***Hell

RV234-01***

We are studying Revelation 19:17-21, as we come to the closing revelation about the tribulation era. Our subject is "The Battle of Armageddon." This is segment number two.

**The Final World War**

There will be a final, dramatic world conflict – a world war such as there has never been before. The call to that war has been from ancient times in the prophets of old. One such call is to be found in Joel 3:9-10, where the prophet says, speaking of this end of the tribulation period: "Proclaim this among the nations. Prepare a war. Rouse the mighty men. Let all the soldiers draw near. Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man."

Joel, under the historical preview of God, saw what was coming. And under the inspiration of God, he made this declaration of calling upon the nations of the world to gather themselves for this great, final, human conflict where God is going to resolve all human rebellion. This refers to the gathering of the armies, which will be culminated on the field of Armageddon.

**The Great Day of God the Almighty**

We have already looked at the description of this in Revelation 16:13: "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon; out of the mouth of the beast; and, out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs." John suddenly sees from the false trinity: Satan; the antichrist; and, the false prophet, three demon spirits coming out, which look like slimy, dirty frogs: "For they are spirits of demons performing signs which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God the Almighty." The final battle of Armageddon is called the great day of God the Almighty.

**Harmagedon**

These creatures (these demons) trick the nations of the world to gather together to fight one another. Satan's plan is to have them join forces at the proper moment to fight the returning Christ. The devil knows what's going to happen. So, he brings the armies of the world together. Revelation 16:16 then says, "And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Harmagedon."

Daniel revealed to us in his writings that part of this campaign of Armageddon would be a two-pronged attack on Israel. We are living now where the unbelievable is taking place. Who would have thought a few years ago that Israel would have given away a big chunk of the Promised Land to which they have returned, and which God has restored to them? Who would have thought that the head of the nation of Israel would sit down and sign a contract with the Palestine Liberation Organization, that terrorist murderous group, and say, "If you give us peace, we'll give you some land."

It's not going to work. They're giving away their land, but peace will not come. As soon as the Arabs have that foothold, they will dig in, in order to expand their terrorism, and they'll have a base of operation now like they have not had before.

What does that tell us? It tells us that the Jew is desperate, and that the Jewish people are trying to find some means to survive. That fits into the picture, because the means that they will finally discover will be the antichrist. And as soon as you Christians are out of the way (the rapture has taken place), then the antichrist will come on the scene, and he will make a treaty for seven years with the Jewish people to protect them against all their enemies. And the Jews will finally breathe a sigh of relief and say, "Now we are safe." And they will proceed to rebuild their temple. But after three-and-a-half years, the antichrist will double-cross them, and use their temple as a place to put his own image as he declares himself the god of all the world. For at that time, he will become the head of a world government – a world government which all the statesmen of the world today are knocking themselves out to bring about, under the impression that this will bring peace, and be good for mankind.

With the antichrist in that position of great power over the whole world, the end of the tribulation will bring a time when these nations begin to get restless. They don't want to be under his authority, and they will rebel. In Daniel 11:40, we read, "And at the end time (the final weeks of the tribulation), the king of the south (Egypt and her allies) will collide with the antichrist. And the king of the north." You have to look at a map in relation to Israel to see who the king of the north is. It's obviously Russia. And Syria will join her, along with other allies: "Will attack Israel at the same time. The king of the north will storm him with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships. He (the antichrist) will enter countries; overflow them; and, pass through them."

So, suddenly the antichrist is going to find himself in a pincer movement: an attack from the south by the king of the south; and, an attack from the north by the king of the north. He will counterattack and destroy both of these forces. He will be supported in this attack by his own confederacy of ten nations, but also by other Western nations who will be sympathetic to him. He will then proceed, Daniel says, to consolidate his position. This is future history. It is immediately on the horizon of the world.

In Daniel 11:41, we read, "He (that is, the antichrist) will also enter the beautiful land (Israel), and many countries will fall. But these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom; Moab; and, foremost, of the sons of Ammon." That's very interesting, because Edom, Moab, and Ammon form modern Jordan. Petra is located in modern Jordan, and Petra will be the refuge of the Jews who will survive the attack and the destruction of the antichrist.

Verse 42 says, "Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape." So, the antichrist turns and consolidates his position, and then he begins to bring together his forces.

