

February 2009

To our neighbours near the church in Friston Village and our neighbours close to where we individually live.

Dear neighbours,

The last book of the Bible is called the book of Revelation. It is full of pictures; some of it we may call startling imagery. It is a closed book to many. But its name indicates the opposite – it is a revealing. The revealing of those things which are final - the final days of the earth, of the devil and all evil; the introduction of a new heaven and an ultimate new earth which will be without evil and permanent (permanent, not in a relative sense but eternal); the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the striking pictures reads:- “I saw...a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer” (Revelation 6.2).

It is picture language to illustrate something very real and something that is happening now.

With the help of some clues, let's see if we can get to the bottom of it all.

1. The colour white represents either age (as in white hairs) or purity (as in a bride's white wedding dress). Here it is both combined. The steed is illustrated as an outstanding animal fit to carry a perfectly pure and eternal monarch.
2. While the bow is not used in modern global warfare, it represents the weapon of warfare.
3. It was not usual for the king leading his troops to battle to wear his crown (though not unknown). Here it serves simply to represent the person who sits on the horse as a king.

It is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Until His death He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4.15). He tasted death in order to make an atonement for sin. But now, He has been exalted to the right hand of God on high. “We see Jesus,” (in our mind's eye) “who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Hebrews 2.9)

In the same passage Jesus Christ is called the captain of His people's salvation (Hebrews 2.10).

So, our picture in Revelation is of Jesus Christ as captain, or general entering the field “conquering and to conquer”. That is to say, winning now and with every intention of finally winning. He intends the ultimate conclusion to be in triumph.

Perhaps, a little irreverently, I might invite you to consider another picture. Of Eros in London's Piccadilly Circus. He, too, has an arrow; for this was a usual way of portraying things in ancient times. But this arrow was for aiming at the heart – not to kill, as you well know, but to cause to fall in love. I stress again - this style of representing things was not unusual. Eros was well known to the ancient world!

The Lord Jesus Christ, then, is pictured as conquering and intending to conquer. But it is to conquer the heart. To win the heart's affections. It is happening all the time.

He will not leave heaven visibly until the time of His return to introduce the end of things as they are and to introduce the new heaven and the new earth. But by His Spirit, He is everywhere – out and about winning the hearts of an innumerable number of people of all ages, in all parts of the world and in every period of history.

He wins their voluntary and undying affection, drawing people to Him, by making them to appreciate the gospel as being for them as individuals, no matter how far gone in sin. In that gospel, He declares:-

1. His love for people of all sorts and conditions because they are lost.
2. He takes such people on board by granting them repentance
3. He made an atonement for sin at Calvary, but applies it to the heart of all those who turn to Him as they repent.
4. He makes such people know (beyond the shadow of a doubt) that their particular sins are all blotted out, and He will not call them to further account for them.
5. He promises that they are adopted into His family, the church. (The word "church" is the Greek word meaning "the Lord's".)
6. He promises that they will behold His glory and remain with Him for ever.

All these things are declared chapter and verse in the Bible. I haven't room to print even one text for each of the above, but I promise you they are there in great number. And there are so many other precious things besides, promised to those who love Him. He really does melt the heart.

But what melts the heart most is that, though He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, eternal and sinless, He took human flesh in order to die, like we have to, to bear the full force of God's wrath against our sins. He took our place. He bore it for us. Now He is glorified and all who believe in Him share His life, are in Him for ever. He was without sin and yet He loved people with the sorts of sins that we have - sufficiently to substitute for them at the place of judgment. We go free; not to sin further, but to glorify Him.

This is our message. At every service you would hear an explanation of a Bible passage. The Sunday afternoon service is especially geared to the preaching of the gospel, as the means by which we are introduced to all these great things. You are welcome to attend any service – on Sundays at 1045hrs and 1400hrs and on Tuesday at 1930hrs.

Our website (address above) contains a large number of these explanations.