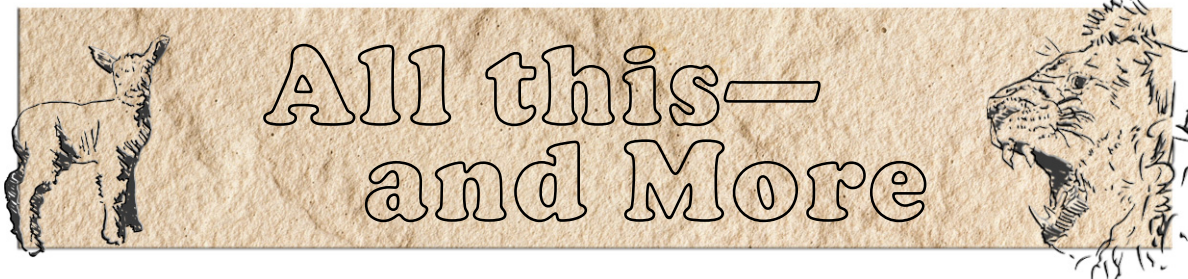


Jesus Christ has made two entrances into this world, and both were played against type.



HIS FIRST ENTRANCE, IN BETHLEHEM, was that of peasant child, rather than that of a conquering Jewish savior a la Gideon or Judas Maccabeus. Judaism anticipated the dynamic, pitiless Messiah of Psalm 2.

**"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as
Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your
possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"**

Psalms 2:7-9

Instead, Israel's Redeemer arrived as a helpless human baby whose first court appearance was attended by ragamuffin sheep herders in an earthy, aromatic stable.

His second entrance was equally unpretentious. Just imagine, You are the Son of God, Creator of the universe, Savior of all mankind. You have suffered not just the physical torture of the cross, but the unimaginable weight and agony of man's collective sin. In that moment—the moment of Your greatest need—Your Father turned away from You. You have paid the price. You have placed Yourself upon the ultimate altar and died.

Given all that, how would you choose to reenter the world—raised from the dead, bodily—from the tomb? If you were C. B. DeMille how would you direct the scene of the resurrection? First there would have to be blinding light, and a majestic, triumphant symphony score. The Son of God emerges from the light, glorious, beautiful, exalted. He cries out,

"I'm back! I'm back! Listen to me, I *am* the Messiah; I *am* the Redeemer! Hear Me, world. Sound the trumpets. Fall down in worship before Me, for I am the Risen Lord, the Son of God!"

In fact, the first person to set eyes upon the risen Jesus, Mary Magdalene, mistook Him for the gardener. No blinding light, no symphony, no trumpets. Just a misidentified stranger.

The next ones to see Him in person were a couple of meandering followers on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They didn't recognize Him either. The scene was as undramatic and ordinary as it could be: Two guys walking along are joined by a stranger. "What're you talking about?" The stranger asks. "Where have *you* been?" They reply, incredulous. "Don't you know anything about all the things that have been going on in Jerusalem?" The stranger answers simply, unassumingly. "What things?"



One lesson learned from the entirety of God's word is that Jesus Christ is all in all. Is He the suffering servant, the gentle lamb, the loving brother quick to forgive? Yes He is.

...but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:7-8

Is He the unflinching Lion of Judah, the stern ruler with the "rod of iron"? Indeed.

From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule

them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Revelation 19:15

Because Christ is the fullness of God, in Him we see and experience the fullness of God's character: the God who loves and serves His people; the God who patiently waits, working quietly in a life; the God who chastises, corrects, disciplines His erring children; the righteous, holy God who hates sin.



In His first two entrances into this living world man experienced the quieter, gentler aspects of Christ's character. But in His next, man will experience something quite different.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Jesus no longer walks the soil of this earth, but every believer still experiences His unassuming tenderness. When the struggles of this earth overwhelm, when things get too tough for us to handle on our own, Jesus comes alongside and quietly says, "What things? Tell me."

At the same time every believer trusts in the strong, victorious ruler who one day will descend through the clouds, who will judge the quick and the dead in righteousness and truth.

Christ is all this.

And more.

