

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Coming Earthly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ

Scripture: Revelation 19:11-20:15

Code: 66-69

We're going to look at the book of Revelation, chapters 19 and 20 by way of an overview. We are now embarking on a new section of the book of Revelation that starts really with the return of Jesus Christ, the establishment of His millennial kingdom, and then the new heaven and the new earth which is the eternal state. This is the last great section in the book of Revelation. And we'll go through it carefully and thoughtfully and look at every part of it, as we have all the way through this tremendous book.

But I want to save that for a little later, that careful detailed study because I don't want to just get into the Second Coming of Christ, it's too vital, it's too significant and then be interrupted as I would be if I were to begin tonight since I have to be gone for a while, to Canada and then again to South Africa and over to Europe. And so when I come back at the end of the month of August, I'll be here some of the time between now and then, but when I come back at the end of the month of August and we're really ready to kind of launch the fall, we'll come back to a detailed study of this text.

But I want us to take an overview of chapter 19 verse 11, all the way down to the end of chapter 20, because that describes for us the great coming Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

Can you imagine a world where justice always prevails? Where righteousness is the rule? Where goodness dominates? Where everything is fair and equitable? Can you imagine a world where there is peace, total and lasting peace? Can you imagine a world where there is joy and happiness? Can you imagine a world where health is so widespread that if someone dies at a hundred years of age, they will be said to die as a child? Can you imagine a world where children can play in snake pits and find the snakes friendly and the snakes will find the children friendly? Can you imagine a world where lions and lambs will walk together with bears and cows? And the whole menagerie be led by a little child?

Can you imagine a world where food is profusely plentiful, even though the globe is experiencing the greatest population explosion ever? Can you imagine a world that is ruled by one person, the whole world? One perfect mind, one perfect will, one who enacts perfect judgment, perfect wisdom, perfect justice, a loving perfect ruler? Can you imagine a world where all of the rulers and leaders and politicians who are in charge are saints? Can you imagine a world that is basically without rebels because they're judged instantaneously with a rod of iron?

You don't have to imagine it because that is the world described in the Scripture as the kingdom to come. That is the new world promised by God in the Bible and it is coming. From the remotest point of antiquity, men have longed for and talked about a golden age, a utopia, an age of peace and justice and righteousness, a time when oppression and war will cease. Poets have written about it. Folk singers still sing about it. Politicians promise it. Prophets predict it. Most people cry for it. And no one brings it.

There is, however, such a world coming. And it will be brought at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be a kingdom the likes of which men have never even dreamed, though they have dreamed much. It will be a utopia beyond all utopia and understanding and comprehension. It will be a true age of blessedness.

Now this period of time to come is called by many titles. In Matthew 19:28 it is called the "regeneration." It's a time of new birth, new life. In Acts 3:19 it is called the times of refreshing. And also in verse 21 of Acts 3, the times of restitution when everything goes back to being the way it's supposed to be.

Ephesians 1:10 designates it as a time of fullness. Philippians 1:6 identifies it as the day of Christ. It is paradise regained.

Now in the biblical doctrine of the Kingdom of God we really have the Christian philosophy of history from start to finish. In this world as we know it, the Christian understanding of history culminates in an earthly kingdom in which God rules through Christ. When we talk about that kingdom, here's what we're talking about. Let me give you a definition...the sovereign rule of God manifested directly on earth through the person of Jesus Christ. I'll say it again...the sovereign rule of God manifested directly on earth through the person of Jesus Christ. That is the kingdom to come.

At the present time a usurper has charge of this world, the kingdom of darkness reigns. Satan himself is the ruler of this world and the god of this age. But there is coming a kingdom in which Jesus Christ will reign both spiritually and physically. That kingdom is the subject of the text before us and of many other texts which we will see as it unfolds in days to come.

But I'm going to show you six components of that great age that are given us starting in verse 11. Here we will see the rule of the Son, the removal of the serpent, the reign of the saints, the return of Satan, the revolt of society and the resurrection of sinners. Now you don't need to write all those down now, they'll unfold tonight. And this will give you a general perspective on the millennial kingdom which is very, very important.

