

The Return of the Warrior King – Part 3

Revelation 19:17-21

We return this morning to Revelation 19. This will be my third and final discourse on the topic, “The Return of the Warrior King.”

Before we examine the text this morning I want to expand your thinking about the grand scope of God’s plan for the ages.

History has many themes depending upon the perspective of the historian who will often focus on a particular background, usually the background of his or her culture. And typically the historical narrative will include some convenient revisions necessary to satisfy whatever agenda a particular culture may have. For example in most of the Muslim countries around the world today they deny that the Holocaust ever existed.

But typically what we see in any historical overview is that something very, very important is missing. And that is God’s perspective, a biblical perspective. Real history should begin with the very first words of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”¹ And it should end with the final words of the Bible when the Lord Jesus Christ says, “Yes, I am coming quickly,”² to which the apostle replied, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”³

I believe that it is important for we as Christians to maintain the big picture of God’s plan for history. And if I can break it down very, very simply and then expand upon it a bit, there are really two dominant themes that are woven throughout the tapestry of Scripture. First we see that God is going to redeem his people. And there God is pictured as a sacrificial lamb, as a Savior, as a suffering servant. But the second theme is that he will restore the kingdom, and there he is depicted more as a lion, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Messiah king who would one day defeat the usurper, Satan, and glorify himself on the earth for 1000 years in a kingdom that will ultimately be the consummating link between human history and the eternal state.

We see a picture of a promised lamb all the way back in Genesis. After the original sin when God killed an innocent animal, we see a substitute had to die to cover sin, a shadow of a coming redeemer who would one day make atonement for sin. And we see this lamb pictured even in the deliverance in Egypt in the sacrificial system all through the Old Testament and in Bible prophecy in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Then he arrives in the gospels and we see him in his humiliation, the lamb that opened not his mouth, the one who died to save sinners.

And all through the New Testament record we learn more about his plan for redemption. We learn more about the signs that will point to his second return as King of kings, and we learn how we are to conduct ourselves and live for God’s glory. So in the gospels we see the lamb in his humiliation. But then in the book of Revelation we see the King in his

¹ Genesis 1:1.

² Revelation 22:20.

³ Revelation 22:21.

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exaltation, the lion of Judah, the King of Israel, the one who has promised to return and establish his glorious kingdom. Now that is the big picture of history.

Obviously this is not going to be taught in our public schools. Hopefully it will be taught in your homes to your children. But let's look a little bit closer at a few of the details. If we examine the detailed genealogical record of Genesis we quickly discover that 1656 years after God created Adam, because of unimaginable wickedness upon the earth, God destroyed the entire world with a flood, all except eight people who found favor in the eyes of the Lord which was Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives. In fact, Adam saw the world into its ninth generation and died one generation before the flood.

About 500 years after the flood God set his uninfluenced elective love upon a particular ethnic group of people, the Jews, later called Israel. And there he made a unilateral, unconditional, irreversible covenant with Abraham that would further orchestrate his sovereign plan to ultimately redeem his people and restore the kingdom.

That covenant is found in Genesis 12 and it contains four elements. That out of Abraham would, first of all, come a seed, referring to Christ who would be both redeemer and king, the lamb and the lion. Secondly, the promise of a land which would be a specific territory that would be set apart by God for his people, a place where he would ultimately dwell with them in holy and intimate communion. And also a promise of a nation where Abraham's magnificent reputation and legacy would be displayed materially and spiritually and socially and where the glory of God's grace would then be put on display. And, finally, in that promise he said that he would protect them and he would bless them. Anyone that would curse them, he would curse. Anyone that would bless them he would bless. And these great promises are reiterated over and over in the Old Testament and even in the New.

Now, 600 years later after God made this covenant or the covenant with the sons of Abraham, he makes now another covenant, one given to Moses, a covenant that was temporal in nature. This covenant was bilateral and it was conditional and it is called the Mosaic covenant. And on Mount Sinai God gave his law to his chosen people Israel to demonstrate to them the sinfulness of man and to demonstrate to them their utter inability to save themselves and, certainly, their desperate need for a Savior and a king. There Moses became the first mediatorial ruler in the theocratic kingdom in all of history and he was authorized to stand before Israel according to Exodus 4:16 instead of God. In fact, Moses is represented in Scripture as a type of Christ, Christ being the one alone who will eventually be the perfect embodiment of God's mediatorial ruler in the Messianic kingdom.