Verse 44 says, "But rumors from the east and from the north will disturb him." Suddenly from the northeast, his intelligence service tells him that there's a huge mobilization of oriental armies that are getting ready to do something: "So, the antichrist will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas (that is, between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea), and the beautiful holy mountain. Yet, he will come to his end, and no one will help him." He now moves in and places himself in a strategic position to meet the onslaught of the armies of the Orient who have gathered against him.

As we have found earlier in the book of the Revelation, the armies of the orient will field 200-million men to oppose the antichrist here at the end of the tribulation. Here are 200 million men in a single army group. At the height of World War II, the United States had 11 million people in the military service, to give you a frame of reference comparison. This is an enormous army that is going to be brought together.

**Atomic Bombs and Neutron Bombs**

Today, you may not be aware of the fact that super weapons are being developed. Nuclear weapons, for one thing, are being sold to Arab fanatics. The Russians are raising money by selling off their arsenal. Other countries who are within the Soviet Union who have access to nuclear weapons are selling those things off. Nations, including the United States, are now developing atomic bombs which are neutron bombs. What they do is they'll kill everything that's alive in the city, but they won't damage the buildings. The ideal weapon kills the people, but it doesn't destroy the property. They are on the verge of a breakthrough of that capacity.

**Particle Weapon Lasers**

Furthermore, we have now been told that the Russians are at a high level of the development of a particle-beam weapon which is capable of vaporizing distant targets. Some of us who grew up on Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers 20th-century comic strips. Of course, one of the interesting things was that they had this ray gun. And I used to think, "How nice it would be if you had a ray gun such that people who did something wrong, you could zap them, and they wouldn't do the thing wrong again. For example, wouldn't it be nice to wipe out smoking by zapping the smokers, so that every time he smoked, he throws up?

Well, these particle-weapon lasers that they're particle weapons are going to do just exactly what those comic strip guns did. They will totally vaporize. This used to be Flash Gordon in the 21st century. Well, we're there folks. We have arrived, and these weapons are within the grasp of mankind. You can see, therefore, that it is now possible for man to annihilate himself completely on the face of the earth. In fact, the Bible tells us that that's the condition that exists. For that reason, Jesus is going to shorten the tribulation a little bit to return so that there's some human life left.

**The Euphrates River will dry up**

One of the things that the Bible tells us, in connection with this attack from the orient, is that the Euphrates River is going to dry up in order to allow these oriental armies to sweep down upon Israel. We have read about that in Revelation 16:12. The Euphrates River has from ancient times been a great natural barrier. It is 1,000 miles long. It begins at the headwaters in the mountains of Turkey, and it empties into the Persian Gulf. It varies in width from a few hundred feet to a mile wide. Therefore, it is a significant natural barrier to an army on the move.

We're also told in Revelation 9 that God has appointed four angels who stand at the Euphrates River, awaiting the call to execute a certain divine mission. The river dries up. Revelation 9:14: "Saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.' And the four angels who had been prepared for the hour, the day, and month, and year were released, so they might kill a third of mankind. And the number of the armies of the horsemen was 200 million. I heard the number of them." So, the army of 200 million is moving across, and the Euphrates is dried up in the process of it. Part of the destruction that the angels of God perform is to kill one-third of all mankind. There are six billion people on earth today. Can you conceive of 2 billion people suddenly going down to their deaths? By the middle of the tribulation period, three billion people will have died – two billion on this occasion alone.

So, God has this plan. When He's on the move, He's on the move. Christ at this time is bringing this army of the orient through the Jezreel valley to Armageddon, where they are going to confront the antichrist. The final battle on the plain of Armageddon of these world armies results in their stopping their attacks against one another. They join forces, which is what Satan intended all along, to fight the returning Christ. They unite against the Lord and His heavenly army. Matthew 24:30: "And the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory."

The earth will be under intense darkness and suddenly, like a lightning flash from one part of heaven to the other, there will be this explosion of light, and there will be Christ returning from heaven. The Jews themselves, when this happen, will also finally have their eyes opened. The people of the world will mourn in the grief that will now come upon them. But the Jews will realize the terrible mistake they have made. Zechariah 12:10 says, "And I will pour out on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication. So, they will look on Me whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

There are some times when you should not follow your leaders. It is true that it is God's principle: lead out; follow; or, get out of the way. If you are negative to God's leader; if you are negative to your duty of following; and, if you don't get out of the way, God will remove you Himself. Here we have this picture of the Jewish people who followed leaders who lied to them about Christ, and who ignored the evidence that they themselves had seen, and now have paid for it with centuries of grief and suffering. Finally, they're going to look at this returning Christ, and they're going to explode with sorrow and grief as they realize what a terrible mistake they have made. To this day, the Jew still thinks he's right about Jesus Christ, and that his rabbis did not lead him astray.

