

Walking in the Footsteps of Paul: Part III
Revelation 19:11-16
August 22, 2021

I want you to look at the picture on front of your bulletin. Those of you watching online, right above the video is a link to a bulletin, and you can see the picture I am referring. It is a portrait of Jesus. Notice the crown on his head and the light around his head, a halo.

In every church or monastery we entered in Greece, Jesus is portrayed this way. If we walked into a domed church, paintings were all over the walls, but if you looked up to the center of the dome, there is Jesus with the crown and the halo, looking down on everything. Every where we went, Jesus is portrayed as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The painting that is in your bulletin is in a monastery built on a cliff in a town called Meteora. Katie and I will talk about these monasteries on cliffs in our class, which starts September 15.

There is another huge painting that covers a whole outside wall of this monastery. Jesus is at the top of the painting with the crown and halo. Below him are 10 famous figures of researchers, scientists, scholars, writers. Our guide gave us the names of them all, but the only one I remember is Aristotle. The painting portrays that Jesus is over all these famous brilliant people. It is Jesus who gave them their wisdom and knowledge. All to portray that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I came back from Greece with this renewed sense of the majesty and awe of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. That is what we are going to talk about today. What does it mean that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of Lords? What does it mean for the world? What does it mean for the church? What does it mean for you?

We are going to read a scripture passage about this particular name of Jesus. Before we do, let us pray: Stir in us now, Holy Spirit, a willingness to hear, the desire to know the truth and the courage to follow in joyful obedience, that we may be formed by your word into women and men of faith. Amen

Our scripture passage is from the Book of Revelation at the very end of the Bible. God has given the disciple John a vision and instructs John to write it down. It becomes the Book of Revelation. Our passage is at the very end of the vision.

Read Revelation 19: 11-16

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

While in Greece, we learned about one of their greatest kings, Alexander the Great, who took over as King when his father, Philip, died in 336 BC. There are statues of Alexander all over Greece, usually on a horse with a sword in his hand. At the peak of his career, he founded over 70 cities and created an empire that stretched over three continents and covered two million square miles.

Alexander was indeed great in creating a huge empire. Yet, this great King was vulnerable. He died of a fever at the age of 33. But our scripture passage says Jesus is King of kings and Lord of Lords. This means that Jesus has complete authority over everything and everyone. Including Alexander the Great. This King of kings will last forever unlike Alexander the Great.

It says in Philippians 2 "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"

In I Timothy 6, it says, "[Jesus] who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light..."

So, what do we do with this Jesus? The one that is described in our scripture passage. The One I described as a Superhero to our children. We are Christ followers. What does it mean to follow a Christ like this?

The Jesus we know and love in the Gospels is described in a different way. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the healer, The Bread of Life, a good teacher. He is humble on a donkey. He calls children to himself. He weeps at the death of a good friend.

The Jesus we know and love is the one who blesses the poor, the grieving, the meek, the hungry and thirsty, the peacemakers. This is Jesus the comforter.

But sometimes I get tired of the nice, gentle, humble Jesus. Yes, there are times when I need this comforter Jesus, such as when my Dad died. But there are times, when I need more. I need more when I see horror on the news, people killing each other, war, famine, hatred, anger, chaos. I need to know that someday it will be okay.

This is when I need the Jesus who is King of kings and Lord of lords. I need the Jesus who is described in this passage.

I need the Jesus who comes on a white horse as the conqueror, not the Jesus who rides on a donkey. I need the Jesus who is just and makes war against evil. I need the Jesus with armies of heaven following him making war on all that is wrong. I need the Jesus with the fire in his eyes that cleanses and purifies the world.

I need the Jesus with the robe dipped in blood. Yes, it is the robe bloodied by his crucifixion and sacrifice, but it is also the blood as Jesus makes war against evil.

I need the Jesus with the sword coming out of mouth to strike down nations. The sword that is the Word of God. Jesus' words have such authority that His words created the world. Jesus' words have such authority that it says in Isaiah: "My word goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Jesus, God incarnate, is King of kings and Lord of lords.

I need the Jesus who is called Faithful and True, but I also need the Jesus, as this passage says, who has a name no one knows. There have been guesses to what is this name. And we will continue to guess. Because Jesus as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the One with complete authority, must have something that remains beyond our understanding or our knowing.

