

THE FALL OF THE BEAST AND ITS MEANING FOR US

Revelation 19: 11- 21; txt: Revelation 14: 9-13

October 18, 2020

I. A Call to Patient Endurance as Beasts Try to Shatter Our Hope

A. Christians in John's day and today often experience joy and freedom when they leave their sins at the foot of the cross, and look forward to a new life with God through Jesus Christ.

1. It is a hope we experience every time we witness a baptism.
2. It is the hope of a life filled with promise.

B. But then a new reality sets in.

1. Satan begins his counter attack, sometimes using anti-Christians, whom Revelation refers to as beasts from the sea, to tear our hopes and dreams apart.
 - a. A Christian child goes to school and is belittled for her faith.
 - b. A Christian from a non-Christian family is made an outcast.
 - c. Or in places like Saudi Arabia and North Korea, Christians are imprisoned, tortured, and killed.
2. Or, Christians are attacked by the beasts from the earth, that is by false prophets.
 - a. A Christian young person finds friends who convince her that her Christian faith is only a made-up fairy tale, and that she's only a Christian because her parents are.
 - b. A Christian young man is convinced by his friends to join them in drinking and using drugs.
 - c. Longing for intimacy a Christian young woman is enticed to have sex outside of marriage.
 - d. As victims of such lies, they sometimes leave the church or even the faith, and some end up on the street as alcoholics and drug addicts.
 - e. Even worse, they become false prophets themselves, who try to deceive others.

C. Our text calls us, who struggle with such realities, to patient endurance and faith.

Revelation 14:12 (NIV) This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

1. A couple weeks ago we looked at what this call means.
2. Today we will examine why Christians should wait patiently.

Questions:

- 1) What feelings do I have when I view a baptism?
- 2) When did I first feel that my life in Christ was full of hope and promise? Do I still feel that way? Why or why not?
- 3) Which "beasts" have I faced, and what has been the result? Which beasts have my friends and family members faced and what has been the result?
- 4) Is it difficult for me to wait patiently for the Lord to come? Why or why not?

II. Because in the End We Will Be Vindicated

A. The beast of the sea and the beast of the earth will be destroyed.

Revelation 19:20 (NIV) But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

B. God will destroy their followers along with them.

Revelation 14:9-10 (NIV) A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.

1. Chapter 19 tells us that the beast's entire army will be defeated by Jesus who rides the white horse.
2. It may seem to the followers of the beasts that they are on the winning side, but they are being deceived, and it will cost them everything.

C. This will happen when Jesus returns on Judgment Day.

1. Most scholars agree that the battle referred to in Revelation 19 is the Battle of Gog and Magog, referred to in Ezekiel 38-39.
 - a. These verses tell of a great emperor Gog and his nation Magog who try to conquer God's people in battle.
 - b. Some of their allies and soldiers are from the great empires who had already done so.
 - c. But they lose the battle and God destroys them.
2. Although some interpret both Ezekiel and Revelation as referring an actual earthly battle, given the realities of how spiritual powers are defeated, it seems more likely that they are pictures that symbolize the defeat of these forces on Judgment Day.
 - a. On that day all those who seek to destroy God's people will themselves be destroyed,
 - b. And all they thought they had accomplished over the centuries will be destroyed with them.

D. To receive the comfort this hope brings, we clearly must believe this and the other promises we have in Christ, but our faith is not a blind faith.

1. We know this will happen because Jesus already defeated Satan and his hosts on the cross.

Colossians 2:15 (NIV) And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

2. In this world we experience evidences of Christ's victory.
 - a. We see it every time someone's life is radically changed.
 - b. We see it in society—in such events as the abolition of slavery and even in the ideas behind our democracy.
 - c. And the more our own lives begin to change and the more we reflect Jesus, the more our own hope

in his victory will grow.