Let's start with the rule of the Son. The first characteristic of this future kingdom is that it is dominated by the Lord Jesus Christ. The kingdom literally on earth will begin with the arrival of the King. You can't have this earthly kingdom until the King gets here. When Christ comes in His glorious return, He comes to establish His Kingdom.

His own words regarding that day are given to us in Matthew chapter 24 verses 29 and 30, "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 heaven will be shaken. And then 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. 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."

The King comes to destroy the ungodly and to collect His elect from all over the universe for the kingdom. This comes at the end of the time called Tribulation in Matthew chapter 24. When the time of Tribulation has come to its end and the whole universe has reeled under the judgments of the seals and the trumpets and the bowls. When all of those judgments are complete, then the King comes.

Let's look at His coming starting in verse 11, and I'm going to read down through verse 16. John says, Revelation 19:11, "And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself, and He's clothed with a robe dipped in blood and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen white and clean were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword so that with it He may smite the nations, He will rule them with a rod of iron and He treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. 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."

Now that's taking you all the way down through verse 19. But in the first part, coming down through verse 16, we have a description of this rider on the white horse who tells us who He is. He is called

Faithful and True, He is called the Word of God in verse 13, Faithful and True in verse 11. He is called KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS in verse 16. Obviously this can be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is also given a name known only to Him which is some secret name related to His deity, a name verse 12 says written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.

Not only do His names tell us who He is, but look at His appearance. He has eyes as a flame of fire. He has many crowns upon His head. He has a vesture or a garment or a robe stained with blood. And not only do His names and His appearance tell us who He is, but notice His activities. He judges and makes war righteously. He descends from heaven. He leads a heavenly host. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword. And with it He smites the nations. He rules them with a rod of iron and He treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

This can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who is King, the One who has been given all judgment, the One who returns to establish His Kingdom. And so at the inauguration of this coming thousand-year kingdom on earth, our Lord will come down from heaven exactly as He said He would. He will come when all of the universe goes dark in blazing light. He will come personally, visibly, gloriously, powerfully with hosts of angels and with glorified saints. And we who are believers are going to be with Him. I believe Old Testament saints will be there and New Testament believers will be there, we'll all be coming back with Him.

First Thessalonians 3:13 says, "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." Earlier He came for His saints and gathered them to Himself, and now He comes to earth with His saints.

Chapter 19 then closes with Christ's arrival and the overwhelming victory that He brings at the battle of Armageddon. Verse 17 leads us into this. There's an angel standing in the sun, he cries with a loud voice, he says to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come and assemble for the great supper of God," and what are these birds going to do? They're going to eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses, that is all the carnage that remains after the devastating triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ in His return. The beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, verse 19, assemble to make war against Him who sat upon the horse and against His army are going to be food for the birds.

Now at this point I want to stop and just briefly note something for you that is a fascination to me, great fascination. When I had the opportunity to visit Israel I was most interested to find out about birds because I was concerned to understand how it is that this massive execution of all of these armies of the world at the battle of Armageddon is going to be consumed by birds.

Well, interestingly enough there is a marvelous, marvelous answer to this. The man who is chief pilot for American Airlines at their Chicago base told me, he said, "I want to tell you a fascinating thing that I recently found out. Any of us who fly overseas and fly into Tel Aviv, Bengourion(?) Airport which is

THE airport in Israel, are very much aware of a severe problem there. And the severity of the problem there has to do with birds, migrating birds. In fact, it is such a severe problem...listen to this...that more Israeli jets have been downed by birds than by enemies. And anybody who is flying in that area, commercial jet or a military jet has been flying in some danger at certain periods of the years when these birds migrate."

