

## The Violence of Grace Revelation 19:11-21

(When you imagine the second coming of Christ, what do you picture?)

(Have your ideas about the second coming changed in anyway throughout the course of your life?)

- Read Revelation 19 what impressions of Jesus and the judgment do you get when you read it?
- How do you feel as you read it? What aspects of the character of God stick out? Does God come across as a God of love? A God of violence? Both?

Some folks really like the picture of a Jesus that, at some point, doesn't take baloney from humanity. A side that we often think leans more towards justice. On the other hand, some people are utterly horrified that Jesus would be described as violent . . . at all . . . or even allow for violence in His creation.

- Do you lean towards one direction or the other, if so, why?
- If the description of the judgment in Revelation 19 seems violent to you, what is the violence upon? Do you think violence can ever be a good thing?

Look at some scriptures about the judgment of God: John 3:19, 5:22, 8:15, 12:31, 12:47

- In these scriptures, what sticks out to you about the judgment of God? Is the description of judgment different in any way than you thought? Explain.
- In what ways do you think the above passages of scripture might relate to Revelation 19? What do you think the ultimate purpose of God's judgment is?

Many in our particular community of belief [those who believe Jesus is reconciling all to Himself] now argue that God never actually instructed anyone to sacrifice... 'cause it's violent. Clearly, according to Scripture, God does not need the blood of sheep and goats, and yet you've got to do incredible violence to the Bible to suggest that He never called for sacrifice, in the tabernacle, the temple . . . or even on a cross.—P.H.

- What are your views about sacrifice and violence in the Bible?
- Instances of sacrifice are throughout Scripture. In Romans we even read: "*Therefore present your bodies as living sacrifices, for this is your spiritual—logikos, logical—worship.*" What do you think God wants to reveal to us through the imagery and acts of sacrifice (if anything)?

An Angel in the sun cries out to the birds of the air to come gather for the sacrificial feast of God, to eat the flesh of... all men—free and slave, small and great ...not SOME men, "all men," "all people," "all flesh." That's violence... on all. What's wrong with human flesh? . . . It's alone. Human flesh feels—only—its own pain and its own pleasure.—P.H

Maybe the Judgment of God sets us free from our loneliness and enables us to be one with Christ "*piercing to the division of soul and spirit, joint and marrow;*" it sets us free from our psyche—the old man—and makes us one flesh with the New Man.

"Alone," is the very first thing ever declared to be "not good" in all of Scripture.

And it was "not good," before the fall. God breathed His *pneuma*, His Spirit, into dust and Adam became a living *psyche*, a soul . . . then, God looked at the Adam, and said, "*It is not good for the Adam to be alone...*"

- In what areas do you feel most lonely right now?
- What do you think is the cause of your loneliness?
- Can you identify any ways in which God might be trying to penetrate your loneliness and draw you into deeper relationship with Him and others?

Pause for a moment and listen to the Lord's voice to His people in the midst of loneliness and fear: "Let us meet together at the place of judgment... I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you" (Is. 41:1b and 13).

*\*These questions were created by Kimberly Weynen.*