I have told you before, when I was on tour in Israel, that the Jewish man who was our tour guide was quite knowledgeable in Scripture. After visiting the site of the Nativity in Bethlehem, as we were walking back out through the church, I said to him, ... "What if the rabbis were wrong about Jesus Christ?" And I was taken aback how he turned to me and snapped, "They weren't wrong." He didn't just say, "Well, I think they were right." He flatly said, "They weren't wrong." I could only say, "OK, no hard feelings." He was so adamant. And I could that probably what bugged him was that he keeps running these Christian groups on tours, and they're all witnessing to him about Christ. And he's gotten sick of it, and he has to reassure himself, "We Jews are right. Christ was wrong." Well, they're wrong. And they're not going to find out until they see Him coming back with that army from heaven.

In Revelation 19:20, we come to the doom of the antichrist and the false prophet: "And the beast (the antichrist) was seized, and with him the false prophet." Suddenly, God moves in on the command post of the antichrist and seizes the antichrist himself. He just grabs hold of him and pulls him out of the command center. The kings of the gentiles, and the armies that they lead, have had great faith in the antichrist's ability to defeat Jesus Christ. They view the antichrist as a god, and they have no question that he would lead them to victory against anything that God could bring against them. They had such confidence in him that they burned their spiritual bridges behind them by taking the mark of the beast. For once you took the mark of the beast, you could never be saved. You could never turn around. You could never go back.

In Revelation 14:9-11, we have previously read that the followers of the antichrist readily took the mark of the beast and worshiped him: "And another angel (a third one) followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full-strength in the cup of His anger, and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment grows up forever and ever. And they have no rest day and night – those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of the name."

**The Lake of Fire**

The mark of the beast is to doom you to the lake of fire. The lake of fire is a horrible, eternal experience of suffering of something that we cannot even imagine. But the Bible constantly keeps coming back to this, and reminding people that it's bad to end up in hell. And while you may speak glibly about it (that you will be there with your friends, and so on), believe me, when you will be there, all that we have from the Bible is that it will be such misery; there won't be any fellowship; and, it certainly won't be a fun place.

These soldiers believe that the antichrist was invincible both in war and peace. Suddenly, the political leader of the world government is captured by Jesus Christ, and he is helpless to resist. God's final judgment hits the antichrist first for the simple reason that he is the one who has set himself up as the god to the army; to his citizens; and, to the leaders. This kind of a snatching away of the antichrist by the Lord humiliates him, and it exposes him.

Along with him is taken the false prophet. This is the religious leader of the world religion, which we know today as the New Age religion. He is the one who has, by the power of Satan, been performing signs in the presence of the antichrist: "The beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs (these miracles) in his presence (or by his authority)." These miraculous acts were, of course, by the power of Satan, and they were used to confirm the claims of the antichrist to deity. The result was that he deceived those who were willing to receive the mark of the beast, and those who worshiped his image. He deceived them.

**Hypnotism**

This is the thing about dealing with the satanic world. Sometimes people seek information through hypnotism. Hypnotism is a bad scene, because under a hypnotic state, you have used your capacity; yourself; and, your whole process of rational control to another sphere. You have completely handed yourself over.

I remember somebody one time seeking some information on some issue saying, "Well, I'm glad to find information from any source whatsoever." And it is awesome. I have watched on tape people who have been hypnotized, and the information that they were able to give upon the situation that they could not when they were in a conscious state.

The point is that when you are out of control of yourself, Satan comes along and gives you all kinds of information. That is the lie. You've been hearing about these people who have been accusing their parents of abusing them as children. Here are good old American mothers and fathers (some even Christians) shocked to have a daughter or son accusing them of sexual abuse as children? And the parents know that's not true. Yet, these people are absolutely sure because this is what they revealed under hypnosis. What are they revealing? They're revealing the lie of Satan. It is very important for you never to look to the spirit world or to the occult world, and say, "We can get some information there." That information will always be tainted with deceit.

The Lord tried to alert us to this in John 8:44, where He said to the Pharisees, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature. He is a liar, and the father of lies."