And so, as enterprising as the Israelis are, they did a study of migrating birds to try to solve the problem. And they put it all on video and he gave me a copy of the video. It showed pictures literally of birds flying and a jet coming into a flock of birds and a bird going through the cockpit and shearing off the head of the pilot...incredible pictures. They needed to deal with this. And so what they did was they began to study very carefully the migrating birds and they actually got in gliders and got up in the air with the various different kinds of birds that migrated and they flew along with them and studied very thoughtfully their pattern.

And when they completed their comprehensive study, they sent it to every airport and every chief pilot all across the globe to tell them what they had concluded and how they had solved the problem. What they basically said was this, that at a certain period of the year, spring on into early summer, mark this, almost all migrating birds from western Europe to Siberia migrate south through Israel. You say why? Because it is the most obvious neck of land. The birds would rather migrate over land so that they can have access to food than fly across the Mediterranean. They would rather migrate through Israel because it is fertile than fly in the barren deserts to the east. And so millions and millions and millions of birds stretching from western Europe into Siberia, Asia, all funnel through Israel.

Incredible thought. They also found out that the birds come predictably at the same time, depending upon what kind of bird they are and they always fly at the same altitude. So they set their altitudes at different altitudes than the birds and move in and around them.

All of that to say this, when God gets ready to put on a feast, there will be plenty of birds to participate. It may also mean that the carnage of Armageddon will...will be in the spring, but then on the other hand, we don't want to be too sure about that since calendars and seasons will be, by this time, in utter chaos. And the migrating of the birds may be part of the disruption of their natural course that is characteristic of that whole age. But all of that to say when the Lord needs birds, they'll be there. He's already trained them where to fly. I'll say more about that specifically when we get to this text.

And so the Lord Jesus will come. Verse 20 says, "The beast was seized," that's the Antichrist, "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. The rest were killed with a sword which came

from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

Christ is coming back and He will destroy all the ungodly, provide carnage for scavenger birds. This is the beginning of the kingdom. King Jesus will come to reign. The form of government will be a theocracy, God will rule by Christ Jesus. Psalm 2:6 speaks of this day when it says, "Yet I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." God promised this in 2 Samuel 7 when He said, "The greater Son of David will come and establish an eternal kingdom." This is it. The absolute character of this kingdom, by the way, is described by the prophets. It is not a shared rule, it is an absolute kingdom. Isaiah 2 says, "It will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains and will be raised above the hills and all the nations will stream to it, and many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us concerning His ways, that we may walk in His paths, for the law will go forth from Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and He will judge between the nations and will render decisions for many peoples and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, never again will they learn war.'"

It is absolute rule. Isaiah 9:6 describes it in that magnificent passage where it says that this one who comes will have the government on His shoulder and of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and evermore.

So, the first thing we're going to see in this passage is the rule of the Son as He comes to establish His kingdom of righteousness. And to do that He has to do two things, He has to destroy the ungodly, He has to get rid of the beast and the false prophet who have been the earthly leaders of that ungodly force, and He has to gather His elect from all over the universe. So the rule of the Son.

Second thing you see in this text takes you down into chapter 20 and that is the removal of the serpent...the removal of the serpent. "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him so that he should not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed. After these things, he must be released for a short time."

Now note this, as the kingdom begins God has already taken care of all the human rebels. Many of them were destroyed at Armageddon and became the food for the birds. The rest of the Gentiles who were not destroyed there in the battle, verse 21 says were killed with the sword that comes out of the mouth of Christ. That would be at the judgment of the nations. These would be the goat nations, to borrow the terminology of Matthew 25, who go into everlasting punishment. The rebels from the nation Israel, according to Ezekiel 20, will have been purged out. Fallen angels defeated and

sentenced to the pit. The beast and the false prophet cast into the lake of fire. And then this great enemy Satan is incarcerated.

If the kingdom is to be Christ's, the usurper has to be incarcerated. The ruler of this world currently must be vanquished. There can be no thousand years of peace, no thousand years of righteousness on earth while he, the great enemy of God, is at large, so God removes him. That's very important to note. Satan is removed. He is put into the abyss.

