

Intro. Each year on October 31st, you really aren’t too surprised on who & what you will see, right? I mean, kids & teens will dress in a variety of costumes—some cute & some scary, but neither catches us by surprise, even if it’s the Grim Reaper. But what if the Grim Reaper showed up at your house on the night of November 30th or February 20th? You’d be scared then, right? You’d think your life was over. As we conclude our series on “Heaven’s Celebration” from Revelation 19, today we look at “The Return of the King, Part 2,” because though Christ comes in victory for His people, He also comes in judgment of unbelievers & for the unbeliever, Christ’s return will be scarier than the Grim Reaper.

Theme: Christ’s return

Background: As I’ve said before, I see Revelation as a series of visions—the first one is largely introductory (chapters 1-3) & the last one is largely conclusive (chapters 20-22).

The others describe God’s sovereignty & His judgments upon the earth in the form of seals, trumpets & bowls. Each vision concludes with a note on the end, whether it be the calm before the storm (8:1-5), the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of our Lord & His Christ (11:15-19), the harvest of the earth (14:14-20); the 7th bowl (16:17-21) & now, given in the most detail, Christ’s return (19:11-21)

- The Scriptures are quite clear about what Christ has come to do & what He will come to do—the 1st time He came in humility to die in the place of sinners, but the 2nd time He is coming in victory to deliver His people & to judge the unbelievers (cf. Hebrews 9:27-28)—so trust Christ now, before it’s too late, because this text describes the outcome for the unbelievers left at Christ’s return & the judgment they’ll face

➤ **Truths we learn about the judgment at Christ’s return:**

1. **The judgment at Christ’s return will be calculated (19:17-18)**

- What happens in these last verses is announced ahead of time by an angel, one of God’s messengers—the gathering of the earth’s forces against the Lord & His Christ will not catch God off-guard, because He has already planned for it
- Some scholars see this as part of Ezekiel’s prophecy against Gog & Magog, but I’ll say more about that when we get to chapter 20

Illus: When you get ready to start a project, you are wise to count the cost & see if you can afford it—God is all-wise & He has calculated in advance what this judgment will look like

2. **The judgment at Christ’s return will be comprehensive (19:18-21)**

- You cannot help but notice the universal, all-inclusive nature of this judgment
- Though the judgment will begin with the Antichrist, who gathers his forces against the Lamb (see 17:13-14), Christ will also defeat all the kings & those who have set themselves up against Yahweh & against His anointed one (Psalm 2:2)
- The flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses & riders & all men, free & slave, small & great will be judged & killed at Christ’s return

Illus: In modern-battles today, a group may aim to take out everybody, but people often escape or survive the attempts on their lives—but that won’t happen at Christ’s return—all will be affected

3. The judgment at Christ's return will be commanding (19:19-20)

- Christ will capture the antichrist & false prophet first, because taking out the leaders will be devastating to the kings but it also proves Christ's commanding power over them who appeared to be able to do anything they wanted (cf. ch. 12-13)
- By His spoken word, He will defeat His enemies

Illus: Like a sword coming from His mouth—not a puny pocketknife or dagger, but a sword—a metaphor for how sharp & powerful His words are in striking others down (show the sword of Aragorn of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*)

4. The judgment at Christ's return will be ceaseless (19:20; cf. 20:10, 15)

- The “lake of fire” which burns with sulfur occurs a couple of times in the next chapter & there we find this judgment, 2nd death, is eternal—forever and ever in light of the torment

Illus: Have you ever watched a youth baseball game & one team was killing the other team but mercy rules are invoked—5 run-limit per inning & calling it quits after a 10-run lead after 4 innings—why do they do that? To keep the game from lasting forever. I played in a tournament once that didn't use the mercy rule & after batting around twice, my Dad made us take the field & we won one game 31-1 & another game 46-5, because he invoked his own mercy rule or we would still be playing that game—God's era of mercy will be over when Christ returns & it will be nothing but judgment

- The beast thrown into the blazing fire is spoken of in Daniel 7:11 & the prostitute will be burned with fire, possibly referencing this death, too (17:16)
- The burning sulfur reminds us of the judgment on Sodom & Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24), which was judged for their sexual immorality (see 2 Peter 2:6-10; Jude 7)
- One of the more common misunderstandings today about hell is its eternal nature—some false teachers have taught annihilation-ism but we don't find that in Scripture—Scripture stresses the eternal nature of the torment (see Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:47-48; Jude 7; Revelation 14:10-11; 20:10)

5. The judgment at Christ's return will be crude (19:21)

- “This will be the most gruesome single act of carnage ever in the history of mankind” (Barton, Taylor, Wilson, Veerman, 233)—elsewhere we see where the blood will flow 180 miles as high as the horse's bridle (14:20)

Illus: Think of the worst horror movie you've ever seen (far worse than The Bates Motel scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* movie or *Nightmare on Elm Street* or a Freddie movie) or the scariest costume at Halloween & the great supper of God for the birds will be far worse

- The description here is birds feasting off the corpses of the slain & it certainly refers to types of vultures—there are 23 species of vultures, some of which can spot a carcass 4 miles away

Conc. In J.R.R. Tolkien's 3rd & final book of the *Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn leaves the army of the race of men, who are preparing to come to the aid of Gondor, as he goes to face to the Army of the Dead (from which none have ever returned). Although it seems he is going off to his death, Aragorn wields the sword remade by the Elves, the sword belonging to the true king. He returns to the race of men & leads a great victory, killing off all the evil enemies. Tolkien penned the storyline as a metaphor of Bible doctrine & Christ's victory & leading an army to victory against the enemy. There are only two sides in the Bible—those who have surrendered to Christ in this life & those who will lose to Him at His return. Are you ready for “The Return of the King?” You must turn from your sins & trust in Him in order to be saved.