

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, September 8, 2019

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2-3)

If you, for purposes of eschatology, have a single verse of Scripture ringing in your ears as you make your daily path in this life, this should be the verse. These words of Christ, spoken on the eve of His death, are invaluable to an understanding of eschatology. During Christ’s first advent, He came to deliver our souls from death by taking the form of a man, living without sin, suffering and dying for our transgression, and then rising again to take His seat in heaven at His Father’s right hand. He saved our souls – in accordance with the terms and conditions of the covenant of grace. He bought to Himself the right of possession, which is why it is called ***“the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:14)***. Then ... He ... left. The work was not done.

Our bodies are still enslaved to this flesh and are perpetually assaulted by the enemy of God and Christ, even he who works through his demons every hour of every day to terrify and accuse the brethren to make them lose that most precious faith through sheer fatigue and terror. Our bodies are not yet saved. The salvation – both of our bodies and of the creation generally – has not been completed! That is what was lost in the falling of Adam, and unless that is what gets restored, it cannot be said that there has been a Redeemer. Christ is our Redeemer. Christ must save – sanctify – redeem – our bodies. That is what the second advent is for.

So as we begin a multi-part sermon to examine the subject of the first series of events under the Day of the Lord – the seven seals from the Book of Redemption – we must see a completing of what was started during our blessed Savior’s first advent. He told His disciples that he was going to prepare a place in His Father’s house. As this book of Revelation opens, He’s done that. Now it is time for Him to come get His saints and take them to ***“the reward of the inheritance” (Colossians 3:24)*** in the heavenly Jerusalem. If it were not so, He would have told us otherwise.

I prepared a two-part sermon on the scene of Revelation chapters four and fiveⁱ, so I’m not going to go through all of that again. These chapters lay the foundation – though very much more could be said and should be said about them – for the opening of the seven seals. Further, to have a proper understanding of this scene in Revelation chapters six and seven, you must understand that both the seven trumpets (chapters eight through 11:14) and the seven vials (chapters 15-16) flow directly out of the seven seals. When the seventh seal opens, it is to put into motion the seven trumpets (Revelation 8:1-2). When the seventh trumpet sounds, it puts into motion the seven vials (Revelation 11:18).

“¶ And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see [i.e., ‘Go!’].” (Revelation 6:1)

The Lamb ... Jesus the Christ ... the Lion of the tribe of Judah ... a Jew after the flesh ... the Root of David ... God Almighty, in the office of the Redeemer of those granted the gift of life before the world began ... has finally ***“prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”*** (Revelation 5:5). We don’t know – we cannot know – how much time will have passed when this moment arrives. We know that since the fall of Adam, this desperately rotten race of ours – and the dreadfully wasted earth we’ve been given to occupy – has been in need of this redemption (Romans 8:19-23). If you do not believe you need a Savior ... if you believe that humankind can evolve into happy globules of self-reliance and think themselves out of the hot mess we’ve become ... if you’re a “secular humanist” ... then this is the point on this sermon that you should turn off the recording. Because what we’re about to discuss is the Creator of all things, including time, coming to take His own precious jewels BACK ... to repair this sin-ruined planet ... and then to dispose of the majority of this rotten race.

Those who are present – in heaven and in earth – animate and inanimate – when the Day of the Lord begins to have actual initiation among the inhabitants, know and declare who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and Ruler of this creation. And it is NOT mankind!

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. ... Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Revelation 5:12-13)

In many previous sermons, I have engaged in some summary discussion of the seven seals on this Book of Redemption that Christ the Lamb takes ***“out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne”*** (Revelation 5:7). But I have never prepared a sermon exclusively about them, so that my friends here can do some focused reading just on what these are as a body of work by our Christ. I’ve done sermons on the seven trumpetsⁱⁱ and on the seven vialsⁱⁱⁱ – but not this initiating series of glorious movements and displays. I think it might be helpful, so I will share what the Lord has revealed in His great work of prophecy for our edification.

