

The Avenger of Blood

REVELATION: YOUR STORY IN GOD'S STORY, Week 28

Revelation 19:11-21 (NIV)

I. The _____ of God's Messiah

¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

II. The Invitation to _____

¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."

III. The _____ of God's Enemies

¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The Bottom Line

_____ to bring final _____.

...by recognizing that God has not yet enacted His _____ to evil.

...by trusting God with _____ eternal future and that of _____.

...by recognizing that God is the benchmark for _____, not our _____.

How Can a Loving God Send People to Hell?

(from Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*, 70-86)

Misconception #1: "A God of judgment simply can't exist."

"The most fundamental belief in American culture is that moral truth is relative to individual consciousness. Our culture, therefore, has no problem with a God of love who supports us no matter how we live. It does, however, object strongly to the idea of a God who punishes people for their sincerely held beliefs, even if they are mistaken. This objection, however, has a cultural history to it."

"In ancient times it was understood that there was a transcendent moral order outside the self, built in to the very fabric of the universe. If you violated that metaphysical order there were consequences just as severe as if you violated physical reality by placing your hand in a fire. The path to wisdom was to learn to live in conformity with this unyielding reality. That wisdom rested largely in developing qualities of character, such as humility, compassion, courage, discretion, and loyalty.

Modernity reversed this. Ultimate reality was seen not so much as a supernatural order but as the natural world, and that was malleable. Instead of trying to shape our desires to fit reality, we now seek to control and shape reality to fit our desires."

"The spirit of modernity, then, gave us the responsibility to determine right or wrong. Our new confidence that we can control the physical environment has spilled over so we now think we can reshape the metaphysical realm as well. It seems to our minds unfair, therefore, that we should determine that it is all right to have sex outside of marriage and later discover that there is a God who is going to punish us for that. We believe so deeply in our personal rights in this realm that the very idea of a divine Judgment Day seems impossible."

"A woman told me that the very idea of a judging God was offensive. I said, 'Why aren't you offended by the idea of a forgiving God?' She looked puzzled. I continued, 'I respectfully urge you to consider your cultural location when you find the Christian teaching about hell offensive.' I went on to point out that secular Westerners get upset by the Christian doctrines of hell, but they find biblical teaching about turning the other cheek and forgiving enemies appealing. I then asked her to consider how someone from a very different culture sees Christianity. In traditional societies the teaching about 'turning the other cheek' makes absolutely no sense. It offends people's deepest instincts about what is right. For them the doctrine of a God of judgment, however, is no problem at all. That society is repulsed by aspects of Christianity that Western people enjoy, and are attracted by the aspects that secular Westerners can't stand.

Why, I concluded, should Western cultural sensibilities be the final court in which to judge whether Christianity is valid? I asked the woman gently whether she thought her culture superior to non-Western ones. She immediately answered 'no.' 'Well then,' I asked, 'why should your culture's objections to Christianity trump theirs?'"