But this historical kingdom was broadened at Mount Sinai to include the people of Israel. According to Exodus 19:6 we read, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."⁴

⁴ Exodus 19:6.

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So at Sinai God commissioned Israel to be the ones to mediate blessing to the entire world. These were to be a people for his witness, a witness nation, the custodians of divine truth. And during that time God inspired Moses to frame a civil government to exist upon the earth that would ultimately illustrate the kingdom of God, to give the world just a little sample of what would one day come, and the theocracy of Israel became the greatest model of government in the history of the world, a sample of the future kingdom promised to Abraham from God himself.

Over the course of history, other mediatorial rulers were set into place. You have the leader judges of Israel from Joshua all the way to Samuel, men chosen directly by God, invested with regal functions and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Next God established a monarchical form of government whereby he mediated the rule of his kingdom through various kings all of which were sinful in various ways which pointed to the need for a righteous king that would one day rule and be able to defeat Satan and sin and even death itself.

So the only remedy for the problem was the promised Messiah, the Savior King. And for this reason, about 1000 years after God made his covenant with Abraham and about 500 years after the giving of the law to Moses, God made another promise to one of his mediatorial rulers, King David. That covenant, which is found in 2 Samuel seven, was a reaffirmation of the regal terms of the original Abrahamic covenant. But also it contained the addition that the ultimate provision of those covenantal rights would be permanently attached to the historic dynasty of King David, that King David would have a greater son who would be the Messiah, the Son of David, ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ. And although its ultimate fulfillment would be interrupted for a season because of sin and unbelief, it would ultimately be fulfilled in a future earthly kingdom with a restored Israel when finally that covenant nation would be all that it was intended to be. And repeatedly the Old Testament prophets speak of this future kingdom and its Messiah King.

Despite Israel's repeated unfaithfulness, the Lord promised to be faithful and fulfill what he said he would do. But eventually because of Israel's sin, God transferred world power to the Gentiles as recorded in Daniel two and ultimately the presence of God left them as we read in Ezekiel chapter 10 and 11. Because of Israel's long trend toward apostasy, God pronounced a judgment upon them through the prophet Daniel, the prophecy of the 70 weeks of years or 490 years of judgment that we read about in Daniel 9:24-27.

That judgment would span from the Persian Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild Jerusalem in around 445 BC all the way to the Messianic kingdom. The first 69 weeks of judgment or 483 years were completed precisely as the prophet said when the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem in nine Nissan, AD 30 and was ultimately cut off or crucified just as Daniel had prophesied. But this means that there remains now seven more years of judgment which we many times call Daniel's 70th week, a seven year period of tribulation of pre kingdom judgments upon Israel where God will ultimately defeat the unholy trinity of Satan and the antichrist and the false prophet and all of the nations that hate Christ and ultimately restore Israel unto himself.

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Now, as a footnote, because Israel rejected her Messiah according to Ephesians three the mystery phase of the kingdom was ushered in as the Church became the temporary replacement of Israel as the new custodians of truth, the body of Christ where Jews and Gentiles are described in Ephesians three as heirs together and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

But keep in mind, Israel is never absorbed into the Church. It remains distinct from the Church as an ethnic people. And as a nation they will have a prophetic future. We can already see some of this in the miracle of the state of Israel today. Rising out of the ash heap of the Holocaust they are now returning to their land in unbelief as the prophets said they would. They survive against all odds.

So the present Church age must be seen as part of the ongoing fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy that will culminate in the messianic kingdom. It should not be seen as some kind of disconnected plan B or a parenthesis in God's plan. You see, the Church shares in the promises of Israel, but not in her unique identity as a chosen nation whom Paul described in Romans 11:16-24 as the "natural branches" from a "cultivated olive tree," some of which now have been "broken off" for the present time due to a hardening of heart. There Paul reminds us as the Gentile Church that we are the wild olive branches that have been grafted into the "rich root," the "rich root" being the covenant privileges originally promised to Abraham. Indeed, the Church shares these promises with Israel, but never takes her place as a nation.

May I remind you? Despite her rebellion, God will never abandon Israel. Paul made this very clear. In Romans 9 we read of Israel's election. In Romans 10 we read of Israel's defection and in Romans 11 we read of Israel's salvation when their Messiah King returns.

