

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

3A. “AND THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER” - The Scene In Heaven

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INTRODUCTION:

1. Hosea 5.15: “I will go *and* return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.” This verse predicts the occasion of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will come when His people acknowledge their offenses and seek His face.
2. As the campaign of Armageddon squeezes the regathered Jewish people in a military vice, with the forces of antichrist to the North, the forces of the kings of the East coming in from the East, the Southern confederacy coming from the South, and the Mediterranean Sea to the West, the Jewish people will have nowhere to look for their deliverance but heavenward.
3. After three and one-half years of hearing the preaching of the young Jewish evangelists mentioned in Revelation chapters 7 and 14, their desperate straits will be used by God to persuade them that their situation is hopeless and that the only one they can turn to for salvation from their sins and their enemies is the Messiah the young Jewish evangelists have repeatedly declared to them.
4. The chapter before us deals with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory, fulfilling the prediction made in Acts 1.9-11 by the two angels at the time of His glorious ascension to His Father’s right hand on high:¹

⁹ And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

¹¹ Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

(19.1) And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God

1. “This chapter is one of the most dramatic in all the Bible. In it, the Church, the Bride of Christ, is the guest of honor at the marriage of the Lamb in heaven (vv. 1-10) and returns with Christ in His triumphal Second Coming (vv. 11-21).”²
2. “The first ten verses are parenthetical, depicting heavenly pronouncements preceding the Second Coming of Christ. ‘After these things’ refers to events that occur after the bowl judgments and the destruction of literal Babylon as discussed in Revelation 16 and 18. John hears the voice of the great multitude praising God for His

¹ See also Psalm 16.11; 110.1; Matthew 26.64; Mark 12.36; 14.62; 16.19; Luke 20.42; 22.69; John 3.13; 13.1; 14.2-4; Acts 2.33, 34-35; 7.56; Romans 8.34; Ephesians 1.20; 6.9; Colossians 3.1; Second Thessalonians 1.7; Hebrews 1.3, 13; 8.1; 9.24; 10.12-13; 12.2; 1 Peter 3.22; Revelation 19.11

² See footnote for Revelation 19.1-6 from *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), page 1396.

salvation, power, glory, and honor. This is the same great multitude identified in Revelation 7, made up of saints killed or martyred during the Tribulation Period.”³

3. “After these things,” μετὰ ταῦτα, is John’s reliable phrase for changing scenes. “This is a time key. After the destruction of Babylon at the end of the Great Tribulation, just before the kingdom is established (chap. 20). This section bridges the Tribulation and the millennial kingdom.”⁴ John is turning our attention from the earth and the final destruction of the political and economic Babylonian system to the events immediately preceding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.
4. In this verse, we see *the first of our four hallelujahs, the hallelujah of redemption*. The word “Alleluia,” correctly pronounced “hallelujah,” means “Praise Jehovah,” and is the utterance of tremendous praise toward God. Found only in Revelation chapter 19 in the New Testament, it was a term first used in the Bible by King David when the Ark of the Covenant was finally brought to Mount Zion and placed on the threshing floor of Araunah.⁵ It has always been a word of ultimate praise and adoration toward God.
5. Lehman Strauss referred to this first hallelujah as “the hallelujah of *redemption* because the first note of praise is *salvation*. Christ is about to appear with His Church to complete the redemption He began at Calvary. One final conflict remains and then, after Armageddon, the swords of men shall be beaten into plowshares, the earth will be redeemed, and the lamb and the lion shall lie down together. While Satan is the prince of this world now, Christ holds the title deed to the earth, and the day is coming when He shall possess that which is His own by creative right and redemptive right. There has been much speculation in the many attempts to identify the “*much people in heaven*” who utter the first hallelujah. But what does it matter? Let us all join in the chorus. The great day of deliverance for all creation will surely come. Hallelujah!”⁶
6. But to what do the words of this hymn of praise refer? What about the words “salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God”?
 - a. Salvation has to do with deliverance. The Lord Jesus Christ not only delivers sinners from their sins, Matthew 1.21, but He also delivers other things from other things. For example: Will He not rescue this entire physical universe from the curse? Moreover, will He not deliver to Israel’s nation the covenant blessings promised them through their father Abraham? Therefore, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in power and great glory is not a future event that should be considered only from the limited perspective of a single sinner who does not

³ Bob Kollin, *Revelation Unlocked*, (Springfield, Missouri: 21st Century Press, 2003), page 181.

⁴ See footnote for Revelation 19.1 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2018.

⁵ First Chronicles 16.1-4

⁶ Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), page 315.

want to go to Hell. There are bigger things than you and me wrapped up in my Lord's Second Coming.

- b. **Glory** is the end to salvation in the most incredible means. Remember what we read back in Revelation 4.11: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Ultimately, God, specifically the Second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, has created everything so that the Triune Godhead might be glorified. However, what does the word "glory" mean? Our Church sings the doxology whenever we take up an offering, and the word doxology comes from the Greek word for "glory," δόξα. The word has a range of meanings, from brightness, shining, and splendor to fame, recognition, honor, and prestige.⁷ As nearly as I can figure out, **glory** has to do with that opinion of God or that estimation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which recognizes and acknowledges that God is the most majestic, sublime, and surpassingly excellent of beings. In addition, the single most significant reason why Jesus Christ saves sinners is that by so doing, the Father is greatly glorified. In John 17.4, Jesus said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." That is, He greatly exalted men's opinion of God. We are called upon to do the same in John 15.8: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." So then, when Jesus Christ comes again, humanity's opinion of Him will be greatly lifted, and He will significantly elevate everyone's views of God the Father.
- c. **Honour** is closely related to **glory**, except that **honour**, the Greek word τιμή, has to do with price, value, and the respect that a person enjoys.⁸ Therefore, though these words overlap to a degree in their meanings, **glory** would have to do with your estimation of God, while **honour** would have more to do with how you behave because of your assessment.
- d. There are two words translating **power** in the New Testament. One word refers to authority, ἐξουσία, such as in Matthew 28.18, where Jesus indicates the absolute authority the Father has given to Him by declaring, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The word we have here is the other word, the word δύναμις. It refers to might, strength, force, capability, and the ability to do something instead of the authority to do something.⁹ This is what the angel Gabriel was referring to in Luke 1.37, when he told Mary, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

7. "... unto the Lord our God."

⁷ Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), page 256-258.

⁸ *Ibid.*, page 1005.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pages 262-263.

Revelation Chapter 19

- a. All those in heaven who have been waiting for so long; the angels from the fall of Lucifer and from the fall of Adam, Abel from the moment he was slain by his older brother, and the rest of the saints of old from the time of Enoch and Noah and Abraham, down to those who we are personally acquainted with who have gone before us, can finally begin to rejoice. However, because a reference is made here to salvation, I think those rejoicing here are likely the redeemed and not the angelic host since holy angels are not redeemed, having never sinned.
- b. And you seldom see a great crowd of observers wait until the contest is finished before they begin to cheer and rejoice. The rejoicing starts as soon as you see the final episode begin to unfold. And so, though the Lord Jesus Christ has not yet returned to earth in power and great glory at this point, the celebration starts just like on the last lap of the Indianapolis 500, just like when the last pop fly goes up before the catch will end the baseball game, just like when the clock runs out with the home team too far ahead for the visiting basketball team to have any chance of scoring enough to win in the end. I have drawn a weak parallel, but you get the point. Revelation 19.1 is where the celebration begins.

(19.2) For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

1. This verse shows the Lord Jesus Christ to be what I maintained He was early on in our study of Revelation. That is, He is portrayed in this book to be the Righteous Judge. He judges the great whore and avenges the blood of His servants who died at her hand.
2. This verse implies rather than declares the deity of Christ. Remember that Jehovah said vengeance was His and that He would repay. Christ, being the One Who gains vengeance, shows Him to be the great God Jehovah.

(19.3) And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

1. Here we have *the second hallelujah*. This hallelujah might be called *the hallelujah of righteous retribution*. When the damned are judged and punished, those in heaven will understand and appreciate, from God's perspective, God's grand scope and plan to deal with sin. Then they will shout hallelujah. We ought to do the same now rather than wait until then.
2. Occasionally, you might be tempted to question the righteousness and the justice of God's activities. Nevertheless, when we note that those in heaven, who have a heavenly perspective, shout hallelujah, perhaps we can reconsider our doubts and acknowledge that God really does know best.
3. "Her smoke rose up for ever and ever" indicates the length of Babylon's judgment. People and ungodly religions try to say that eternal torment either does not exist or is not endless. This verse, however, shows that the Great Whore will be

punished forever and ever. But what does this mean? Can a destroyed city or an economic and political system send up the smoke of punishment forever and ever? No. But the smoke of the punishment of those damned souls who perpetrated those foul deeds, for their punishment, first in Hell and then in the lake of fire, will be forever. Cities are not eternal, except for the city of New Jerusalem. However, souls created in God's image and likeness are immortal. Therefore, when those same sinful souls are punished, their smoke will rise forever, which is what is meant in this verse.

(19.4) And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

1. This hallelujah is often called *the hallelujah of realization*. The twenty-four elders and the four beasts are the ones who shout out this hallelujah. But why are the twenty-four elders and the four beasts distinguished from the “much people” of verses 1-3? I would suggest that those who shout hallelujah in verses 1-3 are more likely the tribulation saints who suffered first hand from the antichrist and the false prophet, who had to endure the institutional oppression of Babylon. Thus, they would shout hallelujah in response to their heart's cries for retribution being fulfilled. The twenty-four elders, representing Church Age Christianity, would also rejoice for somewhat different reasons.
2. This is the last time we read about the twenty-four elders in the Word of God. This is because future references made by John use the phrase “bride of Christ.” Since these twenty-four elders are representatives of Church Age believers, and since Church Age believers comprise the bride of Christ, they will not be separately distinguished by John again.

(19.5) 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.

