

The Beasts are Overthrown, Part II

Scripture: Revelation 19:17-21

Introduction:

Last time, we have begun to transition to another viewpoint of the end, honing in on the return of Christ. We have already focused in on the fall and destruction of Babylon, and we are now moving in the direction of witnessing the destruction of the beasts. Following this, we will hone in on the defeat and destruction of the dragon. And all of these events take place at the pouring out of the last bowl judgment found in Revelation 16:17-21. We saw in the pouring out of the sixth bowl judgment, how the two beasts and the dragon had deceived the kings of the world and all unbelievers to gather together, as an attempt to surround and destroy the church. They war against Christ and His church. But then, Christ returns and defeats all of His enemies. And the chapters that followed (17-20), record the individual destruction of each enemy, before bringing us into the new heavens and the new earth in chapters 21-22.

Let us read Revelation 16:12-21 again before breaking down our text, so that we can witness once again the clear symmetry of these events. [Preview Rev. 20:7-10 also]

I. The Beasts are Overthrown

1) Verses 17-18: Here we are given a gross and horrific picture of the coming judgment upon the unbelieving world. The implication, of course, is that when Christ returns, the living unbelievers will experience a terrible *first* death, before standing before God in judgment, leading to the second (eternal) death in hell. Their bodies will be laid out, open and bare, as it were. They will not even experience the decency and dignity of receiving a proper burial, but will be left exposed, to be given as food for the birds. The angel crying aloud, standing in the sun, implies that he is accessing every bird for a very large feast. Compare this to Revelation 11:7-10 (how the "two witnesses"--the church--are treated) and see the just recompense here. Also read Ezekiel 39:17-20 (OT context---note: Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 39 & Revelation 20:7-10).

2) Verses 19-21- In accordance with the Sixth Bowl judgment, the beast wars with Christ and His people. The beasts and the dragon have deceived the world into following them, but the paradox is, that they surround the people of God unto their own destruction.

Notice that the birds, in this apocalyptic picture, do not devour the beasts. Rather, the beasts are cast alive, directly into hell. I believe that this would further indicate that the true nature of the beasts are demonic rather than human. They are visibly represented in human empires, false religious systems...etc, but the real power lies behind what is visible and in the spiritual realm. And so, they are cast alive into hell. They will rise no more in future empires and world systems (Babylon is fallen, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords has come to take up His universal throne!).

And the rest; the remainder of unregenerate mankind, who have served and followed the beast (bearing his mark), are destroyed by the Word of Christ (the sword of His mouth). They experience the first death, and all of the birds that were called by the "angel standing in the sun," "were filled with their flesh." And so ends history from another angle. Next time, Lord willing, we will begin to transition to another vision of the same final battle and end of history, but our eyes will be fixed on the defeat of the dragon, the final and greatest foe of all.

II. Conclusive Thoughts

1) This horrific, shameful judgment is for all living unbelievers. Contrast with the Marriage *Supper* of the Lamb to be enjoyed by the Bride of Christ. One enjoys a blessed meal, the other *is the meal!*

2) Note the speed at which the beasts are captured and defeated. They seemed like such a powerful threat, but they are no match for the Christ, whatsoever!

Amen!!!