The Glorious Return of Jesus Christ
Revelation 19:11–21

One of the most prominent prophecies in Scripture is the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. There are a total of 1,527 OT passages that refer to the second coming of Jesus Christ; there are approximately 8,000 verses in the NT and 330 of those verses—one out of every twenty-five verses—refers directly to His second coming. Next to the subject of faith, no subject is mentioned more in the NT than the return of Christ; for every time the first coming of Christ is mentioned, the second coming is mentioned eight times. Jesus Himself refers to His return twenty-one times, and over fifty times we are exhorted to be ready for that great event; it is a major theme throughout Scripture!

The oldest prophecy of His coming is from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who prophesied, “Behold the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14–15).

Even His enemies know of His coming; Revelation 12:12 says: “Therefore rejoice O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows he has a short time.” Yes, even Satan knows the Lord is coming back!

It is because there is so much testimony in Scripture concerning the return of Christ that we can be certain He will return; the promises of the entire Godhead demand it!

The promise of God demands it and God cannot lie; God promised in Psalm 2 that His Son would inherit the ends of earth as His inheritance; the prophet Isaiah says that the Son of God will sit on the throne of David and rule over His kingdom and He will establish it with judgment and justice (Isaiah 9:6–7).
The promise of Jesus demands it; He told His disciples that He was going to His Father’s house to prepare a place for them, but He will come again and receive them unto Himself for where He is, there they will be also (John 14:1–3); in Matthew 24:29–31, He describes His “coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

The promise of the Holy Spirit demands it; the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures which speak of His second coming (2 Peter 1:21); He is also referred to as the arrabon, “the guarantee of our inheritance”; the word arrabon can be translated “engagement ring”; currently as believers we are engaged to Christ, and He is coming back from heaven as the Bridegroom to marry His Bride, the Church (Ephesians 1:13–14; 5:27).

The entire Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—demand the return of Christ, and with so much of the Scripture banking on it, it would be foolish for us to question it! In fact, His coming is a promise to His Church; when Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles were astounded by what they saw; an angel in white apparel said to them, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11); He ascended in the clouds, He will return in the clouds; that is the promise of the angel who gave witness to the apostles at Christ’s ascension!

**The Return of the Conqueror (19:11–13)**

*His coming...* “Now I saw heaven opened...” (19:11a); Christ ascended to heaven and He will descend from heaven; the door of heaven is open; it is not open to let people in, it is open to let Christ out; previously, the number of times in Revelation the door of heaven has been opened is to give John access, or us access as to what is happening up there; that is not the case this time; it is open because Jesus Christ is returning to the earth in glory and power.

*His conquest...* “…and behold, a white horse...” (19:11b). Previously John saw a Lamb in the midst of the throne, but coming out of heaven is not a lamb, but a white horse; and riding on the white horse is the great Conqueror, the Messiah Himself; this picture comes out of ancient Rome and spoke of military victory; when Rome, under the Caesars, won a military victory, they would always celebrate it with a victory parade down the main streets of Rome; the victorious Roman general would always lead the parade riding on a white horse; when Jesus comes again, He comes as a warrior; He comes as a conqueror; He came
the first time as a humble babe from Bethlehem and born in a manger, or a cattle stall; His personality was viewed as being meek and lowly of heart; He came the first time as a Savior of mankind; the Jesus who comes a second time is the same Jesus, but His objective is different; He comes not to save His enemies but to crush them!

*His credentials*... “And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True...” (19:11c). When the Messiah comes the second time, He comes bearing the credentials of One who is both Faithful and True.

The word translated “faithful,” *pistos*, means to be one who is absolutely to be trusted and to be relied upon; Christ is the Person on whose fidelity a man may utterly stake his life.

Scripture tells us three ways He is faithful: He is faithful to protect His own (1 Corinthians 10:13); He is faithful to purify the sinner (1 John 1:9); He is faithful to produce what He promises (Hebrews 10:23).

The word translated “true,” *alethinos*, means to speak the truth and never at any time speak falsehood; in Jesus and His word we meet the absolute truth; furthermore this word, *alethinos*, has an overtone; not only does it mean true, it means genuine and real, as opposed to being fake, or unreal; in Jesus Christ we meet reality; Jesus is the genuine One who can be totally trusted in whatever He says or does.

Scripture teaches us five ways He is true: He is the true light (John 1:9); He is the true bread (John 6:32); He is the true vine (John 15:1); He is the true God (1 John 5:20); He is the true witness (Revelation 3:14).

*His commitment*... “And in righteousness He judges and makes war” (19:11d). This is an amazing statement; He comes to judge the world in righteousness and to wage war; Acts 17:31 says: “He (God) has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed.” What Man? “The Man He raised from the dead.” The Man is Jesus Christ; He is coming back to judge and to do so righteously.

