

The Return of the King (Jesus is Coming Again)

Revelation 19:11-21

Introduction: The greatest and most influential person to ever live was Jesus of Nazareth. A survey of the Bible reveals that his life can be outlined around 7 major events:

- 1) The incarnation when the Word became flesh (John 1:14).
- 2) His baptism where He was immersed by John, anointed by the Spirit, and declared by His Father to be the Messiah (Matt. 3:13-17).
- 3) His temptation in the wilderness for 40 days where He accepted His destiny as a Suffering Servant Messiah (Mat. 4:1-11; cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12).
- 4) His crucifixion on the cross where He bore the wrath of God and paid the full penalty of sin providing salvation for all who would trust in Him (Matt 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19).
- 5) His bodily resurrection whereby God declared His acceptance of Christ's sacrifice and His victory over death, hell, Satan and sin (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 1; I Cor. 15).
- 6) His ascension back to heaven (Luke 24; Acts 1) where He intercedes for us at God's right hand (Heb. 7:25) and reigns as Lord and King (Phil. 2:9-11).

7) His 2nd coming where He will establish His universal and cosmic reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-21). It is this last event that has captivated the expectations and hearts of Christians for almost 2000 years. All who know King Jesus as Lord and Savior join with the Apostle John in praying the prayer of Revelation 22:20, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

The 2nd coming of Jesus Christ refers to the historical, visible and bodily return of the Son of God to the earth. This return will be a great and glorious return in power. It will take place at the end of the tribulation period (Rev. 6-18), and the millennial kingdom will immediately follow (Rev. 20:1-6). The enemies of Christ will be totally defeated at his return.

Key texts of this event include Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 14:1-11; Matthew 24:29-31, 36-44; 25:1-26; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28; Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 11:15-19; 14:14-20; 16:12-21; 19:11-21.

Key terms include parousia, meaning presence, coming or arrival; apocalypse, which means unveiling or revelation and epiphany, which means manifestation or appearing.

The nature of the coming is detailed and specific:

- 1) It will be personal (Zech. 14:3-5; Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11).
- 2) It will be historical (Zech. 14:3-5; Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11).

- 3) It will be visible (Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11).
- 4) It will be physical (Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11).
- 5) It will be victorious (Zech. 14:3-5; Rev. 19:11-21).
- 6) It will be cosmic in its benefits (Rom. 8:18-25).

The purpose of the coming is also detailed and specific: 1) It will be to judge Satan, sin, and the system of the world (Rev. 17-18; 19:11-21). 2) It will be to establish the universal, visible manifestation of His kingdom (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 20:1-6). 3) It is to provide motivation for faithful service for the Christian community in each and every generation (Matt. 24:42 – 25:46; 2 Thess. 2:13-17; 1 John 3:1-3).

The climactic events of His coming include: 1) The battle of Armageddon (Rev. 14:14-20; 16:12-21; 19:17-21); 2) The Sheep and Goats Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46); 3) The Resurrection of the Saints (Rev. 20:4), and 4) The establishment of His 1000 year reign or millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6).

Few things stand in greater contrast than the 1st and 2nd coming of King Jesus as the following comparison makes clear:

The First and Second Comings of Jesus Christ	
His First Coming	His Second Coming
He rode a donkey	He will ride a white horse
He came as the Suffering Servant	He will come as King and Lord
He came in humility and meekness	He will come in majesty and power
He came to suffer the wrath of God for sinners	He will come to establish the Kingdom of God for His saints
He was rejected by many as the Messiah	He will be recognized by all as Lord
He came to seek and save the lost	He will come to judge and rule as King
He came as God incognito	He will come as God in all His splendor

So, there is a clear and obvious contrast in His first and second coming, but there is also a certain continuity that Graeme Goldsworthy captures beautifully, “Christ does not return to do some new or different work. His return in glory will be to consummate the finished work of his life, death and resurrection. At his coming he will be revealed in all his glory to all principalities and powers. That which the believer now grasps by faith will be open to every eye...Although the Lamb will ever be the Lamb, for the glorified Christ is exalted on account of his sufferings, nevertheless the majesty of the Lion will shine forth from the Lamb at His second coming” (*The Lion and the Lamb*, 28).