Notice the angel in verse 1 has the key of the abyss...key of the abyss, abussos. Sometimes it's translated the bottomless pit. It's the place of bound demons, according to Luke 8:31 and 2 Peter 2:4. It is not the final hell, it is a place of bound demons. Ultimately they will all be cast into the final hell at the end of the millennial period. Here they are sent to the abussos, the abyss, the abode of bound demons.

God has the key and a great chain. He takes the chain and binds Satan. At the same time certainly binds certain demons and casts them into the abyss. And this is for, it says, a thousand years. And that's the duration of the millennial kingdom. Satan, by the way, in this text is called by four names. He's called the dragon, it refers to his bestial cruelty, his oppressive powers culminating in the death of so many. He is called that old serpent to identify him as the same one who was in Eden, the one of whom God said He would bruise his head. He is also called the devil, diabolos, that means a slanderer, a malignant liar. This has been his character from the start, he's the father of lies, John 8:44. And he's called Satan which means adversary, or accuser. This roaring lion is overcome by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the One with the bruised heel crushes the serpent's head.

And for a thousand years the earth will be rid of the evil one. Wow. You say, "Does that mean there won't be sin in the millennial kingdom? No. There will be sin in the millennial kingdom because sin is not dependent on Satan. Sin is the reflection of man's fallenness. What there won't be in the Millennium is false religion. That's where Satan spends his time disguised as an angel of light. What there won't be is governmental corruption. What there won't be is anarchy. What there won't be is crime, pervasive runaway crime because it will be dealt with instantaneously. What there won't be is inequity in injustice and unrighteousness at the leadership level. But sin, yes there will be sin because Satan is not the source of sin, fallenness is.

Now in verse 3 he is thrown into the abyss. All that seven times that term "abyss" is used it refers to the place where fallen angels, foul evil spirits are imprisoned. And as I said, final hell comes later.

But then notice, he is not allowed to deceive the nations any longer. He can't deceive them religiously. He can't deceive them politically. He can't deceive them militarily. He is bound. But then this, "Until the thousand years are completed, after these things he must be released for a short time." This is only temporary. He is going to be loosed at the very end. And when he is loosed, he is

going to bring about a rebellion. He's going to be turned loose and he's going to be able to gather a force to strike against the Lord.

In fact, down in verse 7 he's released, he comes out, verse 8, to deceive the nations. I'll say more about that. But the second thing we see then is not only the rule of the Son but we see the removal of the serpent. He is incarcerated during this time of the kingdom. And that's why you can have justice and righteousness and peace over the earth. It isn't that sin is eliminated, it is that Satan's work is in high places, religiously and politically and that is ground to a complete halt.

Now thirdly, as we see the overview here. The next feature that is characteristic in this time, is the reign of the saints...the reign of the saints. The rule of the Son, the removal of the serpent and the reign of the saints. Let's look at verse 4, John continues as he sees this vision and he says, "I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image and did not receive the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand, and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

Here's the reign of the saints. John sees this glorious panorama of all of God's people and they're all resurrected and they're all rewarded and they're all glorified and they're all enthroned. Who are they? I saw thrones and THEY sat upon them, who are they? Some say Israel, some say the church, some say the Tribulation saints.

Well I think all of the above. I think that all the saints are going to be there, certainly the kingdom belongs to Israel. Certainly we're promised a part in it. Certainly those Tribulation saints who were martyred for the sake of Christ will come back with Him in His kingdom glory. Listen to what Daniel 7:18 says, "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, and the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Who is that? Well that's first of all Old Testament saints...Old Testament saints. So we know they're going to be there. We know we're going to eat and drink with Abraham because Jesus said that. In Matthew chapter 19 verse 28, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, you have followed Me in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Who's that? Apostles. "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My namesake shall receive many times as much and shall inherit eternal life." You're going to be there, too. Everybody who followed Me.