So this brings us to God's final words about the consummation of human history found in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. And what an amazing history it is. It is ultimately, as we say, "his story" (the Lord Jesus Christ), with Israel being a magnificent object lesson in how God deals with mankind, saving some, judging others, all to reveal his glory through Christ who is both lamb and the lion.

Now as we come to our text this morning, by way of quick review, during the last half of the tribulation, the antichrist will desecrate the temple that the Jews have been allowed to build. The prophetic activity of the two witnesses will serve to counter the signs of the false prophet during that day, and their murder and subsequent public resurrection will evoke panic among the Gentiles as they witness this, which will only be exacerbated by a massive earthquake that the Lord will send. And ultimately this will signal the coming of Christ to deliver Jerusalem from Gentile domination.

The final phase of divine vengeance upon the nations of the world is predicted in Revelation 11:18. "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets

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and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.”⁵

So, my friends, we return to Revelation chapter 19. We have been studying verses 11 through 16 and now we come in a moment to verses 17 through 21.

Remember in this passage we have examined thus far the return of the warrior king which is really detailed as the outpouring of the seventh bowl judgment that was introduced in chapter 16. We have learned so far about his arrival in verses 11 through 13 where he descends in all of his majesty, in his full regal authority as Messiah King to come and to judge and to conquer and to rule. Secondly, we have learned about his army in verse 14 that consists of non-combative saints; we will be a part of that, the regiment of the redeemed. It will also include his angelic host. We have studied, thirdly, his authority in verses 15 and 16 where he uses the divine weaponry of both the sword of his Word and the rod of his kingly scepter to slay the wicked. And now finally we come to his attack in verses 17 through 21. And here we are going to learn of the graphic details of his slaughter, which are depicted here to help us understand the capture as well as the disposal of the antichrist and the false prophet.

And might I also add that this is now the second and third in a set of eight chronological action scenes revealed to us beginning in verse 11 that go all the way through chapter 21 and verse eight. The first scene being the arrival of Christ, secondly, the invitation now of the vultures to begin to devour the human carnage as a result of the slaughter at Armageddon in verses 17 and 18 and then, thirdly, the defeat of the beast in verses 19 through 21.

So with all of that introduction, let me read the text to you beginning in verse 17.

Revelation 19 verse 17.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God; in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the

⁵ Revelation 11:18.

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rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.⁶

Now here is the scene. The armies of the antichrist have surrounded Jerusalem, prepared to engage with their mortal enemy, the warrior king who obviously contests the beast's authority as ruler of the world. Now, there is a possibility—we cannot be dogmatic about this—but there is a possibility that by now the Lord has already returned to the earth and that he is in Jerusalem. Perhaps the army of the redeemed, perhaps we will still be hovering in the sky with the heavenly hosts. We don't know. But whatever the circumstances are, we see that the beast with his vast military might have assembled themselves together here at Megiddo and they are fully intent on engaging the rider of the white horse.

There is also no reason not to believe that the world and especially the satanically empowered antichrist and the false prophet are fully aware of Bible prophecy. Why wouldn't they be? Which clearly states in Daniel as well as in Revelation that the beast will only be allowed to spew his venomous blasphemies for 42 months, that is three and a half years after the "abomination of desolation." So they may be looking at their calendar thinking, "Ok, we'll see. Time is up. He says he is coming. All right. Let's be ready."

We read in Daniel 7:25, "And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time."⁷ That is three and a half years.

But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and .5 obey Him.⁸

So, knowing his allotted time is up, the antichrist assembles his vast armies consisting of a 10 nation confederacy and they prepare to do battle foolishly thinking that they can somehow thwart the purposes of God and defeat the lamb who would be lion. We see, according to Isaiah 14, of Zechariah 12 and Zechariah 14 and Joel three and other passages that the antichrist is going to amass his forces and then launch one final assault against Jerusalem and be utterly destroyed.

Now, to enhance the drama here and the suspense of this scene and to depict the absolute folly of the enemy, notice what the whole world will suddenly see. Verse 17. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun."⁹

⁶ Revelation 19:17-21.

⁷ Daniel 7:25.

⁸ Daniel 7:26-27.

⁹ Daniel 7:17.

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Obviously the sun temporarily pierces the darkness of the fifth bowl judgment long enough now for the angel to appear before it and before the sky goes black again in preparation for the Lord's return. But the sun will not be a welcomed sight as this colossal angel evidently eclipses it. And I find it fascinating because his position will make him impossible to go unnoticed. And the enemy forces will hear this terrifying proclamation.