1. Here, we seem to have the reason for *the third hallelujah* or *the hallelujah of realization*. There is a realization of the greatness of God. But whose is the voice that will be heard? “And a voice came out of the throne.” Is this likely the voice of an angel? I think a voice from the throne is more likely God the Father's or the Lord Jesus Christ's than an angel's. Since the Lord Jesus Christ's mission is to glorify God, which results in praising Him, I am inclined to think that this is a general call by the Lord Jesus Christ that is extended to all the servants of God, saints as well as angels, exalted as well as lowly, to do what we should all always do praise our God, all ye that fear Him.
2. Whosoever is the servant of God will, at that time, praise Jehovah. Thus, the angels in heaven will praise Him, those of lofty position and menial station. Old Testament saints will praise Him, both those who were notable and those who are unknown to us. The only two criteria that seem necessary at this point are that you are a servant of God and that you fear God.

3. The word translated “praise,” the word αἰνέω, is an imperative verb in the present tense. “The present tense indicates *progressive* action at the *present* time.”¹⁰ Thus, the voice from the throne directs all creatures in heaven to begin praising God and to do so without interruption! My suggestion, therefore, is that if you plan to spend eternity in heaven, and if you think you will spend eternity in heaven, you start practicing what you will be doing throughout eternity, which is praising God.
4. May I help you get ready to praise God when you get to heaven if you get to heaven? Consider these verses listed below. My suggestion is that you read the verses, become familiar with them, and commit yourself to doing what they recommend:

- Psalm 22.23: “Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.”
- Psalm 28.7: “The LORD *is* my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.”
- Psalm 42.5: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance. “
- Psalm 42.11: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.”
- Psalm 43.5: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.”
- Psalm 69.34: “Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.”
- Psalm 104.35: “Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.”
- Psalm 105.45: “That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.”
- Psalm 106.1: “Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.”
- Psalm 106.48: “Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.”
- Psalm 107.32: “Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.”
- Psalm 109.30: “I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.”
- Psalm 111.1: “Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and [in] the congregation. “
- Psalm 112.1: “Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.”

¹⁰ Ray Summers, *Essentials of New Testament Greek*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1950), page 11.

- Psalm 113.1: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD."
- Psalm 116.19: "In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD."
- Psalm 117.1: "O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people."
- Psalm 135.1: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD."
- Psalm 148.1: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights."
- Psalm 148.3: "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light."
- Psalm 148.4: "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that *be* above the heavens."
- Psalm 150.1: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power."
- Psalm 150.2: "Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness."
- Psalm 150.3: "Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp."
- Psalm 150.4: "Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs."
- Psalm 150.5: "Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals."
- Psalm 150.6: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD."

(19.6) 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 thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

1. This is *the fourth hallelujah of Christ's reign*.
2. Humanly speaking, it seems as if the entire angelic host and all those who have been saved by the blood of the Lamb of God have been more impatient than God to see the Lord Jesus Christ recognized as the omnipotent and absolute ruler over this world. With this impending, they cannot contain themselves.
3. "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" As I mentioned in my remarks about Revelation 19.1, this great multitude of redeemed souls erupts with an awe-inspiring display of praise. If the throne room of heaven shook to the sound of the seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory" in Isaiah 6.3, imagine this incredible scene.
4. "saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

- a. Who is it the redeemed multitudes are shouting their praises to? Matthew Henry rightly, in my opinion, indicates that this is the beginning of our Lord Jesus Christ's marriage song.¹¹
- b. As well, John Gill writes, "*for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; by whom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and God over all, blessed for ever, and is the Almighty; and though he was set up as King over the holy hill of Zion, and has reigned over the church in every age, and came as King into this world, though his kingdom was not of it, and at his resurrection was declared Lord and Christ, and his kingdom was then more manifest, and he has ever since displayed his kingly power in defending his church, and defeating the enemies of it; yet now will he reign more visibly and gloriously, his kingdom will be enlarged from one end of the earth to the other, and he will be King over all the earth, which will occasion great joy to Jews and Gentiles; (see Psalm 47:1,2 97:1) and (see Gill on "Revelation 11:17")."*"¹²
- c. How can we be sure these shouts of praise refer to the Lord Jesus Christ? Two reasons, I think: *First*, the context in which this is set has to do with the impending marriage of the Lamb. Thus, it would seem most appropriate for His virtues to be extolled by His bride and her friends at this point. *Second*, because God has only just been adored by such praise. Thus, it is fitting that the Lamb of God, Whose marriage is about to take place, now be praised.

(19.7) 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.

1. Notice that it is the Groom Who is honored just before the marriage of the Church Age believers to the Lamb of God. Such is not the way marriage ceremonies are conducted in our culture. The wedding ceremonies in the West are more influenced by Muslim tradition than Biblical tradition. The white gown and the veil are traditions from Muslim weddings.
2. Consider the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew chapter 25:
 - 1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.
 - 2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.
 - 3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:
 - 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
 - 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
 - 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.
 - 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

¹² John Gill, *The Baptist Commentary Series Volume I, John Gill's Exposition Of The Old And New Testaments, Vol 9* (Paris, Arkansas: the Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., reprinted 2006), page 838.

- ⁸ And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.
- ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, *Not* so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.
- ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.
- ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.
- ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
- ¹³ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.
3. Though I will not study this parable, we can get an idea from this passage how marriage took place in our Lord's days on earth before His crucifixion, burial, and glorious resurrection and ascension to His Father's right hand in glory. This parable focuses on the bridesmaids, but we see how weddings occur in the background. The bride and her maids were responsible for preparing themselves and being ready for the groom to come.
 4. But who is this bride of Christ? A clue comes from John the Baptist's remarks in John 3.29 response to his disciple's concerns that so many people were flocking to Christ. He said, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." What do we learn from this? We realize that since John the Baptist described himself as a friend of the bridegroom and not the bride, there are, therefore, some people who are not a part of the bride of Christ even though they are God's children. It is generally accepted by those who adopt the premillennial Second Coming of Christ and a pretribulation Rapture view of end-time prophecy that the bride of Christ is composed of those who are Christians during the Church Age. Thus, Old Testament saints and Tribulation period saints are not members of the bride of Christ.
 5. In our text, John writes, "His wife hath made herself ready." That is, the Church in Glory, composed of all believers who have lived during the Church Age, which ended with the Rapture, has done something to prepare herself for marriage.
 6. What does this mean? I am not quite sure. On an individual basis, this seems to indicate that each of us who know Christ during this era has some role to play in preparing ourselves for this future marriage to the Lamb. Is it related to the Christian rewards given at Christ's judgment seat? Perhaps.
 7. To acquaint you with the Judgment Seat of Christ, which is not at all mentioned in the book of Revelation but occurs in conjunction with the Rapture, consider the following passages with me. The first two passages show the certainty of Christ's judgment of His Own, and the passage in First Corinthians seems to show the criteria by which that judgment will be made:

- a. Romans 14.10: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”
 - b. Second Corinthians 5.10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.”
 - c. First Corinthians 3.11-15:
 - ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
 - ¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
 - ¹³ Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.
 - ¹⁴ If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
 - ¹⁵ If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.
8. There is much that we are not certain of concerning the bride of Christ, her making herself ready, and the Judgment Seat of Christ, but allow me to share some Baptist distinctives that, though all Baptists do not hold them, they are held by credible Baptists and by me:
- a. First, from John 3.29, we know that not all God’s children comprise the bride of Christ. John the Baptist was not part of the bride of Christ.
 - b. Next, every genuinely born-again Christian will be part of Christ’s bride.
 - c. Third, since Revelation 19.7 shows that the bride has made herself ready, it is reasonable to ask how that is done and where it is done. I understand that those who are in the bride of Christ make themselves ready in their local Churches down here on earth before the Rapture, which is the only place where they can earn the rewards given to them after the Rapture and at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is according to my understanding of First Corinthians 3.11-15.

(19.8) 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.

1. The word “righteousness” refers to righteous deeds.¹³ This verse indicates that the fine linen, clean and white, represents the good deeds the saints have performed while on earth. Paul referred to this in Philippians 2.12: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” From our understanding of First Corinthians 3.11-16, we know that the context in which such good works were done was the Church congregation, identified by the Apostle Paul as the temple of God.
2. This might scare some people into thinking that this verse somehow detracts from the Bible doctrine of God imputing righteousness to you or giving you the righteousness of Christ when you trust Christ as your Savior and receive the gift of eternal life. Never fear, however, for this is not the case at all.
3. To understand what John meant here, realize that there were two garments typically worn by people in those days. There was an inner garment, similar to our under clothes, and an outer garment, which the Romans called a toga.
4. The clothes analogy goes something like this: When Christ saves a person, God places on that person as representing the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to believers through faith in Christ, that inner garment. You get the inner garment at the time you trust Christ.
5. The outer garment, such as the toga, which stands for a person’s good works after he receives Christ, is something every believer must sew for himself. It is rather like a girl with a hope chest who, throughout her life, collects various materials with which to make her wedding dress someday.
6. When the Rapture comes, Christ will judge each piece of cloth/good works to evaluate whether it was acceptable service to Him. The acceptable pieces will be used to make our marriage garment, but the unacceptable pieces will be burned in the fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
7. But remember, it is the inner garment that gets you to heaven, and that inner garment represents Christ's righteousness, which comes through faith. This garment that we work to prepare has nothing immediately to do with getting saved but is related to the kind of Christian life you must live after you have been saved.
8. The bride making herself ready in verse 7 might represent Church Age Christians gone to heaven who are sewing those pieces of cloth together to make their wedding garments, their togas.
9. Ponder this well-written summary statement from a noted Bible teacher:

¹³ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 855.

Hebrew weddings consisted of 3 phases: 1) betrothal (often when the couple were children); 2) presentation (the festivities, often lasting several days, that preceded the ceremony); and 3) the ceremony (the exchanging of vows). The church was betrothed to Christ by His sovereign choice in eternity past (Eph. 1:4; He. 13:20) and will be presented to Him at the Rapture (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). The final supper will signify the end of the ceremony. This symbolic meal will take place at the establishment of the millennial kingdom and last throughout that 1,000 year period (cf 21:2). While the term “bride” often refers to the church, and does so here (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-24), it ultimately expands to include all the redeemed of all ages, which becomes clear in the remainder of the book.¹⁴

(19.9) 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.