God says in the scriptures, "'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, 'declares the Lord...'my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'" (Isaiah 55:8-9)

It is appropriate that the King of kings and the Lord of lords has a name known only to God, a mystery that belongs only to God. We will never know Jesus in full. And I am thankful for that. For how can I fully understand Someone who has complete authority over everything and everyone?

I need the Jesus who has the name King of kings and Lord of Lords written on his thigh. While riding on a horse, the name on the thigh was the best place for all to see, including Jesus' enemies. There is no mistaking who Jesus is.

This is an amazing passage. An amazing description of Jesus. What do we make of it today? How does it shape our lives? Are we worthy to follow such a king?

Illustration: There's an old story of the boy who stood on a sidewalk, waiting on a bus. A man walking by spotted the boy, and gave him some gentle instruction. "Son," he said, "if you're waiting on the bus, you need to move to the street corner. That's where the bus stops for passengers." "It's OK," said the boy. "I'll just wait right here, and the bus will stop for me." The man repeated his argument, but the boy never moved. Just then, the bus appeared. Amazingly, the bus pulled over to where the boy stood, and the child hopped on. The man on the sidewalk stood speechless. The boy turned around in the doorway and said, "Mister, I knew the bus would stop here, because the bus driver is my dad!"

When you've got a family relationship with the bus driver, you don't need a bus stop. If your mother is a US Senator, you won't need an appointment to slip into her office. If you've given your heart to the King of Kings, you're in a royal family of unspeakable proportions. It is a high honor. This vision of Jesus in Revelation means we give Jesus our loyalty, our allegiance as part of the royal family.

This vision of Jesus means we serve Jesus – we are not lord of our lives. Many of you have probably read the book "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren. Instinctively, most people want to know: What is my purpose? How can I be more fulfilled? What a shock to open this best-selling book and read the first sentence: "It's not about you!" Though Jesus is intensely interested in you, and loves you more than can be described (remember the family relationship), he is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and is worthy to be served and worshiped.

This vision of Jesus means we believe him – the Faithful and True one who is completely trustworthy. This King of kings and Lord of lords will do what he says he will do. The only weapon – God’s powerful Word. God created the world by speaking. Jesus overcomes his enemies by speaking. Jesus healed by his word, calmed the storm, raised the dead with his word. Jesus sustains all things by his powerful word (Hebrews 1).

This vision of Jesus means we hope in Christ. No matter how bad things are in the world, something better is coming. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. God will live with his people, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for all evil is gone. Our King of kings and Lord of lords has vanquished all of it. And God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

Revelation doesn’t say when this time will be, but it does say Who will be there at the end.

When we read Revelation 19, we are called to respond to Jesus – give our allegiance, serve this Lord, believe in this King, hope in the One who is eternal.

I end with a description of Christ by a pastor named S. M. Lockridge. He is famous for a sermon called “That’s My King.” Here is a portion of it that I have probably given before:

“He’s enduringly strong, He’s entirely sincere, He’s eternally steadfast. He’s immortally graceful. He’s imperially powerful. He’s impartially merciful. He’s God’s Son. He’s a sinner’s savior. He’s the centerpiece of civilization. He stands alone in Himself. He’s unparalleled. He’s unprecedented. He’s supreme. He’s preeminent. He’s the loftiest idea in literature. He’s the highest idea in philosophy. He’s the fundamental truth in theology.

He’s the miracle of the age. He’s the only one able to supply all of our needs simultaneously. He supplies strength for the weak. He’s available for the tempted and the tried. He sympathizes and He saves. He guards and He guides. He heals the sick, He cleans the lepers. He forgives sinners, He discharges debtors, He delivers captives, He defends the feeble, He blesses the young, He serves the unfortunate, He regards the aged, He rewards the diligent, He beautifies the meek. Do you know Him?

Well, my king is the king of knowledge, He's the well-spring of wisdom, He's the doorway of deliverance, He's the pathway of peace, He's the roadway of righteousness, He's the highway of holiness, He's the gateway of glory, He's the master of the mighty, He's the captain of the conquerors, He's the head of the heroes, He's the leader of the legislators, He's the overseer of the overcomers, He's the governor of governors, He's the prince of princes, He's the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords."

Amen.

Let us stand and affirm our Faith in the King of kings and the Lord of lords by saying together The Apostles' Creed.