

Ann Coulter on Brit Hume; The Nuptials of Joseph & Mary: Order of the Annunciations; the Regathering of Israel, Matt 24:27-31; 1st-Century Jewish Marriage: The Groom (Christ) & the Bride (The Church), the Wedding Procession, & the Wedding Banquet of the Lamb, Rev 19:9

### If You Can Find a Better Deal, Take It!

by Ann Coulter

Someone mentioned Christianity on television recently and liberals reacted with their usual howls of rage and blinking incomprehension.

On a Fox News panel discussing Tiger Woods, Brit Hume said, perfectly accurately:

"The extent to which he can recover, it seems to me, depends on his faith. He is said to be a Buddhist. I don't think that faith offers the kind of forgiveness and redemption that is offered by the Christian faith. So, my message to Tiger would be, 'Tiger, turn to the Christian faith and you can make a total recovery and be a great example to the world.'"

Hume's words, being 100 percent factually correct, sent liberals into a tizzy of sputtering rage, once again illustrating liberals' copious ignorance of Christianity. (Also illustrating the words of the Bible: "How is it you do not understand me when I speak? It is because you cannot bear to listen to my words." John 8:43.)

In The Washington Post, Tom Shales demanded that Hume apologize, saying he had "dissed about half a billion Buddhists on the planet."

Is Buddhism about forgiveness? Because, if so, Buddhists had better start demanding corrections from every book, magazine article and blog posting ever written on the subject, which claims Buddhists don't believe in God, but try to become their own gods.

I can't imagine that anyone thinks Tiger's problem was that he didn't sufficiently think of himself as a god, especially after that final putt in the Arnold Palmer Invitational last year.

In light of Shales' warning Hume about "what people are saying" about him, I hope Hume's a Christian, but that's not apparent from his inarguable description of Christianity. Of course, given the reaction to his remarks, apparently one has to be a regular New Testament scholar to have so much as a passing familiarity with the basic concept of Christianity.

On MSNBC, David Shuster invoked the "separation of church and television" (a phrase that also doesn't appear in the Constitution), bitterly complaining that Hume had brought up Christianity "out-of-the-blue" on "a political talk show."

Why on earth would Hume mention religion while discussing a public figure who had fallen from grace and was in need of redemption and forgiveness? Boy, talk about coming out of left field!

What religion -- what topic -- induces this sort of babbling idiocy? (If liberals really want to keep people from hearing about God, they should give Him his own show on MSNBC.)

Most perplexing was columnist Dan Savage's indignant accusation that Hume was claiming that Christianity "offers the best deal -- it gives you the get-out-of-adultery-free card that other religions just can't."

In fact, that's exactly what Christianity does. It's the best deal in the universe. (I know it seems strange that a self-described atheist and "radical sex advice columnist ..." like Savage would miss the central point of Christianity, but there it is.)

God sent his only son to get the crap beaten out of him, die for our sins and rise from the dead. If you believe that, you're in. Your sins are washed away from you -- sins even worse than adultery! -- because of the cross.

"He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross." Colossians 2:14.

Surely you remember the cross, liberals -- the symbol banned by ACLU lawsuits from public property throughout the land?

Christianity is simultaneously the easiest religion in the world and the hardest religion in the world.

In the no-frills, economy-class version, you don't need a church, a teacher, candles, incense, special food or clothing; you don't need to pass a test or prove yourself in any way. All you'll need is a Bible (in order to grasp the amazing deal you're getting) and probably a water baptism, though even that's disputed.

You can be washing the dishes or walking your dog or just sitting there minding your business hating Susan Sarandon and accept that God sent his only son to die for your sins and rise from the dead ... and you're in!

"Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9.

If you do that, every rotten, sinful thing you've ever done is gone from you. You're every bit as much a Christian as the pope or Billy Graham.

No fine print, no "your mileage may vary," no blackout dates. God ought to do a TV spot: "I'm God Almighty, and if you can find a better deal than the one I'm offering, take it."

The Gospel makes this point approximately 1,000 times. Here are a few examples at random:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23.

In a boiling rage, liberals constantly accuse Christians of being "judgmental." No, we're relieved.

Christianity is also the hardest religion in the world because, if you believe Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead, you have no choice but to give your life entirely over to Him. No more sexual promiscuity, no lying, no cheating, no stealing, no killing inconvenient old people or unborn babies -- no doing what all the other kids do.

And no more caring what the world thinks of you -- because, as Jesus warned in a prophecy constantly fulfilled by liberals: The world will hate you.

With Christianity, your sins are forgiven, the slate is wiped clean and your eternal life is guaranteed through nothing you did yourself, even though you don't deserve it. It's the best deal in the universe.<sup>1</sup>

### The Nuptials of Joseph and Mary

After Mary completed her "Magnificat" it is recorded in Luke 1:56 that she stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to Nazareth. Her visit to Elizabeth occurred immediately after the revelation by Gabriel that she was bearing the biological life of Messiah. The annunciation is said to have occurred at the beginning of Elizabeth's third trimester:

**Luke 1:24** - After these days Elizabeth, Zacharias's wife, became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying,

**v. 25** - "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men."

**v. 26** - Now in the sixth month [i.e., one month later], the angel Gabriel was sent from God to the city in Galilee called Nazareth,

**v. 27** - to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Therefore, the time line for Gabriel's annunciations runs this way:

1. To Zacharias, the husband of Elizabeth: Gabriel informs him that his wife will bear a son and name him John (Luke 1:13), and that he will be the prophesied forerunner who will announce the coming of Messiah (Malachi 3:1 cf. Luke 1:17).
2. To Mary at the beginning of Elizabeth's third trimester (Luke 1:26-27).
3. To Joseph at the beginning of Mary's second trimester (Luke 1:56 cf. Matthew 1:20 were the neuter singular, aorist passive participle of the verb **γεννώω, gennaō**, translated "that which has been conceived," indicates Mary is already pregnant, in fact, she is in the early days of her second trimester.

