

Lesson 44

Last week we started Chapter 19, which is the first of the four remaining chapters in this book. These final four chapters have, in particular, suffered much at the hand of careless commentators, so we started our study by reviewing 10 points that will help us stay on the right track.

What we see in Chapter 19 is what God's people were commanded to do in Chapter 18: rejoice! We see the great rejoicing of God's people in response to God's answer to their prayers. The church is rejoicing over the fulfillment of Daniel's great prophecy in Daniel 2:44. The church has come through this great tribulation victorious. How? Because they have remained faithful unto death. That is how we overcome this world and the kingdoms of this world. Not by physical power or by carnal weapons, but by being faithful to Christ following our obedience to his gospel. That was how the first century church overcame the world, and that is how the twenty-first century church will overcome the world.

Revelation 19:4-6

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Again we see the word Hallelujah, and here the word is spoken by the twenty-four elders and by the four living creatures who defend God's holiness. We

first met these twenty-four elders and these four living creatures back in Chapter 4. And once again we see the unity of this vision. What we were seeing at the beginning of the vision is what we are seeing at the end of the vision. There is no indication that the subject has changed, and every indication that it has not changed.

God is the one King who was able to stop the military might of Rome. God reigned then, God reigns now, God has always reigned, and God will always reign. God reigned prior to the fall of the Rome, and God reigns after the fall of Rome. If we are reading this book looking for something that God is going to **begin** to reign over, we will be disappointed. God has been the King of the universe from the moment God created the universe.

You mean to say that God reigns as King over evil people? Yes, that is exactly what the Bible tells us.

***Psalm 47:7-8** — For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. **God reigneth over the heathen:** God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*

God was Rome's King, but Rome was rebelling against its King. Punishing Rome did not make God King over Rome — God punished Rome because God was already King over Rome. This is a good point to remember as we inch ever closer to Revelation 20:4 and the so-called thousand year reign of Christ. (It is actually a reign *with* Christ, but more on that later.)

In verse 6, we have yet another reminder that what John is seeing and hearing is a vision. "And I heard **as it were** the voice of a great multitude, and **as** the voice of many waters, and **as** the voice of mighty thunderings" John is reminding us that he is describing a vision using things we are familiar with (such as the sound of many waters), and this is an important reminder, particularly as we study the closing chapters of this book.

Verse 6 shows one reason why I love the King James version of the Bible: "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" I don't think it is a coincidence that the most used English version of the Bible was translated at the very time at which the English language reached its peak of beauty and power. I love that phrase: "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" The ASV loses some of the beauty, but arguably gains a bit in accuracy: "for the Lord our God, **the Almighty**, reigneth."

The word “Almighty” in verse 6 occurs ten times in the New Testament — once in 2 Corinthians 6:18 in a quotation from the Old Testament and nine times in Revelation. The term denotes God’s sovereignty over all of creation.

Rome believed that it was almighty, but Rome was very badly mistaken. Almighty God created the universe, including Rome, and Almighty God reigns over the universe — including Rome! That is a vital lesson for nation builders in any age! “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Psalm 127:1). Sadly, there are many people today who are laboring in vain. That was certainly the case in the first century.

Revelation 19:7-8

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

So far in this book we have met two women. First, we met the radiant woman of Chapter 12, and then we met the bloodthirsty whore of Chapter 17. In verse 7 we again meet a woman, the wife of the Lamb, but this is not a third woman. This is a woman we have seen before in this book. This woman in verse 7 is the same radiant woman we met back in Chapter 12. This woman is the people of God, who at this time is the church of God. That is confirmed by the description in verse 8 — who else but the church could be “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” And to remove all doubt we have the closing phrase of verse 8: “the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” This woman represents the saints.

So what is happening in these two verses? That’s the million dollar question, but let me start with the simplest answer, which I think is the correct answer. What is going on here is a scene of unrestrained joy by the people of God over their victory against Rome. Isn’t that what we would expect to see at this point in the book? Isn’t that what God’s people were commanded to do in the pre-

vious chapter in Revelation 18:20? I think that is what we are seeing here, and a common symbol for unrestrained joy is a wedding.

The harlot of Chapter 17 is no more. And now that the harlot — that great enemy and rival of the church — is gone, it is time for a wedding. It is time for rejoicing.

The phrase “**let us be glad and rejoice**” in verse 7 is a phrase that is commonly associated with persecution in the Bible.