1. This verse brings up an important point about those attending the marriage of the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church. As I mentioned, some of those present will not be a part of the bride.
2. Some people say that others in attendance will be angels. This is partly right, but remember that John the Baptist identified himself as a friend of the Bridegroom and not as a part of the bride.
3. This indicates what many other verses bear out. Namely, only those saved during the Church Age will be members of the bride of Christ. Old Testament saints will be guests at the marriage, as will angels, invited by the Groom.
4. It is possible that Tribulation saints, those saved during the seven years of tribulation, will not take part in the ceremony in any way. Indeed, those who died without Christ will have no role in the marriage.

(19.10) 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.

1. When John saw the events surrounding the marriage of the Lamb, he was apparently overcome with himself and fell down at some person’s feet to worship him, forgetting, I suppose, that only one of God’s creatures stood before him. However, that individual would not allow such blasphemy, even if it were accidental or due to ignorance. Remember, people, Satan’s sin was in wanting this kind of adoration. This fellow, however, wanted no part of such misplaced adoration.

¹⁴ See footnote for Revelation 19.7 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2019.

2. Who is this fellow? What is this fellow? He is mentioned in verse 9 as the one who spoke to John. He is also the one whose voice in verses 5-8 is so majestic and overwhelming. But just who he is, we do not know at this point.
 3. Is it not interesting to compare the actions of the masses who gather around the so-called Vicar of Christ? No matter where the Pope of Rome travels, there are teeming masses who bow down and worship or try to kiss his hand. Ever wonder why he does not do what this individual did and tell those folks not to commit such sin?
 4. This person identifies himself as a servant of Christ, just as John is. Such identification might suggest that he is a redeemed person, not an angel. He also says, "I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." But for the fact that Revelation 1.1 reads, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John," I would be dogmatic about this necessarily being a redeemed man, most probably one of the 24 elders.
 5. Also, notice the last phrase of verse 10, which reads, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." This angel/man is telling John that the true spirit of all Biblical prophecy gives witness to, or testimony to, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Jesus is the provider of prophetic revelation in accordance with Revelation 1:1, and prophecy should always point to Christ with the purpose and intent to provide revelation of Christ."¹⁵
 6. This verse shows us what we already know, that Jesus Christ is the focus of the prophecies of the Bible. Might I add that any religious persuasion that detracts from the person and work of Christ does not have the genuine spirit of prophecy?
- (19.11) 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.
1. First, an overview of the verse, and then an exposition and an expansion of the text and topics related to the text.
 - a. This is the most extraordinary event in human history since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! We are now told of His Second Coming. This is not the Rapture, where He comes secretly to snatch away the Church Age believers. No, this is His glorious second advent, when He comes back a conquering king.
 - b. When this opening of heaven occurred, and John saw the white horse appear, his mind might have contrasted the Rider of this white horse with the rider he saw in Revelation 6.2. Remember, in Revelation 6.2, it was the antichrist riding. Here it is the real Christ riding. These two scenes cannot show the same rider

¹⁵ Kollin, page 184.

riding since so many things about them are different. Their time of appearing is different, their purpose for appearing is different, their results are different, etc.

- c. This rider is called Faithful and True. This rider can only be the Lord Jesus Christ. No one else fits these two titles properly.
 - i. It is from Revelation 3.14 that we know the title Faithful applies to the Lord: “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”
 - ii. Moreover, it is from John 14.6 that the title True applies to Him: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - iii. Faithful applies because He is faithful in His execution of the things His Father wants Him to do. What does His Father want Him to do? Execute judgment upon the wicked. True applies to the standard by which He judges.
- d. God’s righteousness demands that judgment be carried out according to truth. Those who must stand before the Almighty God will find that the standard by which they are judged is truth.

2. “And I saw heaven opened”

- a. Heaven opens up when something profoundly significant has happened or is about to happen. Consider some of these passages in the Bible in which an opening in heaven is referred to:

Ezekiel 1.1: “Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the river of Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.”

Do not think John’s Jewish Christian readers’ minds would not immediately hearken back to Ezekiel 1.1 when their eyes fixed on this phrase in Revelation. Ezekiel is the most apocalyptic of all prophetic books in the Old Testament. So, adding to the already heightened tension in this portion of John’s vision, this phrase, “And I saw heaven opened” would produce in them an exquisite anticipation.

Matthew 3.16-17: ¹⁶ And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

¹⁷ And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Luke 3.21-22: ²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,
²² And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

John 1.51: “And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Revelation 4.1: “After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.”

When the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized, heaven did open, the Spirit of God was seen descending by John the Baptist (but no one else), and the Father spoke. This illustrates the truth that God is a Tri-unity. Then the Lord Jesus Christ predicted that Nathaniel would see heaven open and the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, His name for Himself. Then, in Revelation 4.1, we read of the Rapture-like experience of the Apostle John, as heaven opens to receive him in a fashion similar to the way heaven will open to receive Church Age Christians at the time of the Rapture. Thus, we see that the opening of heaven is a significant occurrence in fulfilling God’s program for the ages.

- b. That John “saw heaven opened,” or that John will see heaven open (since this is yet future to us) again shows that John is not functioning in any prophetic office or role. Instead, he is merely a seer. He gives testimony to what he has seen.
- c. But what John saw some 2,000 years ago are events which, for the most part, have not yet occurred. What does this mean? This suggests that only a portion of reality exists within the boundaries of time. This indicates a reality beyond the constraints of what we think of as the past, the present, and the future.
- d. This can only be true if there is an infinite God Who exists both within and outside this time-space-matter continuum that we call the universe. When heaven opens, God creates an opening, a bridge, if you will, that, for a moment, connects history to eternity. Of course, this means the universe in which we live is not what scientists would call a closed system but is an open system that God is continually involved with and continuously involved in.

- e. This is why we pray, people. God involves Himself in the affairs of men. God interacts with the universe that He created. He presides over it. And as the Second Person of the triune godhead once dwelt among us for some thirty-three years, before His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the Father's right hand on high in heaven, He will someday return to our midst to rule and reign.
 - f. What specific events on earth correspond to this future moment when heaven opens? Several things happen: First, as we have recently seen in Revelation, Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, has been destroyed in all her manifestations. Second, but not mentioned in the Revelation, coincident with that, the armies of humanity will have surrounded the regathered Jewish people in Israel to eradicate them in a suicidal frenzy just before they are themselves going to be destroyed by the King of kings and Lord of lords. Third, and also not explicitly mentioned in Revelation, at that precise moment, the Jewish people will respond to the preaching they have heard over the last seven years, coupled with the hopeless situation they find themselves in. They will cry out to this One they have rejected for 2,000 years, laying hold of Him by faith to save them from their sins and their enemies.
 - g. What about you? Where do you stand with the Lord Jesus Christ? When He comes (and He will come), will He come for you? Or will He come after you? Will He come to rescue you? Or will He come to judge you? Will you come to Him now, or will you foolishly dawdle and wait for Him to come to you then?
 - h. To summarize: "The One who ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11) and had been seated at the Father's right hand (Heb. 8:1; 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22) will return to take back the earth from the usurper and establish His kingdom (5:1-10). The nature of this event shows how it differs from the Rapture. At the Rapture, Christ meets His own in the air—in this event He comes with them to earth. At the Rapture, there is no judgment in this event it is all judgment. This event is preceded by blackness—the darkened sun, moon gone out, stars fallen, smoke—then lightning and blinding glory as Jesus comes. Such details are not included in Rapture passages (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18)."¹⁶
3. "and behold a white horse"
- a. "In the Roman triumphal processions, the victorious general rode his white war horse up the Via Sacra to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. Jesus' first coming was in humiliation on a colt (Zech.9:9). John's vision portrays Him as the conqueror on His war-horse, coming to destroy the wicked, to overthrow the Antichrist, to defeat Satan, and to take control of the earth (cf.-2 Cot 2:14)."¹⁷

¹⁶ See footnote for Revelation 19.11 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2019.

¹⁷ Ibid.

- b. Those are the words in the *MacArthur Study Bible*, which I think are generally correct. Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ did enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the foal of an ass, Matthew 21.1-11:

1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,
2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.
3 And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.
4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,
5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.
6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,
7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.
8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and *strawed* them in the way.
9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.
10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?
11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

- c. However, we see nothing in Christ's ride into Jerusalem on a donkey colt that is humiliating or speaks of humiliation. His humiliation had to do with His crucifixion. Riding into Jerusalem this way is simply another manifestation of His condescension, not His humiliation. Philippians 2.7-8 is where we see that Christ becoming a man is one thing, what we call the incarnation, which was an act of condescension, while His humbling of Himself has directly to do with His crucifixion:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- d. The point of my concern for detail is that what we have is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was not humiliated by becoming a man. He humbled Himself by submitting to the death of the cross, which included becoming sin for us Who knew no sin. In His condescension, He came in peace to reconcile sinners to God. But

now that He is exalted, it is clear He is not at His Second Advent coming in peace. Oh, no. He is coming to execute judgment, wage war, exact vengeance, smite His enemies, and kill those who are unconverted.

4. “and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True”
 - a. Of course, the One who sits on the white horse at this time can only be the Lord Jesus Christ, seen as the Conqueror and the Victor.
 - b. But note how He is identified “Faithful and True.” What does using those two words mean to characterize our Lord Jesus Christ? Is not one who is faithful, one who can be relied upon, one who can be trusted, trustworthy? This is a reminder that the One Who returns is the One Who is the Object of our faith, the One in Whom we trusted. That would demonstrate Him to be true, would it not? If you are faithful, you are also true; if you are unfaithful, you cannot possibly be true.
 - c. Ah, this One Who is my Lord, my Savior, Who is my Master, is glorious beyond description and reliable beyond expectation. Words are too feeble to do Him justice. They fall far short of the honor that is His due.
5. “and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”
 - a. No surprise here. In John 5.22, the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” Thus, we do not have anything resembling a good cop versus bad cop arrangement between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby God takes the role of the offended one, and the Lord Jesus Christ takes on the role of the sympathetic one.
 - b. Note Jude 14-15, which recounts Enoch’s preaching some 5,000 years ago:¹⁸
 - ¹⁴ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,
 - ¹⁵ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

So you see, the Lord Jesus Christ is not angry with sinners at this time, during our Christian era. He does want sinners to come to Him for salvation and cleansing in His blood. But if you think for one moment that it will not be Him Who avenges God for your sins, that it will not be Him Who inflicts judgment upon you for stubbornly refusing to forsake your sins, you are very, very mistaken.

