THE BOOK OF REVELATION, REVISITED

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with Pastor Dan Betzer

THE RETURN OF JESUS TO EARTH

As already indicated in this series, Revelation chapters 19 and 20 are watershed chapters as they whisk us out of the Tribulation description into the saints’ eternity with God. Last week at discussed the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, that time to come in which the Church of Jesus Christ is eternally united with Jesus, He is the Groom and the church is the Bride. Paul's reminder to the believers in Corinth, Greece, make this very clear:

II Corinthians 11:2

*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

Revelation 19:9

*And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

In the many weddings I have officiated over the decades, I have never seen an ugly bride. They appear radiant, and are attired beautifully. When the church, the Bride appears before Jesus, we must be pure, radiant and dressed in robes of white, which is the biblical description of the righteousness of Christ Himself.

We used to sing:

> "Tis a glorious church without spot or wrinkle,
> Washed in the blood of the Lamb!

At this wedding, we will lay our rewards at the feet of Jesus - that is, if we have any rewards following the Judgment Seat of Christ. How tragic it would be, an how terribly embarrassing to lay at His feet only scorched ashes of the hay, wood and stubble, described by Paul in I Corinthians 3! It would be worthwhile for every follower of Christ to be familiar with this coming event - the Marriage Supper. It would affect the way we live now!
In the time when Revelation was written, a marriage in Israel included three distinct aspects.

- The first part included an agreement between the parents of the bride and groom that usually included a dowry paid to the bride. This is still practiced in some cultures, called a betrothal.

- The second part usually involved the groom coming to the home of the bride late at night. He and his male friends would arrive with torches to come for the bride. Jesus' story of the ten virgins in Matthew has to do with this event:

Matthew 25: 1-13

*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. [2] And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. [3] They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: [4] But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. [5] While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. [6] And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh;*
go ye out to meet him. [7] Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. [8] And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. [9] But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. [10] And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. [11] Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. [12] But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. [13] Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

- The third part included the marriage feast, which often took place over several days. The wedding at Cana in Galilee where Jesus turned water into wine offers an example of this.

John 2:1-2 - And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: [2] And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

In Revelation 19, John tells of the Marriage Supper beginning as the Lamb, Jesus Christ, comes to earth for His Bride, the Church. The payment, or dowry, preceding this marriage supper was the blood of Jesus on the cross. His death paid the price. This is why we continue to observe communion, remembering the awful cost of our salvation.

We believers in Christ are currently living in this betrothal period in which we are pledged as the Bride of Christ have not yet been united in eternal marriage or union with Jesus. This will take place shortly following the Rapture of the Church.

An interesting analogy in this chapter (19) includes the fine linen in which the Bride is clothed. Revelation 19:8 - And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.
How do we obtain such righteousness? Certainly not through our alleged goodness. It comes by God's amazing grace alone in Christ.

John 14:6
Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Ephesians 2:8-9
For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.

THE SECOND COMING

We must remember: the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming (to earth) of Christ are two different and completely distinct events.

1. At the Rapture, we believers - both living and dead - hear the trumpet sound and the shout of victory from Heaven, and we are immediately caught up in the clouds to meet Christ.

2. Seven years later, we believers (now in immortal bodies just like Christ's body after His resurrection) come back to earth with Christ to enjoy the 1000 year Millennium.

The Second Coming of Christ to earth occurs as the armies of the world gather for battle (the epicenter of which is the Valley of Armageddon). Our Lord's feet touch down on the summit of the Mount of Olives:

Matthew 24:16-22
Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: [17] Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: [18] Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. [19] And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that
give suck in those days! [20] But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: [21] For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. [22] And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Zechariah 14:1-4

Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. [2] For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. [3] Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. [4] And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Why has Jesus returned to this planet? To rule it! For a thousand years!

Revelation 19:15

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Psalm 2:1-12

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? [2] The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, [3] Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. [4] He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. [5] Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. [6] Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. [7] I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son;
this day have I begotten thee. [8] Ask of me, and I shall give thee the
heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for
thy possession. [9] Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt
dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. [10] Be wise now therefore, O
with/ear, and rejoice with trembling. [12] Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Until Christ returns to rule, Satan's counterfeit messiah plagues the earth's
remaining citizens. But his end is now at hand-and it's not pretty:

Revelation 19:17-21

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice,
saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather
yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; [18] That ye may
eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty
men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh
of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. [19] And I saw the
beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to
make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. [20]
And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought
miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the
mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were
cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. [21] And the
remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which
sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with
their flesh.

Here is a question: when Jesus returns to earth and conquers all His foes,
do we, the redeemed believers, who have returned to earth with Him have
to fight? No, we will not. Jesus spoke everything into existence (see
Genesis 1-3), and with His word alone He will conquer and destroy.

You and I are only onlookers in this scene of vast carnage. Those who
mistakenly believed there was no reason to fear God will now learn a very
painful lesson. All rebellion to God's authority will be suddenly ended.
All opposition to God's rule (theocracy - God-rule) will be silenced and
the earth will settle in for the one thousand year reign by Jesus Christ
Himself – the glorious Millennium.

What awaits Satan and his henchmen? An angel takes them, binds them,
and pitches them into hell for the thousand years. They will not deceive
nations or individuals any more. Satan will be thrown into “the lake of
fire and brimstone.”

Revelation 20:10
And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and
brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be
tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Remarkably, Satan will be released for a short time after the thousand
years end. And then the end will come as it has been known since the
Garden of Eden. I will discuss this remarkable occurrence next
Wednesday night, my final such night with you.