Jesus: Bridegroom, King and Judge part 2

1. Introduction

a. We are looking at the three faces of Jesus as Bridegroom, King and Judge as we prepare for the end of the age. These three faces of Jesus that the bible outlines will help to prepare us as encounter the pressures of the days that lie ahead. We must understand what Jesus is coming to do when he returns. If we understand what he's going to do, we will be better able to partner with him, both now and in the days of his return if we are still alive at that time.

   i As a Bridegroom we encounter the heart of Jesus for his Bride. As a King we see Jesus in his authority and power and the wisdom of his leadership. As a Judge we see Jesus' heart for justice and righteousness as the Father entrusts him to judge the earth.

b. Last time we looked at the face of Jesus as a passionate Bridegroom, who is coming back to claim his Bride. His identity as a bridegroom is entirely appropriate, and fully in line with the bridal paradigm. The Old Testament prophets speak of it, we find it in the apostles' teaching, and Jesus himself gives us the most direct revelation on the bridal paradigm and the coming kingdom.

c. What is the bridal paradigm? It's an invitation from God's heart to the church to have intimacy with him. God is calling us to a lifestyle of active intimacy with his heart, where our hearts are awakened by his love and become fiery in the same way that his heart is fiery.

   i Seeing Jesus as a Bridegroom changes our perspective of ourselves as the object of his desire. We begin to see ourselves as God sees us, as a bride being prepared for his son. Seeing Jesus as the Bridegroom God is the foundation for us to be able to embrace the other two faces that he will display when he returns. As well as coming for us as our passionate bridegroom, he will also come as a conquering king and as a righteous judge.

2. Jesus the conquering King

a. There is more to Jesus coming as a king than meets the eye. In the UK we are used to the idea of a king or queen. But we're not used to kings with real authority, that is why we need to acquaint ourselves with the realities of what it will look like when Jesus returns as a conquering King with ultimate power and a zealous heart

   i When Jesus comes back at the end of the age, he will come with all power and authority, to make war and to conquer. As the rightful sovereign king, Jesus has received all authority and power on earth to restore it, to renew it and to rule over it. When he comes it will be to bring about a hostile take-over because he will be resisted by the kings of the earth.

   ii When Jesus returns, it is not to take us all away to heaven and leave the earth to destruction, but he is coming to rule and accomplish all the purposes of the Father's heart, and to take his rightful place as the King of the earth.

Psalm 110:1-2 *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." [2] The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty sceptre. Rule in the midst of your enemies!*

b. We need to see Jesus' kingship within its right context. Although Jesus has always been God, there came a time when he chose to take on flesh and become a human being, to lay aside the glory of his deity, to become a man.

Philippians 2:5-7 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*

c. Jesus became human in every sense of the word. He wasn't a hybrid, but 100% human, just like us. But he was also 100% God as well. As a member of the human race he faced all the same kind of things that we do. And he did so in perfect submission to his Father.

   i The consequence of that is he fully understands and can sympathise with us in our weakness because he has been there himself. He knows what it is to be human and to experience the full spectrum of life in the same way as us.

   ii When Jesus made that choice to be born as a baby in Bethlehem, he made an irreversible decision – he will be a man forever. This had very real consequences, but we know that it also brought him the greatest honour that any man could be given:

Philippians 2:8-11 *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

   iii The same Jesus who came to earth in human flesh, who died on the cross and was raised again, who ascended to heaven and now sits at God's right hand is the same Jesus who is coming back at the end of the age to complete the work that the Father sent him to do.

d. As the sovereign king with transcendent power, Jesus has received all authority, ability and resources to fully establish the Kingdom of God and manifest His Father's will on the earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). As King, Jesus restores individual lives, and in partnership with his people will transform every sphere of society in the nations, and will rule the earth itself.

e. As God, Jesus has always had full authority in the heavens. His authority as King over all the nations of the earth is given to him because of His obedience to the Father's will as a fully submitted man (Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 5:9-10). This is because God has delegated the authority for what happens on earth to men.

