

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #64

1/09/2008

The King Is Coming To Defeat His Enemies: Part 2

19:17-21

Revelation 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

If the things presented in the immediately preceding verses were gruesome and frightening to those who don't belong to **the King of Kings**, what we read in this verse is even more so.

Let us take note of the specifics which are before us in verse twenty, and, as we do, we need to emphasize that each thing that God tells us in verse twenty is real, even as that which precedes it is real. We have (1) the beast and false prophet being taken or seized; (2) the beast and false prophet being cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. While we have seen the beast and false prophet before, the introduction of a lake of fire burning with brimstone is new. Some handle these things by rejecting them as being real and then symbolize them away. None of what we read here should be symbolized away and, if one does, it is done at great peril to the person doing it and puts that person in a position of great danger.

First, the beast is real. While symbolic descriptions are used to present him, such as what we read in Chapter thirteen, it is only because he, a real person, is so fantastically awful and demonic that normal descriptions are inadequate to picture his reality. When this person, about whom we have studied extensively as we have gone through this [Revelation of Jesus Christ](#), appeared on the scene at the mid-point of the Tribulation Period as **the beast**, he was given all of the power of Satan so that he might be Satan's alter-ego on this earth. **He first appeared, not as a beast, but as a pseudo-Savior in Chapter six riding a white horse** as he brought a false peace to this earth for a very short time and even dared to pretend to be a representative of God and a friend of God's chosen people, the Jews. Even then he was nothing other than anti-Christ, but his real and demonic nature was not fully seen until the passage in Chapter thirteen.

Review some of what we learned in Chapter thirteen about the beast since it was there that his true nature was uncovered and became public. **First, "the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."** Of course, **the dragon, Satan**, had great power as that fallen arch angel **Lucifer**, so, when he gave the beast his power and his seat from which to rule over men and his angelic authority, it greatly empowered the beast to be able to do supernatural things. Even as Lucifer's sense of entitlement and his drive to elevate himself to a position of equality with his Creator prompted him to take insanely misguided actions in his rebellion, a like pattern of foolish actions is reproduced by **the beast**.

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Revelation 19:21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

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Second, he attempted to show that he has power over life and death so that he could mobilize and energize his growing following of worshippers by producing the hallucination of his own death and resurrection: *“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast”* (Rev. 13:3). His trick worked — *“And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?” who is able to make war with him?”* (Rev. 13:4). During the last half of the **Tribulation Period** the **beast** becomes the object of worship of multitudes of people. In effect, for a brief period of time, he becomes their god. To achieve this, the beast enlists the help of another person who takes on the role of **the false prophet**.

Second, the false prophet is real. He is a person of a religious position and identity who arises out of Palestine. Note what we have learned:

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:11-17).

The beast and **the false prophet**, along with Satan, form an unholy trinity, a pseudo substitute of our Holy Trinitarian God, to give those who reject God’s manifestation of Himself, what is customized to satisfy their perverted desires. From the time of the Garden of Eden Satan has appealed to the sensuous nature of man to stimulate him into trying to fulfill his illogical drive to make himself the center of his universe. Just as Eve made herself vulnerable to Satan’s temptations when she began to respond to the stimulations of her senses, acting according to her feelings, rather than being guided

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by the thought processes of her mind, men have become increasingly vulnerable to the seductions of Satan by following her pattern. That is why the magical illusions offered by **the false prophet** through “**miracles**” is so successful. Only when the appetites of men have been cultivated to be stimulated by the sensational and dramatic, no matter how bizarre, such as a statue speaking and acting alive (13:15), can men be led into such illogical activities as choosing to worship and serve such illusionary objects.

The role of **the false prophet** is to take that which has long been long relegated to the world of fantasy and make believe and bring it into the accepted religious lives of millions. This is achieved over a period of time by fertilizing an appetite for the dramatic and sensational designed to appeal to the sensual nature of men and feed their desires to make them feel good and experience pleasure. That this is happening in our day is easy to see when masses of people crowd meeting places, called churches, to be entertained and stimulated to feel good and to experience excitement and pleasure. What is happening is simply a “tilling of the ground” to prepare multitudes of people to respond to the sensational and illusionary offerings of Satan with their sensual nature rather than with their minds. If men were to exercise their minds and think they would realize that it is futile and illogical to fight against God, knowing that He can easily defeat and destroy them. Only by stimulating a response based upon their deceived and perverted feelings is it possible for Satan and his henchmen, the beast and false prophet, to seduce millions of people to attempt the illogical, utterly foolish and suicidal act of rushing to their own execution at the hand of God. That this is the ultimate result of the use of this tactic is clearly indicated in Revelation 16:13-14: *“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”* Thus, it is that the beast and false prophet have, beyond any doubt, earned that which is imposed upon them by our just and righteous God.