One has only to look at some of the cult groups today (one of the most prominent is Mormonism), to see how absolutely deceitful and full of lies a religious system can be. Mormonism is one lie built upon another, and people are foolish enough to believe it. In 2 Corinthians 11:13, Paul says, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, an angel of truth. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds. Those who follow Satan (and the religious world is full of them) are themselves liars because their information is coming from Satan. And that's the one whom they serve.

**Miracles**

So, we have this condition where God is pulling out the antichrist and the false prophet who use the power of Satan to perform miracles. Miracles do not prove that God is acting. That is totally false. The power of Satan is where the next outburst of miracles is going to come from. Miracles have only occurred at certain periods of human history. The first place that you ever had miracles in the Bible with Moses. Then you didn't have another whisper of a miracle until you got to Elijah and Elisha. Then suddenly you had an outburst of miracles. And then over the centuries, there was not a miracle again of any kind until you came to Christ and the apostles of the New Testament. Then there was another great outburst of miracle. And every time, it was to prove that God was doing something.

The Bible tells us that the next outburst of miracles is going to be at the hands of the antichrist, and at the hands of his false prophet, under the power of Satan. So, don't be deceived by someone who says, "Well, let me tell you a miracle that took place in my life. Even though what I'm saying is contrary to the Word of God, I know it must have been of God. Miracles are a deceit of Satan.

So, these people were deceived, and because of this deception, they received this mark of the beast upon them, and they proceeded to worship the image (the "icon") of the beast, which he had put up of himself there in the temple in Jerusalem. This refers to his statue in the Jews holy of holies. Those who worship him will be those who bear upon their forehead and on the right hand the mark the antichrist. The antichrist and the false prophets have allowed themselves to be used by Satan against God, and they are taking multitudes of people down with them.

So, these two were then cast out by God. The two were thrown alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone.

At this point, I must remind you once more that the Bible is a literal book. Don't try to say, "This is poetic language." That is never the case unless the Bible indicates that it is using symbols. These two are literally thrown (they're literally pitched out) by God at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and they can't do a thing about it. But it does say, I want to point out, that they were thrown alive into the lake of fire.

Let me call your attention to 2 Thessalonians 2:8, lest you might think we have a contradiction in the Bible: "And then that lawless one, the antichrist, will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming." Well, Paul in Thessalonians says that Christ is going to kill the antichrist with the sword of His mouth – His spoken word. Yet, here in Revelation 19:20, we're told that he's thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. The word in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 for "slay" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "anaireo." "The word "anaireo" means indeed "to slay," but it also means "to take away." Therefore, it could more accurately be saying in Thessalonians that Christ is going to take away the antichrist, which is exactly what He's going to do to him. It could mean simply that he's going to be taken from the world scene to be cast into the lake of fire alive.

**The Second Resurrection**

However, it could also mean this: that indeed Christ does kill the antichrist and the false prophet. But then He resurrects them, which would be a resurrection ahead of the second resurrection which is where all unbelievers are raised. The second resurrection takes place at the end of 1,000-year millennium. The first resurrection of believers happens before that. The second resurrection is at the end. It may be that God gives them their bodies, and then throws them into the lake of fire, and they simply are an early stage of the second resurrection.

This would be as indeed we have various stages of the first resurrection. Jesus Christ is the first stage of that second resurrection. We who are the church are the second stage of that resurrection. Others who follow us (the Old Testament saints and so on) – they too will be raised at the end of the tribulation. They are part of the first resurrection. So, there are stages of the first resurrection. There may also be stages in the second.

In any case, all unbelievers in time will get their bodies back. Everybody gets his human body back. The body is eternal, just as the soul and spirit are. And with these bodies, they will enter the lake of fire. So, it may be that when it says, "It throws him in alive, he may have been killed; given his body back; and, put into the lake of fire alive.

It may also mean that he is thrown in there where he is conscious, because that is true. We learn from Luke 16, in the story of Lazarus and the rich man that people who die and go over to the other side are entirely conscious of what goes on. They don't lose their ability to know things. So, it may be that "the alive" refers to the fact that they are aware of what is going on.

In any case, there are a variety of explanations for this, to coordinate this such that if someone were to point this out to you, we really don't have a contradiction.

What they're thrown into is the lake of fire, and this lake of fire burns with brimstone. The Greek word is "theion." "Theion" is phosphorus, or sulfur. It is a terrible burning chemical. It is, of course, used in warfare today. Phosphorous bombs and phosphorus grenades are very frightful weapon, because phosphorus sticks, and you can't brush it off. And it just eats down and burns right down to wherever it is hit on the body. So, this is a description that is hard for the human mind to even grasp. It is a description of the lake of fire.

