

Dr. Dave Mathewson, Revelation, Session 25, Revelation 19:11-21--Description of the Warrior

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Okay, so today we're going to be taking a deep dive into Revelation chapter 19, verses 11 through 21. We're going to be looking at a lecture by Dr. Dave Mathewson, and he really kind of unpacks some of the imagery and the symbolism here, and it's a really fascinating passage. It can be a little bit confusing when you first read it, you know, you think about Jesus coming back and you maybe picture like a gentle shepherd, but here he's described as a warrior on a white horse, and he's decked out for battle, and he's ready to deliver judgment.

Yeah, it is interesting how the imagery shifts there. It's like we move from all this symbolic language and these warnings to like the actual events of the end times, you know, the second coming of Christ. Yeah, and it all starts with heaven opening up.

If you remember back in chapter four, John has this vision of the throne room, and he sees heaven open then, but this time it's like something's coming down from heaven instead of John being called up. Yeah, this is like the culmination of everything John's been talking about so far. It's the moment where things shift, and the eternal consequences of our choices in this life become really apparent.

So let's talk about this warrior who comes down from heaven. He's described as faithful and true, and he's bringing justice and waging war, but then John throws in these really strange details. Well, he's got blazing eyes, for one thing, and many crowns.

I mean, that's pretty striking imagery right there. Yeah, and his robe is covered in blood before the battle even begins. Like, what's up with that? It doesn't exactly scream like Prince of Peace.

Well, I think we need to remember that John is using a lot of symbolism here, and we need to think about the Old Testament context as well. This image of the blood-soaked robe seems to be drawing from Isaiah 63, where God's garments are stained with the blood of his enemies after he treads the winepress of his wrath. So maybe we're not supposed to take this literally, then.

This isn't blood from a physical battle. It's a symbol of God's judgment against evil. Right.

You have to remember that Revelation is full of this kind of symbolic language. It's meant to evoke these powerful emotions and spiritual truths, not necessarily describe literal events. Okay, so that makes sense.

But then we get to this part where it talks about a sword coming out of the warrior's mouth. What is that all about? It's not like any weapon I've ever seen. Well, again, we can look to the Old Testament for some clues.

Both Isaiah and Psalms describe God as a warrior who defeats the wicked with the words he speaks. So the sword represents the power of God's judgment, the truth that exposes and overcomes darkness. So it's not about physical combat.

It's about the power of God's word to triumph over evil. Exactly. Think of it like this.

God's truth is like a double-edged sword that cuts through all the lies and deception and reveals the reality of things. And what's interesting is that the warrior's army doesn't actually do anything. They just follow him.

It's like John is really emphasizing that it's all about the power of God's word, not about human might or military strength or anything like that. And notice too who the first targets of this judgment are. It's the beast and the false prophet.

We've seen these characters before earlier in Revelation. The beast we know was associated with the Roman Empire, which was persecuting Christians at the time John was writing this. Right.

But I think they also represent something bigger: this kind of recurring pattern of evil and oppression throughout history. Every generation faces its own beasts, systems, and powers that oppose God and try to control people's lives. So this passage isn't just about some ancient Roman emperor.

It's about any power that sets itself up against God. Exactly. Which brings up another interesting question.

Where's the dragon, Satan himself, in all this? He's been a major player throughout Revelation, but he's conspicuously absent from this judgment scene. You're right. It's like John is deliberately removing evil in stages.

First, we saw the fall of Babylon, that symbol of corrupt human power, and now we see the beast and the false prophet being judged. It's like he's setting the stage for this final showdown with Satan himself. Yeah, I think you're onto something there.

It's like a strategic dismantling of evil. First, the human systems and then the spiritual forces behind them. John seems to be showing us that God has a plan, and he's systematically taking down everything that opposes him.

That's an encouraging thought, especially in a world that often feels so chaotic and out of control. Yeah, it really makes you think like, if God's so intentional about taking down these beasts, what does that mean for us? The battles that we face in our own lives. Yeah, that's a great question.

And I think this passage really gives us some insights into that. Like Matthew was saying, this whole battle isn't meant to be taken literally. It's a symbolic representation of God's victory over evil.

Right. So we shouldn't be expecting to see literal armies clashing or a physical sword coming out of somebody's mouth. Something deeper, something spiritual.

Yeah, exactly. And that's where it gets really relevant for us, I think. If this is about God's power to overcome evil, then the question is, how do we tap into that power in our own lives? What kind of weapons do we have? Yeah.

What are our weapons? I mean, we're not riding white horses and stuff. Right. Well, if you think about the imagery here, the warrior's main weapon is that sword coming out of his mouth, which is the word of God.

And his army doesn't even fight. They just follow him. So maybe our weapons aren't physical.

Maybe it's more about aligning ourselves with God's truth, you know, standing firm in our faith and letting his word guide our actions. Exactly. You know, our battles might look different than the ones John's describing here, but the principle is the same.

We're called to be warriors for truth and justice. Even when it's hard, even when it feels like we're fighting an uphill battle. Okay.

So that makes sense. But if the victory is ultimately God's, then like, what role do we play? Do we just sit back and watch him do everything? I don't think so. You know, those descriptions of the warrior, faithful, and true.

Those qualities aren't just about God. They're about us too. We're called to be faithful to God, to live with integrity and reflect his truth in the world.

That's how we participate in his victory. So it's not just about passively waiting for God to fix everything. It's about actively living out our faith and standing up for what's right.