I. Jesus will return in glory and power 19:11-16

- Revelation 19-22 is the way the Bible is supposed to end, the way our hearts long for it to end. John Piper puts it so well, “there are two appearings of Christ—one is called an appearing of grace, the other called an appearing of glory (Titus 2:11-13). . . . The Christ who will come in glory is the Christ who came in grace. . . . What God’s grace has begun in our lives through the first coming of Christ his glory will complete in our lives through the second coming” (“Our Hope: The Appearing of Jesus Christ,” 5-18-86).
- John’s vision of the second coming of Christ focuses primarily on one major aspect of His return: His complete and total victory over all the powers of evil. He sees our King coming as the conquering Warrior Messiah “in bloodstained garments, destroying all hostile and opposing powers with his mighty sword. . . . In his cross and resurrection, Christ won a great victory over the powers of evil; by his second coming, he will execute that victory” (Ladd, 252-253). There is not a more glorious description of our coming King in all of the Bible than verses 11-16. Three facets of His return are highlighted in these verses.

1) His appearance will be glorious 19:11-13

- Heaven opens and we see a rider on a white horse. This is not the rider of 6:2 who represented the spirit of conquest embodied

ultimately in the Beast of 13:1-10. This rider is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the return of the King! The white horse symbolizes victory and possibly purity. This rider also has 5 names, 4 that are revealed and one that is concealed. Here he is called “Faithful and True” (1:5; 3:14). “Faithful” conveys dependability, reliability, trustworthiness. “True” affirms that He is authentic, genuine, the real thing. What He says you can believe. When He acts you can trust Him. In fact as “Faithful and True” He can do what no other King, ruler, or warrior can do, “in righteousness he judges and makes war.” Ladd notes, “The present tense of the verbs indicates the permanent character of Messiah in all his acts” (p. 253). He is always Faithful, True, and righteous in whatever He does, including making war.

- Verse 12 adds three further characteristics of the returning King. First, His eyes are like a flame of fire communicating His penetrating judgment and insight (1:14; 2:18; Dan. 10:6). Jesus peers into the very depths of our souls. He sees every act, every thought, every emotion. He knows you like no one else. He knows you better than you know yourself. Such a reality should thrill you and terrify you. It should humble you. He knows you in all of your sin, depravity and wickedness. And yet, He loves you and cares for you. To know you

and me as He does and yet still love us is simply another evidence of His amazing grace. Second, “On his head are many crowns, many diadems.” These are the crowns of royalty, the crowns of absolute, complete and total sovereignty. Swindoll notes “This image of the multi-crowned King Jesus inspired Matthew Bridges in 1852 to pen a majestic hymn that God’s people still love to sing:

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne:
Hark! How the heav’nly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Thru all eternity” (p.249).

The end of verse 12 adds the third characteristic of verse 12: “He has a name written that no one knows but himself.” This is His third name and also his concealed name. “That he also has a secret name means that the human mind cannot grasp the depths of his being” (Ladd, 254). For all of eternity we will grow in our knowledge and wonder of this great Redeemer King!

- Verse 13 adds two more descriptions to this awesome vision. First, “He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood.” Given the context and the parallels in Isaiah 63:1-6 and Revelation 14:20, the blood of His enemies would be the most natural reading. However, we also see in Revelation the importance of the blood of the martyred saints (6:10; 17:6; 18:24) and the blood of the Redeeming Lamb (5:9). Perhaps it is God’s intention to remind us that His enemies will be judged, the saints will be vindicated, and the redemption of the Lamb will be remembered for all of eternity. Of this much I am certain: We should never forget that without the shedding of His blood, the precious blood of the Son of God, there is no forgiveness for our sins.

Second, the 4th name of the Returning King is revealed: “he is called The Word of God.” (cf. John 1:1; 1 John 1:1). As “The Word of God,” He is God’s perfect communication and revelation. When you look at Jesus you are looking at God. When you listen to Jesus, you are hearing the voice of God. In these last days, God “has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb. 1:2).

2) His army is holy 19:14

- When the King returns He will be accompanied by His armies. The plural tips us off that both angels and believers are in view, though the

saints are the main army in view here. Angels are said to come with Christ in Zechariah 14:5; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Matthew 13:40-42; 16:27; 24:30-31; 25:31-32; I Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Jude 14-15. Believers are said to return with the King in 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Revelation 17:14. But, verse 14 reflects verse 19, which is clearly a reference to the redeemed. Believers clothed in the imputed righteousness of Christ and their righteous deeds come “in fine linen, white and pure... following him on white horses.”