**Hell**

Usually we refer to the lake of fire by the word "hell." I want to point out that there are some other words in the Bible that are used as the place of the abode of the unsaved dead that are different from the lake of fire. As far as we know now, there is not one individual in the lake of fire. The Roman Catholic Church says, "That one of the persons who is in the lake of fire is Martin Luther. You can probably figure out why they think that. The lake of fire is not occupied now by anybody. Here's the picture:

**Hades**

We have the word "Hades" used ten times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament. Hades is called Sheol. In the experience in Luke 16 about the rich man who died, he went to Hades, and we find that he felt pain, and the flames were there. He was able to remember his five brothers that were still alive. He was able to reason through the consequences of what had happened to him because he rejected the offer of a Savior. And suddenly he found that he couldn't do a thing about it. There was no way out. He wanted to keep his brothers from coming there, but there was no such thing, as the Jehovah's Witnesses tell you, as soul sleep. The Jehovah's Witnesses are wrong.

The Bible makes it very clear that, as Paul says, "Absent from the body is present with the Lord." The moment your eyes closed in physical death here, they open on the most magnificent scene in heaven that you have ever contemplated. You will find yourself being born on angels' wings into the presence of God the Father, and Jesus Christ will be there to meet you. The people who knew you will be rushing up to greet you. The angels of heaven will be there rejoicing over your entrance into the ivory palaces above.

So, there is no such thing as soul sleep. You're entirely conscious. The only thing you don't have in heaven is your body. That's left behind in the grave until the resurrection.

Hades is a way station to hold unbelievers until the time when God is ready to empty Hades into the lake of fire. We're told this in Revelation 20:13-14: "The city gave up the dead which were in it, and the dead in Hades gave up the dead which were in them, and they were judged, every one of them, according to their deeds. And death (which held the physical body) and Hades (which held the spirit and soul of the unbelievers) were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death: the lake of fire."

So, suddenly, a lake of fire begins to have occupants. It's from Hades where all the unbelievers of all the ages past are now residing, and they will be emptied into the lake of fire. So, I'm pointing out to you that Hades is not hell, or the lake of fire. They are two different places.

**Tartarus**

There's also another compartment of Hades, and it is called Tartarus. We can't get into this in detail, but Tartarus is referred to in the Scripture as a place where a particular group of demon angels are now held under special darkness. And in the context, it is evident that the special group of demon angels that are held in Tartarus are those who were engaged in marrying human women in Genesis 6, and creating that hybrid race of half-demon / half-humans, which all were wiped out in the Noahic flood. So, Tartarus is a special section of Hades. It is not the lake of fire. It is not what we refer to as hell. Incidentally, Tartarus is used only once in the New Testament.

**Gehenna**

Then there is another word: "Gehenna." This word is used 12 times in the New Testament, and it refers to a place southeast of Jerusalem in a valley called the Valley of Hinnom. "Gehenna" is from the Hebrew word meaning "Valley of Hinnom." In ancient times, children were sacrificed here to the god Molech. This is referred to in 2 Chronicles 33:1-6 and in Jeremiah 7:31. Let's look up Jeremiah 7:31. Here's where the people of God (the Jewish people) were imitating the worship of the pagans around them: "And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Ben-hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind."

God says, "I would never have told you to practice human sacrifice, and to burn your infant children as a sacrifice to the god Molech. Yet, the Jews were doing this. That's how far they have become sidetracked from the divine viewpoint knowledge of Old Testament Scripture.

By the time that New Testament times came along, this Valley of Hinnom was a garbage dump. There they threw the dead animals. And if there were any criminals who were not buried, they threw them in there too. Therefore, there was flesh that was crawling with maggots. There was also the garbage and trash that was thrown in. The Jews kept a fire burning there continuously night and day because it was their landfill. They just burned up everything that was in there. Therefore, whenever you wanted to make a reference to the lake of fire, you just looked over the wall there on that southeast side, and there were these flames all burning away, burning this trash, and burning these decaying bodies, and whatever had been thrown in there. So, it became quite a place that was significantly an analogy to the lake of fire, as used here in Revelation 19:20.

