

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

### Week 8 - Day 1: A New Kingdom: God's Rule

**Rev. 22:3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.**

Have you ever been able to revel in a moment of an amazing victory? Working hard to make it on a team or being on a team as the underdogs who come out with the win over your rivals? I personally never played sports so I didn't get the thrill of that type of victory, but I have a deep love for the Olympics (sad time for me waiting for 2021 for those summer games). I always keep up to date on the medal counts (go USA!) and I absolutely love when you watch an Olympian take home a hard-earned victory. We've probably all watched a nail-biting game between two teams and screamed with joy as our team came out on top! Victory truly is a sweet thing.

Back in Genesis, we witnessed the greatest battle between good and evil as Adam and Eve ate of the one tree they were told not to eat from. Over the course of the Bible, we witness a constant battle between God's way and the way of sin. Far too often, the crafty ways of the "serpent" seem to come out ahead. This isn't just seen in the Bible, but it is seen in our lives and the world around us today. But as we enter the book of Revelation, we get to see God establish His full victory and rule over Satan and sin. As we walk through these passages, it can often feel intimidating or extreme, but we have to understand that Revelation is the culmination of the greatest battle ever fought. Try to focus on the big picture of what this represents if the details or the symbolism feels overwhelming.

**Revelation 12:9-12 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"**

The dragon. The serpent. Satan. The Deceiver of the world. WAS THROWN DOWN! His angels were THROWN DOWN. And with that, the kingdom of God came to rule on earth. This is the future reality that awaits us. The full victory will come and this victory goes far beyond any other victory we could experience on this earth.

**Revelation 19:11-21** Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

What we have to understand is that this passage is explaining the return of Jesus – the Christ who promised that he would return, just as he left after his resurrection. His return marks the physical and spiritual victory over all evil. God's rule over all things becomes crystal clear. He is the LORD of LORDS. He came to proclaim His rule and evil will be struck down. The passage continues on:

**Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.**

**Revelation 20:10-15** and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

These moments show us the defeat of Satan and those who followed him. Satan, the false prophet, and the beast are not shown mercy. The reality of Satan's work, his destruction, left no options. The battle that begins in the garden is over, but now we face the reality that we are either for God or we are against Him during the moment where judgement truly begins.

**Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it,**

**Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

Since God is the God of love, there can be no evil in Him. He promised that one day we would all stand before Him and if our names are not written down in the book of life, if we have not given our hearts to the rightful King, we have no place with Him. There will come a time when the opportunity to change will be gone. That is why it is so important to share with others the *good news* that Jesus lives and is the king of all things!

**Revelation 21:8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”**

**Revelation 21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

If we have a relationship with Jesus, if we have faith that salvation from the kingdom of the serpent is found through the death of Jesus, and if we believe that Jesus resurrected and rules as Lord over all things, we have nothing to fear. But, we can't avoid the reality that there will be those who do not enter heaven. This makes our time on earth so critical for sharing the *good news* of the *kingdom of God* so that those around us have the opportunity to take part in this future kingdom rule under God's authority in God's space.

**Revelation 22:3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.**

And here is the beautiful hope we have: a future hope of glory with God, worshipping and praising Him all of our days. All of the pain, hardship, disease, hopelessness will be no more. Tears and sadness will cease as God's kingdom reigns forever and ever.

This is the hope we have to offer those who don't yet walk with Jesus. When facing current struggles on earth, this is a reminder that we have a future with Christ where all the pain goes away. Our desire should be to invite everyone else we know to join us in that future hope.

-Annie Wilson

**Share the Gospel:** As you share God's glorious truth with others, let it be known that He is the one who has ultimate victory – all of our troubles on earth pale in comparison to the hope He offers.

Personal Observations, Reflections, and Prayers:

