

Revelation 20 – The Millennium and The Judgment

Three Dominant Views of The Millennium

Premillennialism – The 1000 year reign of Christ will come after the second coming. Jesus will return and set up an earthly throne and rule on the earth for 1000 years before the final battle and the end of history. Subsets of this view include historic premillennialism and dispensational premillennialism.

Postmillennialism – The 1000 year reign of Christ comes at the end of the church age after the gospel has conquered and the majority of the world has been Christianized. Christ's second coming will happen at the end of the millennium

Amillennialism – The millennium (symbolized by the 1000 years in Revelation 20) began at Christ's resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. The 1000 years describes the entirety of the church age and the second coming of Christ takes place at the close of history.

NOTE: All three of these millennial views fit well in orthodox Christianity. Great scholars and godly people throughout history have held all three views. One's millennial view is not an issue believers should break fellowship over. Also it is possible to hold any of the millennial views and still see most of Revelation fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem (although I have never met a premillennialist that does.)

I. The Binding of Satan (1-3)

A. The Angel's Appearance (1)

1. The Introduction

- a. "Then I Saw" is not a reference to chronological sequence but to the sequence of the visions John receives.
- b. John's vision in Revelation 20 will move us past the destruction of Jerusalem, to our own day and beyond.

2. The Angel Descends Holding a Key and a Chain

- a. The key represents authority over the abyss
 - i. This is the fourth time keys have been mentioned in Revelation
 - In 1:18 – Christ possesses the keys of death and hades
 - In 3:7 – Christ possesses the keys of David
 - In 9:1 – the key of the abyss is given to the fallen star
 - Here Christ possess the key of the abyss
 - ii. Christ (represented by the angel) maintains authority over all

- b. The key will also show that Christ ultimately has authority over Satan as well
- B. Satan is Bound For One Thousand Years (2-3)
 - 1. Is This a Literal Thousand Years, no more...no less?
 - a. Symbolic nature of Revelation – We have already seen numbers holding symbolic value in Revelation
 - i. 10 horns, Seven heads, Power given for one hour, placed in prison for 10 days, the 144,000, etc.
 - b. 1000 is consistently used in Scripture as simply a large number, not intended to communicate an exact amount
 - i. Deut. 7:9 - Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;
 - ii. Ps. 50:10 - For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills.
 - iii. Joshua 23:10 - One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you.
 - iv. Ps. 91:7 - A thousand may fall at your side And ten thousand at your right hand, But it shall not approach you.
 - v. 1 Chron. 16:15 - Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,
 - 2. Is Satan Bound With A Physical Chain?
 - a. Remember Revelation has been filled with symbols till now. There is no reason to believe this is any different
 - i. Jesus is not really a lamb with 7 horns
 - ii. Satan doesn't really look like a dragon
 - b. This is material language used to describe a spiritual reality. Satan is a spiritual being.
 - 3. How Exactly is Satan Bound?
 - a. Satan is Bound from a singular activity – deceiving the nations
 - i. Satan is not bound from all activity on earth
 - ii. He is bound SO THAT he would not deceive the nations
 - iii. Until Jesus' incarnation, only one nation knew the true God. To come into relationship with God, one had to become part of Israel or worship the God of Israel. Outside of Israel, the nations were largely ignorant of God.
 - iv. Acts 26:16-18 - But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to

appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the **Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God**, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

- v. It makes little sense to think chapter 19 describes the destruction of all the nations if now Satan is kept from deceiving those who have already been destroyed
- b. After Christ, the gospel goes to all nations everywhere.
 - i. Satan is still active, but he is bound from deceiving the nations and keeping them from coming into God's kingdom. The gospel is the power of God for all who believe, to the Jew first and then the Gentile.
 - ii. Although He still deceives people, in the presence and power of the gospel he is powerless.
- 4. When Exactly is Satan Bound?
 - a. Matt. 12:29 - But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.
 - b. Luke 11:21-22 - But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.
 - c. John 12:31 - Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.
 - d. Luke 10:17-18 - The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.
 - e. Col. 2:15 - When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

- f. Heb. 2:14-15 - Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

C. Satan Will Be Released After the One Thousand Years

- 1. This will be explained later in this chapter

II. The First Resurrection (4-6)

A. The Reign of The Believers (4) – The Intermediate State

- 1. Judgment is Given to Those on the Thrones (4a)

- 2. Description of Those on the Thrones (4b)

- a. Notice the same language here as in Revelation 6:9-11

- i. And I saw...