Considering the structure of the book of Revelation, we find that chapter six opens the first of the action. Chapter one introduces the subject matter of the book, then flows into the preparation of the Gentile church for the work to come; in chapters two and three. Chapters four and five, then, allow the reader to see what personages are engaged to accomplish the work – in heaven and in earth; God, the Lamb, the angels, the four and twenty elders, and the “church of Revelation” in the form of the four living creatures or “beasts”. These are all seen above and within the ***“sea of glass”***, referencing the humanity upon and among whom the coming events are prepared to play out. The stage is set, the players in their positions – it’s time for the curtain to be drawn back and the action to begin. Christ removes the first seal.

A common theme among the first four seals – distinct from the final three – are these “*beasts*”, or “*living creatures*” as the term actually identifies. Generally, this is settled doctrine. If there is any thought to the contrary among this body, I would hope to be engaged on it, but I believe it is important to understand that these “*beasts*” identify the saints of God in the form of the Gentile church. In both Ezekiel and Revelation, these same living creatures are seen, and have been competently identified by expositors as descriptors of the gospel ministers.^{iv} Yet, I think for the edification of the body, it would be instructive to examine it a little closer to understand the history and relevance. Some say that the order of the beasts is a relevant thing, and take this language of chapter six as intimating specific characters of the beasts, or Gentile church members:

“I heard ... one [the first] of the four beasts ... I heard the second beast ... I heard the third beast ... I heard the voice of the fourth beast.... ” (Revelation 6:1, 3, 5 & 7)

The word in verse one “*one*” is actually, as Gill articulates, identical to the expression for the “*first day*” (Genesis 1:5) and the “*first day of the week*” (Matthew 28:1) and therefore should properly be saying that John heard the first of the four beasts; i.e., the lion (Revelation 4:7). This means that we would be attributing the call to go forth with the nature of God’s elect people that is unique to the four faces or entities given the beasts. The lion calls forth the white horse, the calf (or ox) calls forth the red horse of conflict, the man calls forth the black horse of starvation, and the eagle calls forth the grey or multicolored horse of death and hell. That changes things a bit, because to understand why they would be so distinctly identified means that we should pay attention to the history of those symbols.

“Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.” (Numbers 2:2)

This language at first looks like there would be 12, since there were 12 sons of Israel. However, the next clause “*with the ensign of their father’s house*” being provided separately, the expositors agree that each of the sons of Israel had an ensign, but for purposes of ranking and filing the families as they came forth from Egypt, they were directed by Moses to pitch and march in a formation that broke the group up into four sections: East, South, West, and North to wit:

“And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch ... next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar ... then the tribe of Zebulun”. (Numbers 2:3, 5, 7)

&

“On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben ... by him shall be the tribe of Simeon ... then the tribe of Gad”. (Numbers 2:10, 12, 14)

&

“On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim ... by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh ... then the tribe of Benjamin”. (Numbers 2:18, 20, 22)

& finally

“The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side ... by him shall be the tribe of Asher ... then the tribe of Naphtali”. (Numbers 2:25, 27, 29)

Four standards. Expositors generally agree that each of the sets of three tribes had a unique standard that identified the three colors of their tribes on the backdrop, and the signa over the top. The colors were in accordance with what Fred talked about last week, a beautiful stone that was ascribed in glory and in color to each tribe and will be the foundations of the wall of the great City of our God to come (Revelation 21:19-20). Just as the new city has three gates on each side, the ancient Israelites had three tribes on each side as they marched across the desert toward Canaan. The standards carried these same four beasts according to the tribe that led each set of three: Judah = lion; Ephraim = ox; Reuben = man; Dan = eagle. But we should look a bit closer.

Lions are mentioned for their strength (Judges 14:18), boldness (2 Samuel 17:10), ferocity (Psalms 7:2), and stealth (Psalms 10:9; Lamentations 3:10). Therefore in prophetic references to the millennium, the lion is mentioned as living in peace with the ox, calf, kid, lamb and the child (Psalms 91:13; Isaiah 11:6-8; 65:25). The roaring of the lion is often mentioned (Job 4:10; Psalms 104:21; Isaiah 31:4; Ezekiel 22:25; Hosea 11:10). It is said of certain of David's warriors (1 Chronicles 12:8) that their ***"faces were like the faces of lions."*** ***"The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion"*** (Proverbs 19:12). God in His wrath is ***"unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah"*** (Hosea 5:14). And "lion" occurs in the figurative language of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation.