Psalm 115:16 *The heavens are the LORD's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man.*

f. That is why Jesus had to be a man to carry out this mandate. This unequalled measure of Jesus' authority, ability and resource is directly related to the unparalleled depth of his humility. No man will ever reach the same height of His being exalted, because no man will ever experience the same depth of His humiliation.

g. Jesus not only possesses the fullness of the Godhead in his body, and is fully anointed by the Holy Spirit without measure, He has also been fully endorsed by His Father with all the infinite resources of heaven to fulfil His sovereign purposes on earth.

h. It had always been God's intention that Adam should rule the earth in partnership with him (Genesis 1:26-28). But Adam forfeited that authority when he submitted to Satan by sinning in disobedience to God's will (Genesis 3; Luke 4:6).

i Jesus, the second man, won back Adam's authority at the cross, and as the Last Adam will fully accomplish all that the first Adam failed to do in subduing the earth to the Father's will, and taking full dominion for the glory of God (Genesis 1:26-28; 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47; Matthew 28:18; Revelation 5:1-7).

i. When He returns, Jesus will exercise His authority over all the nations and will transform every nation on the earth. Every wrong thing will be put right, in every sphere of society. Where darkness still resides when he returns he will confront it and remove it. This is our King!

Psalm 2:8-12 *Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. [9] You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." [10] Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. [11] Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. [12] Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

j. The Father has given Jesus the nations of the world to be his heritage, but because of their rebellious nature they will need first to be subdued. If they do not submit to Jesus willingly, then he will exercise his authority over them by force until they either bend the knee or are destroyed.

k. This is not commonly understood or spoken about in much of the Church, but the Bible tells us that Jesus is coming back to displace the standing leadership of the planet in a hostile takeover. The Bible speaks of this over and over again and we must not miss this point just because it is intense or new to us. Jesus coming as a warrior king is actually a very frequent theme in the Bible: Isaiah 2:10-22; 4:1-6; 11:1-15; 13:6-9; Ezekiel 13:5; Joel 1-3; Amos 5:18-20; Zephaniah. 1:7, 12, 14-18, 20; Zechariah. 14:1-4; Malachi 4:5; 1Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2Thessalonians 2:2-3; 2Peter 3:10; Revelation 6:17.

Isaiah 63:3-4 *"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. [4] For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come."*

Revelation 19:11-16 *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. [12] His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. [13] He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. [14] And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. [15] From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. [16] On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

l. We see many aspects of Jesus' glory as a conquering King riding out in this majestic procession. White horse – Faithful and True – Judges and declares war – The winepress of God's wrath – Robes stained with blood – Fire in his eyes – Diadems on his head – The armies of heaven following – His names – King of kings and Lord of lords.

m. Jesus will go on to the final battle where he will utterly defeat his enemies with one breath of his mouth. He will enter Jerusalem to be hailed as King by the remnant of Israel. There he will

establish his eternal throne from which he will establish his kingdom on the earth and begin to rule the nations.

n. Recognising the kingly aspect of Jesus at the end of the age will empower us with confidence. We must understand Jesus' power and plans as King; it strengthens our faith in his abilities and our resolve to contend for all that He has for us. Our prayer today will determine the measure to which we experience the power and glory of God at work and the outworking of His grace in this region.

    i As we gain greater insight into Jesus' power and plans as a transcendent King we are being prepared in greater measure to partner with Him in fervent intercession as a House of Prayer (Matthew 16:18-19), strengthened in faith (1 John 5:14) and inspired to contend for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Isaiah 62:4-5; 6-7; Matthew 6:10).

Isaiah 9:7 *Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward… forever.*

3. Jesus, our righteous judge

a. A lack of understanding of both the nature of judgment and the necessity for it makes this uncomfortable for us. Jesus is coming as a judge and our discomfort changes nothing about this reality.

b. The unpopularity of the message of Jesus coming to judge the earth is greatly influenced by the enemy and accuser of the Church, whose aim is to present a distorted view of God's judgments. He distorts the truth in order to get the Church to wrongly perceive God's judgments. One of his ploys is to reduce scripture to allegory, causing people to become indifferent to Jesus' perfect end-time plan.

    i Or he presents Jesus' judgments as a demonic contradiction to love, causing many in the church to become offended at this aspect of Jesus' end-time plan.

    ii Satan wants to cause confusion and conflict. His plan is to divide the Church about His loving leadership, to keep the Church unprepared in prayer and to eventually be offended at Jesus when His judgments come to pass instead of trusting in His loving leadership.

c. What comes to your mind when you hear that word "judgment"? Most people think of judgment in negative terms, as punishment for wrongdoing. But judgment is much broader than that, and can be positive as well as negative.

    i That's the basis of what judgment is – making a decision between alternatives.

d. Judgment is as much about reward as it is about punishment, and the bible is clear that the responsibility for making that judgment rests with one man – Jesus. He is going to sit as judge over all mankind. Everyone who has ever lived will have to give an account of their lives to Jesus. That is why we need to come to a place where we trust in Jesus' discernment and have confidence that he is incapable of getting anything wrong. He will always assess both people and situations with absolute truth and with perfect measure.

