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# The Victorious Return of Christ

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# *The Victorious Return Of Christ*

*by Dr. Chris Miller*

To many people, the name “Jesus” means anything but *victorious King*. They view him as a teacher or philosopher, perhaps a pacifist or martyr, or even the founder of a new religion, but not as a triumphant leader. Why do such misconceptions exist? The answer is probably because people are more familiar with the historical Jesus of the Gospels than the prophetic Jesus of The Revelation. Because the purpose of Jesus’ first coming was to redeem, the best-known books of the New Testament picture Him as a suffering savior instead of a conquering king.

As we learn about Jesus in the four Gospels, the whole demeanor of His first coming

was that of the humble servant. On the most “royal” day of Jesus’ ministry, when He presented himself as King of Israel on Palm Sunday, He came “lowly and mounted on a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:5). He came not to *demand nor control*, but humbly to offer Himself to those who would receive him. When His own people rejected His gracious offer, the leadership of the nation abused him. Matthew records that the Sanhedrin, Israel’s main ruling body, spat in His face and beat Him with their fists (26:67). His humiliation continued at the hands of Roman soldiers who unwittingly fulfilled Scripture as they brutalized the Son of God. They punished Him

physically and scorned His claim to kingship. A crown of cruel thorns pierced His brow. They beat Him on the head with a reed, placed it in His hands as a “royal scepter,” and bowed down in mock reverence saying, “Hail, King of the Jews” (27:29). According to Roman custom, they again humiliated Jesus on the cross as they stripped and publicly shamed Him. Even the sign at the top of the cross that proclaimed Him “King of the Jews” was intended by Pilate to insult Jesus and the nation. To the casual observer, these strokes paint a portrait of a weak Jesus.

None of these events happened by accident, of course, and in reality all were significant in Jesus’ role as

Savior. To redeem all humanity Jesus had to pay the price for human sin. The scenes depicting his abuse at the hands of the Roman soldiers and his suffering on the cross are hauntingly reminiscent of the sin and consequences of Genesis 3. Jesus wore a crown of thorns that were a direct result of Adam's sin (Genesis 3:18). The scepter that the soldiers gave Him reminds us again of the rule which God entrusted to Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:26-28). They foolishly forfeited their role as God's rulers when they sinned (Genesis 3:17). Even on the cross, exposed and humiliated, Jesus bore the shame of nakedness that God graciously covered up for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). In these ways, Jesus humbly suffered the consequences of Adam's sin to become the promised redeemer, but this is only half of the story.

The glorious side of the story is most clearly told in the final book of the New Testament, appropriately named The Revelation of Jesus Christ. God designed this book to complement and balance the portrait of Jesus given in the Gospels. It reveals a picture of Jesus painted in vivid colors that was previously sketched in only muted tones. Now we see Him not only as a redeemer but also as a king.

This is a remarkable contrast and complement to the humble Jesus of the passion week.

Revelation 19:11-16 proclaims that this same Jesus will not come back in a humble way on a donkey, but victoriously on a white steed as conquering King. His royal countenance will be adorned not with a crown of thorns but with "many diadems" because He is much more than simply "the King of the Jews"; He is now the King of Kings. He will wear a glorious garment that will be dipped in blood, but this time the blood to be shed will be that of His enemies, not His own. The scepter with which He will rule will not be a Roman reed of mockery, but a rod of iron (19:15). Jesus, the suffering Savior, will return as conquering King.

The ultimate goal is not simply to conquer, but more important, to reign. In the final chapters of Revelation, John reveals a few tantalizing foretastes of what life will be like when the Savior assumes His role as Sovereign on earth.

In chapter 20, John sees a new earth which has no sea. As one who had been exiled to an island, John must have understood how isolating the sea could be. He surely welcomed the promise of never being separated from the family of God when Jesus returned. In the next chapter, John uses the comparisons of a groom and bride (21:2) and a father and son (21:7) to speak of our closeness to the Lord himself. No longer will the confining regulations of Temple worship restrict access to God (21:22); we will walk with him as Adam and Eve did in the garden. We will experience unending fellowship with God and His family. Victory over separation will be ours.

The tree of life that has not appeared in Scripture since the fall of Genesis 3 reappears in the final chapter of Revelation where it yields not one, but "twelve crops of fruit" (22:2). Boredom and monotony will have no place in the kingdom; variety and fullness of life will be the order of the day. God will finally lift the curse over



the creation (22:3) and release the earth itself to fulfill its original purpose of serving man. The entire environment will support and encourage fullness of life. Victory in the abundant life will be ours.

Perhaps the greatest blessing, however, will be the absence of sin and the abundance of righteousness. The Lord himself will place His name on the forehead of the believer (22:4) to signify not only His ownership but the implantation of His righteous character on our personalities. No longer will we be fallen beings, much less clones without character, but holy examples of individuals uniquely created by the hand of God. Then we will enjoy victory over sin.

We look back to Calvary and rejoice in the Savior who redeemed us. We look forward to the coming Sovereign who will establish His kingdom and invites us to reign with Him. Yet His life is more than a cause for rejoicing for the believer. In reality His life is also a pattern for ours. Just as He suffered in the past and will return to reign in the future, so also we are destined for suffering now and glory later. Just as He "for the joy set before Him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2), so also we endure present suffering because we know Jesus as our victorious and coming King and "...when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2b). "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the

victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). **I**

Dr. Chris Miller, associate professor of Bible at Cedarville College, earned degrees at Tennessee Temple University, Grace Theological Seminary, and Dallas Theological Seminary. He conducted research at the Jerusalem University College, formerly the Institute of Holy Land Studies. A popular speaker in a number of Christian settings, Dr. Miller also was instrumental in integrating CedarNet technology into Cedarville's Department of Bible curriculum.



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