

Robin: Hi, Jon and Tim. I'm Robin Rumble hailing, at the moment, from North Carolina. My

question is perhaps a bit picky but surfaces the deeper underlying question about the literary structure of the revelation. Several times in your video, on Revelation also in your podcasts on The Day of the Lord, you've made a point that in John's vision of Jesus as a High King sitting on a white horse in Revelation 19, the blood on his robe is his own, and that this vision segment is about Jesus's return.

However, the reasons you give seem to me to be confusing. I'm just wondering if somehow your hermeneutics are conflicted. Thanks.

Jon: So she actually sent some more information on that question. So when she said, "Your hermeneutics are conflicted," I think what she was referring to is how the Revelation in the way we talked about it wasn't this chronological sequence of events, but really the hinge for why that wouldn't be the blood of people he was destroying is because the battle hadn't started yet. So it was appealing to chronology when chronology wasn't that important in other parts of the Revelation. So I think that's what she meant by a conflicted hermeneutics.

But in general, I think there is a lot of pushback with that interpretation of it being Jesus' blood.

Tim: Yeah, we got a couple of other questions about that, too.

Jon: Yeah. So is this a bit of a stretch? Have other people interpreted it that way?

Tim: Yeah, totally. Yeah, I didn't make up the idea. I've started reading people who are way smarter than me and found like, oh, man, there's so many really, really sharp biblical scholars, present and past, who have argued for that.

You actually can't start with that scene of Jesus riding in on the horse to make the

full case for that. It actually is about the depiction of Jesus and his army victorious as a theme that runs throughout the whole book of Revelation.

And so it goes all the way back to the letters to the seven churches, where multiple people in these churches are being persecuted. He mentions churches being put in prison, some have died, Christians have died as martyrs. But yet, every letter he talks about how that each of these communities can become overcomers or conquerors.

To the one who overcomes, Jesus makes a promise of vindication, stuff like that.

So that raises the question of, "Well, oh, this is persecuted religious minorities, but John is telling them that they can be the conquerors?" It's like a military language.

What does that mean?

And then, in the next vision, Revelation 4 and 5, Jesus is introduced as the Conqueror. It's the same word as the one who conquers. And it's really important.

Before Jesus is introduced onto the scene, he hears Jesus being announced. Like a king entering a throne room, he hears, and the elders in the vision say, "Behold, it's the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David, who is conquering, who has conquered."

Those are both Old Testament texts. Lion of Judah, Genesis 49. Root of David, Isaiah 11. And in both of those cases, it's God's raising up the Messianic King as a violent conqueror and destroyer of wicked people. In Genesis, it's like the lion tears and slashes and bites off the bad guys' heads.

Jon: Yeah, lions are brutal.

Tim: Yeah, totally. So it's very important. This is the introductory scene of Jesus in the...

[crosstalk 00:51:44]

Jon: He becomes the Lion.

Tim: So he's introduced as the lion and as the victorious messianic butt kicking, kill the bad guys. Messiah of Isaiah 11, that's what John hears. So like, that's the announcement made over the loudspeakers.

And then when he looks, the one who walks through the door, what he sees is a lamb, a helpless lamb, with its throat slit and dripping covered in its own blood. And that's Jesus throughout the whole rest of the vision of the Revelation until the moment on the white horse is the first time Jesus is depicted as not the bloody lamb.

So if you read through Revelation 4 and 5, all the way through to chapter 19, where he appears on the horse, every time Jesus is depicted or referred to as the slaughtered Lamb.

Jon: And so this image of the slaughter Lamb obviously is connected to Jesus sacrificial death?

Tim: Yes, that's right. It's a metaphor talking about Jesus is the victorious messianic king

that the prophets were talking about in the Hebrew Bible, Genesis 49:11.

Jon: But his victory didn't come from being this ferocious lion that could rip people apart. His victory came from being a sacrificial Lamb.

Tim: Sacrificial Lamb. And in so doing, they aren't contradicting the Old Testament. What

they're doing is picking up another strand of Old Testament promise that comes all the way back to Genesis 3 when God promised that some a seed of the woman, a descendant of Eve would come to crush the serpent. But His victory over the Genesis

3:15, these descendants' victory, will happen by himself being struck by the serpent. And then that gets played out, especially in Isaiah's depiction of the suffering servant King.

So even the book of Isaiah, you've got Isaiah 11 butt kicking, killed a bad guy's King. But then later in the book of Isaiah, you find out that that figure is going to be victorious by giving up his own life.