As a judge, He comes in fury, for His judgment is to make war; only one other time in Scripture do we learn of Jesus coming as a warrior King. He said to the church at Pergamos, “Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth” (Revelation 2:16). This is not the Jesus
we are used to seeing; we are used to seeing Him ministering to the needy, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, casting out demons, giving peace to troubled hearts, inviting those with heavy burdens to cast them on Him and find rest for their weary souls, but that is not how it is going to be; when He comes the second time He comes on a war mission; He comes to search out and to destroy. When God destroyed Pharaoh and his hosts in the depths of the Red Sea, the children of Israel said, “The LORD is a man of war” (Exodus 15:3); the Lord is a warrior; it is an amazing title for the Son of God.

The Lord is coming to make war. In righteousness He judges and makes war; heaven cannot be at peace with sin. God is of purer eyes than to behold evil; He cannot look on iniquity. Finally, God’s patience has come to an end; truth cannot live with lies; justice cannot live with injustice; peace cannot live with rebellion; righteousness cannot live with iniquity; when Christ returns He comes as a conquering warrior to destroy everything that has stood in opposition to God.

*His confidence*... “His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns…” (19:12a); when Christ returns His eyes are red with anger; on His head are “many crowns” or diadems; this speaks of His royal rank and regal authority; the picture is, Christ has gathered all the crowns of all the kings who have ever ruled and put all of them on His head at the same time; you may recall in chapter 12 of the red dragon who had seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his heads (12:3); it is like the Lord takes all those diadems and puts one on top of the other and says: “You have had your time to rule, now it is my turn!” When Ptolemy conquered Antioch, he set two crowns on His head, the crown of Asia and the crown of Egypt; this signified the comprehensive nature of his rule.

*His concealment*... “He had a name written that no one knew except Himself” (19:12b). If no one knows that name it would be foolish for me to guess!

*His clothing*... “He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood...” (19:13a). When He comes a second time He will be wearing a robe dipped in blood; He is wearing a blood-splattered garment and the war has yet to start; could that blood represent the blood He shed to save mankind from sin? His garment is to remind us all that without His atoning death on the cross, there would be no forgiveness of sins, there would be no truth or justice, or righteousness, and there would be no second coming! We must never forget the blood of Jesus—precious blood shed that God might ultimately redeem the world from sin and restore it to its original pristine beauty as it was in the Garden of Eden when God could say “everything is good!”
"His communication... "... and His name is called the Word of God" (19:13b). This should tell us who this One is that is coming from heaven; if there has been any doubt that it is Jesus Christ, this verse should clear matters up; His name is the Word of God; in John’s gospel, he said of Jesus, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14); Jesus is the Word of God because He is God and He speaks for His Father; what He communicates is everything we need to know about God and how we are to live for Him!

The Regiments of the Conqueror (19:14)

“And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses” (19:14). Who will accompany Christ when He comes back? There are two groups: the angels will come with Him and the raptured Church, as well as all the saints in heaven will accompany Him.

Concerning the angels, Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory” (Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).

Concerning the saints we read that the army that follows Him is “clothed in fine linen, white and clean”; if you go back to verse 8, the “fine linen, clean and bright” is identified as “the righteous acts of the saints.” This will include not only the raptured Church, but also the Tribulation saints as well as the OT saints; both the tribulation saints and the OT saints will be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation (Daniel 12:1–3).

Jude tells us, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 1:14–15); we come with the Conqueror to assist in convicting the world of its ungodly behavior; we come to reign; Paul writes, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?...” (1 Corinthians 6:2); Revelation 20:4 has us sitting on thrones and reigning; once the kingdom of God is established, we rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom!

The Rule of the Conqueror (19:15–16)

"His sword... “And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He shall
strike the nations...” (19:15a). The weapon of the Conquering Christ when He returns is a sharp sword; this sword comes from out of His mouth; He speaks and it is all over; the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all who have followed them will be doomed by the sword of God’s Word! The sword is the Word of God!

Paul referred to the Word of God as “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17); it is an offensive weapon that every Christian should use in doing battle with the wiles of the devil; when you know your Scripture then use it against Satan; you cannot fall into temptation and obey Scripture at the same time.

The writer of Hebrews said of God’s word: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:12–13); all the people living during the Tribulation will have heard the Word of God; it was preached by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists; it was preached by the two witnesses; and during the second half of the Tribulation there will be three angels circling the globe proclaiming the everlasting gospel; there will be no excuse for not accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior; they cannot say when the Lord returns, “I did not know.”

In fact, when they hear the Word of God it will penetrate them, dividing the soul from the spirit; the soul speaks of life; all living things possess a soul (psuche); only man has a spirit (pneuma); it is by the spirit that man thinks and reasons and looks beyond himself to God or to a god; the Word of God tests his earthly life and his spiritual existence; it scrutinizes man’s thoughts or desires as well as his intentions; desires are the emotional part of man as man is governed in part by his feelings and passions; his intentions speak of the intellectual part of man and his will and his motives for doing what he does.