This latter event is the point where Joseph first learns of Mary's pregnancy. He confronts the problem by deciding to marry her which brings us to the nuptials.

In the ancient world a Jewish marriage was a festival, its pageantry a part of the customs of the day. Although the marriage was not considered a religious ceremony it did convey spiritual principles that the Lord was able to use to teach principles of doctrine.

Both the bride and groom were dressed in regalia similar to the adornments of royalty. The groom represents the royalty of Jesus Christ while the bride portrays the royalty of the Church Age believer.

The bride is prepared for the wedding by her bridesmaids who assist her in dressing for the occasion. She was bathed, her hair braided with precious stones, and assisted in putting on her wedding gown and facial veil.

This process speaks of the preparation of the church as the body of Christ to become the bride of Christ by means of the resurrection at the Rapture followed by the purification at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Coulter, "If You Can Get a Better Deal, Take It!" *Human Events*, January 11, 2010, <http://humanevents.com/article.php?print=yes&id=35103> (accessed January 13, 2010).

At the home of the groom, his friends gather to accompany him to the home of the bride. These friends represent Old Testament saints and Tribulational martyrs placing the timing of the marriage as post Second Advent.

The groom and his friends then leave for the bride's house, preceded by a musical group made up of musicians and singers. The procession is joined by citizens bearing torches to light the way.

This procession continues until it reaches the home of the bride where she is to be escorted to the site of the wedding banquet to be held at the home prepared for the couple by the groom. Symbolically this would be the millennial kingdom.

The details of the event figuratively prophesied by the Jewish marriage are provided by John in:

**Revelation 19:7** - "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

**v. 8** - It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

The journey from the home of the bride to the new home of the groom is portrayed by a wedding procession. The friends of the groom along with the musicians, singers, and torch bearers continue along the streets to the couple's new home.

In the first century, weddings were often held at night because the daylight was used to carry out the activities of business and family life. The fact it was at night serves also as a reminder of the Lord's description of the suddenness of the Second Advent:

**Matthew 24:27** - "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

**v. 28** - "Wherever the corpse is [ casualties of the Armageddon Campaign ], there the vultures will gather.

**v. 29** - "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

**v. 30** - "And the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

**v. 31** - "And he will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."<sup>2</sup>

This passage is a description of the Second Advent and is not applicable to the marriage procession of the Lord but it clearly illustrates the suddenness of the events that surround the Second Advent, among them the regathering of true Israel, those Jews who are scattered throughout the known world in what is known as the **διασπορά, diaspora** and translated "scattered" (KJV & NIV), "dispersed" (NASB & NET). Angels will escort them to Jerusalem for the baptism of fire:

The Dispersion is the comprehensive designation applied to Jews living outside of Palestine and maintaining their religious observances and customs among the Gentiles. They were known as *Golah*, the captivity—an expression describing them in relation to their own land; and the *Diaspora*, the Dispersion, an expression describing them in relation to the nations among whom they were scattered.

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<sup>2</sup> The regathering of Israel involves three categories of Jews: (1) Believers in the dispensation of Israel whose souls and human spirits were transferred to the Paradise compartment of Hades at physical death and then transferred to heaven in interim bodies at the ascension of Christ, (2) believers who suffered martyrdom during the Tribulation, and (3) believers who are alive at the Second Advent.

The thought of such a Dispersion as a punishment for the disobedience of the people finds frequent expression in the Prophets:

**Hosea 9:3** - They will not remain in the Lord's land, but Ephraim will return to Egypt, and in Assyria they will eat unclean food.

**Jeremiah 8:3** - "Death will be chosen rather than life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family, that remains in all the places to which I have driven them," declares the Lord of hosts.

**Ezekiel 4:13** - Then the Lord said, "Thus will the sons of Israel eat their bread unclean among the nations where I will banish them."

**Zechariah 10:9** - "When I scatter them among the peoples, they will remember Me in far countries, and they with their children will live and come back."<sup>3</sup>

The current dispersion of the Jews occurred in A.D. 70 and will not end until the regathering prophesied by our Lord in Mathew 24:31. Until then, the return of Jews to present-day Israel places them into harm's way exemplified by the irrational hatred of the sons of the freewoman (Sarah) by the sons of the bondwoman (Hagar).

The torches held by those moving through the streets of Nazareth light the way to the bridegroom's home as the light of the gospel leads any respondent to its message to the eternal state.

On arrival at the groom's home, the groom and the bride go inside, an act that constitutes the marriage. Immediately there begins wedding feast, mentioned in:

**Revelation 19:9** - Then the angel said to me, "Write the following: Blessed are those who are invited to the banquet at the wedding celebration of the Lamb." He also said to me, "These are the true words of God."

This feast will last for a week or more. The last event of the celebration is the ushering of the bride by the groom into the bridal chamber called a **חֵתֶר chether**.

Arrival at the groom's home constitutes the marriage whereas its consummation occurs in the bridal chamber's bed which is covered by a canopy called the **חֻפָּה chuppah**.

Awaiting the arrival of the wedding party are those who survived the Tribulation. They are hopeful of being invited into the wedding banquet. The Lord uses this aspect of the wedding traditions to teach the baptism of fire for Tribulational survivors in Matthew 25.

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Nicol, "Dispersion," on *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:855.