¹⁸ James Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, Inc, 2003), page 18.

- c. And what about the fact that He will make war? He is God. Exodus 15.3 declares, “The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name.” Remember that God is holy, and His holiness is active, energetic, and cleansing. Therefore, it is God’s nature, and Jesus Christ is God, to actively and aggressively seek to judge sin. Therefore, not only is it no surprise that Jesus Christ will judge when He comes again, but also that He will make war when He comes again. To think otherwise of Him is to mistake His very nature.
- d. And it is in righteousness that He will do these things. It is righteous that He is presently not angry with sinners since that is the posture He takes to display His mercy and His grace most greatly. However, when the time of His longsuffering ends, when the time comes that He has finished with patience and determines that it is time for judgment and wrath that, too, will be righteous.
- e. Beloved, time is running out for those who are not saved. They dilly-dally and delay, they piddle and procrastinate. Do you do that? Then stop. Do not think you should wait until things feel right before you deal with your sins. If you do that, your time will have run out, and you will either be dead or your opportunity to come to Christ will have passed.
- f. The reason the apostle Paul wrote that “**behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation,**” and the reason why God has given us this book of the Revelation is so you will quit wasting time, so you will stop delaying, and so you who will come to Christ will come now!

(19.12) 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.

1. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire

- a. It seems that this description of the Lord Jesus Christ is intended to accomplish two things: First, to make sure that the reader understands the one spoken of here to be the one introduced at the beginning of this revelation. Next, to communicate the nature of the one spoken of, His insight and wisdom, His knowledge and perception.
- b. That this one described must be the Lord Jesus Christ, the same person introduced to us at the beginning of this book, can be seen from Revelation 1.14 and 2.18:
 - 1.¹⁴ His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;
 - 2.¹⁸ And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;

- c. What can we learn about the Lord Jesus Christ from this description of His eyes? In Revelation 1.14 and 2.18, the Lord Jesus Christ's eyes are described metaphorically. "his eyes *were* as a flame of fire" in the former verse, and "his eyes like unto a flame of fire" in the latter verse. The same is valid here. Again, the Lord Jesus Christ is symbolically described as being omniscient, as being all-knowing. Thus, His judgments will be righteous and just.
2. and on his head *were* many crowns
 - a. It is interesting, as we read this, to remember that John described the beast, or the antichrist, as having a crown on his head back in Revelation 6.2: "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."
 - b. The Lord Jesus Christ, in contrast, has many crowns. As well, notice that the beast's crown was given to him. Remember that it was a στέφανος, a perishable wreath given to a victorious athlete or a conquering warrior. On the other hand, Christ's crowns are diadems, διαδήματα, signifying His kingship in all things, His royalty, His inherent right to rule and exercise lordship.
 3. and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And the name? John could see the name that was written but could not comprehend it. The lesson to draw from this? "There are unfathomable mysteries in the Godhead that even glorified saints will be unable to fathom."¹⁹

(19.13) And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

1. Just a quick review. Heaven opens in Revelation 19.11, and we have described someone "called Faithful and True." As well, it is said about this person, "in righteousness he doth judge and make war." Then, in Revelation 19.12, His eyes are described the same way the Lord Jesus Christ's eyes were described in the first two chapters of Revelation. Is there any question concerning who is being referred to here?
2. The identity of this person is further established here in Revelation 19.13 as none other than the Lord Jesus Christ in two additional ways: His appearance and His name. His appearance is of one dressed in bloody clothes. "his name is called The Word of God."
3. Does anyone know whose blood is on His vesture? By the way, a vesture is simply an outer garment. He has blood on His clothes. But whose blood did John see on Christ's garments when the doorway to heaven suddenly opened, the King of all

¹⁹ See footnote for Revelation 19.12 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2019.

glory burst forth, riding a white horse? Whose blood is on His garment when He appeared in heaven, poised after some 2,000 years to come to earth again in power and great glory?

4. Reflect on what John MacArthur wrote in his study Bible concerning whose blood is on Christ's vesture: "This is not from the battle of Armageddon, which will not have begun until v.15. Christ's blood-spattered garments symbolize the great battles He has already fought against sin, Satan, and death and been stained with the blood of His enemies."²⁰ On what basis does he assert that this language is symbolism? There is no reason why this should be understood as symbolic language. If Christ is on a literal horse in heaven, then it should be recognized that there is literal blood on His clothes.
5. Then there is John Walvoord's opinion in his commentary on Revelation: "His vesture is declared to be 'dipped in blood,' as if anticipating the bloodshed to come (cf. Isa. 63:2-3; Rev. 14:20)."²¹ So, it is evident that Walvoord, too, recognizes that the blood on Christ's garments cannot possibly be the result of the battle against His enemies, since there is blood on His garments while He is still in heaven before His Second Coming. So, he concludes that John's description anticipates the blood resulting from battles not yet fought against His enemies.
6. Here is what another contemporary commentator writes about the blood on Christ's vesture: "His clothing dipped in blood could symbolize his crucifixion, and the shedding of His blood for man's sins. However, based on the location of this passage immediately preceding Armageddon, this verse more appropriately refers to the blood that will be shed at Armageddon."²² Do you see a pattern here? For some reason, contemporary commentators seem blind to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, in heaven, preparing to come again, has blood on His clothes.

²⁰ See footnote for Revelation 19.13 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2020.

²¹ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 200.

²² Kollin, page 185.

EXCURSUS ON CHRIST'S BLOODY VESTURE (Revelation 19.13)

I was first aware of a controversy in Christendom concerning the blood of Christ while I was in Bible college. The school administration informed the student body that possession of any material produced by Colonel R. B. Thieme, whether written material or cassette tapes, would be grounds for immediate expulsion. I was given to understand that R. B. Thieme's cassette tapes and study materials were widely distributed in the U. S. armed forces and that the harmful effect of his heretical doctrines was widespread. Since I had never heard of R. B. Thieme, I let the matter pass without much thought.

More than a year later, my pastor, Dr. Eli Harju, called me into his office and asked me if I would like some Christian books and literature from the library of a deceased Church member. The man's widow had decided to give his collection to some ministerial students in the Church, and the pastor asked me, along with two other much younger men, if we wanted to go by her house Sunday afternoon after Church to select the books we wanted. Of course, I accepted the offer.

Upon arriving at the widow's house, I was introduced to the other two fellows. The widow had decided that fairness required allowing us to take turns in her husband's library, each taking one minute to select the books we wanted before exiting. Then, after each of us had our minute, the cycle would start over until the books had all been picked. I won the draw and was given the first minute in the library.

However, my excitement quickly turned to consternation when my eyes fell upon a section of books and pamphlets by R. B. Thieme. Not wanting the heretical material to fall into the hands of the younger men and not wanting to say anything that would disturb the memory of her recently deceased husband, I spent my first minute scooping up the Thieme materials instead of grabbing the excellent commentaries and classics there for my taking. Once I got home, I stashed the books and never paid attention to the Thieme material again. However, I do remember noticing about that same time that there were some books for sale in the nearby Christian Discount Book Center in Whittier, authored by Thieme's former Dallas Theological Seminary classmates, who strongly opposed his position on the blood of Christ. However, I never bought any of those books or discussed the matter with anyone.

Several years later, having graduated from Bible college and had a year of graduate school under my belt, I was again made aware of the controversy related to the blood of Christ shortly after beginning my first pastorate. Only this time, the dispute was not related to Colonel R. B. Thieme but to a well-known pastor and radio Bible teacher named John MacArthur. He seemed to have taught some things concerning the blood of Christ that challenged accepted conservative Christian thinking. Then his views came out in print, in his commentary on the epistle to the Hebrews (if my memory serves me correctly regarding the sequence of events that occurred so long ago).

Read Hebrews 9.18-22, after which I will present some of the statements he wrote in his commentary on Hebrews:

- ¹⁸ Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.
- ¹⁹ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,
- ²⁰ Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

- 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.
- 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Here are two paragraphs and part of a third paragraph from page 237 of *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Hebrews*:

It is possible to become morbid about Christ's sacrificial death and preoccupied with His suffering and shedding of blood. It is especially possible to become unbiblically preoccupied with the physical aspects of His death. It was not Jesus' physical blood that saves us, but His dying on our behalf, which is symbolized by the shedding of His physical blood. If we could be saved by blood without death, the animals would have been bled, not killed, and it would have been the same with Jesus.

The purpose of the blood was to symbolize sacrifice for sin, which brought cleansing from sin. Therefore, **without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.** (Emphasis in the original.)

Again, however, we need to keep in mind that the blood was a symbol. If Christ's own physical blood, in itself, does not cleanse from sin, how much less did the physical blood of animals?²³

I find it incredible that John Mac Arthur offers no examples of morbidity about Christ's sacrificial death. He also cites no illustrations of anyone being preoccupied with Christ's suffering and shedding of blood. Moreover, where are we warned in the Bible to avoid becoming preoccupied with the physical aspects of Jesus Christ's death? As for blood symbolizing sacrifice for sin and blood is a symbol, on what basis does Mac Arthur make such statements?

I became so alarmed by what I perceived to be his departure from Christian orthodoxy that I called John MacArthur's office and arranged an appointment to meet with him to make sure I clearly understood his position and to verify that he was not misquoted and that the words of his commentary accurately reflected his position. However, when Larry Arnold (a long-time and trusted Church member) and I drove to his office, several of the elders of the Grace Community Church told us that John was flying out of town the next day and could not meet with me and that they were taking his place, met us. This was after Dr. MacArthur scheduled the appointment with me earlier in the day.

Needless to say, I was a bit put off by what sounded like a weak excuse. However, we sat down and discussed the issue of the blood of Christ, the two elders all the while assuring us that John was completely orthodox and was not breaking any new ground or asserting what Christians had not always believed. So, has there been a retraction of MacArthur's written comments on the blood of Christ? Has he taken steps to clarify his position and show that some of his statements had been poorly worded or misstated what he meant to convey? Not that I am aware of.