So what do you have? You have Old Testament saints promised the kingdom in Daniel 7:18. You have the Apostles promised the kingdom in Matthew 19. And all who follow Christ, that would include the church, they're all going to be there.

First Peter 2:9, "You are a chosen race," speaking to the church, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." And God's own possessed people are going to be there. Listen even more specifically and explicitly to 1 Corinthians 6:2, "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?" When is that going to happen? It's going to happen in the kingdom. We're going to be the judges. Presidents aren't going to appoint judges anymore, Christ is. We're going to be the judges. We're going to be in the Supreme Courts and the Superior Courts and the local courts. We're going to be the law makers. We're going to be the chiefs of police. The saints are going to rule. And that would certainly encompass Tribulation saints, the glorified resurrected saints of all ages, all of them were promised to reign with Christ. The bride and all the guests that we learned about in our last study.

What will be the conditions on earth during that time? Well politically, and we'll say more about this in the future. Politically...universal rule, absolute rule, righteous, just rule. Spiritually...Israel will be converted. Israel will be restored to the land. Israel will be the nation that leads the world. She will have the land promised to Abraham. Jerusalem will be rebuilt. Christ will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem. Israel will be blessed. She will be again united to God. It's a special time for Israel.

But not just Israel. All other saints will be exalted as well. Beyond that the characteristics, the spiritual characteristics of the kingdom are the presence of Christ will be there, the presence of truth, and I'm just telling you what the Scripture specifically says. Righteousness will flourish. Peace will reign. Joy will abound. The power of the Holy Spirit will be unleashed like never before. And even a new temple, a memorial temple will be built. Spiritual life will be glorious.

What will it be like physically? Well the curse on the earth will be lifted. The desert will blossom like a rose. Streams will run into the desert. A whole valley will open up in the land of Israel and fill with water. There will be a super-abundance of food, according to Joel chapter 2. There will be health and healing. There will be a high birth rate and low death rate. Jerusalem will be exalted. The topography of the land will be utterly changed. It's an incredible time...an incredible time. And the saints will sit on thrones. We will rule the world under Christ. We'll be His ambassadors and His presidents and governors and rulers and authorities and judges and justices. We'll be His chiefs.

We've been waiting for this kind of control for a long time, haven't we? And we'll have it. And may I say, it will never come until then. There are some people running around today who call themselves reconstructionists, or theologians, or perhaps the old traditional name, post-millennialists who think that politically we can literally bring the kingdom through our earthly efforts. The only one who can bring the kingdom is the King.

Verse 5, "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed." What is that? Well that's the rest...that's the resurrection of the unjust. Did you get that? All of the redeemed

have been resurrected. At the Rapture, at the end of the Tribulation when Daniel says that those who sleep shall awaken, Tribulation saints who have died will be resurrected and glorified, I believe, at the coming of Christ. So that aspect of resurrection, the resurrection of the just unto life will be done.

But the rest of the resurrection, the resurrection of the unjust doesn't come till the thousand years are over. So the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection, "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection." Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection. "Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

This is the first resurrection, really belongs with verse 6. The first resurrection is the blessed resurrection of saints. The first component in the first resurrection was the resurrection of Christ, the second component, the Rapture of the church, the third, the resurrection of Old Testament saints. And we will all be resurrected and all be glorified. Now at the same time there will be people on the earth living in physical bodies, obviously, because they will...they will have been believers when Christ came. He didn't destroy the believers so they went right into the kingdom in their physical bodies and they have babies, they have children, they have families, they multiply. It's a flourishing world. They'll fill the world with people and not all of those people, believe it or not, will believe in Christ.

Isn't that amazing? Even though He's right here on earth. That shouldn't surprise you, they didn't believe on Him the first time He was here on earth. In fact, only a small group did, the rest of them wanted Him dead. And out of that collection of people born to their saints during the time of the kingdom, who multiply and multiply, and multiply exponentially to fill the whole earth in that thousand-year period, they can literally populate the earth in that period of time, especially people who live a long time and are highly productive as the Scripture says they'll be. Out of all of those people will come enough people who don't believe to constitute a rebellious army that Satan will collect in the very end, at the end of the thousand years, to fight against god.