The point of all this is that the lake of fire is a real place, and there is nothing so terrible as to spend eternity in the lake of fire. Mark 9:42-48: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believes to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea."

I pointed out to our teachers and Berean Christian Academy that we are in the forefront of protecting our children from the abuse of human viewpoint false ideas. Can you imagine the onus and the condemnation upon the secular school system, which daily causes are little ones to stumble by what they teach them; and, worse than that, by what they surround them with on the playground?

"If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you than your life crippled than having two hands to go to hell and to the unquenchable fire (into Gehenna), where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than having your two feet to be cast into Gehenna, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into Gehenna, where their worm does not die, and a fire is not quenched."

Christ, of course, is using strong language in a poetic analogy here. How extreme you must be to take this passage literally. He doesn't want to be poking your eyes out, and cutting your arms or your legs off. How extreme you must be to avoid the evil because the consequence is so terrible. Three times he says, "Where the worm does not die." The rotting, decaying maggots are there, and the fire is not quenched.

Well, the antichrist and the false prophet, it seems, will be the first two rational creatures to enter the lake of fire. The rest of the unsaved dead will be held in Hades until the end of 1,000-year millennium, and then they will also be placed into the lake of fire. So, the antichrist and the false prophet will have the place all to themselves for 1,000 years. Even the devil will not be put in there. He is going to be in the pit of the abyss, locked up and chained for the 1,000 years. He doesn't get put into the lake of fire until after the end of the millennium.

So, these people will be conscious of their surroundings. They will now recognize the judgment of God for their defiance of God. It is Revelation 20:10 that points out to us that: "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 will be tormented day and night, forever and ever."

Here's a significant point. This is 1,000 years later from the time that the antichrist and false prophet were put into the lake of fire, and they're still alive; they're still kicking; they're still in agony; they're still able to reason; they're still able to speak; and, now Satan, their master, joins them in that place.

**The Great White Throne**

So, hell is not a place of annihilation. In fact, hell is not even a place of purgatory. It is not a place where your sins can be purged out. It is a place, and it is not a condition. It's probably in the center of the earth, and it is entered by all unbelievers. They go there at the point of the great white throne judgment. Revelation 20:10-15 tell us about the great white throne judgment. This is only for unbelievers.

Here's another thing that the Mormons never could get straight. They thought the great white throne sounds like an awful nice place to be. If you ever visit Zion National Park, there's a majestic peak, and it's called the great white throne. The Mormons named it that. Everybody who goes there says, "Oh, the great white throne! That must be the symbol of God's throne."

One of the earliest songs we used to have here at Berean church was from a denominational group, and we used to have a song in it that said, "I want to stand before the great white throne someday." And you can tell that whoever wrote that song didn't have much knowledge of the Bible, because if you're standing at the great white throne, you're in a heap of trouble. Only unbelievers stand there, and all they're going to do is open the books and say, "Well, what do you want to tell us about going to heaven? Well, these are all good works. They're human good. They're evil in God's sight. They're no good. That won't take you in. You have to have absolute righteousness. I'm sorry, but you're condemned." And they are ushered off into the lake of fire.

So, the great white throne is where, finally, all unbelievers join the antichrist and the false prophet in the lake of fire. It is a terrible condition for a person to find himself in for all eternity. It is a horrible destiny.

It's interesting that the Bible tells us more about hell than it does about heaven. If you add up the verses, and the context, and everything that it talks about, there is not nearly as much on heaven as on hell. The one thing that God wants to make clear, it is: "Don't end up in the lake of fire."

However, in comes Satan. Sooner or later, somebody is going to say to you, "I can't believe that's true. This is a god of love. He is love. You can't tell me that the God of love would send a human being into such an eternal horror as a lake of fire. I mean, that's burning with fire and brimstone. I mean, that hurts. You feel it. It's like sitting on a hot stove all your life. When you do, you don't want to get in there.

Years ago, when we first moved into the current parsonage, it used to have floor furnaces in it. And the floor furnaces had a metal grill on them with little half-inch squares. My number one son, though they were warned that those things are hot, ran around the house barefooted one day as a two-year-old or so. And he ran right across that grill, and he flew up in the air because it was hot. On the bottom of his little feet were these waffle marks where he had walked across this hot grill. And he just didn't find it pleasant. Thereafter, no matter what time of the year it was, whenever he ran into that particular room, or into one of these rooms where the grill was, he would stop dead, and he would walk around it very carefully with his little feet. He knew he didn't want to go back there. There would be no more waffle grill marks on his feet, or anywhere else on him.