- We should not miss the observation that they are “following him.” When we return with Christ, He will be out front. He will lead the way. We will not be participators in the battle, only spectators. King Jesus did not need our assistance or help when He came the first time to redeem sinners, and He will not need our assistance or help when He comes the second time to reign as Sovereign. Holy armies come with Him and are following Him. He fights the battle for us. He again wins the day on behalf of those who love and trust Him.

3) His authority is unparalleled 19:15-16

Three images (sword, staff and winepress) depict the unparalleled authority of the returning King. Old Testament references once again drive the argument of these verses. “From his mouth comes a sharp

sword” draws from Isaiah 11:4 (cf. Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; also 2 Thess. 2:8). His powerful word is the means by which He will “strike down the nations and rule them with a rod of iron.” This draws from Psalm 2:8-9 (cf. Rev. 2:26-27; 12:5; also Isa. 11:4). Further, “he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.” This hearkens back to Isaiah 63:1-6 (cf. Joel 3:13-14; Rev. 14:19-20; 16:19). He can judge the world in such vivid wrath because He is “God the Almighty”, the Sovereign God (1:8; 4:8, 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6; 21:22). He can do all of this because on his robe along the thigh he has a name, a 5th name: “King of kings and Lord of lords” (17:14; see also Deut. 10:17; Dan. 2:47). He and He alone is the sovereign King and Lord. He has no equal and no competition. He possesses full divine authority and absolute power over all things (Matt. 28:16-20). This is who He is. This is He who is coming. It is a day His followers look, pray and sing for! David Jeremiah is right, “When we sing, “All hail the power of Jesus’ name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, and Crown Him Lord of all,” we are proclaiming His coming again” (*Escape The Coming Night*, 206).

II. King Jesus will judge all who reject Him 19:17-18

- As the apostle Paul anticipated his approaching execution, he wrote, “there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8). And the apostle John wrote as the end of his life drew near, “It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).
- It is sad, tragic and heartbreaking beyond words that unbelievers do not get to share or enjoy our hope. For them there is no hope, only horrible and terrifying destruction and judgment.

1) There will be no escape 19:17

John Piper says, “The second coming is like lightning and vultures.” He notes Christ’s coming “will be globally unmistakable. It will be as publicly unmistakable as lightning” (Matt. 24:27). And, the 2nd coming of Christ will be “like vultures [who] come on a corpse” (Matt. 24:28). “When the world is ready for judgment as road kill is for the vultures, then he will come in great wrath.... This will not be private, secret, or pleasant for unbelievers. He will come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). And the judgment will be like

vultures sweeping in on the corpse of human rebellion” (“The Second Coming Is Like Lightning and Vultures”, 3-18-09). The apostle John sees an angel. The sun is to his back giving him an ominous appearance. He cries in a “loud voice” to “all the birds,” the vultures “flying high overhead.” They are called to “Come, gather together for the great supper of God.” This supper is much different than the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in 19:9. There the saints are called to come and celebrate with the Lord. Here sinners are called and condemned by the Lord for a “bird feast,” a vulture’s banquet where they are the entrée. It is a great supper because all rebellious sinners on earth will be present. Try as they might, there is no escape.

2) There will be no discrimination 19:18

Verses 17-18 draw from Ezekiel’s prophecy against Gog (Ezk. 39:17-20). Scott Duvall solemnly notes, “Everyone will participate in one of two eschatological feast: the righteous joining in the wedding supper of the Lamb or the wicked becoming the feast at the great supper of God. God will judge the wicked from every social category (6:15; 13:16); social status or rank will not be enough to exempt the ungodly from judgment” (258). Scott is right. Kings, captains and mighty men will be judged. Free and slave will be judged. Just as our God is indiscriminate

in His offer of salvation (Acts 10:34), He is also without discrimination in His judgment. A day of universal, righteous reckoning is coming. Everyone will be held accountable for their rejection of the Lamb.