The seizing, or taking, of the beast and the false prophet is real. Precisely how this happens, whether **the King of Kings** simply reaches down and snatches them or sends an angel to do His bidding, we are not told. It really doesn't matter — **they are forcibly seized and dispatched to their deserved destiny — cast alive into a lake of fire burning with fire and brimstone!**

The lake of fire burning with brimstone is real! The introduction of this **lake of fire burning with brimstone** demands that we spend some effort to understand what is before us.

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Almost since the time the Holy Scriptures have been available men have tried to deny, spiritualize or symbolize away the existence of **a lake of fire burning with brimstone**. Unbelievers have scoffed at the “**scientific possibility**” of the existence of such a place. “**Christians**” of various positions have tried to explain it away. In a way, the reason for such attempts is understandable. The existence of such a place, and its destiny, is frightening beyond description for those in danger of being sent there by a Holy God for an eternity of suffering. It has long been the route some have taken to deny a terribly unpleasant reality, but it is futile. Not only does the Word of God provide a substantial amount of information about such a place, but it is also interesting that science, the more information it acquires about our universe, seems to even provide some support. Since we shall confront the subject of **the lake of fire burning with brimstone** again when we study Chapter twenty, we shall simply introduce some information at this time.

Consider some of what is found in the Bible. The Bible indicates that there are temporary holding places God has designed, both for the dead and for especially wicked demons or fallen angels. The word “**hell,**” as it is used most frequently in the Bible sometimes refers to one of these temporary holding places and is variously called or translated from the following words: **(1) Hades, (2) Tartarus, (3) Abaddon, (4) The deep.** We will pursue a more thorough understanding of these words when we come to Revelation 20:11-15 and study about all of the wicked being cast into **the lake of fire burning with brimstone**. Distinguished from the word **Hades**, a temporary holding place of the dead, Jesus used the word **Gehenna** to describe the place which had been prepared before time as the final destination for the devil and those who choose to become his followers (Matt. 25:41). Jesus said that its fire was everlasting, eternal. Jesus also used this word in Mark 9:43-48 and, in addition to telling us that it is a place where “**the fire shall not be quenched,**” He also said the “**worms dieth not.**” This place for the wicked of an “everlasting fire” is also further described in Jude which speaks of the destiny of fallen angels being confined “**in everlasting chains under darkness that is forever**” (Jude 6-13).

Assimilating this brief bit of information we know this about this eternal place of punishment:

- (1) It is eternal, forever.
- (2) It is a place of fire that cannot be quenched.
- (3) It is a place of worms that do not die.
- (4) It is a place of everlasting darkness.
- (5) It is a place from which there is no relief or release.

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To those who question how a person could have a body that would burn forever and not be consumed, we point to John 5:28-29 where it tells us that all men, both good and evil, shall be resurrected. *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”*

Those who have **done good**, that is have given their lives to Jesus, will be resurrected with bodies prepared to enjoy being with Jesus and will never again experience any pain or suffering. Those who have **done evil**, that is, have refused to trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior, will be resurrected with bodies designed to experience the very opposite of those who are resurrected to be with Jesus. They will be given bodies designed to experience pain and suffering to its fullest extent forever and ever. They will have bodies that cannot be burned up or annihilated.

When **the beast and false prophet are seized**, they are then instantly given bodies designed to experience the fullest pain and suffering forever in **the lake of fire that burns with brimstone where their worms never die and in a darkness where nothing can be seen**. They deserve what they get, though, being men, sinful men for whom Christ died, they could have made the choices that would have resulted in being forgiven, converted, and being born into God’s family by the grace of God because Jesus died for them just like He did for all other sinners. However, they get what they chose to get and they certainly deserve it. It is fitting to note that they will go to a place prepared for the devil, but they will be there a thousand years before he arrives.

For those who scoff because they think that such a place is scientifically impossible, we close this lesson with a couple of points that are known by most scientists. **First**, most scientists would agree that the molecules which are the building blocks of the various elements known to man never cease to exist, they just change form and structure. Solids are transformed into gases, or liquids, or energy, etc. **Second**, most scientists are aware of what they have called **“a black hole”** in the universe. Though such a place cannot be seen, its existence is commonly accepted and it is thought that the power of the gravity in such a place is of such strength that light cannot escape and be seen though most scientists seem to think that it contains earthly bodies, similar to stars, that burn continuously and seem to have an endless source of energy.

For those of us for whom the Word of God is our source of authority and truth, we may not need the support of science, but it is interesting to know a little of what the scientists have learned and cannot fully explain.

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