

Jesus Is More Than Just A Nice Guy ~ Revelation 19:11-16

Pastor Colin Rieke ~ May 12, 2013

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.



Grace, mercy and peace are yours in the name of our risen and ascended Lord Jesus,

In the early twilight hours, the conquering hero approaches in the distance – bloodied sword in one hand, battered shield in the other. The battle is over, he is victorious. His enemies lay strewn across the battlefield. He removes his helmet as the cool breeze whips through his hair. His face is a mixture of sweat, dirt and blood. His armor doesn't glisten like it did before the battle. And the hem of his robe is stained with the blood of his enemies.

Maybe you can picture this scene, perhaps from a book or a movie. Hollywood has glamorized glorious battle's like this with one-word movies such as *300*, *Troy* or *Gladiator*. The more enemies the hero defeated the greater the victory it was. Tales are told of heroes who have slain hundreds if not thousands of enemies. The Bible even has a few of these – King David, before he was king slew 100 Philistines for the hand of Saul's daughter. Samson is said to have killed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey.

But what relation does a victorious warrior, a hero, have to do with the ascension of Jesus? More than you probably think. What is it that draws people to a conquering hero like that? I think it's the power and strength that warrior has. We wouldn't want to face such a warrior on the battlefield, we want to have a warrior like that on our side. But again, what does that have to do with Jesus? We don't usually picture Jesus as a champion of battle slaying all his enemies. We have more pictures of Jesus welcoming little children into his arms, or hanging on a cross for our sins. But in this section from Revelation, we have just that, a picture of Jesus as a champion of battle. JESUS IS MORE THAN JUST A NICE GUY:

1. He is a warrior King
2. He is not known as well as we think

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Today we are celebrating the Ascension of Jesus into heaven. This was something that happened 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead. For those 40 days he appeared to his disciples, he gave them encouragement, he gave them more knowledge, he gave them a mission. And on that 40th day, after he

had completed everything he had set out to do, he took them outside and gave his blessing to them and told them to stay in Jerusalem. And then he ascended into heaven. Leaving the disciples feeling very alone.

Maybe that is the way that we might feel as Christians today, alone. We don't have Jesus there with us every day, we don't have Jesus fighting our battles for us. Sometimes we just feel so alone. But that really isn't the case, we really aren't ever alone. Jesus has given his promise, **"Wherever two or three are gathered together, there I am with them."** Jesus also said, **"This is my body, this is my blood,"** in the Lord's Supper. Jesus is here with us now, more than ever before. If Jesus had stayed on this earth, he would only be able to be in one place at one time, now that he has ascended into heaven, he can be watching over all places at all times.

But that is not the only reason why Jesus went into heaven. He ascended into heaven to declare his victory over all the powers of this world. His ascension is an exclamation point on his life. And it is this victory over all (that he has won already by the way) that the apostle John is talking about in this section of Revelation. Really, the whole book of Revelation is talking about the victory of Jesus. But this picture here is special. This picture is the bookend to Jesus showing his victory to his disciples at his ascension, in Revelation, he will show it to the world. JESUS IS MORE THAN JUST A NICE GUY – he is a warrior king.

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True." There is certainly no question that this rider is Jesus. The apostle John sees heaven opening up and here comes this conquering king. And did you notice the name that is given this rider? Faithful and True. This rider has been faithful in all his promises, he is the very essence of truth, nothing he says, is or does is false. These are all pictures we are used to associating with Jesus. How about this next one? **"With justice he judges and wages war."** We recognize Jesus as the judge who will come on the last day, but how often do we picture him waging war? **"His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns."** This is the picture of our Savior.

JESUS IS MORE THAN JUST A NICE GUY – he is a warrior, he is a king. Just like kings of old would lead their kingdoms into battle, that is the picture that is painted here in Revelation. But why does Jesus have to go to war? Doesn't he love everyone? Yes, Jesus does love everyone, that is why he gave his life to pay for the sins of the world. But to those who continue to live in their sins, to those who think Jesus was just a good teacher, to those who reject his payment for sins, these ones have to pay for what they have done. We don't accuse the judge of being unloving when a convicted murderer is sentenced – either to death or life imprisonment. That criminal had what was coming to him. And so it is with those who reject Jesus' sacrifice. They have what is coming to them.