Oxen (or bulls) are identified in Scripture as used for labor (Numbers 7:3-88), and for its strength (Proverbs 14:4), even to making the owner liable (Exodus 21:28-36). In Psalms 22:12 for ***"strong bulls"*** the word is ***"ab'bir"*** (***"ab'-beer"***), signifying from the root ***"mighty one"***, and is simply translated ***"bulls"*** (Psalms 50:13, 68:30; Isaiah 34:7). It is the symbol of patient, strong continuance in work.

Man, as one of the faces these beasts have, is interesting. Six Hebrew/Chaldee words are used variously throughout Scripture that help to understand this concept of a man; four of which are probably more relevant to our examination. ***"Adam"*** (***"Aw-dawm"***) is a generic term for man (Genesis 1:26, 27). ***"Enowsh"*** (***"en-oshe"***) is the base man, one that has no spiritual life or the attributes that come with it. ***"Iysh"*** (***"eesh"***) identifies a man in the regenerated state, so he has attributes such as ***"champion"*** or ***"great man"***. Then, two additional words are used for man in the scriptures that are instructive. ***"Ben"*** (***"bane"***), which is used to declare a worthy or valiant man,

filled with spirit (1 Samuel 14:52, 1 Kings 1:52, Ecclesiastes 3:21). Then there's "ba'al" ("bah'-al") which when capitalized references the false god of sex and filth, but in its root is actually a word that articulates the proper role of the husband in a godly relationship; the lord of the house (Genesis 20:3). Finally, there's "gibbor" ("ghib-bore'") that expressly refers to mighty men or men of renown for their character and nobility (Genesis 6:4). So, the noblest of the human being is seen here which, I believe, is the proper expression of the saints in honesty and charity.

Eagles have strong characteristics that are helpful as well. It's known for its swiftness in flight (Deuteronomy 28:49; 2 Samuel 1:23). It's known for how it mounts high in the air, away from the bustle below (Job 39:27; Jeremiah 49:16). The apparently incessant strength is notable, so that it is said our "**youth is renewed like the eagle's**" (Psalms 103:5). The eagle's strength and visibility are both declared by God to Job (Job 39:27-30). The eagle's treatment of her young are used in Scripture to show God's speedy deliverance of His people (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11-12). The eagle is also known for its attraction to presence of death, to consume the flesh (Matthew 24:28; Job 39:30). So, the symbol is one of perspicacity, swiftness in action, and a consuming disposition.

I went through this brief exercise so that we could better ask the questions, both why it is that these four are the presentation of the beasts and why is each of those natures what is engaged in the opening of the first four seals. Why a lion, and why does it send the white horse (Revelation 6:1)? Why an ox, and why does it send the red horse (Revelation 6:3)? Why the face of a man, and why does it send the black horse (Revelation 6:5). Why an eagle, and why does it send the pale horse (Revelation 6:7)?

***"... and behold a white horse ... there went out another horse that was red ... and lo a black horse ... I looked, and behold a pale horse"* (Revelation 6:2, 4-5, 8)**

One final thing that needs some exploration before we get into the application of the seals themselves, is this business about using the metaphor of a horse. The word "**horse**" is just "*hippos*" ("*hip'-pos*") which means nothing other than "a horse", so there's not a lot to learn from that word alone. But this is a magnificent beast that has much in Scripture to help the understanding in capturing this frightful scene that is upon the creation in John's vision.

***"¶ Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."* (Job 39:19-25)**

Joseph Caryl spends 43 pages in his book examining this passage about horses. I invite all of you to go and read that stuff, because it is highly instructive. Horses are used for travel, burden, drawing wagons, hunting, racing, and (as described here) war! The war horse is a unique creature. His strength is renowned such that God declares the dangers of humans trusting in that power rather than giving Him glory (Psalms 20:7; Isaiah 31:1). He terrifies with the thunders of his bulging neck and glory of his flaring nostrils. So far from fearing what can come in conflict, this steed craves it, drives to it, flaunts his own power in it, and disregards any hint of opposition. He is, except by God's decreed end, unstoppable.