Let's look at that point, point number four. We saw the reign of the saints, following the removal of the serpent, following the return of the Son, now we get the return of Satan. Verse 7, "When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison," as it says at the end of verse 3, "For a short time." Why? Why would this have to happen? I'll tell you why, now listen carefully. Because there has to be a culmination of the remaining latent opposition. I'll say it again. When Jesus came He destroyed the ungodly, but the sheep, as they're described in Matthew 25, go into the kingdom so that the millennial kingdom is an actual earthly kingdom with earthly people as well as glorified saints. The glorified saints are there but so are the earthly people. They reproduce. And they populate the world. And now you've got a world populated again, and most of them, or many of them, I don't know the numbers, will be unbelievers. And so there has to be a dealing then with those unbelievers before the final heaven is established.

So to reveal that latent opposition, to reveal the final character of sinful men born in the kingdom, Satan is released. And God uses Satan to collect the unbelievers together. And that's exactly what he does. During the kingdom children will be born, children of saints. Outwardly they will be forced to conform to Christ, outwardly they will not be able to rebel, but inwardly they will be sinful and they will reject Christ. And Satan is loosed to reveal this latent opposition and let it break loose so it can be destroyed.

Isn't it an amazing thing that in the perfect environment Christ will be rejected? If that doesn't make the point that you can't change sinners by changing their environment, I don't know what does. Some people think if you can create a Christian culture you can change people. Listen, you can't even change people with millennial culture. Sinners aren't changed by their environment. Men rejected Him the first time He was here. Unbelief is blind in any age, and it will be then too. This is Satan's last rebellion then as he comes back at the close of the thousand years. People who have chosen sin, unrighteousness will follow Satan.

That leads us to the fifth point, the revolt of society, verse 8. "Satan will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war, the number of them is like the sand of the seashore." That's why I said it isn't just a few folks, it's most or certainly many. Here he comes and he deceives the nations and he gathers them all to battle and this great battle has forces that number like the sand of the seashore, worldwide vast rebellion. Satan is always a rebel, always a rebel. And even a perfect environment won't make a perfect man. A perfect environment won't make a perfect world. Environment is not the issue.

Then verse 9, "And they came up on the broad plain of the earth." Now remember something. In the bowl judgments, what happened to the earth? What happened to the mountains? They are no more, right? So the earth is a broad plain. And on that great broad plain of the earth came these forces of Satan and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city...what would that be? Jerusalem. This is the march of the world to its final Waterloo. The whole mad army of the world encircling Jerusalem faces destruction like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and one sentence tells all..."And fire came down from heaven and devoured them." Fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

And this is some kind of fire, my friend. Some kind of fire. If you look at chapter 21 verse 1, this fire, this holocaust caused the first heaven and the first earth to pass away. Could this be what Peter was talking about when he talked about the elements will melt with fervent heat? An atomic reaction that incinerates the globe? Obviously the Lord is going to have to gather the living saints at that point to Himself, glorify them instantaneously so they don't suffer this disaster with the ungodly.

And then verse 10, "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'll be tormented day and night forever and ever."

By the way, just a footnote. Satan doesn't run hell, he's a victim there. God runs it. It is God who destroys in hell, according to Matthew 10:28. Satan suffers with the rest. He is not in charge of hell at all.

So, the rule of the Son, the removal of the serpent, the reign of the saints, the return of Satan, the revolt of society, and then one last point, the resurrection of sinners...the resurrection of sinners. You've got all these sinners who have been destroyed. Now listen, you've got all the sinners throughout all of human history, all the unregenerate and the ungodly, and here is their resurrection. This is what John 5 calls the resurrection of the unjust. You can tell...you can tell anybody you know who rejects Christ that they will be resurrected. Resurrection isn't just for Christians, no, no. They're going to have a resurrection, too. Verse 11, "I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it from whose presence earth and heaven fled away and no place was found for them." There's what you have in 21:1.