***Matthew 5:11-12** — Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:** for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

1 Peter 4:13** — But **rejoice**, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, **ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

These Christians suffered great persecution — many had been persecuted to death — but now they had come out of that persecution. God had given them the promised spiritual victory, and so what we see here is their response: unrestrained rejoicing!

And, of course, the image of the church as the bride of Christ is not unique to this book. In the Old Testament, the relation of God to his people was often referred to as a husband and wife relationship, albeit usually in a negative sense as in Hosea 2 and Ezekiel 16. But even when the image was used to show how God’s people had forsaken their husband, the image of how God wanted his relationship to be with his people remained.

***Ezekiel 16:8-9** — Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. **Then washed I thee with water;** yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.*

Given those Old Testament descriptions, it was natural for the relation between Christ and his church to be described that same way in the New Testament.

***Ephesians 5:23-27** — For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with **the washing of water by the word**, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

Did you notice the similarity between Ezekiel 16 and Ephesians 5? “Then washed I thee with water” in Ezekiel 16. “The washing of water by the word” in Ephesians 5. There’s a sermon on baptism lurking in those two verses!

We also see the symbol of marriage applied to the church in Romans 7.

***Romans 7:4** — Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

We find that same symbol here in Chapter 19, where there is a marriage between Christ the Lamb and the woman who becomes the wife of the Lamb, which is the church. The marriage and the marriage feast are used to illustrate the joy of God’s people in Chapter 19 just as the joyous feast of the tabernacles was used for that same purpose in Chapter 7.

That all sounds pretty simple. God’s people are told to rejoice, and that rejoicing is described as a great wedding. But is that really all there is here? Are we missing something? Many would say yes, but I don’t agree. I am very suspicious of any theory about these verses that purports to tell us something about the church that is not described anywhere else in the New Testament.

Many commentators (including some in the church) have used the closing chapters of Revelation to develop elaborate theories about Christ’s marriage to the church. Let’s look at a rather extreme example. Max King, whom we

discussed in our introductory lessons, teaches that Jesus was **married** to literal Israel until the church appeared, at which point Jesus was **betrothed** to the church while still **married** to Israel. But when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, Jesus was **divorced** from Israel and **married** to the church. **That theory sounds more like a soap opera than it does like Scripture!** Max King's theory is baseless and, in fact, is contradicted by Paul's pre-AD 70 descriptions of Jesus' relation to the church that we read just a moment ago.

In fact, the church is described sometimes as being married to Christ and at other times as being betrothed to Christ. For example, the point of Ephesians 5 is to describe the relation between Christ and the church as **one flesh**.

Ephesians 5:29-32 — For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Being one flesh is more than a betrothal. (Recall Matthew 1:18 — “When as his mother Mary was **espoused** to Joseph, **before they came together.**”) And remember also Romans 7:4 — “that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, **that we should bring forth fruit unto God.**” That, too, is more than a betrothal. And those are descriptions of the church **prior** to this wedding that we see here in Chapter 19.

But some might object that in 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul wrote, “for I have **espoused** you to one husband, that I **may present you as a chaste virgin** to Christ.” Didn't that mean the wedding was yet future. Was the church married to Christ or just betrothed to Christ? And if it was just a betrothal with the wedding yet to come, then is there a contradiction between 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5 and Romans 7?

Of course not. **Neither is literally true, but both are figuratively true.** Just as with similar Old Testament descriptions, these descriptions of the church being married to Christ or betrothed to Christ are illustrations that show the love of Christ has for his church. Sometimes that love is shown as a marriage, while other times it is shown as a betrothal with the marriage yet to come. In each case a spiritual point is being made, and in neither case is the intent to

show that the church is *literally* married to Christ or *literally* betrothed to Christ.

Paul used marriage in various ways to describe the church. In Ephesians 5, for example, Paul used marriage both to describe Jesus' love for the church and to emphasize the need for purity in the church. In Romans 7, Paul used marriage to describe not the relation of the entire church to Christ but instead the relation of an individual Christian to Christ. Romans 6 and 7, studied together, describe baptism as a wedding ceremony in which we enter a covenant relationship with Jesus. In short, even outside of Revelation, the symbol of marriage is used to describe different aspects of the church and of a Christian's relationship with Christ. Here in Revelation 19 we see yet another aspect — the unrestrained joy of the church in its victory over Rome.

Yes, verse 7 sounds on the surface like the church was not married to Christ prior to verse 7, but we know that was not the case. A Christian is married to Christ from the moment of baptism, and there has never been a moment since Acts 2 when Christ did not love the church as a husband loves his wife. When verse 7 says that the marriage of the Lamb is come, that is just part of the symbol for a joyful wedding. The wedding is happening! It is time to rejoice!