It has now been almost forty years since I was first made aware that some men do not believe what the Bible teaches concerning the blood of Jesus Christ. It has been nearly thirty years since I

²³ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Hebrews*, (Chicago, IL: The Moody Bible Institute, 1983), page 237.

attempted to allow John MacArthur to clear himself in this matter. Further study of this important topic has not changed my views. I believe I have an orthodox understanding of what the Word of God declares concerning the blood of Jesus Christ.

Overall, I am persuaded that differences between men concerning the blood of Christ relate more to anti-supernaturalism than to differences arising from the meanings of different Bible texts. I cannot prove this accurate; I believe this to be true. There have always been men, infidels, who denied that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day in a glorified physical body. Of course, such men would also have blasphemous views about Christ's blood. There have always been men, believers, who accept as an article of their faith that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in a glorified physical body after three days and three nights in the rich man's tomb. Once they study the issue, their views on the blood of Jesus Christ predictably fall in line with established Christian orthodoxy. Those who have no clear understanding concerning this matter of Christ's blood need to come down on one side or the other because this is vital.

Allow me to state the issue as clearly as possible: Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the living God, suffered, bled, and died for sins. From the time of His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, where "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22.44), until He gave up the ghost as He hung from the cross, at which time "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19.34), His blood was being shed. The question is about His blood. What happened to His blood?

Why is the blood of Christ so important? Keep in mind what Hebrews 9.22 declares: "...without shedding of blood is no remission." There is also the promise of Psalm 16.10, clearly a Messianic psalm: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." The Lord Jesus Christ knew the Father would not suffer His Son's body to corrupt and decay following His death on the cross.

First, the blood of Christ is crucial because it is God's means of remitting sin. Indeed, apart from Christ's shed blood, the sinner has no hope of standing before God on Judgment Day. Read Romans 3.23-28 with me:

- 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
- 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
- 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;
- 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.
- 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.
- 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

You can see from this passage that we have just read that the blood of Christ figures very prominently in God's economy for dealing with sins. But this "faith in his blood," is it faith in blood that no longer exists? Is it faith in something that ceased to exist 2,000 years ago? This matter is an understandable concern.

A second concern has to do with Christ's resurrection. Is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ an essential doctrine? I think we all recognize that the resurrection of Christ in physical

form is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. Let me read portions of ancient Christian creeds so you will see how important the resurrection of Jesus Christ has always been to our Christian faith:

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontias Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell and on the third day, He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father Almighty, From whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.²⁴

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen²⁵

Athanasian Creed

(1) Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith; (2) Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. (3) And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; (4) Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. (5) For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Spirit. (6) But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is

²⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Apostles-Creed>

²⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nicene-Creed>

all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. (7) Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit. (8) The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. (9) The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. (10) The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. (11) And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal. (12) As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. (13) So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty; (14) And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty. (15) So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; (16) And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. (17) So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; (18) And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord. (19) For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord; (20) so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say: There are three Gods or three Lords. (21) The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. (22) The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. (23) The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. (24) So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. (25) And in this Trinity none is afore, nor after another; none is greater, or less than another. (26) But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and co-equal. (27) So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. (28) He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. (29) Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. (30) For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. (31) God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and made of the substance of His mother, born in the world. (32) Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. (33) Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. (34) Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. (35) One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God. (36) One altogether, not by the confusion of substance, but by unity of person. (37) For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ; (38) Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; (39) He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; (40) From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. (41) At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; (42) And shall give account of their own works. (43) And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. (44) This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.²⁶

So, it is clear that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith but that it was so recognized in ancient times by those who, down through history, have been identified as orthodox.

A third concern, connecting the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the blood of Jesus Christ, has to do with whether or not the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day was

²⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Athanasian-Creed>

complete, a full resurrection. Is blood part of a person's physical body? Yes, it is. Indeed, the blood is so much a part of physical life that "the LORD spake unto Moses," in Leviticus 17.11, saying, "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood." So, no one can argue that a person's blood is not a vital organ of the human body or that the blood is not essential to physical life. That leads to the question, If Christ's body was raised from the dead so that it would not see corruption, was Christ's blood not also raised, since His blood is part of His body?

I think the answer is obvious, quite simple, and straightforward to those not predisposed against supernaturalism. Yes, Christ's blood was also raised up when He was raised from the dead and glorified. And if that be true, where is Christ's blood now? Before I address that question, let me first list some of the towering figures and authorities in Christian history who were unequivocal in their conviction that the Bible shows Christ's blood to be in heaven:

John Chrysostom (AD 347-407)

(The early church preacher known as "golden mouth")

John Calvin (1509-1564)

(The Great Reformer)

Matthew Poole (1624-1679)

(The great Puritan Bible commentator)

Stephen Charnock (1628-1680)

(The great Puritan writer and theologian)

Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

(The most widely read commentator of all time)

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

(The great hymn writer and preacher)

John Bengel (1687-1752)

(The great German commentator)

Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-1760)

(The hymn writer and leader of the Moravians)

John Wesley (1703-1791)

(The evangelist and founder of Methodism)

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

(The great hymn writer and preacher of the First Great Awakening)

James A. Haldane (1768-1851)

(The Scottish Baptist evangelist, pastor and Bible commentator)

Patrick Fairbairn (1805-1874)

(The author of *The Typology of Scripture*)

Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

(The beloved author and teacher)

C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

(Pastor of London's Metropolitan Tabernacle and the greatest of modern preachers)

R. A. Torrey (1856-1928)

(The Dean of the Moody Bible Institute and Biola, renowned evangelist)

The Pulpit Commentary (19th century)

The Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary (19th century)

The Expositor's Bible (1909)

The Scofield Study Bible (1917)

Revelation Chapter 19

- (The most widely used study Bible of all time)
Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952)
(The founder and longtime president of Dallas Theological Seminary)
M. R. DeHaan (1891-1965)
(The beloved Bible teacher and author)
J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988)
(The most widely heard Bible teacher of all time)
W. A. Criswell (1909-2002)
(The pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas;
twice president of the Southern Baptist Convention)
Bob Jones, Jr. (1911-1997)
(The courageous president of Bob Jones University)
Oliver B. Greene (1915-1976)
(The great evangelist)
Rt. Hon. Ian R. K. Paisley (1926 -)
(The fearless champion of Protestant Christianity and member of the British parliament).²⁷

Believing that our Lord Jesus Christ's blood was raised along with the rest of His body on resurrection's morn is not a strange belief. Neither is it an unscriptural belief. It is the most natural and normal conclusion a Bible-believing person could arrive at from studying Scripture. Therefore, at this time, we will examine every New Testament verse that sheds light on the blood of Christ, with what I hope are pertinent questions and comments:

Luke 22.44: "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ fell to the ground in the garden of Gethsemane. Do you believe microbes and insects then ate the blood of Christ, as John MacArthur does, as R. B. Thieme does, as Nels Ferre and Harry Emerson Fosdick believed? Psalm 16.10 rings in my ears: "neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

John 19.34: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

The same question arises. Was this blood of Jesus Christ that spilled onto Golgotha's rocks eaten by flies and bacteria?

Acts 20.28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

These are Paul's final words to the Ephesian elders. He is speaking to them about their duties as pastors. But notice the last phrase, "which he hath

²⁷ http://rlhymersjr.com/Online_Sermons/073005_JohnRRiceOnTheBlood.html 10/9/2005

purchased with his own blood.” To whom does the word “he” refer? Against MacArthur, let me read the comments of R. C. Sproul and A. T. Robertson. First, Sproul: “The phrasing is remarkable in the way it acknowledges that the blood of Christ is the blood of God.”²⁸ Robertson wrote, “... Jesus is here called ‘God’ who shed his own blood for the flock.”²⁹ So, the antecedent of the pronoun “he” in this verse, the noun to which the pronoun refers is God.

Why is it essential to ascertain whose blood Paul is speaking of? It is more difficult for those who deny that Christ’s blood is in heaven if they can persuade readers and listeners that Christ’s blood is not God’s. Who would acknowledge that **God’s blood** was corrupted after it fell to the ground? To be sure, we must be careful to distinguish between the persons of the Trinity since failure to distinguish between the Persons of the godhead is an increasing problem in Christendom these days, but the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is the reason why Paul chose to identify Christ’s blood as God’s blood when he spoke to the Ephesian elders.

Romans 3.25: “Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

The antecedent of the pronoun “his” in the phrase “his blood” in this verse is found in Romans 3.24. It is Jesus Christ. Romans 3.25 refers to faith in Christ’s blood. However, consider that faith is one’s *present trust* in the object of one’s faith. Is it reasonable to suppose that if a person trusts in Christ’s blood to remit his past sins, he would be presently trusting in blood that exists and not blood that was eaten by bugs 2000 years ago? To put it another way, keeping in mind that the word “propitiation” has to do with Christ’s sacrifice for sins satisfying God’s righteous demands for the punishment of sins, does it not seem reasonable that a sinner’s faith would be in atoning blood that exists, rather than faith in atoning blood that no longer exists?

Romans 5.9: “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

In Romans 8.29-30, we see God’s grand purpose from eternity past to eternity future:

²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

²⁸ See footnote for Acts 20.28 from R. C. Sproul, *The Reformation Study Bible*, (Orlando, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2005), page 1595.

²⁹ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol III*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1930), page 353.

³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Consideration of this passage reveals that God's foreknowledge and predestination occurred in eternity past, while glorification will occur in our future. But God's effectual call and the sinner's justification occur during our lifetimes. I was called and justified through faith in Christ (I was "justified by his blood" according to Romans 5.9) on or about March 31, 1974. Are we to suppose I was justified by blood that had not existed for 2,000 years? Are we to suppose that I was justified almost 2,000 years before birth? No, to both questions. Forty-nine years ago, I was justified by the blood shed 2,000 years ago but was not corrupted where it splattered onto the ground. Somehow, and in some way that I do not pretend to understand, Christ's blood (along with the rest of His physical body) was glorified and exists to this day in glorified form in heaven. I insist that this must be the case because Paul wrote, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood," in Romans 5.9, decades after Christ's blood fell to the ground. If His blood could still justify sinners when Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, that same blood can still justify sinners today because it is glorified blood, not subject to corruption and decay.