Jon: So there are two ways to deal with that. The first way is to say, there are two different modes. God's in warrior mode, and then He's in sacrificial mode and He's going to go back to warrior mode. Right?

Tim: Yeah, sure.

Jon: The second way is to say, "There's some strange interplay between these two, which

is the way God actually wages war is through sacrifice."

Tim: Yeah, you have both those portraits in the Old Testament. What Jesus seems have

done is read them in light of each other, but reinterpreted the divine violence as an image of conquering by sacrificial Lamb and giving up his life.

Jon: And if that's then your position, which is, "That's what Jesus did," then do you begin

to reinterpret any divine violence as that? Or is there still room for some butt-kicking Jesus?

Tim: Well, hold on. Let's just stick in Revelation. Let's finish the thread from the lamb to the white horse.

Jon: Let's finish.

Tim: So, from that scene where Jesus is called the Slain Lamb who conquers his enemies

by dying for them, that's what that image means. Then from there, in chapter 7, the army of the lamb is introduced. And the army of the lamb is introduced as a crowd of people from all nations, who have washed their robes white in the blood of the lamb. Obviously, a beautiful mixing of metaphors. They've become pure—

Jon: It's impossible to do; try to make a robe white with blood.

Tim: Yeah, totally. So but symbolically, the point is the blood is using Leviticus purification

sacrifice imagery of through the blood, they have become the pure ones. And then later in Revelation 12, where it's the battle between the dragon and the army of the Lamb...This is such a great line.

In Revelation 12:10, 11, "Our brethren, the army of the Lamb overcomes the dragon because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of their testimony because they didn't love their lives even unto death." So not only does the Lamb triumph and conquer by giving up his life, but the army of the Lamb conquers by the blood of the Lamb.

Jon: Conquers the dragon.

Tim: Conquers the dragon, in Revelation 12, by the word of their testimony, speaking the

truth of the gospel, the good news that King Jesus died for his enemies.

Jon: Which is kind of similar to the sword in the mouth.

Tim: Exactly. Yeah, that's where I'm going.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then, they overcome with the blood of the Lamb, which is explained as "they

gave up their lives."

Jon: So they conquered the dragon by giving up their lives?

Tim: Giving up their lives, and by their words. By proclaiming Jesus as the true king before

the dragon. Even if the dragon kills them, we're dying just like our King died in act of sacrificial witness against the dragon and his violence. And thereby we conquer him.

That's what it says, "They conquered him through the blood of the Lamb." There's actually more clues to this puzzle, but those are the main ones. And when you get to Jesus, you're already prepared.

Jon: Jesus on the white horse.

Tim: Jesus on the white horse with blood on his robes and a sword in his mouth, you already know what these images mean. Blood on the robes is an image of being the pure one who has died on behalf of the testimony or on the message.

Jon: But it's also pulling from that Isaiah image.

Tim: Okay, yes. All right.

Jon: So there's kind of a dual thing going on there?

Tim: Yes. Now, we're in Revelation 19, the rider on the white horse. That paragraph is just

a load of Old Testament hyperlinks. But it's remarkable. Here, I'll just do it because you get the effect.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: It's Revelation 19:11. "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! And the one

who sat on it is called Faithful and True." That phrase, Faithful and True is a play on some things going on in Hebrew and Isaiah 62. "In righteousness, he judges and

wages war." That's a quotation from Psalm 96. "His eyes are a flame of fire." That's a quotation from Daniel 11.

"On his head are many diadems, he has a name written on him which no one knows except himself." That certainly allusions back to the Divine name that is unknown but then God reveals as known to Moses in the burning bush. "He's closed with a rope dipped and blood." And that's an image from Isaiah 63.

Jon: Of what of treading the winepress alone?

Tim: Yeah. Isaiah 63 - we talked about it earlier in the podcast - is the image of God comes on the day of vengeance, The Day of the Lord, stomping grapes, is an image of him stomping his enemies.

Jon: Yeah, destroying the nations.

Tim: And it's the stomping, the treading of the winepress of his wrath that spatters their juice all over his garment. It is the stomping that makes the robe bloody. What John has done, is he separated the stomping from how you get bloody. So he introduced his Jesus as bloody before he mentions the treading the winepress of the wrath. In Isaiah 63, they're closely connected. In this scene, Jesus is bloody before any stomping begins.

Jon: Before the battle begins?

Tim: Before the battle begins. Again, he's still showing how—

Jon: How important is that? That's I think Robin's question is, is this the chronology that important?