Well, people might say, "You can't believe that God is going to put people through that kind of agony. But we must tell you that Jesus pointed out to us, in Matthew 25:41, that this place was specifically created by God for Satan and his angels who chose to rebel with him against God: "Then he will also say to those on his left, 'Depart from Me, O accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

In verse 46 we're told: "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." So, in this context, it is clear that human beings who reject the gospel offer will also join Satan in this place called the lake of fire. It will be a punishment that God has specifically prepared for those who are rebels against Him.

Please notice in verse 26 that they go into eternal punishment, but the righteous go into eternal life. And the word "eternal" is applied to both of them. As our life in heaven never ends, so the life of those who choose to be in the lake of fire never ends either. You don't ever get over the suffering; just as in heaven, you never run out of joy.

God's justice governs His love. So, the penalty of death for sin must be executed. That's what you must remember – God's justice governs His love. God's love, therefore, sent His Son Jesus Christ to satisfy his own justice by sending him to pay for the penalty of sin of all mankind on the cross. Once God's love had removed the barrier to His own justice, so that His justice was satisfied (the Bible calls that "propitiated"), now God's love is free to be expressed in salvation to those who trust in Christ Jesus.

We close with the reiteration of that great truth. 1 John 2:2: "And He Himself is the propitiation (the satisfaction) for our sins; not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." Anybody who sits in the agony of the lake of fire sits there with his sins having been completely paid for by Jesus Christ. Isn't that a tragedy? He sits there because of his negative volition toward the gospel of the grace of God.

John 5:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Then John 3:16-18: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be see through Him. He who believes in Him is not judge. He who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Would you notice in this passage that the key is to *believe*? The key is not to invite Jesus into your dirty little heart. The key is not to give Christ your life. The key is not inviting Him into your life. The key is not all these pop Christianity phrases that digress and get a person off from what he must do to be saved. All those are satanic phrases, and you should never use them. Instead, say: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." That's what Paul said to the Philippian jailer, because believing is saying, "God is not a liar, and I accept the grace of God – that salvation comes as a gift from God, or it doesn't come at all.

There is a conference where a few very prominent evangelical leaders (whose names you know) have signed an accord that they will henceforth not try to convert Catholics – that they will view Catholics as fellow Christians. Those of you who were with us a few sessions ago when we showed that magnificent video on Catholicism, and listened to the testimony of those ex-priests and ex-nuns, know how false that is. No Catholic who believes the Catholic plan of salvation ever goes to heaven. You got it? That is because that plan says, "Christ died for our sins, but now you must deserve it. You must prove yourself worthy. That's the very phrase they use. That's the same thing the Mormons say: "You must prove yourself worthy." How do you do that? Well, with your good works, and then the church will dribble salvation of grace to you through the seven sacraments. And at the end, you don't know where you're going. It may be heaven; or, it may be hell eventually, but where you're going to as a Catholic is purgatory. That's the only thing.

I gave our little evangelism brochure that says, "Hell or Heaven, Which will it be for you?" to that priest who was our guide in the Pope's hometown of Czestochowa, Poland. I thought the tour was over, so I gave him this little brochure, and told him who I was, and that he might enjoy reading this. Then I found that the tour was continuing, so I saw him reading it. He brought us to the next station where he was going to tell us something. He held up this little booklet and said, "I have this little booklet from Irving, Texas, and the title says, 'Hell or Heaven: Which will it be for you?' Let me tell you a joke: for me, neither. It'll be purgatory." Boy, that's a joke. That man did not realize what a horrible thing he had said. For him, the sorriest part of that statement was that it won't be heaven for all eternity for him. There's no way he can go to heaven on the basis of the works plan of the church dribbling out grace to you as you prove yourself worthy. It is whether Christ has been worthy, and He has proved Himself worthy. That's all we need. Jesus Christ is all I need. He is My righteousness. I cannot add anything to that.

Thank God that you have been enlightened. Isn't it terrible when prominent religious leaders are going to tell millions of Catholics, "You're OK, and you're on your way to heaven," when in fact they're on their way to the lake of fire? How could Satan have brought that about? Don't think that you're immune to his wiles and his trickery" the smartest of you; and, the most sincere of you? We have a trail of history here at Berean Church of the most godly kind of people who have been shot out of the water when they thought they had it made, and the devil got them in the end. May that never be true with you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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