

Victory!

- ✦ **Our Hero is not dead, but alive – death defeated. (v.11)**
- ✦ **Our living Hero has all the authority on Judgment Day. (vv.12-15)**
- ✦ **Followers of the Rider are safe forever. (v.16)**

In the name of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, dear fellow redeemed:

“We walk by faith not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7) Was there ever a time like this Coronavirus for us to follow our Savior Jesus not by what we see, but by what He says? If someone had told you last Easter that next year – now – all over the world Christians would not be able to come to church on Easter, why would you believe it? Yet that would have been a faithful prediction because it came true.

In Revelation, the last book of the Bible, our eyes of faith are permitted to see the awesome sights in these Last Days, the New Testament era between Christ’s first and second, final coming. It’s as if John the Apostle is recording what he sees as the dear Holy Spirit shines the camera up in heaven, down on earth, and up in heaven again. These verses before us are the last picture of Jesus that we have in the Bible. This is meant to leave an lasting impression long after Easter. This is our **Victory!** with Christ.

✦ **Our hero is not dead, but alive, having defeated death. (v.11)**

Clearly the Rider on the white horse is Jesus, called ***“faithful and true.”*** So ***faithful*** we saw Him Maundy Thursday, sweating great drops of blood in prayer to His Father. Could there be some other way? ***“Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.”*** Then Jesus let Himself be arrested, tried and crucified.

With eyes of faith on Good Friday we saw Jesus is ***true***. He was one of two casualties fulfilling the first Gospel promise in the Garden. To our first parents when they rebelled, right in front of Adam and Eve the LORD God said to the serpent-Satan: ***“I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers, he will crush your head and you will crush his heel.”*** (Genesis 3:15) Satan died when Jesus willingly gave up His life, then crushed Satan’s head by rising again – ***“faithful and true.”***

Do you believe the Rider on the white horse ***“judges and makes war in righteousness”***? Jesus spoke that judgment on the cross when He said, ***“It is finished!”*** He was echoing that ancient Psalm 22 from a thousand years before. Psalm 22 begins, ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*** Psalm 22 ends with, ***“All the rich of the earth will eat and bow down. All who go down to the dust will kneel before him – those who cannot keep themselves alive. Descendants will serve him. For generations people will be told about the Lord. They will come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet to be born – because he has done it.”*** (Psalm 22:29–31 EHV) Salvation won and done – ***finished!***

Now the Rider on the white horse is alive – no longer scourged by Roman whips, beaten by the soldiers, mocked by the Jews, mourned by His disciples. For forty days with powerful proofs Jesus kept appearing to eye witnesses like Peter, the Emmaus disciples, even 500 believers at once, finally to Saul who became Paul. They all needed to be convinced so that their eyes would believe what the Scriptures said would happen. Solders at the tomb felt the earthquake and saw the angel roll away the stone. But without faith they could not see their Savior. Jesus’ eye witnesses chose death rather than deny the truth!

✦ **Our living hero has all authority on the Day of judgment. (vv.12-15)**

What keeps convincing the skeptic in me to set aside my doubting questions? It’s the fact that all this was prophesied in more details than we can count. ***“His eyes are like blazing flames, and on his***

head are many crowns. He has a name written on him, which no one knows except he himself. He is also clothed in a garment that had been dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies in heaven, which were clothed with white, clean, fine linen, were following him on white horses. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will shepherd them with an iron staff. He himself is going to trample the winepress of the fierce anger of the Almighty God.”

Are those blood stains of Jesus to wash sin? See the prophecy in Isaiah 63 (1–6 EHV): *“Who is this coming from Edom, with bright red garments? Who is this coming from Bozrah, clothed majestically, marching out with great strength? It is I, the one who speaks in righteousness. It is I, the one who is mighty to save. Why is your clothing so red? Why are your garments like those of someone who has been trampling grapes in a winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples there was no one with me. So I stomped on them in my anger, and I trampled them in my wrath, and their juice splattered on my garments. I stained all my clothing. For the day for vengeance was in my heart, and the year for my redemption has come. I looked intently but there was no helper. I was shocked that no one supported me. My arm delivered me, and my wrath supported me. I trampled the peoples in my anger. I made them drunk in my wrath, and I will pour out their juice onto the ground.”*

Dreadful! Why so important that our last Bible picture of Jesus is violent wrath? Same reason Moses had to warn the Israelites entering the promised land. Same reason the last verses of Isaiah are so gruesome about dead *“corpses of [those] who were rebelling against me [whose] worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched, and all flesh will be horrified by them.”* (Isaiah 66:24 EHV) Same reason the last verse of the Old Testament warns about John the Baptist coming to *“turn the hearts of fathers to their children and...children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with complete destruction.”* (Malachi 4:6 EHV) Who takes Judgment Day seriously? Fun in hell with friends? Jesus says *“weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* Coronavirus? Can't the talkers see “Death On a Pale Horse”? The painting is in Cleveland's Museum of Art by Albert Ryder. His friend lost \$500 at the race track then committed suicide. Ryder's pale horse takes the track backwards with a scythe to intercept one and all. Scoffers ask, “Shall I hold my breath till Christ comes?” Go ahead...the judgment comes for you too.

✦ **Those with the Rider are safe forever. (v.16)**

What keeps convincing the coward in me to set aside my anxious fears? Jesus kept saying to His disciples: *“Peace be with you.” “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid.”* (John 14:27 EHV)

While the nations rage against Him (Psalm 2), we keep worshiping Jesus for His name-reputation as *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*. Jesus promised, *“Because I live, you also will live.” “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”* (John 11:25 NIV84) By His Easter **Victory!** Jesus has made death a sleep from which we now awake with Him glory. Following our Good Shepherd through the valley of the shadow of death, we fear no evil because He is always with us. As each believer passes from grace to glory, on heaven's side one of the elders told John, *“These are the ones who are coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* (7:14 EHV)

How safe will we be in heaven with the Rider on the white horse after all the kings of earth lay their crowns before Him? Isaiah said, *“Gladness and joy will overtake them; sorrow and sighing will flee away.”* Revelation pictures heaven as the New Jerusalem with twelve gates standing wide open always in the light from Jesus – no sun, no night. There *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, because the former things have passed away.” The one who was seated on the throne said to me, “Look, I am making everything new!” He also said, “Write, for these words are trustworthy and true.”* (21:4f) Bring your doubts and fears to Jesus. Lay your anxieties on Him who cares for you. *I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!* (Mark 9:24) And Jesus sweeps it all away with His Word: *“Peace be with you.”* Amen.