

A Bridegroom OR a Conquering Commander?

Revelation 19:1-21

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Introduction:

- I. Revelation is a book with a vital message for modern Christians – Victory is found in Christ Jesus! (17:14).
 1. John was writing to Believers who were oppressed b/c of their faith. Satan was doing everything possible to cause them to fall from faithfulness.
 2. In the closing chaps, John is bringing into focus the Second Coming of Christ. The Judgment is very pronounced. God will never allow the wicked to go unpunished (18:4-6).
 3. In Revelation 19, two images are given describing the Second Coming of Christ. These are dramatic contrasts.
 - a. One is a "Bridegroom," the other a mighty "Warrior."
 - b. One comes in the midst of mirth and joy, the other in death, desolation, and dread.
 - c. One comes for the blessed, the other for the cursed.
- II. There is a great lesson found in this chapter.
 1. It speaks to all assembled today.
 2. Everyone will greet Christ at the Second Coming as either a Bridegroom or as a Conquering Commanded!
 3. A study of each image should prod us to prepare for His Second Coming.

Body:

- I. There are those present who will greet Christ as a Bridegroom (Revelation 19:1-10).
 - A. This metaphor becomes clear as the wedding customs of ancient Israel are considered.
 1. **The Betrothal** – This was similar to our "engagement" period. However it was much more serious. Whenever one was betrothed, it was considered final. The betrothal was a covenant (Ezekiel 16:8). After this ceremony the man and woman were considered legally married but did not live with together for a year's period of time.
 2. **The Interval** – Usually an entire year elapsed between the betrothal and the actual wedding. During this time the couple lived separately

- with their families and the dowery was paid. This length of time served to prove the bride's purity.
3. **The Groom comes to take his bride** – The groom would come to take his betrothed at the end of the interval. He usually came with a group of friends and took his wife back to his house where the wedding feast was prepared (Matthew 25:1).
 4. **The Bride's Adornment** – Much care went into making the bride as beautiful as possible. Her complexion was polished, hair was braided with jewels, and her garments were spotless (Jeremiah 2:32).
 5. **The Wedding Procession** – The groom arrived at the bride's house, often dressed as a King. He took his bride and a grand procession followed all the way to his house. All along the route were demonstrations of joy – shouts, singing, and dancing (Jeremiah 7:34).
 6. **The Wedding Feast** – This was a prolonged supper lasting 7-14 days. Throughout the time joy and merriment prevailed.
 7. The overall emotion was joy and happiness. Mirth and laughter prevailed in the hearts of all present! Each looked to this occasion with great anticipation of joy!
- B. The application of this marriage metaphor to Christ and His Church suggests a marvelous lesson.
1. The Church is the "Bride" of Christ (Matthew 9:15; Ephesians 5:22; Revelation 21:9). We have in the ancient weddings a symbol between Christ and His Church.
 2. Notice how each step of the marriage process illustrates Christ's Second Coming:
 - a. The betrothal (2 Corinthians 11:2). The Church is presently betrothed, not married, to Christ.
 - b. The dowery (Acta 20:28). The blood of Christ was the dowery paid.
 - c. The interval between the betrothal and the actual wedding, is our present era. The time between Christ's ascension into Heaven and His second coming (Revelation 19:7).
 - d. The Bride's adornment (Revelation 19:8). During the interval, the Church is busily engaged in good works so as to be clothed properly (Revelation 16:15).
 - e. The Groom's coming (Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). Revelation 19:7-8 looks to this moment.
 - f. The wedding feast will last forever (Luke 13:29).
- C. This picture is presented by John to encourage his readers. They must

hold on to their faith because of the wonderful blessings ahead! What a blessed picture! (v. 9).

II. There are those present who will greet Christ as the Conquering Commander! (Revelation 19:11-21).

A. What a horrible picture is next painted by Inspiration's pen!

1. In the very instant that many will be cheering and rejoicing, others will be mourning and crying aloud!
2. Our Lord rides out of Heaven on a great white horse. He rides to judge and make war!
 - a. His penetrating eyes are like fire (Revelation 1:14). He sees all deeds and judges righteously.
 - b. On His head are many diadems (victor's crowns) for He is King of all!
 - c. His garment is sprinkled with the blood of His enemies (Isaiah 63:1-6).
 - d. His angels accompany Him (Matthew 25:31).
 - e. Out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword that will destroy the disobedient (Revelation 1:16).
 - f. He comes to "smite" with a rod of iron because men have not obeyed.
 - g. No one can with stand His fierce power and a great slaughter follows! (Revelation 19:19-21).
 - h. The Judgment Day will be worse than anything man has yet witnessed (Revelation 16:18-20).

B. This portrait of Christ should strike terror into the hearts of all unprepared to meet the Lord when He returns the second time!

1. He IS coming back! (2 Peter 3:10)
2. He WILL punish all who are disobedient to the Gospel! (Revelation 6:12-17)
3. We must realize the truth of this fact and not be deceived by Satan! (Revelation 18:4-6)
4. Do you want to face this Conquering Commander?

*"There's a great day coming, a great day coming, There's a great day coming by and by,
When the saints and the sinners shall be parted right and left,
Are you ready for that day to come?"*

*There's a bright day coming, a bright day coming, There's a bright day coming by and by,
But its brightness shall only come to them that love the Lord,
Are you ready for that day to come?"*

*There's a sad day coming, a sad day coming, There's a sad day coming by and by,
When the sinner shall hear his doom,
"Depart I know ye not," Are you ready for that day to come?*

*Are you ready? Are you ready? Are you ready for the Judgment Day? Are you ready? Are you
ready?
Are you ready for the Judgment Day?" (W. L. Thompson)*

Conclusion:

- I. What a powerful chapter! What contrasting pictures of Christ! A Bridegroom coming in rejoicing, merriment, and happiness. A conquering Commander coming in the midst of woes, cries, pain, death, and war!
- II. Which of these are you expecting? Do you really expect Jesus to come back? Have you educated yourself to the deceit that you have plenty of time yet? (Matthew 24:37-39, 42-44).

"Will we be ready for the Second Coming?"

The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 took silhouette photographs of their victims. The heat of the blasts was so intense that it printed shadows of objects and human beings – some in the midst of their final movement – upon bldgs and roads. One can thus see the shadow of a person sitting on the steps of a bank, looking toward the blast. A shadow soldier unbuttons his Shirt after coming down a ladder from an observation post and hooking his sword to a clipboard.

Stories have been created abt the shadows. It is said that a painter, standing on a ladder and in the act of dipping his brush into the paint can, has left for ages his shadow. In the shadow of a cart on a bridge, it is said, you can see the driver abt to beat his horse.

These shadows, left decades ago, serve to remind us of the Lord's 2nd Coming. We will all be involved in work, play, or pleasure. We need to make sure that at His coming we are ready! "For in an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

- III. Let all prepare to be guests at the great wedding supper! The Lord invites us to come and bring all who will come with us. Will you respond to His gracious invitation? (Matthew 22:1-14).