Questions:

- 1) How does having the sure hope that my faith will be vindicated help me to patiently endure?
- 2) How do I understand the Battle of Gog and Magog? (Do I see it as an actually earthly battle, or do I see it as a picture of Judgment Day when all anti-Christ's and false prophets will be defeated?) Why do I understand it that way?
- 3) Why do I know for sure that the anti-Christ's and false prophets will be defeated? What evidences do I see of Christ's victory over Satan and his evil forces? How do the victories I have over sin and evil strengthen that faith?

III. Because in the End We Will Have Rest

Revelation 14:13 (NIV) Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

A. This is our time of testing, but we live with hope of the Promised Land, the hope of the new earth, where we will enjoy eternal rest.

1. Hebrews 3 tells us about the rest that was promised God's people when they entered the Promised Land, after they went through the wilderness.
 - a. Because of their unbelief, the people to whom God promised that rest never received it and died in wilderness.

Hebrews 3:18-19 (NIV) And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

- b. Even after arriving in the Promised Land, their children also never received that rest, because they too failed to trust and obey their Lord.
 - c. They continually suffered from wars, famines, disease, and other tragedies.
2. Hebrews 4 then compares their failure to enter rest with that of all people to do so after Adam and Eve sinned.
 - a. Adam and Eve's first day of life was the seventh day, the day God rested, but because of their unbelief and sin they never entered that rest.
 - b. After Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed work

Genesis 3:17 (NIV) To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

3. Our work as Christians is made even more difficult because of our battles with evil and with those would do us evil.
 - a. Like redeemed Israel, we live in the wilderness.
 - b. But we await the day when there will be no more tears or crying or pain, when the old order of things will pass way.

B. Sadly, those who give-in to the beast's lies will never know that rest, but will be eternally with the beast, knowing only toil and never joy and satisfaction.

Revelation 14:11 (NIV) And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."

Questions:

- 1) In what ways can I experience a taste of the rest I am promised? Have I done so? Why or why not? How can the Lord's Day (Sunday) give me a taste of that rest? What could I do on the Lord's Day to help me experience more of God's promised rest?
- 2) In what ways have beasts from the sea (anti-Christ's) and beasts from the sea (false prophets) made my labor more stressful and robbed me of the rest and satisfaction I should have received from it? How does promise that Christ will completely destroy these beasts comfort me as I reflect on that?
- 3) Will heaven be only rest, or will I work in heaven? If I will be working, how do I understand the promise of eternal rest?
- 4) Do I truly grieve for those who will never know the eternal rest which I am anticipating? If so, what have I done about it?

IV. Because in the End We Will Be Rewarded

Revelation 14:13c (NIV) Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead" "Yes," says the Spirit, "for their deeds will follow them."

A. The master will take note of what we have done and reward us.

B. Our reward will include reigning with Christ and enjoying the beauties of heaven, where there's perfect peace and no more crying or pain.

C. Jesus hints at our greatest reward in his Parable of the Talents, by the master's words to his faithful servants.

Matthew 25:23 (NIV) "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

1. The greatest reward will be sharing our Master's happiness.
2. It will be living with him forever.

Revelation 21:3 (NIV) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Questions:

- 1) Since I am saved only by grace through faith in Christ, should I really be hoping to be rewarded for my works? Why or why not?
- 2) How do I understand "reigning with Christ?" How might my reigning with him be similar to what God called people to do in Genesis 1: 28? What else might it entail? (see 1 Corinthians 6:2- 3)
- 3) Does the Bible really clearly tell us all that much about heaven and the new earth? Why do I think that is the case?
- 4) Am I looking forward to seeing Jesus and my heavenly Father? How do my priorities here on earth demonstrate that?

Today, the beasts in this world are very real. They seek to kill our hopes and dreams. The more we resist them, the more vicious they become, and the more they try to steal our hope from us. Today, God reminds us that they really cannot do so. And the dreams he has given us will come true. For there is a day of reckoning, followed by a time when the beasts and this present time will be only a distant memory, a tear he will wipe from eyes, eyes that will enjoy seeing him face to face