A central theme of this book is that Jesus loves his church and is intimately concerned with its welfare. How better to illustrate that love and concern than with a marriage? How better to illustrate the great joy of the church than with a marriage and a marriage feast? The context here is unrestrained joy, and a marriage is used to symbolize that joy.

I think we have gone astray from the text and the context when we start trying to create elaborate theories about the church from these verses. I like what Jim McGuigan has to say on that subject:

It's not out of place here to say a word or two about using figures to build doctrines on. If the doctrine is not clearly taught in other plain sections of scripture, it's a foolish man indeed who founds a school on a figure! Haven't we seen enough of this in the world? We've had men fill us with their types, double applications, and allegories.

To which I say, Amen! (And I should add that I like what brother Jim McGuigan has to say on most other subjects as well!)

The fine linen, clean and white, that the bride is wearing in verse 8 is a sharp contrast to the worldly apparel that the harlot was wearing. The bride of the

Lamb, as Ephesians 5:27 tells us, is without “spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” but is “holy and without blemish.”

And isn't there a lesson there for us? A lesson that we can understand without having to look up the Greek word for “betrothal”? **We are the bride of Christ without spot or blemish, and we should live that way! We must always give Christ our very best.**

After all that this book of Revelation has told us so far about Christ and his church (and the most beautiful descriptions are yet to come!), how could his church possibly fail to give him its very best? But do we? I fear sometimes that the modern church is in danger of settling into a bed of comfortable but deadly mediocrity. Jesus deserves and demands our very best. God sent his very best into this world to die for us — how can we respond with less than our own best? Remember how this book started: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16).

Malachi 1:13 — Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

That was God's response in the Old Testament when his people brought him something less than their very best. Do we really think God will respond differently today if his people do the same thing? Remember — we are the wife of the Lamb!

Revelation 19:9

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Verse 9 confirms all that we just said about this marriage. What is the main point of this marriage symbol — the marriage itself or the joy that accompanies the marriage? Look at verse 9. The angel says that those who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb are blessed. What that means is that

the wedding **guests** are blessed. Why? Because they are able to share the **joy** of the event. The context is joy, and the marriage is a beautiful symbol for that joy.

But who are these wedding guests? If the church is the bride, then who is left to be blessed? There can be only one answer to that question, and it is an answer that we have seen before in this book and that we saw in our study of Zechariah — these guests are those Romans who are called by the gospel and who repent and heed that call in obedience to Christ.

Even here, at the joyous wedding feast celebrating the victory over Rome, the church is pictured as continuing its work to proclaim the gospel to those who are lost. Earlier we saw the church doing its mission work while being persecuted, and here we see the church doing its mission work while celebrating. The church has a mission, and nothing can stand in the way of that mission. We must continue working until that last great day.

And for those who want to see the end of the world in these verses, doesn't the presence of these wedding guests tell us that the world had not yet ended? Doesn't the fact that we see the mission work of the church continuing here in verse 9 provide further evidence that what is being described in this chapter is not that last great day! There will be no wedding guests on that day! On that day, the church will no longer be proclaiming the word to the lost.

What does the end of verse 9 mean? "These are the true sayings of God." Why did that need to be added? Do we have sayings of God somewhere that are not true? Of course not. God's word is truth (John 17:17). This phrase is just emphasizing what has been said, and is just reminding us that if God said it then there can be no doubt at all as to its truthfulness. And it is a reminder on one more thing: these words are the sayings of God. They are not the sayings of man.

Revelation 19:10

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

John falls down to worship the angel but is told that such worship is improper. (This same thing will happen again later in Revelation 22:8.) **Why did John try to worship this angel?**

Some argue that John was confused as to the identity of the speaker and perhaps thought it was Christ himself, but others rightly respond that John knew Christ very well and was able to recognize him elsewhere in the book.

Others argue that John was perhaps so overwhelmed at what he was seeing that he impulsively fell at the feet of the angel — something he would never have done in ordinary circumstances. I favor this view, which also explains why it happens again in Revelation 22:8. Can you imagine what it must have been like to actually **witness** the visions in this book? I'm surprised that John didn't fall down more often!

In any event, the angel uses John's reaction as a teaching moment (which is itself a teaching moment!). When John falls down before the angel, the angel responds by restating a central theme in this book: **God alone is worthy of worship**. The choice between Caesar and Christ is no choice at all. Caesar is a creature; Christ is the Creator. Paul made this same point when he described the Romans in Romans.