And he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God; in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."¹⁰

Now, beloved, imagine the terror of this scene. Imagine if you were a soldier and you were assembled on that battle field and suddenly you saw that and heard that. No doubt the satanic powers of the antichrist and the false prophet have been sufficient to convince the world including this vast military force that they can defeat the lamb.

But notice. This is the insult of all insults. Here the angel doesn't even address the antichrist, doesn't even address the vast military forces, but rather he summons the vultures to come to supper, and their corpses will be the main dish. This is the ultimate humiliation to say, "You are about to become carrion for the birds."

Birds, in the original language is a general word for birds, for fowl. But Jesus used a more specific word in Matthew 24:28. There in his description of this scene he says, "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."¹¹ So it will certainly include vultures and, no doubt, many other kinds of birds.

And notice they are summoned in verse 17, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God."¹² Think about the stark contrast this is to the blessed saints who according to verse nine are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. Obviously the human carnage of this scene will be beyond our ability to even comprehend, beyond anything that the world has ever witnessed. In fact, you may recall back in chapter 14 and verse 20 where this scene is also predicted, we read that, "The wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles."¹³

There the Lord uses hyperbole to describe the slaughter and there we learn that the carnage will extend for a distance of 200 miles which is basically from northern to southern Israel. So, this will be a massive stretch of corpses capable of feeding millions of birds.

¹⁰ Daniel 7:17-18.

¹¹ Matthew 24:28.

¹² Revelation 19:17.

¹³ Revelation 14:20.

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You might ask, “Well, where would all these birds come from?”

I did a little bit of research and according to Israel’s Jewish virtual library, we read this, quote, “Israel, located at the junction of three continents is crossed by migrating birds on a scale unparalleled anywhere. Studies over the past decade show that about 500 million birds cross Israel’s narrow airspace twice every year in the course of their migrations. Consequently, Israel has become an attraction for bird enthusiasts world wide.” They go on to say, “Although Israel has laws that protect migrating birds, the massive migrations have created a grave safety problem for both the Israel air force and the birds. A joint study conducted over the past decade by the Israel Air Force and the society for the protection of nature in Israel led to several solutions that have reduced the number of accidents involving aircraft and birds by 88 percent thereby helping to protect pilots, aircraft and the migrating birds that fill Israel’s skies by the millions twice each year. Research on migrating birds in Israel, based on satellite and radar monitoring makes it possible today to track the birds from Israel to their winter nesting grounds in Africa and back northward via Israel to their summer nesting grounds in Europe,” end quote.

The bottom line, dear friends, there will be no shortage of birds. Birds of all kinds could eat the carrion of this slaughter. Although I believe that the purpose of this text is not necessarily to describe the clean up procedure, but rather to emphasize through hyperbole the utter indignity of how their remains will be treated. Frankly an indignity reminiscent of the dishonor that was perpetrated upon the two witnesses whose corpses, you will recall, were left unburied in a public place so that the world could watch and rejoice as they decomposed before they were resurrected.

Now notice the birds will eat the corpses of every strata of mankind in verse 18. We read that, “In order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men.”¹⁴ Again, this is the ultimate insult to these proud kings and commanders, an ignominious fate that perfectly characterizes God’s warning that pride goes before a fall, and what a fall this is, stunning, these arrogant blasphemers, proud without a cause are ultimately going to be nothing more than food for the vultures.

Now notice, the vultures will eat the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them. This is a curious statement. But, remember, by this time the cataclysmic judgments poured out upon the earth will have knocked out all of the satellites that orbit the earth. They will have virtually eliminated all of the high tech type of modern warfare that we are accustomed to. There will be no aviation at this point. There will be no jets, no missiles, guided by GPS. There will be no ships or submarines because the waters will be a toxic, putrid pool of death so there will be no navigation. All long range warfare will be over.

You see, by this time combat will require men to be up close and personal. All the roads will be destroyed. Think about it. By now the topography of the earth will be very difficult to traverse because of all of the earthquakes, because of all of the catastrophic plagues that have wrought havoc upon the earth. And also as you think about it, by now

¹⁴ Revelation 19:18.

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petroleum fuel will be extremely difficult to come by if available at all. So obviously horses and mules will be of great value. You know, even today many militaries use horses and mules as means of transportation in muddy and rocky mountainous regions. I know first hand a horse will go places where a four wheeler and a dirt bike could never dream of going. And he can do so silently without any fuel except what he is walking on.