Exactly. And I think that's a really powerful message for us today. You know, we might not be facing down Roman emperors or battling literal beasts, but we all have our own struggles with evil.

Yeah, definitely. Whether it's facing temptation or standing up to injustice, or even just trying to live a good life in a world that often feels so dark. Right.

And those battles can be tough, but this passage reminds us that we're not alone. We have the power of God's word on our side, and ultimately the victory is his. Okay.

So, you know, Matthew's pointed out something that I thought was really interesting. He was talking about how John seemed to be dismantling evil in stages. First Babylon, then the beast and the false prophet, and finally Satan himself.

Yeah. It's a really fascinating pattern. Like God's systematically removing every obstacle to his kingdom.

And it got me thinking: is it possible that all these battles we see in Revelation are really just different perspectives on the same conflict? Hmm. That's an interesting idea. And Matthew's son actually talks about this too.

You know, there are a lot of similarities between the battle of Armageddon in chapter 16, and the war against the Lamb in chapter 17, and this one here in chapter 19. Yeah. They all involve Satan or the beast gathering the nations for war, and they all end with God's victory.

It's like the same story told from different angles. Yeah. And that makes sense.

If you think about how Revelation is structured, it's not like a chronological account of events. It's more like a series of visions and images that are meant to reveal these spiritual truths. So maybe John's giving us these multiple glimpses of the same ultimate battle, the battle between good and evil, between God and those who oppose him.

Exactly. And by seeing it from all these different perspectives, we get a fuller understanding of what's at stake and how God's power works. Yeah.

And it really highlights that no matter how many times the forces of evil try to rise up, they're always defeated in the end. Right. And that's a really powerful message of hope, especially when we're facing our own struggles.

Yeah, definitely. But there's another detail that Matthewson brings up. I thought this was really fascinating.

He points out that the same Old Testament passage, Ezekiel 38 and 39, it seems to inform both the battle in chapter 19 and the one we see in chapter 12. Oh, wow. Yeah.

And I don't think that's a coincidence. Yeah. You know, John's deliberately drawing on Ezekiel's prophecy here to connect these battles and reinforce their significance.

So it's not just thematic similarities. There's like a direct scriptural link. Right.

And remember, John was writing to a community that knew the Old Testament really well, so they would have recognized those connections immediately. So it's not just some random crazy story. He's grounding this vision in the scriptures and showing how God's plan for victory has been unfolding throughout history.

Right. And by connecting these battles to Ezekiel's prophecy, he's highlighting that this isn't just about a specific historical event. It's about this age-old conflict between God and those who oppose him.

And as we've seen, that conflict has a clear winner. Yeah, it's really striking to me that even with all this talk about battles and judgment, John emphasizes that God's victory doesn't come through brute force. It's through the power of his word, his truth.

Yeah, it's a really powerful message. It challenges our assumptions about what it means to be victorious. You know, it's just that true power isn't about military might or political dominance, but about the unwavering truth of God's word.

And that truth has the power to dismantle entire empires, to topple the mightiest of foes. It really does. And that's the truth that we as followers of Christ were called to embody and proclaim even in the face of opposition.

Yeah, it's like we're watching this play unfold, and all these forces of evil are being taken down one by one. It really is. Makes you wonder what happens next, you know, when the curtain falls on all the darkness.

Yeah, what does happen next? Well, thankfully, John doesn't leave us hanging. He goes on to describe the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth, a world without evil and pain and suffering. It's an amazing picture of hope, especially after all the intense imagery we've been talking about.

Yeah, for sure. But before we get too caught up in the happy ending, I wanted to go back to something we talked about earlier. The fact that the warrior's army doesn't actually do anything.

Oh, yeah. They just follow him. Right.

It's a really interesting detail. It makes sense if we're interpreting this battle symbolically, like it's not about human effort or military strength. It's about surrendering to God's power and letting him lead the way.

But what does that mean for us? I mean, we're not riding white horses. Right. So how do we apply this to our everyday lives? Well, John describes this warrior as faithful and true.

Right. I think those qualities aren't just meant for Jesus. They're also a call for us.

You know, we're called to be faithful in our own lives. Yeah. To live with integrity and reflect God's truth in the world.

So it's not about sitting back and waiting for God to do everything. It's about actively living out our faith and being a force for good. Exactly.

Think of it this way. We're all part of God's army, in a sense, and our weapons aren't swords and shields. They're things like kindness and compassion and forgiveness, the qualities that reflect God's character and bring light into the darkness.

Yeah, I like that. Maybe that's what this whole battle is really about. It's not about winning through violence or domination, but about transforming the world through love and truth.

I think you're right. And remember, even in the midst of all this judgment, God's mercy is always present. You know the warrior in Revelation.

He's both a conqueror and a judge, but his ultimate goal is redemption. That's a powerful reminder for us, especially when we're facing our own battles. No matter how tough things get, we can always turn to God's love and find hope in his promises.

Definitely. And knowing that evil is ultimately defeated gives us the courage to keep fighting for what's right, to keep spreading God's love and light in the world. So as we wrap up this deep dive, I want to leave you with a final thought.

If this battle in Revelation isn't meant to be taken literally, what does that mean for how you understand your own struggles against evil? What weapons do you wield? And how can you,

as a follower of Christ, participate in the victory that's already been won? That's something to think about. Thanks for joining us on this deep dive.