

Lent, Day 36
Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Revelation 19:11–21

Have you ever had a conversation with someone about Christianity and they have thrown up historical times like the Crusades or the Spanish Inquisition? Those are difficult things to address because they know and we know that Christians who engaged in those things were wrong to do so. The way of the cross is the way of peace not war.

Wright and others are so right when they remind us that John is continuing to use figurate language when speaking about the final victory over the beast and the false prophet. Wright says it so well, “The victory here is a victory *over* all pagan power, which means *a victory over violence itself*.”¹ He goes on to remind that Jesus’s self-sacrifice on the cross are the tools that he uses to secure victory over those powers.

Those of us who are looking forward to taking up a sword to follow Jesus in the last great battle against the infidels need to be reminded that it is our King who has already won the battle with the sword of his mouth. That sword is the Word of God. We should also remember that he is the Word of God and the Word of God is all about him. We participate in this final battle through our faithful testimony to his great and final work, the cross.

This should also check us on how we share this testimony. We can be tempted to use pagan power here as much as anywhere else. We can weaponize the faith and unfortunately we have. We need to be open and honest with our testimony which may even warn against a wrath to come, but we cannot coerce or cajole. We must love and lay down even our own will for others to become like us in our commitment to the cross of Christ.

Prayer

Lord, bend our swords into plowshares and help us to take up the weapon of the cross. Fill our mouths with your words of love in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ N. T. Wright, *Revelation for Everyone* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 173.