Ephesians 1.7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Redemption means "'deliverance by payment of a ransom.' A thing is redeemed by the payment of a stipulated price."³⁰ The question is, what was the ransom payment? What was the stipulated price? Our text indicates that it is the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2.13: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Consider, if you will, this idea of someone "far off" being made close by the blood of Christ. Psalm 147.20: "He hath not dealt so with any nation: and *as for his* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD." God's dealings with Israel are different than with the Gentile nations. Psalm 148.14 located the Jewish people before this dispensation as being "near unto Him": "He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; *even* of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD." In Isaiah 57.19, God promises peace to both those who are near and to those who are far off: "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to *him that is far off*, and to *him that is near*, saith the LORD; and I will heal him."

³⁰ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God's Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition of Ephesians 1*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1978), page 153.

But Ephesians 2.13 declares that Gentiles, those who used to be far off, are now made nigh by the blood of Christ. That is, the application of the blood of Christ results in the saved Gentile being now near instead of far. The question, of course, is when this was accomplished. When Christ shed His blood on Calvary's cross, were all Gentiles made nigh by the blood of Christ? Or is a Gentile made nigh as an individual when he comes to Christ and receives the benefit of Christ's shed blood?

I do not think that all unsaved Gentiles are now close to God in the way His chosen people are close to God. I believe that proximity to God is the direct result of conversion and cleansing in the blood of Christ. Thus, I am convinced that the blood of Christ is necessary each time an individual Gentile sinner is reconciled to God through faith in Christ, effecting that sinner's redemption through blood that still exists, through blood that did not corrupt and rot 2,000 years ago, through blood that is glorified and presently in heaven.

Colossians 1.14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins"

This verse says much the same thing that Ephesians 1.7 says. The question that can always be asked is when does someone have redemption through Christ's blood? Does the convert have redemption now, through the blood that was shed 2,000 years ago and no longer exists? Or did the convert have redemption 2,000 years ago, long before he was born? Or is there a third way in which this verse can be understood? Can it be that Christ's blood was shed 2,000 years ago, but that His glorified and still existing blood is ever efficacious to save sinners in time when they come to Christ? It seems to me that the third alternative is the preferable one to those who are not anti-supernaturalists.

Colossians 1.20: "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven."

This verse clearly shows that peace with God is impossible apart from the peace that can only be made through the blood of Christ's cross. Only by Christ's blood on the cross is reconciliation to God made. But you were born 2,000 years after the cross. So, there are three possibilities for you: First, reconciliation is impossible for you since Christ's blood was shed and then corrupted long ago. Second, reconciliation was effected when Christ's blood was shed, long before you were born and came to faith in Christ. Of course, this would mean that you were saved before you were ever born. Or, third, though Christ's blood was shed long ago, you were actually and really reconciled to God through the blood of Christ's cross because the blood of Christ's cross remains and is ever efficacious to save.

Hebrews 9.12: “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.”

This is a compelling verse for those who believe Christ took His blood into heaven. Consider what John MacArthur wrote on this verse in his commentary on Hebrews:

How does Christ minister in His heavenly sanctuary? What does He do as our eternal High Priest? He does three things, primarily. First, His service is in **His own blood**, not that of sacrificial animals. The Sacrificer was the Sacrifice. Second, He made His sacrifice only **once**, and that once was sufficient for **all** people of all time. Third, He obtained permanent, **eternal redemption**. He cleansed past, present, and future sins all in one act of redemption. (Emphasis in the original).³¹

I suggest you reread it. That is all MacArthur says about this verse. In the face of the express statement by the writer of Hebrews that the Lord Jesus Christ entered into the holy place by His Own blood, MacArthur quickly scoots past this verse with a short, seven-sentence paragraph that avoids facing what annihilates his erroneous assertion that Christ’s blood ran into the dirt and decayed.

Hebrews 9.14: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

In this verse, we see that the blood of Christ purges the sinner’s conscience from dead works to serve the living God. However, Christ shed His blood 2,000 years before your conversion, before your sins were forgiven, before your sins were cleansed. Are we to suppose the blood of Christ has a saving efficacy after it no longer exists?

Hebrews 9.22: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

This verse, quite obviously, shows that the blood of Christ and the death of Christ are not the same, as John MacArthur, Jr. and R. B. Thieme, Jr. would have their followers believe. The Jews knew the difference between death and blood. Moses knew the difference between death and blood. The writer of Hebrews understood the difference between death and blood. As well you and I know the difference between death and blood. It is the blood that is used to make atonement.

Hebrews 10.19: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

³¹ MacArthur, page 229.

Reflect on the great Matthew Henry's comments about this verse:

The apostle tells us the way and means by which Christians enjoy such privileges, and, in general, declares it to be *by the blood of Jesus*, by the merit of that blood which he offered up to God as an atoning sacrifice: he has purchased for all who believe in him free access to God in the ordinances of his grace here and in the kingdom of his glory. This blood, being sprinkled on the conscience, chases away slavish fear, and gives the believer assurance both of his safety and his welcome into the divine presence. Now the apostle, having given this general account of the way by which we have access to God, enters further into the particulars of it, Heb 10:20. As,

1. It is the only way; there is no way left but this. The first way to the tree of life is, and has been, long shut up.
2. It is a new way, both in opposition to the covenant of works and to the antiquated dispensation of the Old Testament; it is *via novissima--the last way* that will ever be opened to men. Those who will not enter in this way exclude themselves for ever. It is a way that will always be effectual.
3. It is a living way. It would be death to attempt to come to God in the way of the covenant of works; but this way we may come to God, and live. It is by a living Saviour, who, though he was dead, is alive; and it is a way that gives life and lively hope to those who enter into it.
4. It is a way that Christ has consecrated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh. The veil in the tabernacle and temple signified the body of Christ; when he died, the veil of the temple was rent in sunder, and this was at the time of the evening sacrifice, and gave the people a surprising view into the holy of holies, which they never had before. Our way to heaven is by a crucified Saviour; his death is to us the way of life. To those who believe this he will be precious.³²

Hebrews 10.29: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

1. Notice how the writer of Hebrews essentially shows three things to be the same in this verse. To tread underfoot the Son of God and to count the blood of the covenant (Christ's blood) as an unholy thing, and what

³² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

means essentially to insult the Spirit of grace, are three offenses equal in their seriousness.

2. To tread the Son of God underfoot is to treat Him like a conquered foe, show Him the bottom of your shoe's sole, and display your disgust for Him.³³ Moreover, doing despite unto the Spirit of grace is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.
3. These two things considered how serious it is to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. In addition, do you not count the blood of Christ an unholy thing when you insist that it ran to the ground and was corrupted when the Savior was crucified?

Hebrews 13.12: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

This shows that Jesus suffered outside the gate, outside the walls of Jerusalem, to sanctify the people with His Own blood. He suffered without the gate once. Did He also sanctify the people with His Own blood at that time? That is, did Jesus sanctify me with His blood 2,000 years ago? On the other hand, did He shed His blood 2,000 years ago but sanctify me with His blood when I was born again? If the latter be true, then His blood must exist in heaven.

Hebrews 13.20: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

1. "The meaning is, that he was made or constituted the great Shepherd of the sheep--the great Lord and Ruler of his people, by that blood. That which makes him so eminently distinguished; that by which he was made superior to all others who ever ruled over the people of God, was the fact that he offered the blood by which the eternal covenant was ratified."³⁴
2. When God brought Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, back from the dead, did He resurrect part of Him or all of Him?

First Peter 1.2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

³³ To expose the underside of one's shoe or foot is quite offensive in many Eastern cultures and is not fully appreciated as such by most Westerners. See <https://www.ciu.edu/content/soles-our-feet> and <https://rudemeter.com/where-is-it-rude-to-show-the-soles-of-your-feet/>.

³⁴ Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes' NT Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

Peter here refers to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. But where would the blood be that was offered for sins sprinkled under the Mosaic system? Would the blood not be sprinkled on the mercy seat in the holy of holies? What corresponded to the mercy seat in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified as the cross corresponded to the altar? I submit to you that the wrong-headed notion that Christ's blood ran into the dirt and perished raises more questions than it answers.

First Peter 1.19: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The word "precious" means valuable.³⁵ What do you do with something precious, that is valuable? Do you not take care of it? Christ's blood is valuable for at least two reasons: First because it is His blood. He owns it. He possesses it. Anything that Christ owns is precious because of its owner. Second, His blood is valuable because of what it accomplishes: the expiation of sin.

First John 1.7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Note the word "cleanseth." Consider A. T. Robertson's comment on this verse, remembering that the word "cleanseth" is a present active indicative verb, meaning that the action of the verb is ongoing in the current time. That is, Christ's blood is cleansing us from all sin. Robertson writes:

If we walk (ean peripatômen). Condition of third class also with *ean* and present active subjunctive (keep on walking in the light with God). As he (*hôs autos*). As God is light (verse 1Jo 1:5) and dwells in light unapproachable (1Ti 6:16). *One with another (met' allêlôn).* As he has already said in verse 1Jo 1:3. But we cannot have fellowship with one another unless we have it with God in Christ, and to do that we must walk in the light with God. **And the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin** (*kai to haima Iêsou tou huiou autou katharizei hêmâs apo pâsês hamartias*). This clause with *kai* in true Johannine style is coordinate with the preceding one. Walking in the light with God makes possible fellowship with one another and is made possible also by the blood of Jesus (real blood and no mere phantom, atoning blood of the sinless Son of God for our sins). John is not ashamed to use this word. It is not the mere "example" of Jesus that "cleanses" us from sin. It does cleanse the conscience and life and nothing else does (Heb 9:13; Tit 2:14). See in verse 1Jo 1:9 both forgiveness and cleansing. Cf. 1Jo 3:3.³⁶

³⁵ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol VI*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1930), page 90.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 207-208.

First John 5.8: “And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

1. This verse does not bear directly on the issue before us, which concerns the resurrection and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. This verse is a statement by John that three witnesses on earth of the saving work of Jesus Christ are the Spirit, the water, and the blood. This is likely a reference to the Spirit descending upon the Lord Jesus Christ at the time of His baptism at the hand of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus itself, and the shedding of His blood on the cross and everything related to that event as it was predicted in the Scriptures.
3. Those three, the Spirit coming upon Him, the baptism of Him, and the shedding of His blood, are the three reliable witnesses of Who He is and what He did. However, this verse does not bear on the matter before us.

