

REVELATION Chapter 20

Teacher: John M. Brown, Olive Hill Church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class, December 2014

INTRODUCTION: *We have seen three of Christ's enemies go down in defeat: the Great Whore, the Sea-Beast, and the Earth-Beast. Now we'll see the Dragon, Satan, judged by God's wrath. He will be bound in that he will not be able to work through Rome any longer. Remember the time frame of the book (1:1, 3; 22:6, 10).*

I. THE BINDING OF SATAN, 20:1-3

A. John sees: angel come down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.

1. The angel is ready to "catch" Satan to stop his activity: *Satan is bound for 1,000 years!*

Remember the symbolism of numbers: 10 = completeness

10 x 10 x 10 = 1,000: *symbolic of a period of time (or state of affairs) in which God has bound Satan (see Deut. 7:9; Psalm 50:10; 105:8; 2 Peter 3:8).*

2. Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, shut up, and a seal is set on him.

a. Purpose: *to deceive the nations no more.*

b. Satan previously deceived the nations (13:11-14) by Emperor worship, convincing the earth to worship the State (Rome); but now God's people are comforted knowing Satan's power of deception would be stopped for a time.

c. This binding doesn't mean he is inactive during this time (see 1 Peter 5:8-9), but rather his power to deceive the nations had been bound: *Satan has used Rome to fight Christians, but will not use Rome nor her allies during his binding.*

B. Satan is loosed for a "little season" (a short while): to deceive again!

II. THE REIGN OF THE SAINTS, 20:4-6

A. The victorious ones are seated on thrones.

1. Souls who had been beheaded, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, or received his mark (666) (Compare Revelation 6:9-11)

Thought: *if the 1,000 years is literal, then the beheading would have to be literal; but if figurative, then the whole imagery is figurative or symbolic.*

2. These live and reign with Christ 1,000 years!

a. Christians are comforted in knowing that faithful brethren who had departed this life were alive and reigning with Christ.

b. Christ now reigns (1 Timothy 6:15); those cleansed by His blood live and reign with Him (1:5-6; 7:14-17), a reign that began on earth but continues after death.

3. In Revelation 6, we saw a picture of defeat; now we see a picture of VICTORY!

B. **"Rest of the dead"** = the wicked dead (they don't live or reign with anyone).

C. The **FIRST RESURRECTION**: over such the second death has no power.

1. This first resurrection is to life and reigning.

2. The Christians being described here are martyrs: *thus “first resurrection” is a way of referring to their triumph in connection with the fall of Rome.*

NOTE: **there will only be one bodily resurrection from the grave (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 John 3:1-2) and that is NOT what is under discussion here.**

3. These martyrs are raised to reign with and relish in the victory of the Lamb during the period of the Dragon’s binding (cf. Mark 12:26-27; John 8:51; 11:25-26; 12:25-26; 16:16; Ezekiel 37:1-14).

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN:

- a. *Where? Heaven, where Christ is (v. 4) – not earth.*
- b. *When? After death, martyrdom (v. 4).*
- c. *Nature? Judging, living, reigning with Christ - first resurrection.*
- d. *Who? All the souls (not bodies) of the martyrs.*

III. SATAN LOOSED AND DEFEATED, 20:7-10

A. When the thousand years are finished, Satan is loosed out of his prison and comes forth to deceive ALL nations.

GOG and MAGOG (from Ezekiel 38-39): *they represent the evil nations of the earth*
(not just one in particular, but any who would fight against God and His people).

EZEKIEL 38 & 39

- a. The events take place in the latter years (38:8) or latter days (38:16).
- b. The motive of God’s coming: gain.
- c. God’s purpose: that He may sanctify Himself in Gog’s destruction (vv. 16, 23).
- d. The greatness of Gog’s overthrow is depicted (39:1-20).
- e. Nations will know that Jehovah is God (39:22-23) and all will long for Satan’s defeat
(*just as ROME was defeated, so will be ANYONE who fights against God*).

B. Heavenly destruction will come upon them!

1. Fire came down from God and devoured them (cf. 2 Peter 3:10).
2. The devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are: **TORMENT!**
3. Satan will put forth one final effort to destroy the work of God: that is his nature!

IV. THE DESTINY OF THOSE JUDGED, 20:11-15

A. The Judge described, v. 11

1. He sat upon a great white throne.
2. Heaven and earth fled away, and there was no place for the fleers.

B. The evil are judged, vv. 12 and 15

1. The dead had to give account (compare 19:17-18).
2. The books were opened; another book was open: the book of life.

C. The dead are identified, vv. 13-14

1. The sea gave up the dead, and death and hell (hades) delivered up their dead..
2. “...judged every man according to their works.”

GOD’S VENGEANCE HAS BEEN POURED OUT AND HIS JUDGMENT COMPLETED!

REVELATION 20 & PREMILLENNIALISM

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PREMILLENNIALISM: the belief system that states Christ has not yet come in His kingdom, and when He does, He will reign for a literal 1,000 years upon the earth.

Much of the doctrine called Premillennialism (“pre” = “before”; “millennial” means 1,000 years) is built upon some phrases or thoughts found in Revelation 20. Unfortunately, it is a doctrinal system that reads far more into the chapter than is actually there. Premillennialists do not believe that Christ has yet set up His kingdom, but the Bible teaches otherwise (*see Daniel 2:44-45; Luke 1:30-33; Matthew 3:12; 4:17; Mark 1:14-15; John 3:3-5; Matthew 16:13-19, 28; Mark 9:1; Luke 17:20-21; John 18:33-37; Acts 1:6-8; 2:29-33; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:22-23, 26-28; Revelation 1:6*). John, Jesus and His apostles, all said the Kingdom was near; it is a kingdom not of this world, the rule of God in the hearts of people; Christians in the 1st century were in the kingdom, as are Christians today. *The Lord’s church is the expression of the Kingdom of God.*

When the Second Coming of Christ occurs, that is not the “beginning,” but rather the ending (see 1 Corinthians 15:24). The KINGDOM OF CHRIST (the rule and reign of God in the hearts and lives of men and women) began in the first century, on the day of Pentecost, and continues to the present time. Jesus rules as King of God’s Kingdom!

Key concepts vital to Premillennialism are not even found in this chapter:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| -Second Coming of Christ | -Literal throne of David |
| -Bodily resurrection | -Jerusalem or Palestine |
| -Reigning on earth | -Christ on earth |

JESUS’ KINGDOM: Christ ruling and reigning in the hearts of men and women! Jesus Christ is now reigning as KING of the KINGDOM OF GOD

***Mark 9:1
John 18:33-37
Colossians 1:13-14
Revelation 1:5***