This is the vision of the great war horse painted by God to Job ... and this is the import of these tremendous works in store for the earth's inhabitants when the time comes for the seals to be removed. Once sent forth, they travel with great strength and power. They will not be distracted from the course set, the consequences to the human race notwithstanding. There is a finality to the act of sending forth these movements, like a war horse that is alarmed by nothing; fears nothing; stops at nothing. The pains will move across the globe like a valiant, swaggering steed smelling the outcome and driving relentlessly against all opposition. This is the message of this amazing metaphor. The color of the horse intensifies and educates; but for now be resolved that these are tremendous and unstoppable events.

“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.” (Revelation 6:2)

The first thing that has to be discussed here is the color white. I have read many expositions about this verse; some helpful and others utterly confusing. One of the points that is considered substantive is the idea that this is the Antichrist. Setting aside the confusion that this creates since the Antichrist of Revelation 13, etc., does not arise until *after* the second advent of Christ – which comes at the seventh trumpet ... and the trumpets don't begin until the seventh seal – there's also the problem of the *color* of this horse: White! In the Old Testament, the root of the word used typically is “*laban*” (“*law-ban*”) and it means to be or become purified. In the New Testament, including in this passage, the Greek word is “*leukos*” (“*lyoo-koos*”) and signifies brilliance or dazzling in presentation and a sign of purity. We already have a problem making this Antichrist.

The whiteness of Christ's presentation on the mount of transfiguration should be noted, as it says: ***“his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.” (Mark 9:3)***. Whiteness is part of the transition of the righteous souls, both Jew and Gentile, when their clothing is changed (Revelation 3:5, 3:18, 19:8). When Christ rides into battle at Armageddon, of course, He's riding on a ***“white horse” (Revelation 19:11)***. The closest you come in Scripture to any evil thing having anything approximating whiteness is the passage that says ***“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” (2 Corinthians 11:14)***, but that word ***“light”*** in this passage is

the Greek “*phos*” (“*foce*”), and it refers to the emission of light – the appearance of good – not actual light or white or purity. White is a color that is reserved for purity and righteousness in Scripture ... and we should therefore make that the case in this verse and see that whatever we have working here is pure and righteous.

He that sits on the horse has a bow. This is an instrument of war (2 Samuel 22:35), and the mighty men of David were renowned for their ability to manage the bow with either hand (1 Chronicles 12:5). Interestingly, in light of the horses that follow this one, there is no human death expressed. Even if we believe, as intimated in the sprawling expression of this work in Zechariah chapter six, that these “horses” are running simultaneously, the work of this horse is not about the slaughter of men, but most certainly about a conflict – as the rider is said to be “**conquering and to conquer**”. The focus of the passage is on the bow ... not the arrow that shoots from it. This rider is the source of conquering energy in this vision. This is further indicated when you consider that the word “**bow**” used in this passage is used no place else in the scripture. The word “*toxon*” (“*tox’-on*”) comes from a base that means “*to bring forth, bear, produce ... of a woman giving birth*”. The bow produces the arrow; it is *not* the arrow.

So, to better understand what it is with which this entity conquers, we must consider more closely what it is that is projected from this device. I’ve used a verse written in Habakkuk’s eschatology before, when I was pulling from it the reference to the work of God in the trumpets. But, in past tense, we see this same passage refer to the work of this white horse:

***“Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation [dragons of Revelation 9]? Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.*” (Habakkuk 3:8-9)**

The time comes – as this verse suggests in fulfillment of His covenant with Abraham [“**according to the oaths of the tribes**”] – that this bow, even the Word of God (Christ) becomes quite open for full view to the inhabitants of the world. No longer is there any misdirection, obfuscation, pretense behind which vain professors can confuse the rabble with vain and imprecise statements of doctrine. It is on full view ... for ... everyone! In our reality, this may seem like it’s not a real big deal since we live in what is frequently advertised as a “Christian nation”. But at last count, there are only around 350 million Americans. There are more than seven billion humans. It is said that presently there are about 31% Christian, 24% Muslim, 15% Hindu, and seven percent Buddhist. The remainder are either some off-shoot or among the remaining thousands of religious expressions ... or claims no religion. If you add to that how dismally ignorant of Scripture those who pretend to Christianity are – and those who intentionally twist it for their personal ends – there is a whole lot of deceit and confusion about the true and living Word of God! The sheer insult of reprobation is thereby tamed. If the insult becomes evident ... so does the conflict. When this Word becomes “**quite naked**”, and it travels across the globe in a way that cannot be stayed, then those “**tares**” that have grown up

among the **“good seed”** for all these centuries will resist this process by which they **“are gathered and burned in the fire”** (Matthew 13:38-40).