US special forces have used horses extensively in Afghanistan. They say that in many places it is the only way they can get around except by foot. And, of course, we know that the Muslim forces of northern Sudan have used them in their military raids against the Christians in the south.

But here we see that even the horses will become carrion for the vultures when the warrior king attacks. The same fate will fall upon those assembled against the warrior king regardless of status. Notice that the carrion will include—according to verse 18, at the end of the verse—“The flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”¹⁵ In other words, all who have accepted the mark of the beast. My dear friends, we see the judgment has no partiality.

So the colossal angel eclipses the sun and gives a preview of what is about to happen and then John sees the actual theater of operations in verse 19. “And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies.”¹⁶ This is referring to the antichrist and the 10 kings who are his allies. They are, “Assembled to make war against Him who sat up on the horse, and against His army.”¹⁷

Again, now the Lord may already be in Jerusalem with the army of the saints hovering above along with the angelic forces. We are not sure. And this may help explain a curious statement in Revelation 11:13 where we learn that the Jewish inhabitants during this time of peril will suddenly give glory to the God of heaven. But what we do know is that the antichrist and his allies will amass their forces in this region according to verse 19 to make war against him who sat upon the horse and against his army.

Now think about it. Amassing such a vast force would take weeks. And I believe that the satanically empowered antichrist will have deliberately assembled his troops while he awaits the arrival of the warrior king understanding Bible prophecy, knowing that the three and a half years of his promised coming is about to elapse. In fact, in Daniel chapter 11 verse 45 we read that the antichrist, “will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain.”¹⁸ In other words, right on the—as we would look at it—the west side of Jerusalem. And then it says, “Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Revelation 19:19.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Daniel 11:45.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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Now, we are not told anything about the specifics of the attack, but we know the outcome is going to be instant. And it is going to be devastating.

The next scene is such a cause for rejoicing. Verse 20. “And the beast was seized.”²⁰ Literally he was captured alive. “And with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”²¹ In other words, here we see that the one who promoted the false worship is treated in the same way as the beast himself. And we see here that these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

My friends, there is nothing more humiliating to a man than to be picked up and thrown. I have never experienced that and I hope I don't. But I find it fascinating that this will be precisely what will happen to these vile creatures. And to think they are not only going to be thrown, they are going to be thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone by their archenemy. This, beloved, is a mortification that begs language. You can almost see the humor of God in this, a horror that we cannot imagine.

Now, given the fact that they will be thrown alive into the lake of fire indicates that they will either instantly be equipped with a body that is suited for the torments of hell even as believers are suited for our eternal state, we are given a glorified body. “We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,”²² Paul tells us. Or, perhaps, there will be something super human about their makeup. In fact Alford says, quote, “The two are more than just human because the rest of the lost will not enter the lake until the judgment of the great white throne,” end quote. In other words, that is when the rest of the lost will receive their body suited for hell. Robert Thomas adds, and I quote, “The beast has already undergone the healing of his death wound, a counterfeit of Christ's resurrection. So his super human standing is already a matter of revelation, the joining of the false prophet with the beast in this doom is surprising, but not completely unexpected, though, because of his evil sign working powers,” end quote.

Well, we don't know all of the details, but what we do know is that they will be thrown into the lake of fire.

Can I digress for just a moment?

Dear Christian friend, trying to elect the right politicians to turn this country and the rest of the world around makes about as much difference as a spit in the river. Don't waste your time rearranging the deck furniture on the *Titanic*. The ship of the United States and the rest of the world is going to go down. It is going to sink into the abyss of ungodliness and utter ruin. Even today the world is being prepared for the antichrist, a world that is insanely gullible and, therefore, easy prey for the antichrist, for the false prophet, a world that is brazenly antichrist. Things are going to get far worse before they get better.

²⁰ Revelation 19:20.

²¹ Ibid.

²² 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.

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Beloved, give yourself to the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of men. I think of what Paul told Timothy. He says to him, “Be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”²³ That needs to be our priority, not all this political stuff. Trust the warrior king to deal with the politicians, ok? Trust him to bring in his glorious kingdom. It is coming.