Tim: No. I'm not talking about chronology. I'm talking about the sequence of the sentences in this paragraph. John has hyperlinked to a passage in Isaiah 63, where

the sequence is God comes stomping on his enemies, and that's what makes him bloody. And John has disturbed that sequence in Isaiah 63 and reversed it.

Jon: So he comes bloody but he's going to stomp.

Tim: Yes. Which redefines what it means for Jesus to stomp. And that's what the whole Revelation has been doing. Stomping is another image for conquering. How does Jesus conquer? How does Jesus wage war? How does Jesus gain victory over his enemies? How does Jesus confront evil?

He does it with a sword coming out of his mouth, which we already are prepared for that. It's the testimony. It's the gospel that exposes the truth about Babylon and says, "No more." So one. And then two, the means of his conquering is the robe dipped in blood, namely, the slain Lamb who gives up his life, the saints who don't love their lives even unto death.

Jon: Got it.

Tim: The Revelation is very intentional in how John introduces keywords and images, like

blood and conquering. And then you watch him, he leaves a trail of breadcrumbs. All you do is read through the book quickly with a highlighter, just looking for one or two keywords at a time and you'll see he's left these trails of themes that he developed throughout the book one by one. And so this image of conquering by blood, by giving up your life as a key one. And it comes to its culmination right here.

So my point would be, yes, he's reading Isaiah 63, but he has fundamentally transformed the images in light of his depiction of Jesus as the wounded Victor. And I'm totally not the only person who reads the Revelation this way. Leon Morris, classic, down the line orthodox, Protestant commentator, he makes a whole case of



this. He inbox a lot many commentators. Some don't.

Some think that you should import the divine stomping from Isaiah 63 and that overrides. But in my mind, you can't just say, he's quoting the Old Testament. You have to ask, "What's he doing with these old testament images?" I think the best case that accounts for the whole book is that he's transformed the divine violence of the Old Testament images in light of the cross.

Jon: Okay. So we've talked about this for a while now, but let me try to summarize the whole violence thing.

Tim: Please do.

Jon: I came with this construct of saying, "Hey, look, isn't it as simple as God can have divine violence against people and He has in the Old Testament. That's kind of His typical mode. That's like default mode. But here comes Jesus, and it's this kind of like one time only special of "get out of God's divine wrath because His wrath was put on Jesus instead." There's a little opportunity for switch.

But that's not going to be on sale forever. And the Day the Lord is coming and if you haven't signed up you're going to get back to what was the default mode, which is the butt-kicking Jesus.

Tim: Getting stomped - this time by Jesus.

Jon: So there's that construct. When you have that construct, you get to a passage is like,

Jesus bloodied with battle that comes from an image of God stomping the winepress and you can see like, "Okay, cool, this is Jesus kicking butt."

Tim: No more Mr. Nice Guy.

Jon: No more Mr. Nice Guy.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay. So what you've done is you said, "Okay, let's start again." First of all, divine violence, I should say, in the Old Testament it's actually pretty nuanced. Four to five times, 8 out of 10, 16 out of 20, 32 out of 40 times, is not actually God doing it, it's natural consequences.

Tim: Just consequences. Not natural consequences.

Jon: Consequences.

Tim: For which God takes responsibility.

Jon: Yeah, that's phrase you've been using. "Take responsibility." He's like, "Hey, no, no I

was behind that, even though it was betrayed is just a normal consequence." And you brought up the Exodus passage. And so, even on those times where you're like, "Well, this is obviously God," those 1 out of 5 times, even those are often...

Tim: Some other agent of the violence is introduced even if it's a mysterious agent.

Jon: The Destroyer. That's so interesting.

Tim: And remember, we're not making this up. Paul the Apostle was tracking with this trend, and he himself inserted—

Jon: Imported the destroyer into the Numbers—

Tim: Into other stories where the destroyer doesn't appear, which means that he's worked

out of theology that even when God does direct divine violence, it's still him handing people over to something other.

Jon: And that becomes the key term is "handing over." I loved that idea of God is sustaining the created order and He is actually making things...He's giving orders by

His own power.

Tim: Yeah, 24/7 imposing order so that creation doesn't implode.

Jon: And so the consequences Him just saying, "I'm going to unfold what will naturally unfold because of the disorder you're trying to create. I'm not going to create more order out of your disorder. I'm just going to let the disorder be."

Tim: Yeah. "You want Toh