- ii. The souls of those who had been slain (beheaded)

- iii. Because of the word of God

- iv. Because of the testimony

- b. The Souls of the Martyrs Reign with Christ

- c. The Souls of the Faithful Reign with Christ

- i. Notice that it is the souls of these people

- ii. These are those who have physically died and are reigning with Christ

- iii. They represent all those who die in Christ – remember that John is writing to encourage and ensure the suffering church that their suffering is not the end.

- 3. The Duration of their Reign

- a. These Souls Came to Life

- i. At the moment of death, they came to life – eternal life

- Just as Paul said, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord

- ii. This may also speak of being brought to life through regeneration

- Eph. 2:5 - even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)

- b. They Reign with Christ for the 1000 Years

- i. 1 Co. 6:2 - Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

- ii. Matt. 19:28 - And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His

glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

- iii. 2 Ti. 2:12 - If we endure, we will also reign with Him;
- iv. Revelation 3:21 - He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

4. How is Christ Reigning In The Church Age?

- a. Matt. 18:18-20 - And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- b. Remember Daniel's prophecy of the Son of Man ascending to the ancient of days and receiving glory, dominion, and a kingdom – it was fulfilled in the ascension of Christ
- c. Eph. 1:20-21 - when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

B. The Blessing of The First Resurrection (5-6)

1. The Unsaved Dead Have no Part in the First Resurrection (5)

- a. The rest of the dead know nothing of this life gained with Christ
 - i. This doesn't indicate some kind of soul sleep
 - ii. It indicates that the unsaved dead will remain in torment until the final judgment
- b. Believers partake in two resurrections (the first and the final resurrection) – The unbelievers partake in two deaths (physical and eternal)
 - i. The believer dies physically but experiences spiritual resurrection
 - ii. The unbeliever is resurrected physically but experiences spiritual death

2. The Benefits of The First Resurrection (6)

- a. They are Blessed and Holy
 - i. They are blessed to enjoy life with Christ
 - Similar to Revelation 14:13 – Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! Yes says the Spirit, that they may rest

from their labors, for their deeds follow them.

- Revelation 2:10 – Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life...

ii. They are made holy by Christ and are perfected in their glorified state

b. They are Made Priests and Kings (Reigning with Christ)

i. They are priests to God in his heavenly Holy of Holies

ii. They reign with Christ for the entire church age

III. The Ultimate Defeat of Satan (7-10)

A. Satan's Final Assault on God's People (7-9a)

1. Satan Will Gather His Forces for Battle (7-8)

a. Satan Will Be Released After the 1000 years (7)

i. This looks forward again to the end of the church age, after the millinnum.

ii. Satan will be released from his bonds, but look what this releasing entails

b. Satan Will Again Deceive The Nations (8a)

i. Satan will still have a following during the millinnum

ii. Satan will again be allowed to deceive the nations and gather them against God's people

iii. At the end of history, mankind will see a great rise of evil and hatred toward God

c. Satan Will Gather The Nations For War (8b)

i. Satan will bring the nations together against God and His people

ii. What is Gog and Magog?

- This is an Old Testament Reference to Ezekiel 38-39. It is not an expansion of Ezekiel's text.
- Just like the woman in the Church of Thyatira was called Jezebel and Jerusalem is called Sodom in Revelation
- The nations and Gog and Magog are in apposition – They are the same group
- Gog and Magog provide a wealth of Old Testament imagery
- ...here we come on a picture which etched itself deeply, if mysteriously, on Jewish thought, the picture of Gog and Magog. We find it first in Ezekiel 38 and 39. There Gog of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and of Tubal, is to launch the great attack upon Israel and is

to be in the end utterly destroyed. It may be that originally Gog was connected with the Scythians whose invasions all men feared. As time went on, in Jewish thought Gog and Magog came to stand for everything that is against God. The rabbis taught that Gog and Magog would assemble themselves and their forces against Jerusalem, and would fall by the hand of the Messiah. (William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 2, Rev. 20:11)

- In the Ezekiel text, Gog is destroyed before the kingdom age (some interpret it as the kingdom age). But here in Revelation they are destroyed after the 1000 years
- Also, if Ezekiel's vision is the end time battle of Revelation, it will be very strange that it will be fought on horseback with swords, spears, and shields. (See Ezekiel 38-39)

2. Satan's Forces Will Attack God's People (9a)

a. These "nations" surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city

b. What is the Camp of the Saints?

i. The language harkens back to the camp in the wilderness where God dwelt among his people in the wilderness

ii. Is there a "camp" of the saints in the New Covenant? – It is the church.

