

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 3RD, 2019 // BOOK OF REVELATION

## A GREAT CHAIN (20:1-3)

At the end of this great battle, the source of the rebellion (the "dragon", "devil", "serpent", & "Satan") gets captured.

- The angel with the keys to the abyss showed up in chapter 9, and now he's back.
- Satan is bound in the "Abyss" or "bottomless pit"- the temporary place of incarceration for certain demons and now Satan (this isn't the final place of judgment).

The length of the period for which Satan will be bound is defined as "a thousand years", which is precisely recorded and emphasized six times in this chapter (vs. 3,4,5,6,7).

- The purpose of this binding is not punishment, but banishment- to keep him from deceiving people for a millennium.
- After this 1,000 years, Satan will be released for a "short time" to once again deceive

So which view is right?

- Over the centuries, bitter theological battles have been fought over this topic with the major disagreement being whether this is to be thought of as spiritual & invisible or literal & visible Kingdom- or maybe something else entirely!
- This isn't a matter of heresy, but of honest differences of interpretation.
- I tend to lean more towards one than the others...

Satan must be released? (vs. 3)

- Some believe this shows God's power by loosing evil just to conquer it once and for all.
- Others see it as God's devotion to mankind's free will and human responsibility to choose to love Him willingly.
- Still others see that this is to prove that sin has nothing to do with economic conditions or environment- it's a matter of rebellion.

## THE 1,000 YEAR REIGN (20:4-6)

With Satan out of the way, the millennial kingdom of peace will be established.

- This vision John receives is that of God's people being resurrected, rewarded, and reigning with Christ for a period of 1,000 years.
- John sees thrones- symbolizing judicial authority-and God's people sitting on them.

Who exactly is occupying the thrones from vs. 4?

- Many viewpoints abound, but it seems from the text like it will be either 1 of 2 groups- all believers in Christ throughout history, or just martyrs.
- In the text, special emphasis is given to the martyrs receiving this Kingdom as a special reward for their suffering, but maybe they're a highlighted part of believers.

John makes a distinction between the "first resurrection"(vs. 5) and the "second resurrection/death" (vs. 12-14).

- This 1st resurrection seems to be only for followers of Jesus Christ- as they are brought to life and given perfect, glorified bodies.
- "The 2nd death has no power over them" (vs. 6)- those are resurrected for Christ will never have to worry about eternal damnation.

When this text is compared with OT passages, it seems that this time will be a fulfillment of many OT prophecies that speak of a physical, Messianic Kingdom

- A time marked by joy, righteousness & peace (Isaiah 12:3-4, 32:17, 61:3,7)
- A time when the physical curse of sin is lifted (Isaiah 11:7-9, 30:23-24, 35:1-2, 7)

Food will be plentiful (Joel 2:21-27), and physical well-being will abound (Isaiah 33:24, 35)

- During this time, "...the lion will lay down with the lamb" (Isaiah 65:25) and this earth will finally be restored to what it intended to be in the 1st place!
- Christians will rule and reign with God (think of Adam in the garden) and bring this earth under the Lordship of & submission to Jesus.

If this is a literal, 1,000 years- think of what this means!

- Jesus is going to run this world the proper way, and we're going to be the ones that rule the nations with Him!
- Media, government, the courts, & banks will all be in Christian hands.
- How are we going to "rule the earth" if we can't manage now? (1 Cor. 6:1-3)

One of the biggest questions most people have about a literal millennial kingdom is, "who will the resurrected Christians rule and reign over?"

- One theory is that those who became Christians during the tribulation and do not die will enter the millennial kingdom alive, where they will live long lives, marry, and have children
- Another theory is that this is the unbelieving survivors of Christ's 2nd coming.

## SO WHY DOES JESUS COME BACK TO THIS EARTH AND SPEND 1,000 YEARS RULING OVER IT?

- To demonstrate what this earth can be under the rule and reign of God.
- To bring humanity back to its original purpose of bringing the earth under submission to the purposes of God.
- To demonstrate that Jesus is deeply committed to the restoration of all things.

## REBELLION? (20:7-10)

At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released (vs. 7) where he will "deceive the nations"

- Why would God allow this? Many believe that this is God's commitment to human free will and confidence in His own sovereignty.
- Others believe that this is to demonstrate the nature of sin.

Many say that vices, would disappear from the earth if only conditions would improve.

- But here we see Jesus demonstrating that sin has nothing to do with economic conditions or environment- it's a matter of rebellion against God!
- Some believe this final battle depicted is simply a retelling of Armageddon.

Whether this battle is Armageddon retold or another battle, the point is that wherever the devil is, large groups of people will be deceived.

- Verse 8 says a group too large to count will be assembled to battle against Jesus.
- Magog was the grandson of Noah, and Gog was a prince of the land of Magog.
- Maybe an actual area, maybe just a group of people.

Who is the group that is deceived and duped by Satan and rebels against Jesus?

- One theory is that this the unsaved descendants of those who enter the millennial kingdom in their physical bodies.
- They will be unmoved by the peace, joy, and righteousness of the millennium as earlier sinners were by the devastating judgments of the tribulation.

The "camp of the saints" (vs. 9) is an allusion from the OT showing that God's people are temporary residents of earth, even during the 1,000-year reign.

- Vs. 9 foreshadows Jesus replacing the temple permanently in heaven.
- Like previous battles with God, Satan is defeated- but now his defeat is permanent.

Satan is thrown into the "lake of fire" where he is to be tormented "...forever and ever" (vs. 10).

- This is explicitly stating that hell is eternal- the same Greek phrase translated "forever and ever" is used in Rev. 1:18 to speak of Christ's eternity.
- Jesus taught that the punishment of the wicked is eternal

## THE WHITE THRONE (20:11-15)

The 2nd resurrection and the 2nd death takes place at this scene, and it's a terrifying picture.

- Think of everything God has ever created "fleeing" from His presence.
- In other words, the universe will go out of existence as God "un-creates" it (2 Pet. 3:10).
- Only a few things remain- God, His throne of judgment, unbelieving humanity given temporary resurrected bodies, and "the books" (vs. 12).

The 2nd resurrection now takes place with "the rest of dead" (unbelievers, vs. 5)

- Scripture teaches that at death, unbelievers are tormented in a temporary place of punishment (Luke 16:23), but now the time has come for them to be sentenced.
- The "books were opened" (vs. 12) and they were "judged by what they had done".

This 1st group of books mentioned contains the record of every thought, word, and deed of every unsaved person who has ever lived.

- Because this group did not accept Christ's judgment on their behalf in life, their deeds will be measured against God's perfect, holy standard.
- No-one will be able to claim perfect obedience to God's holy standards, and they will be sentenced to judgment that corresponds to their deeds.

The 2nd book mentioned is the "book of life"- this is imagery that corresponds to the registry of citizens in ancient cities.

- This "book of life" is a record of all people who have been saved, and anyone whose name was not found written in it was "thrown into the lake of fire" (vs. 15).
- This is the "2nd death, the lake of fire reserved for those who did not trust in Christ.

There's absolutely no room in this text for us to try to twist, re-imagine, or interpret it to include an eternity with no hell.

- The Bible is clear- there will be punishment for those that choose not to repent and accept Christ's sacrifice for their sins.
- If we don't want to repent and let Jesus pay for our sins, we will end up paying.

***We need a sobering reminder. If we really believe this- shouldn't we be warning, telling, and praying for those who don't?***