***Romans 1:25** — Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.*

Verse 10 is making that same point. Worship God!

Now this is interesting. Many people see the command in Ephesians 5:19 to sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord, and they add to that command by bringing musical instruments into the worship service. God says sing, and they sing and play an instrument. Look at the command in verse 10: "worship God." Do they interpret that command the same way they interpret the command to sing? Do they worship God and also worship Buddha, arguing: "The Bible never tells us we can't worship Buddha! Neither Buddha nor electric guitars are mentioned anywhere in the Bible! So why can't we worship one and play the other? I'm still singing; I'm just also playing a guitar! I'm still worshipping God; I'm just also worshipping Buddha!" I have never heard anyone make that argument when it comes to worshipping Buddha, but I have heard countless people make that argument when it comes to playing mechanical instruments in the worship service. "Sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord." "Worship God." Doesn't the first command exclude any music other

than singing just as surly as the second command excludes worship of anything or anyone other than God? **If not, why not?**

No creature — be it an angel or an emperor — is to be worshiped. And if it is improper to worship this wondrous angelic being, then how much more so must it be to worship a perverted pagan emperor!

There is a stark contrast between this event and another event recorded by John. In John 9:38, John described the reaction of the man blind from birth after Jesus gave him his sight — **“and he worshipped him.”** Unlike this angel, **Jesus accepted the worship of men.** Unlike this **created** angel, Jesus is the eternal **creator.** Jesus is the great I Am (John 8:58)! Jesus is God (John 1:1)! How else can we reconcile John 9:38 with what Jesus told Satan in Matthew 4:10? “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” How else can we reconcile John 9:38 with what we read here in verse 10? Jesus is God, and worthy to be praised!

What is meant by the phrase “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” in verse 10? Some hold that this testimony is our testimony about Jesus using the word of God, while others hold that it is Jesus’ testimony to us through the word of God. Either could be the the intended meaning. The word of God is the testimony of Jesus, and the word of God is the spirit of prophecy. Barclay suggests that John may have intended the passage to carry this double meaning.

Revelation 19:11-13

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

There have been many **openings** in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 4:1, a door was opened in heaven. In Revelation 11:19, the temple of God in heaven was opened. In Revelation 15:5, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was opened. Here in verse 11 heaven itself is opened. The next time we say our prayers, we should be sure to thank God that heaven has a door!

We have also seen many **images of Jesus** in the book of Revelation. We saw Jesus with a countenance like the sun in Chapter 1. We saw Jesus as a lamb that had been slain in Chapter 5. We saw Jesus as a lamb in the midst of the throne in Chapter 7. We saw Jesus as a child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron in Chapter 12. We saw Jesus as a lamb standing on Mount Zion in Chapter 14. Also in Chapter 14, we saw Jesus as the Son of man sitting on a white cloud and having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. Those are all wonderful and beautiful images of Christ, but my personal favorite is right here in verses 11-13.

Behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

There can be no doubt about the identity of this rider on a white horse — this is Jesus, the conqueror of Rome and the righteous judge!

Nero thought he was all-powerful, but he was not. In fact, Nero was now dead and waiting in hell to greet Domitian. Domitian thought he was all-powerful, but he was not. In fact, he would soon be dead himself.

***Ecclesiastes 8:8** — There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death.*

The one with the real power is the one who has power over death, and that person is the rider of this white horse. That person is Jesus.

***2 Timothy 1:10** — But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, **who hath abolished death**, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Unlike those Roman emperors, Jesus is faithful and true. Unlike those Roman emperors, Jesus judges in righteousness. Unlike those Roman emperors, Jesus makes war in righteousness. Unlike those Roman emperors, Jesus wears the true crowns. Jesus was coming in judgment to sweep away those evil Roman emperors and their evil Roman empire. And Jesus knew everything that Rome had done — his eyes are like a flame of fire. And Jesus was not just king over a few things, wearing just a few crowns. Jesus is wearing many crowns. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords!

The next time we become discouraged about the state of the church today, we should read verses 11-13. The next time we become discouraged about the state of this world, we should read verses 11-13. The next time we look around us and wonder, as the songs asks, does Jesus care, we should read verses 11-13. In fact, maybe we should read verses 11-13 every morning to remind ourselves about the one we follow.

Behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the most wonderful thing of all? The rider of that white horse died for you! “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). This wondrous rider was on that old rugged cross, and was there for you and for me. Can we even imagine such a thing? But it happened. That is how much God loves us. That is how much Jesus loves us. Do you think that is something the first century church needed to hear? Yes, and it is something the church of every century needs to hear.

John 3:16 — *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

There is no statement in any language made anywhere or at anytime more beautiful than that one. God’s only begotten Son, the rider on the white horse, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

Now as amazing and as wonderful as this image of Christ is to us, let's think for a moment about who it was who first saw this incredible image of Christ. It was John. John likely grew up with Jesus, and John was the special apostle "whom Jesus loved." John was with Jesus throughout his earthly ministry even up to the foot of the cross. John had seen Jesus in many different settings and in many different circumstances both before his death and after his resurrection. John had witnessed the transfiguration.

And yet here John was now — old, alone, persecuted, and exiled. Perhaps Jesus had just forgotten about poor old John. Hardly! John sees Jesus once again — as a rider on a white horse, with eyes like a flame of fire, with many crowns on his head, clad in a robe dipped in blood, and wearing the very name that John had used to open his gospel record, The Word of God. Aside from the comfort this book must have provided to the church, just imagine the comfort this vision must have provided to John!

In verse 12 we are told that Jesus "had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself," but in the very next verse we are told that name: "his name is called The Word of God." What does that mean? How can it be that no one knows a name when that name is given for all to see in the very next verse?

Names in the Bible are often used to denote a person's status. When one's status changed, his name was changed. We are reminded, for example, of Abram, Jacob, and Saul. To have a **name** that no one else can know means that you have a **status** that no one else can share. That is what verse 12 means. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, and no one else can share that status. Roman emperors were a dime a dozen, but there is only one Christ. Only Jesus can wear the name, The Word of God. Only of Jesus can it be said that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus is unique!

Verse 13 tells us that Jesus' vesture was dipped in blood. **Whose blood?**

Some argue it is Christ's own blood, pointing again to the image of Christ as the lamb that was slain. Others argue that it is the blood of the martyrs, shown here as a reminder of why Rome, the bloody city, was being judged.

Either of those views might be correct, but I favor another view — that this blood is the blood of Jesus' **past** enemies. The picture of Christ shown here is that of a warrior going out to conquer the enemies of his people. The ability and power of this warrior to conquer Rome is emphasized by showing him

covered in the blood of those he had previously conquered. And this book of Revelation is full of reminders of the past victories over the enemies of God's people, such as Egypt and Babylon. Jesus defeated them, and Rome is just the next in line in a long line of nations who thought they could hinder the plans of God and harm the people of God. Rome's blood will soon join the blood of those former nations on the robe of Christ.

Does that all sound a bit too bloody, perhaps? It shouldn't.

Isaiah 63:3 — I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

Revelation 14:20 — And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

We will see this same winepress again in verse 15 of this chapter. God does not deal kindly with those who harm his people. Yes, God gives them every chance to repent. Think of Nineveh, for example. But eventually the time for repentance comes to an end, and the hammer of God falls. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

The so-called Dear Leader of North Korea may be feeling a bit relieved these days because of his new friendship with Donald Trump, but Donald Trump is not the one he should be worried about. There is a rider on a white horse with flaming eyes who knows that when someone is found with a Bible in North Korea, that so-called Dear Leader throws that person and three generations of his family into a prison camp.

In a recent list of the top twenty-five countries where being a Christian is the most dangerous, North Korea topped the list. But do you know what other countries were on that list? Iraq was number three. Afghanistan was number five. Pakistan was number eight. Saudi Arabia was number twelve. India was number twenty-one. Egypt was number twenty-three. Do you see any of our so-called close allies and close friends on that list? I do, and I'm sure you do as well. Do you see any countries on that list that have been defended by the blood of Americans? I do, and I'm sure you do as well. And someone else sees them. Someone whose eyes are as a flame of fire sees them. Someone whose

clothing is dipped in the blood of his past enemies see them. There is not a country on that list that can touch the power of mighty Rome, but Rome was swept away by this rider on the white horse with eyes of fire!

Is Revelation relevant today? You bet it is! The Dear Leader of North Korea and all of his fellow tinpot tyrants should open one of those Bibles they have outlawed and see that there is but one eternal kingdom and but one eternal king — and they are not that king, and their nations are not that kingdom. One day they will join Nero and Domitian and all other rulers who put themselves in the place of God.

The description of Christ continues in verses 14-15.