

Revelation Chapter Nineteen:

a poetic exposition

The book of Revelation captured me as the revelation of Jesus Christ back in 1994, the revelation of a person. Many seek a digest of events from the book, and surely a digest lies in there somewhere. But what is a digest without the wondrous person about whom the chronicle speaks? Who is He? We all know chapter nineteen as the vision of Christ on the white steed with the glorious sword from his mouth. In this poem, I follow the text with some obvious interpretive elements, but hopefully also presenting a poem that remains well within the simple intent of the text.

Brian Coatney

The crowd assembled made a mighty roar,
In triumph to the judgments of their Lord,
For he had triumphed over earth's great whore,
When from his mouth there issued forth a sword.

Her fornication desperately corrupt,
Had stained the earth with so much saintly blood,
The day had come to quickly interrupt,
The tide of such a vile, ungodly flood.

The alleluias streamed throughout the skies,
The smoke of torment up forever rose,

As praise around the throne in earnest cries,
Came from a multitude in festal clothes.

A voice of many waters sounded out,
In thund'ring chorus resonant with praise,
That now a feast forever was about,
To start and last through never-ending days.

How happy are those called unto the feast,
They wear their garments white—washed in his blood,
They feel relief that hell's most fiery beast,
Lies dispatched by his passion's trickling flood.

Many prophets heralded some song,
Throughout earth's long, and violent history.
Those not of Jesus taught an error strong,
Seducing tickled ears deceitfully.

Now heaven opened and a great, white horse,
Appeared with him called faithful, just and true,
To finish out war's final destined course,
That factions locked in combat might be through.

His eyes were fires lit in holy flame,
His head stood covered with a host of crowns,
He had a secret, never disclosed name,
But when he spoke he dispelled downcast frowns.

His garment dipped in blood is Heaven's mark,
His name is chastely called "The Word of God,"
And from his mouth goes forth into the dark,
A smiting sword and righteous, ruling rod.
The conquering blade 's supremely sharpened edge,
Smited savage nations still in rank,
Where war's rebellion held forth as a hedge,
But fell to earth a bloody, butchered shank.

Some think the wrath of God a trifling thing,
Where love indulges sin forever more,
And sin no wrath must fear a hell to bring,
An end to earth's parading, scarlet whore.

The winepress of his wrath He names as fierce,
The blood of trampled grapes cries out in pain,
The anguished sounds, the bowels of hell will pierce,
Not ever troubling victor's ears again.

An irony most subtle comes to mind,
That wrath so fierce and anguished to the lost,
Exists the same as love that we did find,
In the winepress of His blood that paid our cost.

Oh love that hates, and hate that loves,
And hates and loves the same,
Oh feathered vengeance—crushing dove,
You share the self-same name.

Your hate is love; your love is hate,
Your winepress is your Cross,
To those that love, they praise as great,
What others curse as loss.

In irony you stand the King of Kings,
A wrathful lamb to some, to us sublime;
To woeful ones, your love but anger brings,
While praises from the saints the higher climb.

Then eerie in the midst of heaven's skies,
An angel summons fowls to gather thick,

To eat a gory supper caked with flies,
Contagion's meal of kingly flesh made sick.

As prelude to the meal, the beast and kings,
With armies gathered in defiance fight,
They sound a voice in unison that rings,
With scorn before their sadly destined night.

The beast and prophet false whose wondrous signs,
Deceived the nations into deadly war,
Come to a sudden end of their designs,
In a fiery lake that burns with brimstone core.

But is the fire different on the throne,
Before angelic, singing multitudes?
Is heaven's fire a fire to disown,
In hell, as light that torments and intrudes?

To one a heaven, to the other hell,
All swallowing light refused to separate be,
Can any voice this tragedy full tell,
Of those that spurn the Lamb's felicity?

The fowls did feed and fill to full their throats,
Their gullets crammed with beastly serving flesh,
That satiates, but in the end it bloats,
With all the lies in which it lived enmeshed.

The chapter here ends on this gruesome note,
Of judgment for the unrepenting man,
The author, our apostle, later wrote,
A beauteous vision for our eyes to scan.

The enemy's defeat but prefaced well,
The soaring story of a heaven high,
Where heaven's glories tower over hell,
And never more its patrons weep or die.

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