The rider of this white horse has been given a crown. He is a victorious rider. When He spoke to the men of his generation, they despised him and when they persecuted Him, they **“platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head”** (Mark 15:17). Even those who hate Christ know Him – and those with whom He has shared His blessed word – as God’s ornamented and honored ones. Crowns, in New Testament Scripture, are not for any other but Christ (to signify His kingship) and those who have overcome this world (Revelation 2:10; 3:11). So we should not expect anything differently here. We deal here with a crowned rider whose bow is quite naked. The symbology of the crown fits together nicely with the bow, when we consider that this rider is sending forth from His bow this unrequited word. We know that this blessed truth is only heard by him that is sent (Romans 10:14-15).

“And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me”. (Isaiah 49:2)

We should consider the import of this rider going **“forth conquering, and to conquer.”** It means the rider is victorious. The root of the word used in two tenses here literally is **“victory”**. That’s good, and I suspect completely logical and understanding to everyone here. This horseman – with the word of God – is traveling in a manner that is utterly victorious. But to what end? We know the word itself is a living and powerful weapon that divides the thoughts and intents of man’s heart (Hebrews 4:12). But again, to what end? As one in a series of six events – the seventh triggering the seven trumpets – this activity of the first seal must be seen as both independent in purpose and joint in effect with the other seals. There’s a thing being done with these seals, and that thing can *never* leave our minds as we consider the nuances.

Remember, that the purpose of this event – as I stated in the first part of this sermon – is the redemption of the body of Christ’s gifted children and the restoration of the creation. But, unless all the earth is clear on what **“restoration”** means; on what **“redemption”** means – that is, unless they understand that there is a clear and focused thing erupting on the earth’s stage to bring a matter to resolution – it would not be relevant to have God’s Word stampeding without resistance across the world stage!

“Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it” (Isaiah 5:29)

This bit of eschatological discussion out of Isaiah helps to understand both what is happening here and why the first beast – the lion – is the character of the saints that are engaged. **“The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?”** (Amos 3:8) The mechanism by which this truth will gallop across the land is the preachments of God’s servants –

first the Gentiles, and then soon with participation of the Jews. ***“The LORD”***, it says, ***“shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem” (Joel 3:16)***. Christ said that in His day He’s going to do this work. The work has to be clear and it has to be unrelenting, like a lion’s roar. To begin it all, He has to send His servants across the earth with His Word in an effectual and binding way. All have to know that the time has come, and there will be a separation between the ***“good seed”*** and the ***“tares”*** so that only truth remains when Christ takes his throne for a thousand years. He goes forth in truth and righteousness, in perpetual conquering ... showing the world who are His.

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see [i.e., ‘Go!']. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.” (Revelation 6:3-4)

At the same time the white horse is running, we have the emergence of this second condition. The color of the horse comes from the Greek root word *“pur”* (*“poor”*) and though much blood is shed, that is not the meaning of the word. Rather, it is *“fire”*. This is a fiery red horse, which is appropriate because he and his rider are the beginning of God’s judgments in the earth. Before this seal is broken, the scene John sees before God’s throne is ***“a sea of glass like unto crystal” (Revelation 4:6)*** ... but after this fire begins to run and takes its horrific course the scene has changed in one unique way; it turns into ***“a sea of glass mingled with fire” (Revelation 15:4)***, the same root word.

The rider on this horse is what tells the story of how. He is given a great sword of combat. The root of the word here for ***“sword”*** is *“mache”* (*“makh’ay”*) – from which we get our word *“machete”* – and means expressly *“a fight or combat; of persons at variance, disputants ... strife, contention; a quarrel”*. It helps to understand what it is this horseman yields, and it is not just entrenched battlegrounds like so many in history have pretended. ***“Peace”***, it says, is taken from the earth; *“the abode of men and animals”*. Try, if you can, to see this with a more discreet eye. If nation states get into military conflict it is destabilizing, not just to those nation states, but to all those whose economies are directly or indirectly impacted by that conflict. Those who watch international affairs see this and understand this. But if peace is removed. If this sword of variance is being wielded the globe over. If nobody has peace with anybody. What happens to international ... interstate ... intercity ... inter-company ... inter-family agreement? How do you contract with a person with which you are at variance? With whom you have strife? How do you conduct the affairs at a store if you don’t trust the store and the store doesn’t trust you? Peace is removed. This helps to understand better what Christ meant when He was describing this scene to His apostles:

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”
(Matthew 24:7-8)

In both Revelation 6:4 and in Matthew 24:7 the word **“and”** is used to make a distinction between the violence of warfare and the violence outside warfare. Peace is taken away **“and”** they kill one another. Nation (culture) rises against culture **“and”** kingdom (nation state) rises against nation state in war. World War III – as it is conveniently and colloquially discussed as part of this scene – misses the mark. Brother’s against brother, father against son, children against parents – they fight and they kill each other (Mark 13:12). Systemic violence is the picture of this rider’s impact. Removing the tares away from the wheat is a violent and disciplined process. With the addition of the unique preachments under the white horse, one might be inclined to even suggest that the reason for all this conflict is the preaching. I have often found it intriguing that just thinking a person or group sounds like our blessed preaching brings the thunder down on that entity’s head; though he/she/it has nothing to do with us and would likewise despise the word of God. It would make sense that those preachments are the catalyst; though the text falls short of directly saying so.

What is true from this text is that nobody on the earth trusts or adheres to another; whatever the cause. Allegiances fail. Friendships fail. Families fail. The peaceful ministers of God have for centuries begged this people to make reconciliation with God and adhere to the standards that would bring them peace and all the gifts that come from serving God. Like faithful oxen, these brethren begged and pleaded for reconciliation of the **“quarrel of [God’s] covenant” (Leviticus 26:25)**.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

In return, the saints received nothing but frightful hatred, variance, and threats of violence. Now before those saints’ very eyes they see the Word of God conquering the earth, so they rejoice and call for the end of any other form of reconciliation upon the earth dwellers. All Gentile elect have been called, it’s time for separation! Now conflict rules the day for this rebellious house, making it impossible for systems that rely on agreement to succeed. The red horse rides, his horseman sowing strife, contention, variance, war, quarrel, and bloodshed the world over. Peace is gone from the inhabitants of the earth, so they are left to the basest and most wicked of motives and activities to serve their pitiful lusts. It is a perfect environment in which then to send forth his allies.

The next time I have opportunity to speak to you on this subject, I will pick up with the black horse and his fastidious rider to see what next unfolds upon the wicked as Christ makes His stand and prepares the earth for the redemption of His elect. I love you all. Amen.

ⁱ See two sermons on Revelation four and five, the scene opening the context of the seven seals: *Revelation 4 and 5's Book of Redemption Part 1 – 12/8/13* <http://bit.ly/Revlatin4Book1>; and *Revelation 4 and 5's Book of Redemption Part 2 – 12/15/13* <http://bit.ly/Revaltin4Book2>.

ⁱⁱ See four sermons on Revelation eight through Revelation 11:14: *Revelation 8, 9, 10, 11's Seven Trumpets Part 1 – 12/24/17* <https://tinyurl.com/WBC20171224MP3>; *Revelation 8, 9, 10, 11's Seven Trumpets Part 2 – 12/31/17* <https://tinyurl.com/WBC20171231MP3>; *Revelation 8, 9, 10, 11's Seven Trumpets Part 3 – 1/7/18* <https://tinyurl.com/WBC20180107MP3>; and *Revelation 8, 9, 10, 11's Seven Trumpets Part 4 – 1/14/18* <http://tinyurl.com/WBC20180114MP3>.

ⁱⁱⁱ See two sermons on Revelation 15-16: *Revelation 14-16 – The 7 Vials of God's Wrath (Final Plagues) part 1 – 7/30/17* tinyurl.com/Rev15-16Pt1PDF; and *Revelation 14-16 – The 7 Vials of God's Wrath (Final Plagues) part 2 – 8/6/17* tinyurl.com/Rev15-16Pt2MP3.