2 Corinthians 5:10 *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."*

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 *"But each one should be careful how he builds…If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."*

John 5:24 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."*

e. If we are born again of the Spirit of God, and we are in Christ, we have already passed the testing of judgment. The consequences of all of our sin has already been dealt with, Jesus took all that on himself on the cross. We are not judged for our sin, our judgment is for reward.

f. Jesus is looking at how we carry our hearts in the little assignments that he gives us in this age. He wants us to be faithful in everything that he gives us to do, no matter how small or insignificant that may seem. As we are faithful over little, so Jesus will reward us with much more – maybe even 10 cities!

   i Our judgment will be for reward, which will be given for what we did and didn't do in this life. (Psalm 18:20, 24, 58:11, 62:12; Isaiah 35:4, 40:10, 49:4, 59:18, 62:12, 66:6; Ezekiel 7:1-7; Luke 9:26; 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 2:23, 3:2-3, 15-16, 14:13, 22:12). This makes our time, our money, our words and the way we invest our energy very important.

g. Jesus coming as a Judge is one of the most unfamiliar aspects of the character of Jesus, even within the church. In heaven there is no such reticence – the cry goes up in Revelation 16 *"Yes, Lord God Almighty, True and just are all your judgments*.

   i There is an eternal decree – sin really does have a consequence, the end of which is judgment. Either we come fully into agreement with Jesus and let Him take the punishment – or we bear the consequences ourselves. We must give ourselves to studying and understanding this now so that we can come into agreement with God and don't become offended in the day of His wrath.

Psalm 110:3 *Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.*

h. But there is also a judgment for the wicked. For those who oppose God and set their hearts against him, there will be a very different outcome. There is a day which the scripture refers to often that is set aside as the Day of God's Judgment (Matthew 10:15, 11:22-24, 12:41-42, 13:36-37; Luke 10:14, 11:31-32; Acts 17:31; 2 Peter 2:9, 3:7; 1 John 4:17; Jude 1:6).

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10… *when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels [8]in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. [9] They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, [10] when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints…*

i. The judgment of the wicked will be according to their deeds. Each one will have to stand before Jesus and give an account for everything they have done in their lives. Every thought, every word, every action, it will all count. And it is in this way that God will vindicate the righteous.

i But if vindication for injustice doesn't come immediately, the temptation is to feel devalued or worthless, because it appears as though either God did not see, or doesn't care. God has never turned a "blind eye" to injustice, but in perfect righteousness will make all the wrong things right. Trust His leadership now, and let your hope to abound for the future.

ii Jesus is able to use all things together for our good so that we learn more about Him, about ourselves, to grow in humility.

Acts 17:31 *…because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed…*

j. The Father has entrusted all judgment to Jesus (John 5:22-23, 27-30; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:4-5; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; 1 Peter 4:5; Revelation 5:1-10; 6:1-17; 8:1-9:21; 11:15-19; 19:2; 11; 20:11-15). Jesus is zealous to intervene in human history and establish justice by vindicating the righteous, while confronting the rebellious to *remove everything that hinders love*.

k. Jesus is the only one who is uniquely qualified to bear the responsibility of judgment. As part of the godhead he understands the design of his creation and the way the human spirit functions (Matthew 6:22-23; 2 Corinthians 3:18). As a resurrected man he understands the challenges and temptations we face (John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 8:9; 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 John 3:5).

Hebrews 4:15 *For he [Jesus] was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

4. Conclusion

a. Seeing Jesus in these 3 ways will give us a balanced view of Jesus' end times plans. We must understand and embrace all three dimensions of Jesus' character. They are inter-related and interdependent.

i To understand Jesus as Bridegroom without seeing Him as the sovereign King can lead to *religious sentimentality and emotionalism*. To understand Him as Bridegroom without seeing Him as the righteous Judge can lead to a *lack of urgency to prepare others.*

ii To understand Jesus as King without seeing Him as our passionate Bridegroom can lead to an *authoritarian view of God*. To understand Him as a King without seeing Him as the righteous Judge can lead to a *lack of hope in our future*.

iii To understand Jesus as Judge without seeing Him as a Bridegroom-King can lead to a *harsh view of God.* If we preach God's judgments without encountering His heart as a Bridegroom-King who removes everything that hinders love to establish truth, humility and righteousness (Psalm 45), then we will be tempted to *operate in a wrong spirit*.

b. It's absolutely critical that we give ourselves to understanding and befriending the Jesus who is coming back at the end of the age, coming into full agreement with His heart and plans that we ourselves will participate in. Understanding this, and having a sound biblical perspective on what He is coming to do will cause us to run to him and not from him as our beloved Bridegroom, our Transcendent King and our Righteous Judge.