Hebrews says that God’s Word so exposes us that nothing is hidden from His sight and all of us are naked before Him; it was by the spoken Word that God formed the universe; it is by the word which Christ speaks at His coming that will expose the true nature of every person on the face of the earth; by His word, like a sword, He will strike the nations for He knows they have spurned His Word and blasphemed His name.

_His success... “And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (19:15b). This_
picture of Christ comes out of the OT; Isaiah wrote of Him, “He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:4b); the psalmist says of the Messianic King, “You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psalm 2:9).

John continues by saying that when the Conquering Christ comes back He “treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”; a winepress consisted of two stone basins; one was on a slightly higher level than the other, and they were connected by a channel; the grapes were put into the higher basin; they were trampled by feet; the juice was then squeezed out and flowed down to the lower trough where it was collected; the picture is that of the Conquering Christ trampling the grapes so as to produce the wine of the wrath of God, which His enemies must drink to their doom.

*His Sovereignty... “And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”* (19:16). When Christ returns, it is not only to bring justice to the world by dealing harshly with those who have stood opposed to God and done evil in His sight; He comes to rule and reign over this earth; He comes back wearing a name written on His robe at the place of His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

I can imagine, when those in heaven realize what is about to take place, there is a lot of shouting going on; a lot of Hallelujahs and Amens being spoken; I can imagine a great celebration in heaven because Jesus is finally going to demonstrate His sovereignty over all; He is finally going to become the King of kings and Lord of Lords; He is finally going to vanquish His foes; the slaughter will be fearful, but His mercy has been abused, His grace has been spurned; now, as we come to the end of this world as we know it, the open blasphemy against God and His Son, along with the increase in wickedness has finally reached irredeemable proportions and the Executor is coming to execute His justice and to rule in truth and in righteousness!

**The Revenge of the Conqueror (19:17–21)**

*Seen in the supper for the birds... “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of the heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of the kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh*
of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great” (19:17–18).

Birds have eaten human flesh throughout history. The prophet Isaiah speaks about a judgment on Ethiopia saying, “They will be left together for the mountain birds of prey and for the beasts of the earth; the birds of prey will summer on them (spend harvest time on them)” (Isaiah 18:6); Jeremiah speaks of God’s judgment on Judah who followed after false gods, “The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth and no one will frighten them away” (Jeremiah 7:33); Jesus warned just before He comes at the end of the Tribulation there will be such a slaughter of people that He says, “For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles (or vultures) will be gathered together” (Matthew 24:28).

Then Jesus says, “Immediately after the tribulation the sun will become darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven...” (Matthew 24:29); just before Christ returns it will be pitch black; it will be His glory that lights up the sky so that everyone who is still alive will see Him come.

This takes us back to our text where John sees an angel standing in the sun and crying with a loud voice, saying to all the birds of the air, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God”; notice that it is still daylight; the angel is standing in the sun where he can be seen; this must take place just before Christ comes; so there seems to be two feedings for the birds, one as a result of the number of people who are killed during the battle of Armageddon; remember, Revelation says of that climactic war, for 200 miles blood splatters as high as the horses’ bridles (14:20); that is a lot of dead bodies. During the Tribulation the vultures will have a feast, but also at the coming of Christ; when He comes there is sudden darkness; His glory lights the sky, then notice what happens.

Seen in the struggle against Him who sat on the horse and against His army... “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army” (19:19).

The armies that were fighting for and against the Antichrist in this climactic battle of Armageddon turn their attention to the coming Christ and the armies of heaven; that doesn’t last long as kings and captains and mighty men, those free
and slave, small and great, along with the flesh of horses will be further food for the birds of the air; that is the supper of the great God.

*Seen in the seizing of the beast and the False Prophet...* “Then the beast was captured and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (19:20). There is no one in hell today; the first two beings to be cast into hell are the Antichrist and the False Prophet; not even Satan is cast into hell until he is released from the bottomless pit at the end of Christ’s Millennial reign; once released he causes one final rebellion against the Lord which is quickly crushed; it is then that he is cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are (20:10).

Seen in the slaying of the armies... “And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh” (19:21).

John Phillips in his commentary on Revelation writes: “Then suddenly it will be over. In fact, there will be war no more 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. And 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, is punctured and still. The pair of them are bundled up and hurled headlong into the everlasting flames. Another word and the panic-stricken armies reel and stagger and fall 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.”

That will be an incredible scene! But more so will be the coming of Christ in the pitch blackness of the day when His glory lights the sky! First there is the rapture of the Church where we are caught up to meet Him in the air; then there is the revealing of Christ from heaven where we, as part of the armies of heaven, return to this earth to eradicate evil and to set up Christ’s Kingdom on earth and He shall reign forever and ever! Amen!