Revelation 1.5: “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

1. If you consider Revelation 1.4, you will see that the “us” who were loved and washed by the Lord Jesus Christ includes the Apostle John and the seven Churches in Asia.
2. But John wrote this Revelation some fifty or sixty years following the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, meaning that the apostle’s target audience, for the most part, were not washed from their sins in the blood of Christ for a half-century following the shedding of His precious blood.
3. How, then, could their sins be cleansed by the blood of Christ before they were converted? Moreover, how could their sins be cleansed by blood that was shed, dried, and then corrupted by oxidation and eaten by microbes and insects decades earlier?
4. No, my friends. People such as John MacArthur, R. B. Thieme, and Mary Baker Eddy cannot be right about this. The sheer weight of evidence that is being accumulated is much too great. Only blood that has been shed and preserved by being glorified could possibly continue to exist and efficaciously cleanse away sins after decades, centuries, and even millennia had passed.

Revelation 5.9: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed

us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

1. Who sings this new song? Who do we see singing a song of worship, adoration, and praise to the Son of God for redeeming them by His blood?
2. If you remember from our study of Revelation chapters 4 and 5, the singers in Revelation 5.9 are the four and twenty elders representing the believers of our era, the so-called Church Age, or the Age of Grace.
3. The singers’ identity is so important because they represent blood-bought and blood-washed saints who have been redeemed from their sins for 2,000 years.
4. But redeemed how? Redeemed by the blood of Christ “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” But how can blood redeem someone from sins without blood? The straightforward truth of the matter is that he cannot. To be redeemed by blood, you have to be redeemed by blood, making it impossible for the blood of Christ to be corrupted and non-existent if redemption occurs.

Revelation 7.14: “And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

1. As you well know, the Tribulation is a seven-year period that follows our present era. It will begin after the Rapture of Church Age believers and conclude at the visible Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory.
2. Thus, of all the saints of God that we have considered, these Tribulation saints are those whose conversion and cleansing have been farthest removed in time from the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Therefore, not only was the blood of Christ not corrupted and consumed by critters in the minutes, hours, and days following His crucifixion, and not only is the glorified blood of Christ still precious and preserved, but it will continue to be precious and preserved in its uncorrupted and glorified state even to the time of the future Tribulation.

Revelation 12.11: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

1. This refers to Tribulation martyrs who are persecuted unto death but remain faithful to the Savior and the faith even in death.

2. What will sustain them during awful persecution and torturing? I believe it is the knowledge that there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilt and stains.

Conclusion:

1. We have considered the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from three perspectives. We have looked at the great Christian confessions and creeds of the past, written by men who, though not perfect, were orthodox Christians. Next, we examined the great saints of God over the centuries to discover their convictions concerning the blood of Christ, recognizing that while they were not perfect, we cannot claim to be the only people throughout history whom the Holy Spirit illuminates. Finally, we have examined every pertinent verse in the New Testament.
2. The conclusion that we draw is that the evidence is incontrovertible. The blood of Christ is precious. The blood of Christ is an organ of the Savior's body. Therefore, the blood of Christ ought to have been, and is, glorified and preserved from that crucifixion day to our day and will be preserved into the future.
3. So, whose blood is on His vesture dipped in blood? It cannot be the blood of His enemies in heaven since His enemies' blood will not be permitted in heaven. Neither can it be the blood of His enemies here on earth since He will wear this bloody vesture *before* His Second Advent to earth. The only possible conclusion one can safely and reasonably draw from thoroughly considering Scripture is that the blood on our Lord Jesus Christ's garments is His blood.

END OF EXCURSUS ON CHRIST'S BLOODY VESTURE

(19.13) (continued)

7. "and his name is called The Word of God." The title "The Word of God" proves to us again that the Lord Jesus Christ is the subject of John's Revelation.

(19.14) And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

1. Notice that there are plural armies following our returning King. That the word "armies" is plural is very important.
2. Some Bible teachers believe that only the bride of Christ composes this group since they think that only Christians can have white robes representative of good works in service to Christ. However, this verse clearly shows that there is more than one army in our Lord's entourage.

3. Further, it is not unreasonable to consider the possibility of Old Testament believers being able to do good works after they were saved, is it? Nor is it unreasonable to deny the possibility of holy angels being rewarded for their faithful service, though they are not saved since they were never lost.
4. So, it is possible that both saved men and holy angels of God comprise the armies that accompany Christ at His return, though I think Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints are not included in this number. They will be resurrected later.
5. To the delight of many,, they all ride horses. And the horses are white. What does that signify? Conquest! Victory! Hallelujah! Our side wins.
6. Three passages indicate who comprises these armies:

First Thessalonians 3.13: “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

Here, Paul clearly shows that Church Age saints will accompany our Lord Jesus Christ at the time of His Second Coming.

Second Thessalonians 1.7-8: ⁷ And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
⁸ In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This passage clearly shows that angels will accompany our Lord Jesus Christ at the time of His Second Coming.

Jude 14-15: ¹⁴ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,
¹⁵ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Finally, Enoch predicted the Second Coming of Christ with His saints thousands of years before His First Coming, even before the Flood.

Therefore, it is clear that among those armies in our glorious king’s entourage will be an army of Church Age saints and an army of holy angels. Both armies will be wearing white because they are comprised of beings that have done righteous deeds

in service to the king, though only the saints are redeemed from their sins (holy angels being sinless).

7. One final thought before we move on.
 - a. Notice that the horses are white and that the saints and the angelic host are “clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” Imagine the triumphant scene.
 - b. Everything the eye can see will be white and clean, except for one object in the sky, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. What will His appearance be? He alone will be “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.” In other words, everyone will be white, but He will wear a crimson garment.
 - c. This will be a grand “demonstration that now at long last the filthy, blasphemous situation in earth is going to be wiped clean with a divine judgment of tremendous character.”³⁷ Think about the visual impression that will be made at that time. The crimson Savior, followed by saints and angels clothed in fine linen, white and clean, clean because of the precious blood seen on His vesture.

(19.15) And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Consider the details before we take a step back to gather it all in:

1. “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword” This sword is not the same kind of sword that is seen in Hebrews 4.12: “For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The word translated “sword” in Hebrews 4.12, μάχαιραν, refers to an instrument that is small and which could be used for precise and delicate cutting. However, the sword referred to in Revelation 19.15, ῥομφαία, refers to something like a Thracian broadsword used by soldiers for killing and maiming.³⁸ What we see here is not the Lamb of God, but the Righteous Judge, cutting down His enemies with the spoken Word.
2. “that with it he should smite the nations” His smiting will be of the nations that oppose Him at His second coming. The blows He administers will be deathblows.
 - a. King Jesus is the Word of God. He spoke the universe into existence. He spoke, and worlds came to be. He spoke, and stars appeared in the night sky. He spoke, and the trees, the grass, and the flowers appeared. He spoke, and all the creatures came to be except for man, who was made with His hands.

³⁷ Walvoord, page 277.

³⁸ See comment on Ephesians 6.17 in Rienecker, page 542, and Walvoord, page 277.

- b. When He walked the earth, He spoke, and the storms were still. He spoke, and the winds stopped. He spoke, and the waves sat down from churning and lapped at His feet. When He spoke, trembling hearts were calmed, and the dead were brought back to life. When He spoke, sins were forgiven, and sinners were told to sin no more.
 - c. For thousands of years, He has spoken blessings, one after the other. He has spoken so many words of blessing that many are tempted to think He will speak only words of blessing. However, this verse shows that there will come a day when He will no longer speak blessings but judgment.
 - d. What will He say? I do not know. However, the One Who has such power in His words that He can create and bless has such power in His words that He can slay and destroy. He will do just that when He comes again.
3. “and he shall rule them with a rod of iron”
- a. His ruling with a rod of iron is a look into the future during His millennial reign. It is something He “shall” do. As He smites the nations and executes all who are lost, He sets the stage for His 1,000-year reign in which He will rule the earth with a rod of iron.
 - b. But what are the implications of Him ruling with a rod of iron? His will be a Theocratic Kingdom, God’s direct rule of men. There will be no Parliament or Congress in His kingdom, only a king. No elected officials, only subjects with assigned responsibilities. Neither will He seek men’s opinions when He decrees and pronounces.
 - c. Do not think it will be all wonderful and glorious because that would be a misunderstanding of the reality of the millennial kingdom. There will be unsaved people in Christ’s kingdom, the children born to the saints who first populate the kingdom, and they will grow up hating Christ’s direct rule over them. They will chafe at the lack of freedom to commit sins. They will seethe at the lack of opportunity to speak sinful words. But most of all, they will hate that He rules righteously with a rod of iron, immediately and effectively chastising all wrongdoing. But this statement anticipates what is yet future.
4. “and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” The first three phrases of this verse were specific and precise comments on Christ’s activities or His anticipated activities. In contrast, this final phrase expresses the big picture, summing all Christ’s activities at His Second Coming.
- a. In Isaiah 63.1-6, we find the prophecy that will fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, which John refers to in our text:

- 1 Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.
 - 2 Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?
 - 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.
 - 4 For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.
 - 5 And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.
 - 6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.
- b. This prophecy is fulfilled when our Lord comes again, but the passage is frequently misinterpreted because of inattention to details and chronology.
 - c. Notice that Isaiah 63.1 states that our Lord's garments are dyed. Isaiah 63.2 states that He is wearing red apparel and that His appearance is like someone who stomps grapes in a winepress. Therefore, according to verses 1 and 2, we see that the Lord Jesus Christ's attire, which is to say His vesture, is bloody red.
 - d. Verse 3 is where mistakes are most frequently made. Isaiah records our Lord's prediction that "their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments." Therefore, there is no doubt that the blood of Christ's enemies will be sprinkled on His garments. The question is, when will this happen? What is most frequently missed is that when Christ's garments are sprinkled with the blood of His enemies, those garments *will already* be blood-drenched with His blood! We see that in Revelation 19.13 and supported here.
 - e. With that critical point clarified, stand back with me to take in the sweep of the events surrounding Christ's coming in fulfillment of Isaiah 63.1-6.
 - i. Though the Lord Jesus Christ is not angry with sinners in His present session at the Father's right hand on high, Isaiah 63.3 shows us that when He comes again, He will be angry. His patience by then will have ended. The time of invitation will by then have passed. By then, there will be only judgment and fury toward those of you who stubbornly refuse to obey the gospel.
 - ii. Isaiah 63.4 shows that at His Second Coming, all He seeks is vengeance and that it will finally be the time when the redeemed (that is, when the saved)

will see those wicked sinners who opposed and persecuted them get their just due.

iii. Verse 6 reveals that the end of the wicked will be destruction, as He will “bring down their strength to the earth.”

