

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 15TH, 2024 // REVELATION

## A GREAT CHAIN (REVELATION 20:1-3) THE BATTLE HAS ENDED...

Ch. 19 concluded with the brief "battle" at Armageddon where the Antichrist and false prophet were thrown into the "lake of fire." Now Jesus will deal with the source of the rebellion ("dragon," "devil," "serpent," and "Satan").

- The angel with the keys to the "abyss" from Ch. 9 comes back with a chain to bind Satan in this temporary place until final judgment.

## "...UNTIL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE COMPLETED"

We see the length of this period clearly defined as 1,000 years and it is emphasized six times in this chapter.

- The purpose of this binding is not punishment, but banishment. While Satan is bound for a millennium, he will be unable to deceive humanity but will be released for a "short time" to once again deceive.

## DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

- **Premillennialism:** Christ returns and establishes a physical kingdom on Earth for 1,000 years.
- **Postmillennialism:** Christ returns after a period of peace brought about by the church.
- **Amillennialism:** There is no future, literal 1,000-year kingdom, but this is symbolic of Christ's rule in the hearts of His people.

## SATAN MUST BE RELEASED?

Why would God loose Satan?

- Some believe this shows God's power by loosing evil to conquer it once and for all. Others see it as a display of God's devotion to humanity's free will and our responsibility to choose to love Him willingly. It's possible **the Millennium reveals humanity's rebellious nature in a perfect environment.**

## 1,000 YEARS (REVELATION 20:4-6)

### A PHYSICAL MESSIANIC KINGDOM

The evil armies led by the Antichrist have been destroyed and Satan has been bound. Now, Jesus will establish the millennial kingdom of peace on Earth. There will be no war or hunger, and predator and prey will live in peace together.

- Christians will rule and reign with God the way He had intended (think of Adam in the Garden) to bring the Earth under the Lordship of Jesus.

## JOHN SEES PEOPLE SEATED ON THRONES

The vision John receives is of the people of God being resurrected, rewarded, and reigning with God.

- John sees a group sitting on thrones, showing they have been given judicial authority. This is either all Christians throughout history or just the martyrs of Jesus, who are given special emphasis in these verses.

## TWO RESURRECTIONS?

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

- The 1st seems to be only followers of Jesus being resurrected and the 2nd is of non-believers before judgment. Blessed are those who experience the first resurrection because the "second death has no power over them."

## WHY?

The Millennial Reign causes difficulty for a lot of people because it raises questions more than it provides answers.

- God uses this time **to show what Earth can be under His reign, to bring us back to our original purpose of bringing the Earth under submission to God, and to show His commitment to restoring all things.**

## REBELLION? (REVELATION 20:7-10)

### AGAIN, WE IMMEDIATELY ASK "WHY?"

Satan will be released from the abyss at the end of the 1,000 years, then he will "deceive the nations."

- Some believe this is God's commitment to free will and confidence in His own sovereignty, but most likely this is to demonstrate the nature of sin. **Rebellion after Christ's reign shows there is not an issue of circumstance or environment but an issue of the heart.**

## ANOTHER BATTLE?

Some believe this is a retelling of the battle of Armageddon. Whether this is the same battle retold or a new battle, the point is that wherever the devil is, large groups of people will be deceived.

- John describes the innumerable multitude, prepared for battle in rebellion against God, as being "like the sand of the sea."

## GOG AND MAGOG

Magog was the grandson of Noah, and Gog was a prince of the area of Magog.

- Gog and Magog, though literal people, are named as prophetic enemies of Israel in Ezekiel 38-39, and mentioned here in Revelation in a different battle. This could be symbolic of a specific area or of a group of rebellious people.

## "THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE SAINTS"

In OT camps, the tabernacle (a temporary temple) was placed in the center. John is using this OT imagery to describe how the rebellious armies will surround the people of God.

- This allusion also shows God's people are temporary residents of Earth, even during the millennial kingdom. V. 9 foreshadows Jesus replacing the temple permanently in heaven.

## ANOTHER ANTICLIMACTIC ENDING

Satan joins the Antichrist and false prophet in the "lake of fire" where they will be "tormented...forever and ever."

- The same Greek phrase translated "forever and ever" was used in Rev. 1:18 to describe that Christ is eternal, that He is without end. This is explicitly stating that hell is eternal.

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

### A SEAT OF PERFECT JUDGMENT

What an image John must have seen. John sees the White Throne of God and everything that God has ever created "fleeing" from his presence. In other words, the universe will go out of existence as God "un-creates" it.

- Only a few things remain—God, His seat of judgment, those about to be judged, and "the books."
- 2 Peter 3:10 (HCSB)

## THE BOOKS WERE OPENED

The 2nd resurrection now takes place with the "rest of the dead" (unbelievers v. 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 sentencing.

- V. 12 says the "books were opened," and they were "judged according to their works."

## STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE

The first group of books mentioned had the thoughts, words, and deeds of every person recorded in them (Matthew 16:27).

- If we do not accept Christ's redemptive deed on the cross in this life, then our deeds will be measured against God's perfect, holy standard. If we do accept Christ's redemptive work, then our names will be found in "another book."

## PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP

The second book mentioned is the "book of life" and this imagery would have been familiar to those in the ancient world, where cities would have the citizens' names written in them as proof of citizenship.

- "Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire," a place for those who did not trust Christ.

## A SOBER REMINDER

There will be punishment for those who choose not to repent and accept Christ's sacrifice for their sins.

- If we do not repent and accept the price that was paid on the cross, then we will have to pay. If we believe this—**are we warning, telling, and praying for those who don't?**

## WE ARE DESTINED TO RULE WITH CHRIST

- According to the Bible, what we do with "a little" is an indicator of what we will do with "a lot."
- How are we going to rule the Earth if we can't manage it now?
- Are we irresponsible and lazy now?
- This is a training ground for something bigger. How can we be trusted with a lot when we can't handle a little?