- 1 Peter 2:4-5 - you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- Eph. 2:19-22 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

iii. What is the Beloved City?

- While this exact terminology is never used of the earthly Jerusalem, we must admit that affectionate terms are given for the city
- How can it be said that the church is the beloved city?
- Hebrews 12:22-23 - But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

B. Satan and The Wicked Will Be Destroyed (9b)

1. Fire descended from heaven and destroyed Satan's followers
2. This is the Second Coming of Christ
 - a. 2 Thess. 1:6-8 - For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
 - b. Right before the final judgment and the destruction of Satan, Christ will return in judgment on the wicked.
 - c. But where is the Rapture?
 - i. Remember Revelation is not a news report giving us a chronological play by play. It is an inspired word of God for the church to exhort them to faithfulness and endurance
 - ii. The Rapture is reported to us in 1 Thess. 4:16-17 so we know that it will coincide with these events
 - iii. But we should look at those verses carefully to see what is being said
 - 1 Thess. 4:16-18 - For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the

Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- Notice that the text says the believers will meet him in the air and forever be with the Lord. – The text says nothing about going back to heaven with Jesus for another 7 years and then coming back again.
- The word “meet” here is only used in two other places in the New Testament.
 - Acts 28:15 - And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.
 - Matt. 25:6 - But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.
 - In all of these texts, the delegation comes out to meet the party and accompany them to their destination. Believers will be changed in the twinkling of an eye and meet Christ in the air and accompany the bridegroom in his second coming. Which culminates in the new heavens and the new earth.
 - The Rapture and the second coming are simultaneous events

C. Satan Will Be Judged And Thrown Into the Lake of Fire (10)

1. Finally the end of history has come and Satan is cast into the lake of fire.
2. He is utterly defeated and given to eternal punishment

IV. The Final Judgment (11-15)

A. The White Throne Appears In Power (11)

1. Heaven and Earth fled from the face of Christ on the Throne
2. This is the dissolution of the heavens and the earth
 - a. 2 Peter 3:10-12 - But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

- b. Jesus has come in full power and glory, seated on his throne and the old heavens and earth are dissolved

B. The Dead Are Judged (12-13)

1. The Dead Are brought Forth For Judgment (12a)

- a. Is this just the judgment of the unsaved or the judgment of all people?

- i. Most will say it is only the unsaved because their deeds are judged. Dispensationalists point to many different judgments

- ii. Jesus continually pointed to a single judgment

- John 5:28-29 - Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.
- Matt. 13:30 - Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.
- Matt. 13:47-50 - Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- Matt. 25:32-33 - All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

- b. All people will stand before the throne. (The dead, small and great) This is the judgment seat of Christ and he judges all based on their works.
 - 2. The Books Are Opened in Judgment (12b)
 - a. The books (plural) are opened – these are the books that contain the deeds of man
 - b. Another book (singular) is opened which is the book of life
 - 3. The Dead Are Judged According to Their Deeds (12c)
 - a. All the dead are judged according to their works
 - b. That doesn't sound like a very promising judgment does it?
 - 4. Death And Hades Give up Their Dead For Judgment (13)
 - a. Death and Hades (the place of the dead) no longer hold any man. They are all called up for the judgment
 - b. There will be no more death
- C. Punishment is Rendered (14-15)
 - 1. Death Itself is Defeated and Cast Away (14)
 - a. This is the second death which is the eternal conscious torment
 - b. Death itself and the realm holding the unsaved dead are removed from creation and cast into the lake
 - 2. The Unsaved Dead Are Cast into The Lake of Fire (15)
 - a. All the unsaved dead are also cast into eternal punishment and separation from God.
 - b. Although all are judged by their deeds, the criterion for salvation is not found in one's works. It is only found in one's name being recorded in the book of life
 - i. The deeds are judged in righteousness and all deserve punishment
 - ii. The punishment for those written in the book of life has already been paid.