

The Lamb and His Followers

Revelation 17: 14

INTRODUCTION

- A. In any military conflict, the leaders are always remembered.
 - 1. We remember George Washington for his commanding the colonies against the British, we remember Robert E. Lee for his commanding the Confederate forces, we remember Teddy Roosevelt for his commanding the rough riders, we remember Norman Schwarzkopf for his commanding the forces against Iraq in 1991.
 - 2. It's really sad that those who really fought the battle are not remembered — those who gave up their lives are often forgotten, those who lost limbs are often forgotten, those who fought in the trenches are often forgotten.
- B. In our text this evening, John discusses not only the commanding officer but the soldiers — he discusses the Lamb and his followers.
 - 1. In some ways, the analogy of warfare doesn't fit the Lamb and his followers.
 - a. Although the Lamb's followers fight the war in the "trenches," their victory is guaranteed because of the Lamb's work — No soldier can say his victory is guaranteed because the commanding officer was killed and resurrected.
 - b. Although the soldiers who fight the combat do deserve a great amount of credit, the Lamb's followers who fight the fight deserve far less credit — Jesus has paved the way and done nearly all the work.
 - 2. But, in other ways, this analogy does fit the Lamb and his followers.
 - a. The Lamb and his followers are engaged in a spiritual war.
 - b. Although the Lamb's victory is guaranteed, his followers must fight the battle here on this earth.
 - 3. Tonight, we want to examine this text to see what we can learn about the Lamb and his followers.

THE LAMB

- A. The Lamb as a victor — "The Lamb will conquer them."
 - 1. The beast and his cohorts will not be victorious, for the Lamb will conquer them.
 - 2. Jesus is going to be victorious.
 - a. Jesus told his disciples, "I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33).
 - b. "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rev. 3:21).
 - 3. There is no doubt the victory that is coming.
 - a. Satan is going to be defeated, and the Lamb is going to be victorious.
 - b. When the Iraqi conflict began, there was probably not a one of us who doubted the outcome.
 - 1) We knew the United States, with its far superior military, would be victorious.
 - 2) But, at the same time, each of us probably felt at least some apprehension: how long would the war take, how many might die, will those we love be harmed?
 - c. Although there were — and still are — many uncertainties about the war in Iraq, there is no doubt about the conflict of this world: Satan and his followers will be soundly defeated, and the Lord and his followers will be victorious.
- B. The Lamb will be victorious, for "He is Lord of lords and King of kings."
 - 1. The title "Lord of lords" is a description of God from the Old Testament.
 - a. "The LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great, the might, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe" (Deut. 10:17).
 - b. As the Lord of lords, God is higher than every other lord that man knows.

2. The title “King of kings” has a long history.
 - a. “King of kings” had long been applied to supreme rulers in the East.
 - 1) “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings” (Ezek. 26:7).
 - 2) In revealing Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Daniel referred to the king as “king of kings” (Dan. 2:37).
 - b. At the time John wrote, the title was used of the Parthian king.
 - c. The Parthian king Phraates III was accustomed to being addressed as “king of kings.”
 - d. This allowed Antony to proclaim his two sons by Cleopatra to be “king of kings” when he made them rulers over Armenia, Media, and Parthia.
- C. This understanding of Jesus had to give great comfort to the Christians to whom John wrote.
 1. The Emperor, the Parthian kings, although they claimed to have complete power, did not.
 2. Jesus, the One with whom these Christians stood, had all power; he is King of kings and Lord of lords. He, as the King of kings and Lord of lords, will overcome all those who trouble the Christian.

THE LAMB’S FOLLOWERS

- A. Those with the Lamb are called and chosen and faithful.
- B. They are called.
 1. Calvin taught that God had chosen who would be saved and who would be lost long before the foundation of the world.
 - a. God, according to Calvin, calls those who are predestined for salvation; those who are not predestined do not receive this call.
 - b. Because of our aversion to Calvinism — it has no biblical foundation; many in churches of Christ do not want to talk about the call of God. But, it would do us well to talk about the call of God, for it is biblical.
 2. God does call people into a relationship with him.
 - a. The Bible teaches that God has called Christians.
 - 1) “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints” (Rom. 1:7).
 - 2) “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2).
 - b. This call is for all people, not just a select few — God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).
 - c. This calling takes place through the proclamation of the Gospel.
 - 1) “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).
 - 2) “He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 2:14).
 - 3) The call of God, then, is not some mystical feeling that one gets that makes him decide to ask God for forgiveness. The call of God, then, is the urging to obey as one hears the Gospel proclaimed.
 - d. Those with the Lamb have been called into a relationship with him.
- C. They are chosen.
 1. Central to the New Testament’s teaching about the people of God is that they are chosen.
 - a. God “chose us” in Christ “before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph. 1:4).
 - b. Peter addressed his first epistle to the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Pet. 1:2).
 2. Again, Calvinism plays a huge role in how we view election.
 - a. Calvin tells us that people are chosen by God, without any effort of their own, and there is nothing they can do to undo God’s election.

- b. The idea in election is not that God elected who would and who would not be saved but that he would bestow special blessings upon those who were chosen.
 - 1) Eph. 1:3-6 — Through the election of God, we have blessings beyond measure.
 - 2) In Rev. 17:14, God chose Christians to be victorious over the forces of evil.

D. They are faithful.

- 1. The other two attributes of those with the Lamb focus upon God's doing — calling and choosing, but this last one refers to what the Lamb's followers must do — be faithful.
- 2. We must be faithful to the Lord.
 - a. Barnabas went to Antioch “and saw the grace of God,” and “he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose” (Acts 11:23).
 - b. “My beloved and longed-for brethren, stand fast in the Lord beloved” (Phil. 4: 1).
- 3. There are great benefits for those who are faithful to the Lord.
 - a. The faithful will receive the crown of life — “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2: 10).
 - b. The faithful would be kept from the hour of trial — “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 3:10).
 - 1) The hour of trial spoken of in this verse has come and gone.
 - 2) But, there is a great principle that can be applied here: God kept these early Christians from wrath, and he will keep us from his wrath at the end of the age.
 - c. Are you faithful to the Lord? Are you always striving to do what you know is right?