

THE ARMY OF GOD—REVELATION 19:14

Jim E. Waldron

Describe the army of the One on the white horse; tell how it was mustered and how it is to live. His army was “*clothed in fine linen, white and clean*” and they “*followed Him on white horses*” (19:14). This symbolism illustrates the fact that Christ’s disciples are those who imitate Him and are like Him in their life and habits (cf., I Peter 2:21-22). The Christian knows he was a sinner, and he knows that “by grace” he has “been saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

He also knows that no one can be saved by keeping the good works of the law; for “by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight” (Romans 3:20), and salvation is “not by works of righteousness which we have done” (Titus 3:5). Such is impossible! The Lord’s death on the cross was God’s own sacrifice for the whole human family, even as John the baptizer affirmed of Jesus, “Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The beloved disciple (John) many years later echoed that statement, saying of the Savior, “And He Himself is the propitiation (atonement or conciliatory offering) for our sins, and not for ours only but for the whole world” (I John 2:2). The Hebrew writer, also testified, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death ... that He by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9). The true disciple realizes there is no way that anyone can earn or merit salvation, for the Lord affirmed, “likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, we are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

Yet one may inquire, why then is everyone not saved? Because salvation comes by grace, but not by grace alone, for it is “through faith” (Ephesians 2:8); yet not by faith alone. God tendered His gift of love, as it is written, “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23); and that gift is to be accepted, by faith – obedient faith. This is true because the Holy Spirit Himself testified that eternal salvation comes through our learning to imitate Jesus’ life of obedience, even as it is written, “though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things, which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

A person is justified by faith when that faith moves him or her to do the Father’s will, that is, obey the commandments of Jesus for He said, “if you love me keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Again He affirmed, “He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me” (John 14:21). Clergymen of the denominational world find Jesus’ statement, “he who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16) very offensive. They find this commandment to believe and be baptized, so burdensome that they not only refuse to teach it, but oppose it. In their human wisdom they affirm, “he who believes and is not baptized will be saved.” Yet, the Spirit said, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His (Jesus’) commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (I John 5:3).

Christendom’s clerics are like the religious leaders (scribes and Pharisees) in the time of our Lord’s sojourn on earth. He said, “They are blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14; cf., II Thessalonians 1:6-9). Catholic clergymen teach that good works and meritorious rituals procure salvation, while on the opposite end of the theological spectrum Protestant preachers claim salvation by “faith alone.” Both greatly err not knowing the word of God. Salvation is not granted because of good works or by faith alone, but one must accept God’s “gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:23b) by “faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6).

John 3:16, tells us, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish have everlasting life.” Note what the inspired writer said, the gift of God’s Son was so great that the believer “should not perish.” He “should not perish,” because the believing sinner is in the position to accept that wonderful gift of grace. He has “the right to become” a child of God (John 1:12). All who are saved are those who accept the gift of grace on God’s terms. We must accept salvation, because, as we noted above, it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). In other words, through the new birth of water (baptism) and the Spirit (John 3:5). Faith alone is not worth the snap of one’s fingers, “even the demons believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).

Salvation is not by faith only or any other man-made scheme such as the so-called “sinners prayer,” but salvation must be accepted on God’s terms in God’s way. The Master Himself said, “not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). In order to be saved, we must submit to the simple, non-ambiguous words of Jesus in His commission for the whole world. He said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned: (Mark 16:16).

Having being cleansed from their sins, they have entered a new way of life; thus they are designated as a “new creation” in Christ (II Cor. 5:17); in other words they are, renewed-individuals, who have been renovated in heart and mind; thus they, “pursue peace with all and holiness without which no one shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). They continually strive to be “pure in heart” knowing

that those who are, are blessed, and “shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). They shun “every form of evil” (I Thess. 5:22), knowing that it is necessary to “put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of (their) mouth...” (Col. 3:8). They follow Jesus. He has given the orders and they follow Him; not men.

Years ago I read of a train wreck in New York City in the 19th century where the driver or engineer was trapped under the wreckage of his engine. When someone came to help him he said, look at the paper in my shirt pocket, “it will show I was given the wrong orders.” There are untold millions going into eternity without God (cf., II John 9-11), because they are following the wrong orders given to them by their “pastors.”

WHAT IF

Keith Bowling

A story was told of a preacher visiting an old farmer's house and asking the farmer, "Did you know the end is coming"? The farmer replied, "No, when is it coming"? The preacher said, "I don't know, it could be today or it could be tomorrow." The old man said, "Well, don't tell my wife she will want to go both days." Fiction like this story often gives insight to the careless thoughts of men about the second coming and what will occur immediately after death.

Have you thought where you'd be if the world ended today? If you are someone that believes the Bible you know there are only two places you could be. 1) You'd open your eyes to things so beautiful, so majestic and glorious that your mind cannot even image them. You'd be in the splendor and joys of your Lord in the place He prepared for you (John 14:1-3). There will be no more pain, sorrow, tears or death (Rev. 21:4), none of the troubles of the flesh will ever come again; you'd see the face of the one who died and shed His blood for you in order that you could be saved. The joy of knowing you will be there for eternity will be yours.

2) On the other hand you could open your eyes in “torments in Hades” (Luke 16:23), that is, a place of pain, torment and where the worst of the worst are; it is a place of outer darkness. You'll remember (Luke 16:25) why you are there and the sad memory of how you could have avoided such a place, but you'll know you are there for all eternity with no hope of ever getting out. It is almost too hard to even write about. Let me ask, What if you died right now? That's when your time will end on this earth. Search your heart. Is Christ a part of your life? Have you obeyed the Gospel? How often do you talk to God? Do whatever you have to do to be ready for your own death or for this world to end.

Where would you be if it did? Is it not past time when you should be regularly meeting with the saints on the Lord's day to remember the death of the one who died for you (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25). Is it not time to daily put God in your life and truly worship Him? If you have not obeyed the gospel is it not high time for you to repent and be baptized in order that your sins may be washed away (Acts 22:16)? {P.O. Box 151, Hyden, KY 41749}

URGENT THINGS ABOUT WHICH WE OUGHT TO PRAY

Pray: 1) For all people on the earth (6.9 billion) because such, “Is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4). 2) For brethren to be evangelists: soul winners and church planters, and not just fillers of pulpits; for the Savior said, “therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38). 3) For our young people to be spared going to Theological Cemeteries, where their faith is buried under the rubbish of post-modernism, old fashion modernism, neo-orthodoxy, or the residue of the infidelity of Julius Wellhausen, etc., but pray that they will be trained, “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). 4) For the unity of our brotherhood for Jesus prayed that they “all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21). 5) For rulers (1 Tim. 2:2), who support the homosexual agenda and the slaughter of the innocent to repent toward God (Rom. 1:26-27, 31). 6) For the whole nation to repent lest “the wrath of the Lord (rise) up against” us as it did His people in the time of Jeremiah (2 Chr. 36:16-20).

America is in dire trouble, therefore it would be wise that from time to time we pray with fasting (Matt. 5:16-18). {Jim Waldron}