There will be no excuses, there will be no second chances. For all those times we have wondered why the wicked prosper in this life, Jesus will make sure all of it is fair in the end. **"His eyes are like blazing fire"** – they see right through everything, nothing can hide from Jesus. **"on his head are many crowns."** When a king conquered his enemies, he would have the defeated kings present him with their crown. Jesus – the true and rightful king – is presented with the crowns of defeated kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Jesus is the only true and rightful king, the only one who is able to wear a crown.

JESUS IS MORE THAN JUST A NICE GUY. He is also a just guy. Jesus conquering his enemies is also pictured in a way that John's early readers would have understood completely – with a winepress. A winepress was a place where all the grapes were poured after being harvested. Then the farmer, or the wine presser would get into the vat of grapes and begin stomping around in there to produce grape juice, which could be fermented into wine. When the presser did this, he would not have on his nice clothes, because they would get stained with the juice that might splatter up. This is also the picture of Jesus crushing on his enemies. This is the very picture that Isaiah foretold of the messiah in his prophecy.

“I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to redeem had come...I trampled the nations in my anger in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground.” This isn't always the warm and fuzzy picture we have about Jesus and God. When John says, **“He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood,”** he's not talking about Jesus' blood shed for all sinners, but the blood of the unbelievers who have rejected him.

This is both awesome and scary at the same time. Awesome, because this is the Savior who ascended into heaven and is fighting on our behalf. But scary, because this is certainly not a Savior who we want to cross. Maybe it's scary because we know how many times we have crossed this Savior. Believers of all people know that. Every time we have a lapse in judgment and lash out on the road, at home, or at work. Every time we fall into that pet sin which we don't think is so bad. We forget that JESUS IS MORE THAN JUST A NICE GUY. That is why it is so vital to get down on our knees and ask for forgiveness daily. We ask that Jesus not look at our own works or unrighteousness, but what he did for us.

In one of my daily devotions this week I came across a passage that struck me, Psalm 11:7, **“For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.”** The Lord indeed is righteous, he will not let the guilty go unpunished. But the upright, those who are upright by the blood of the lamb, will see the face of God.

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We who are upright need not fear this mighty warrior. But he is more than just a mighty king as well, he is much more. How much more? I don't know. JESUS IS MORE THAN JUST A NICE GUY, he is not known as well as we think. Everything we know, and need to know about Jesus is revealed to us in the Bible. But who are we to think that this is everything there is to know about the God-man who was around before the creation of the world?

Let me give you an example. I have been married to my wife now for almost six years. We dated for three years before that. And I am still finding out things that I didn't know about her. One of the most recent examples is when I found out that she could flip her tongue. I know it's something small, but I didn't know that before. And she's my wife. Maybe you can think of some examples in your life about someone you know. If that is the case for people whom we have known for many years, it is a million times greater for Jesus.

“He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.” We know who Jesus is, at least as much as the Bible reveals to us, but this is not everything there is to know about Jesus. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 concludes with these words, **“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”** What a wonderful comfort this can be to us. Because everything we know about Jesus is so great, and wonderful, and amazing, we can guess that everything else that we don’t yet know about Jesus is good too.

JESUS IS MORE THAN JUST A NICE GUY. When Jesus ascended into heaven, he took up his rightful place as ruler. There are many who don’t recognize this, many who don’t realize it. This is God showing his patience, **“not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”** And God works through people like us. People who can give a simple invitation to their friends, people who can tell what a difference God has made in their life. Because the day is coming where there will be no time left. And we don’t know when that will be. But when that time comes, our warrior king will come in victory, to take all his saints home with him. Rejoice in this truth, stand in awe at his majesty. Amen!