Now, back to the text. Notice, again, the ultimate fate of those vile creatures in verse 20. “These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.”²⁴

Brimstone is a sulfuric chemical that can become explosively hot. This, of course, is reminiscent of the judgment that fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah. In Matthew chapter 13 and verse 42 as well as verse 50 Jesus describes hell as a furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. But it is interesting that here in verse 20 is the first time in the Bible where hell is described as the “lake of fire.” This will be the final abode of Satan and his demonic forces along with all unbelievers. In his description of final judgment on the lost, Jesus said in Matthew 25:41, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.”²⁵

My friends, these words should haunt every man who rejects Christ as Savior and refuses to serve him as Lord. Moreover, these words should motivate every single believer, every sinner saved by grace. We should be driven by these words to tell others who are lost about Christ’s saving grace and to warn them about the judgment to come. Frankly, it is a thought that sometimes is so overwhelming to me I have to ask for grace in order to get beyond it. I have friends and family and you do, too, that unless they repent they are going to be in hell some day.

In Revelation chapter 14 verse 11 there is a description of the suffering in hell as a place where, “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night.”²⁶ In Isaiah chapter 66 verse 24 God speaks through his prophet and describes the horrifying and eternal fate of all who have rebelled against him. This is a place, he says, where, “their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched.”²⁷

Jesus referred to hell in the same way by quoting this very text in Mark chapter nine verses 47 and 48. In fact, in Mark 9:47 the word hell translates the Greek phrase **GEHENNA** (gheh’-en-nah), of fire, referring to the valley of Hinnom which was a massive garbage dump. Remnants of it are still there south of Jerusalem, a place that continually burns.

It is interesting. The valley of Hinnom is also called Tophet. In Hebrew it means place of fire. For example, we see the name Tophet in Jeremiah 19:6. It is from the Hebrew word **TOPH** for drum because children were once burned in sacrifices to idols in that place and

²³ 1 Timothy 4:5.

²⁴ Revelation 19:20.

²⁵ Matthew 25:41.

²⁶ Revelation 14:11.

²⁷ Isaiah 66:24.

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drums were used to drown out their screams. So Jesus uses this horrific place of perpetual burning to illustrate the eternal torment of the lost.

Christian friend, please keep in mind, this is not the same place as Hades. Hades is the temporary abode of the unsaved dead between death and judgment at the great white throne. It is the place from which the rich man cried out in torment you will remember in Luke 16.

And, as a foot note, I must say that I don't agree with those who insist that at death the wicked are merely annihilated and never enter into hell. Not only does such a position, I believe, rail against the texts that I have just mentioned as well as other texts, causing them to beg for clarity and relevance, but also we know according to Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10 that the beast and the false prophet, who are here in our text cast into the lake of fire, are still there 1000 years later when Satan is thrown in with them. They weren't annihilated. There we read in Revelation 20 and verse 10, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."²⁸

Now, back to verse 19. This is going to be the eternal and permanent destination of the antichrist, the false prophet, along with the unredeemed as well as all of Satan and his minions.

And, finally, I want you to notice as we close this morning what happens to the rest of the forces after their blasphemous leaders have been seized and cast into the lake of fire. They may have been seized by the angels, maybe by the Lord himself. We don't know. But verse 21 says, "And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh."²⁹

What a tragic end this will be. Millions will instantly die and become carrion for the birds. Millions of fools who will harden their hearts against the only one who could possibly save them. It is inconceivable. People so deceived that not only will they blaspheme the lamb, but they will actually think that they can defeat him.

Those still alive after this slaughter will be gathered from all over the world for the sheep and the goat judgment of Matthew 25 and there we read that the unsaved will go away into eternal punishment and the righteous into eternal life.

Oh, dear friend, I hope you know my Savior. I pray that you will join me some day and all of the saints at the marriage supper of the Lamb because, my friend, one day a roll is going to be called. Will your name be on it?

How can you even bare such a thought?

²⁸ Revelation 20:10.

²⁹ Revelation 19:21.

The Return of the Warrior King – Part 3

Revelation 19:17-21

My friend, you are either saved or you are lost. You either love Christ and serve him or you love yourself and you serve yourself. You are either blessed or you are cursed, and if cursed, you will be damned forever.

So I ask you. Won't you beg Christ to forgive you and to save you before it is too late?

Let's pray together.

Holy Spirit of God, do your saving work today. Remove the veil from the eyes of those who cannot see their sin and the Savior. And for all of us who know and love you, Lord, may our hearts be ignited with anticipation and praise as we await the great snatching away into the presence of the bridegroom and the ineffable glories of the marriage supper. We love you, Lord. Come quickly we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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