^{iv} By way of example, see first Gill on these beasts' descriptors in analyzing Revelation 4:7, when they're introduced:

"Ver. 7. And the first beast [was] like a lion, &c.] And this figure expresses the strength of the ministers of the word, the lion being the strongest among beasts, Pr 30:30, to do the work they are called to, to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, and to bear the infirmities of the weak; and also it denotes their courage and boldness in preaching the Gospel of Christ, without fearing the faces of men, or of being afraid of their revilings:

and the second beast like a calf; or "ox," for so the word here used signifies in the Hellenistic language, and with the Septuagint interpreters, and agrees with Eze 1:10, and designs the laboriousness of Christ's faithful ministers in treading out the corn of Gospel truth, who labour in the word and doctrine, and are labourers with God; as also their humility, meekness, and patience in bearing insults, reproaches, and sufferings for Christ, and instructing those that oppose themselves:

and the third beast had a face as a man; and points at the humanity and tender heartedness, the wisdom, prudence, knowledge, and understanding, and the use of the reasoning faculty, together with a manly spirit in abiding by the Gospel at any rate; all which are so necessary in the ministers of the word.

And the fourth beast [was] like a flying eagle; which sets forth the sagacity and penetration of Gospel ministers into the deep things of God, and mysteries of grace, and their readiness and swiftness to do the will of God, in publishing the everlasting Gospel; see Re 14:6."

Here is what Matthew Poole says about these of Revelation 4:7:

"Ver. 7. It is observed concerning these four living creatures, (for so they were, not beasts in a strict sense, as it is opposed to flying things, for the fourth was a fowl):

1. That they were the same mentioned in Ezekiel's vision, Eze 1:10; only each one there is said to have had the four faces of these creatures, here each one had a single face proper to it.

2. That these were the four creatures whose portraitures were in the four ensigns of the Israelites as they were marshalled into four companies, allotting the men of three tribes to each company.

Judah's standard had a lion in its colours, according to Jacob's prophecy of that tribe, Ge 49:9, Ephraim had an ox, Reuben had a man, Dan an eagle. This the learned Mede proves from the Rabbins, who, though fabulous enough, yet in such a thing may be credited. It is also thought they answered the four cherubims in the temple.

Question. But what is signified by these four living creatures?

Solution. Some say the four evangelists; others, four apostles, &c. But certainly they judge best who say, that by them is signified the various gifts with which God blesseth his ministers, giving to some more courage and fortitude, that they are like lions; to others more mildness and meekness, that they are like oxen or calves; others have more wisdom and prudence, which most adorn a man; others a more piercing insight into the mysteries of God's kingdom, rendering them like eagles."

Lord's Supper -- Sunday, September 8, 2019

“¶ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, **Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.**” (1 Corinthians 11:23-24)

[BRENT] would you please lead the body in asking of thanks for the bread?

“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.” (1 Corinthians 11:25-26)

[JON] would you please lead the body in asking of thanks for the bread?

Remembrance. This language ***“this do in remembrance of me”*** has always been a piece of this subject that has not satisfyingly landed in my heart. There is a good bit of information on this point. While I'm the type of person who likes to “know” what a thing means in an absolute sense ... including the contextual import with precision ... it is not always that simple. Sometimes, it is intentionally dense so that all of the ways that a person can look at a thing is instructive, not just a single (though exciting) one.

So, what I want to do here, while we take the Lord's supper, is provide a good bit of information that is available on this question of ***“remembrance”***. In the verse we're making use of today, this word is the Greek *“anamnesis”* (*“an-am'-nay-sis”*). It is strictly used four times in the New Testament – three times on this ordinance and once when Paul is talking in Hebrews about the annual sacrifice of the high priest to so that ***“remembrance”*** is made of sins every year (Hebrews 10:3). It means simply *“a remembering, recollection”*, and comes from a root word for *“to call to remembrance, to remind, to admonish; to remember and weigh well and consider.”* Not a lot of complexity in that, but it is a good starting point. It is a good thing for us to continuously remember this sober event of Christ, His suffering, His sacrifice, the breaking of His body and spilling of His blood. It should admonish us continually to mortify the deeds of our flesh and take us out of ourselves (with our daily vanities) and weigh with sobriety the reality that all of what we do – indeed all of what the earth is about – is this remarkable event when the Son of God took the form of man so that He could make good on the promise He made in the Covenant of Grace. Remembrance.