5. It will be a terrible day of vengeance and wrath when King Jesus comes again. Just imagine how He will feel toward those who have despised Him, who have rejected Him, who have spurned His offers of kindness and forgiveness, who have trodden underfoot His blood with their resistance, and who have spit upon Him with their refusals.
6. It will be a grand and glorious day for those few saints who will still be alive when He comes again and for those of us who will accompany Him at His return. But it will be a day of howling and shrieking for those who thought other things were more important than coming to Christ, who prefer their sins to His precious blood. In addition, when you consider the eternal destiny of the damned, what they will face when King Jesus comes will be only the beginning of their sorrows.

(19.16) And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

1. Please remember that a vesture is an outer garment. From verse 13, we know that this vesture worn by the Lord Jesus Christ, this outer garment, is dipped in blood. We have also established beyond doubt that the blood this vesture is dipped in is His blood.
2. So, beyond that, He is wearing a bloody vesture with His blood; we are given further information about this vesture. We are also given information about His thigh. At His glorious second coming, our Lord will have a name written on His vesture, His outer garment, and upon His thigh: “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”
3. “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” That this phrase shows my Lord Jesus Christ to be God cannot be denied, except by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Whosoever is a king, Christ is his king. Whosoever is a lord, Christ is his Lord. He is the supremely pre-eminent One.
4. In Psalm 2, we are told some things in anticipation of this Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ:

¹ Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,

³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

⁴ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Revelation Chapter 19

- 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
- 7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
- 8 Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.
- 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
- 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

5. Look at verses 1-4 again. Why does the LORD hold the heathen in derision? Why does He laugh at all of their ragings against Him, at their vain thoughts of somehow escaping final judgment by convincing themselves that He does not exist, and by thinking that if they all agree to oppose Him, they have some chance of success? He laughs and holds them in derision because the notion that you can successfully fight God is ridiculous.
6. Psalm 2.9 declares that God will break them with a rod of iron. However, Revelation 19.15 reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ will rule with a rod of iron—another place in the Bible where Jesus Christ is shown to be God.
7. But quickly notice what else the second Psalm began telling us 3,000 years ago, fully 1,000 years before the Lord Jesus Christ's first advent. In Psalm 2.10-12, kings and judges (and by implication, everyone else), are warned to serve the LORD and kiss the Son while there is time for the blessing of those who put their trust in Him.
8. For over 3,000 years, God has warned everyone in His Word that rebellion is futile, resistance is ridiculous, and judgment is coming. It will be too late by the time those on earth see the King in His glory, with His name written on His vesture and on His thigh. By the time you realize judgment is falling, it is already too late.

(19.17) And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

1. Is the angel standing in the orb of our sun, or does this mean that an angel appears between us in the sun so that the sun is a backdrop to the angel's even brighter glory? Either could be the case, but I rather think the latter will be true.
2. In any case, the angel yells extremely loudly for all the vultures and carrion eaters to come because there will be a great deal of dead flesh for the scavengers to feed on.
3. What is happening? Verse 18 tells us exactly why the angel gathers them.

(19.18) That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great.

1. Notice, in this verse, John records the angel to use the word “flesh” five times. These birds are invited to eat the flesh of both men and beasts, whether bond or free, small or great. It sounds to me like the amount of property you possess or the influence you enjoy will not make much difference when these birds come to pick the meat off your bones.
2. This will all occur at a place called Armageddon, some distance to the north of the city of Jerusalem. This will be where the King of Kings will destroy the antichrist’s forces in a great slaughter of those aligned against God’s Anointed.
3. Then, as the hot Middle Eastern sun beats down on all the bodies of those the Lord Jesus Christ slew with the word of His mouth, their bodies will begin to rot, and the birds will begin to pick at their eyes, and then at the rest of their flesh as it corrupts and becomes soft. For the birds, it will be a great feast. But I ran ahead of our text.

(19.19) And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

1. The beast is, of course, the antichrist. He is described in chapter 13 by John. Mind you, not a tame beast of burden, but a ravenous and wild beast is what this “beast” is.
2. The beast has come to make war against his human enemies who are marching upon Palestine, and they begin to converge at Armageddon just before the second coming of Christ, at the very end of the Tribulation.
3. At this same time, the Jewish people who have been regathered to Palestine during the Tribulation are surrounded by their enemies. They are caught in a vice of opposing armies, which causes them to cry out to God in repentance. In response to that, according to Hosea 5.15, the Lord Jesus Christ returns: “I will go *and* return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”
4. The fantastic thing, which John refers to in this verse when he tells us that the antichrist’s armies are now “gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse,” is that these armies who were fighting each other will band together and unite in their opposition to the returning Christ. They become allies so that they might fight against the Lord and against those of us who are in His army.
5. Should this surprise us? Not in the least. Remember, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians were bitter enemies who united in their opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ. This will just be more of the same.

(19.20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

1. Notice the several things about the beast and the false prophet. First, notice what great things they will do before the returning Christ stops them. The false prophet will work miracles, deceive multitudes, and turn men to worship the image of the beast, the antichrist.
2. Also, notice their end. We are told here that they are cast alive into the lake of fire. Second Thessalonians 2.8 describes the antichrist as “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” So, which will it be? Will the antichrist and the false prophet be cast alive into the lake of fire, or will the returning King of kings slay the antichrist (presumably the false prophet)? I think both will occur.
3. I think the Lord Jesus Christ will immediately slay the antichrist and the false prophet at the time of His second coming. However, I also believe they will be instantly resurrected and fitted with a body suited for an eternity of punishment, as the saints will be resurrected and fitted with a glorified body suited for an eternity of service, worship, and bliss. Once raised from the dead and given resurrection bodies, they will be cast alive into the lake of fire.
4. Before this occurrence, all lost men will go to Hell or Hades, the present abode of the damned. But Hell is not the permanent resting place of the wicked. The permanent home of the damned is the lake of fire. So, these two will be the first to inhabit that horrible place.
5. For their part in the rebellion against Him, the Lord Jesus Christ will cast them into the lake of fire without the benefit of standing before Him in the judgment of the Great White Throne. Look at Revelation 20.10: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” Therefore, these men will precede the devil in the lake of fire.
6. You are well aware that some people believe in a purgatory, that is supposed to cleanse away sins in the life of the person who does not die and go straight to heaven. After some indeterminate period, experiencing the cleansing fires of purgatory, the person in purgatory is supposed to be finally clean enough to go to heaven.
7. Still, others believe that the lake of fire is only a place of temporary punishment. And once you have served your sentence in the lake of fire, God will supposedly forgive you and let you go to heaven. Neither notion is true.
8. By the time Revelation 20.10 occurs, the antichrist and the false prophet will have been in the lake of fire for 1,000 years, without any evidence of repentance for their

sins, and without any indication that the phrase “for ever and ever” has shortened for them by even a minute.

9. Though we can neither understand nor imagine the concept of eternal damnation, we must accept it as fact since that is precisely what the Bible teaches.
- (19.21) And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

1. This might be a glimpse of Christ’s judgment of the nations, which He predicts in Matthew 25.31-46:

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:
³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?
³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?
³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.
⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:
⁴² For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:
⁴³ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.
⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?
⁴⁵ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.
⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

2. Are you sure that only saved people will enter the millennium? If you are, how do you explain this passage in Matthew 25? According to verses 32-33, Christ will separate the righteous nations of earth from the unrighteous ones and invite the righteous into His kingdom.
3. What distinguishes a righteous nation from an unrighteous one? From the following verses, it appears that the righteous nations treated His people right, even though they faced the wrath of the antichrist for doing so.
4. Without delving into it in any depth, it appears at first glance that it might be possible that unsaved citizens of a righteous nation, a nation that fed, clothed, and gave drink to Christ's own, might very well reap the benefit of entering the millennial reign of Christ.
5. However, I do not think that is a tenable position for one very important reason. When the Lord Jesus Christ told Nicodemus that he had to be born again to see the kingdom of God and that he must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God, He was declaring that regeneration is required to become a fit citizen to enter the Messianic Kingdom. For this reason, I do not think a single unsaved person will enter the millennial kingdom at the outset. However, all newborn babies born during that era will be spiritually dead people who need Christ's forgiveness and cleansing.
6. How are righteous nations allowed to enter the kingdom? How is the judgment of the nations to be explained? I think the explanation is that a great revival will occur, a revival of such a sweeping nature that great majorities of entire nations will be saved through faith in Christ. It will be the citizens of those nations who will protect Jews from persecution. It will be those nations who will be granted entrance into the kingdom.
7. Let me conclude my remarks about this verse by pointing your attention to the sword that proceeds from the Lord's mouth. That sword is, of course, the Word of God. It is likened to a sword in several places in the New Testament, and it is the weapon that our Lord will use to slay His enemies, whose bodies will then be eaten by the fowls of the air.
8. Think about the Word of God. It was initially the instrument by which the universe was created, and all that herein is. It was then used to reveal and illuminate. It was then used to beget us. However, there will come a day when His Word will be used to punish, kill, smite, and slay. It is far better to be pricked to the truth of God's Word, leading to salvation, than to be slain by the Word of God, leading to the lake of fire.

CONCLUSION:

1. This chapter brings the Lord Jesus Christ down to earth again.

Revelation Chapter 19

2. It might be pointed out that John pays little attention in this chapter to the brutal events surrounding the Lord's return.
3. Instead, he seems to delight in writing down the general events while relishing that Jesus is coming again and His enemies will get theirs.
4. We do well to copy John in this. Make it a point to think of Christ's coming, and allow the fact of it to excite you. Jesus is coming again.