III. King Jesus will defeat the enemies who oppose Him 19:19-20

The long awaited Battle of Armageddon (14:14-20; 16:12-16) will be a disappointment because it will be over in a flash. It will last but a moment. Swindoll says, "Let's cut to the chase: Before anybody on earth can utter the word "Armageddon," the battle will be over. When God determines the end has come, it's curtains" (254). Martin Luther in his classic hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" wrote of how our God deals with Satan and his devices, "One little word shall fell him." When the King returns, this is exactly what will happen!

1) Jesus will capture His enemies 19:19-20

The beast of 13:1-10 (Antichrist) gathers with his armies to war against the returning King. So swift and complete is the defeat of this evil army that our text does not even describe it! It simply notes the results. Both the beast and false prophet are captured (v. 20). The deceptive ministry and lying propaganda of the false prophet is specifically addressed. Through false miracles or "signs" he had deceived the followers of the beast. This

is a reminder that not everything that appears to be a miracle is a miracle, and not everything that is a miracle is a miracle from God. These two are the first inhabitants of eternal hell, “the lake of fire” (20:14-15; 21:8). There is not a hint of annihilation in these verses. Their eternal destiny is one of conscious torment and eternal separation from God. Revelation simply confirms the witness of Jesus (Matt. 13:40-42; 25:41-46; Mark 9:42-48), who said more about the reality of hell than anyone else in the Bible. Captured and condemned: two words that describe the future of all who say no to God’s grace revealed in Jesus Christ.

2) Jesus will slay His enemies 19:21

- Here is a further and final and unforgettable picture of the destiny of those who have said “no” to God. It details in tragic words what these people who are alive on earth can expect when Jesus comes again. They are slain by the divine sword coming from the mouth of Christ. The birds will gorge on their flesh. This apocalyptic imagery can only approximate the horrors that lost humanity will experience then and later at the final judgment, the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). The Bible teacher John Philips says it well,

“Then suddenly it will all be over. In fact, there will be no war at all, in the sense that we think of war. There will be just a word

spoken from Him who sits astride the great white horse. Once He spoke a word to a fig tree, and it withered away. Once He spoke a word to howling winds and heaving waves, and the storm clouds vanished and the waves fell still. Once He spoke to a legion of demons bursting at the seams of a poor man's soul, and instantly they fled. Now He speaks a word, and the war is over. The blasphemous, loud-mouthed Beast is stricken where he stands. The false prophet, the miracle-working windbag from the pit is punctured and still....Another word, and the panic-stricken armies reel and stagger and fall down dead. Field marshals and generals, admirals and air commanders, soldiers and sailors, rank and file, one and all—they fall. And the vultures descend and cover the scene.” (Quoted in Swindoll, 253).

- David Platt sums up well all we have seen in this passage of Scripture: “What a powerful picture of Christ—on a white horse, faithful and true, the righteous Judge and Messianic warrior who sees all, knows all, and judges all, crowned with diadems and shrouded in mystery. He comes to conquer God's enemies once and for all, to end the history of the world with the revelation of God's Word, to rule the nations as He brings the wrath of God upon this world dominated by

sin and Satan. He is King of kings and Lord of lords” (Sermon, 10-14-12).

Conclusion

“The Incomparable Christ”

Author Unknown

More than nineteen hundred years ago there was a Man born contrary to the laws of life. This Man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He did not travel extensively. Only once did He cross the boundary of the country in which He lived; that was during His exile in childhood. He possessed neither wealth nor influence. His relatives were inconspicuous, and had neither training nor formal education. In infancy He startled a king; in childhood He puzzled doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked upon the billows as if pavements, and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His service. He never wrote a book, and yet all the libraries of the country could not hold the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song and yet He has furnished the theme for more than all the songwriters combined. He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students. He never marshalled an army, nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun; and yet no leader ever had more volunteers who have, under His orders, made more rebels stack

arms and surrender without a shot fired. He never practiced medicine, and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near...The names of the past proud statesmen of Greece and Rome have come and gone. The names of the past scientists, philosophers, and theologians have come and gone; but the name of this Man abounds more and more. Though time has spread [almost 2000] years between the people of this generation and the scene of His crucifixion, yet He still lives. Herod could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him. He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as the living, personal Christ, our Lord and Savior. And, He is coming again! Are you ready?!