In this passage, Gill has a good bit to offer on ***“remembrance”***:

Gill: *"this do in remembrance of me; signifying that it was not a passover commemoration, or a remembrance of the Israelites going out of Egypt; which because done in the night, as that was, and following upon the passover, the judaizing Christians among the Corinthians took it to be in remembrance of that; having imbibed that notion which the Jews then had, and still retain, that their deliverance from Egypt will be remembered in the days of the Messiah {t };*

“ מזכירין, "they commemorate" the going out of Egypt in the nights; says R. Eleazer ben Azariah, lo, I am about seventy years of age, and I never was worthy to say, that the going out of Egypt was recited in nights, till Ben Zoma expounded what is said, De 16:3 "that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt; all the days of thy life; days of thy life," mean days; "all the days of thy life," nights; but the wise men say, "the days of thy life"; mean [the days of] this world, and "all the days of thy life" include the days of the Messiah":

now the apostle mentions these words of our Lord, to show that the design of the institution of this ordinance of the supper was not in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt; but it was in remembrance of himself, of what he did and suffered on the behalf of his people: particularly the eating of the bread was intended to bring to remembrance how the body of Christ was wounded, bruised, and broken for them; how he bore their sins in his own body on the tree, and suffered, and made satisfaction for them; and which was spiritual food for their faith when they reflected on it, and could not fail of bringing to their remembrance the love of Christ in all, when this was the case."

All in all, this is not a bad examination of the case. I should point out that though Gill indicates the Corinthians *errantly* believed the Lord's Supper was for the commemoration of the exodus from Egypt, there are other expositors who believe that is in fact a critical component to what we should remember. Their thinking, in simple terms, is that all of these matters symbolically – though perhaps here not directly – point to the same final event; the return of the Messiah.

Clarence Larkin says a thing in his little work called *"The Second Coming of Christ"* that I think is particularly instructive about how every New Testament Church – and certainly this body of believers who look to very near the Day of the Lord – should see the table at which we today partake:

Larkin: "There is no fact in history more clearly established than the fact of the 'First Coming' of Christ. But as His 'First Coming' did not fulfill all the prophecies associated with His 'Coming,' it is evident that there must be another 'Coming' to completely fulfill them. It was because the religious leaders of Christ's day failed to distinguish between the prophecies that related to His 'First Coming,' and those that related to His 'Second Coming' that they rejected Him. Peter tells us (1 Pet. 1:10, 11) that the prophets themselves did not clearly perceive the difference between the 'Sufferings' and 'Glory' of Christ. That is, they did not see that there was a 'TIME SPACE' between the 'Cross' and the 'Crown,' and that the 'Cross' would precede the 'Crown.' But we have no such excuse. We live on this side of the 'Cross,' and we can readily pick out all the prophecies that were fulfilled at Christ's

*'First Coming' and apply the remainder to His 'Second Coming.' It is clear then that Christ's 'First Coming,' important as it was, is not the 'doctrinal centre' of the Scriptures, that is, Christ's 'First Coming' was not the centre of a circle that contains all doctrine, but was one of the foci of an [analytical] ellipse of which the other is the **'SECOND COMING.'***

[The whole Mediatorial Work of Christ, Prophetic, Priestly and Kingly] is included in an ellipse, the foci of which are the 'First' and 'Second' Comings of Christ. The 'Cross' represents His 'First Coming' and the 'Crown' His 'Second Coming.' ... Between the 'Comings [of Christ]' we have the 'TABLE' which points backward to the 'Cross' and forward to the 'Second Coming.'

In simple terms, Larkin makes the case from Scripture that the Lord's Supper points in both directions – backwards to the suffering and death of Christ through the breaking of His body and spilling of His blood, and forward to His second advent when He comes again to redeem **“the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:14)** which is our bodies. As I more elaborately pointed out in my sermon on Armageddon, this is the point at which we will, as the Christ Himself puts it, **“drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.” (Mathew 26:29)**

So, as we consume this unleavened loaf and this cup of wine in accordance with the Scriptures, we should always have in remembrance both the suffering and death of Christ our Redeemer as well as be continuously looking forward to the resolution of all things when Christ rides into Armageddon, takes His throne, and reigns with His saints and redeemed Jews for a thousand years in fulfillment of His promise.