Here comes this atomic disintegration. The whole universe goes out of existence, and John sees nothing but a great white throne. No more earth and no more heaven, and verse 12, here come the dead, the great and the small, significant and insignificant, standing before the throne. And these are the ungodly dead. "And the books were opened and another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds." The book of life would reveal whether they belonged to God or not. And if their name is not in the book of life, then God would look at the other books. What do the other books record? The other books record all their deeds. Why? Because their deeds are the things that damn them. And God has a complete record of them.

To show you how comprehensive this judgment is, "The sea gave up the dead which were in it. And death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them. And they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds...according to their deeds." This is the great white throne judgment. God destroys it in an incineration of flames and an atomic holocaust, then He raises the spirits, are you ready for that, of the ungodly and I believe they receive some kind of body, some kind of form, else how can you have a resurrection?

What am I saying? This, when an unbeliever dies, where does he go? Out of the presence of God, anytime, now, in the past, in the future. Unbelievers die, they go out of the presence of God. Is it a place of torment? Was it a place of torment? Jesus said regarding Lazarus and the rich man, that the rich man when he died was in torment. Sure it's a place of torment. It's not the final form of hell but it's a place of hellish torment.

So any ungodly person, any person who doesn't know the Lord dying at any time goes out of the presence of God into torment. But their bodies remain in the grave. But in the end, there is going to be a resurrection, some kind of body of all the ungodly who have ever lived is going to come out of the grave, and out of the sea, and be joined with that tormented spirit and they'll take on a new and eternal form fit for eternal hell. I don't know anymore about it than that. But there will be a resurrection. Just like we will have a glorified body suited for the glories of heaven, they will have a body brought together with their already tormented spirit suited for eternal hell. And the judgment is on the basis of their deeds because their deeds damn them apart from Christ.

Then comes the final verdict in verses 14 and 15, "And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire." In other words, hell becomes everything, everything else is swallowed up in hell, this is the second death, the lake of fire. "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." Jesus said it this way in Matthew 25:41, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire...listen to this...prepared for the devil and his angels." Hell wasn't made for men. But they go there when they side with Satan.

Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has eternal life and does not come into judgment but is passed from death unto life." What a great promise. If you hear His Word, if you believe in Him, believe in God who sent Him, you will not ever pass into judgment.

So, the kingdom is coming and with it glory and judgment. Now, after that you're in chapter 21, and chapter 21 is the eternal state, that's the heaven of heavens where we will dwell forever and ever. And in chapter 21 and 22 is a presentation of the glories of eternal heaven. So now you know what is to come in this marvelous book. Let's bow in a closing word of prayer.

Father, thank You for our evening together. We thank you so much for the fact that You have given us a book like this, while it is filled with so much mystery, at the same time it is just filled with so much hope. We thank You that we can trust it. You have proven Yourself trustworthy in the past, You prove Yourself every day trustworthy in the present, and we believe You for the future. It will be as You said. We thank You that You by Your grace have redeemed us from judgment to come. O God, give us a compassion for those who have not been so delivered, for those who will be gathered to the horrors of the great white throne where it is too late for any repentance and there they will receive a body suited for eternal torment. On the one hand, we thank You for delivering us from judgment through Christ. On the other hand, Lord, we grieve for those not so delivered and ask that You would give us opportunity to speak the saving truth to them.

We thank You that history ends with Christ. We thank You that there is coming a day when the world will be the way it should be, when justice prevails and righteousness and goodness is the rule, when there is total and lasting peace and joy reigns, where health is widespread and food is plenty. And more than that, where we are ruled by our loving saving perfect Christ, a world where the people of God are the exalted leaders and unbelievers are judged. Lord, we long for this world, paradise regained in Your good time and for Your glory we pray that it might come soon, that Christ might be exalted and we with Him. We ask in His name. Amen.

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