

Revelation
20:1-15
“What the world is coming too”

I. Intro

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III. Vs. 4-6 The saint’s reign

IV. Vs. 7-15 The final curtain

I. Intro

Before us in this chapter is the end of history as we know it and the beginning of eternity. John describes three specific events that usher in eternity:

- A. Vs. 1-3 Satan is bound
- B. Vs. 4-6 Saints reign
- C. Vs. 7-15 The world is judged

There have been three points of view that deal with the section of scripture at hand:

1. **Amillennialism**: The word means “NO 1000-year reign of Christ” and those that hold to this position believe that this section of scripture (*as well as the book of revelation*) ought to be interpreted figuratively or metaphorically. It is their position that what is described in this chapter is now happening and has been happening since the cross and Jesus is now reigning through His Church. They hold to the verse in 2 Peter 3:8 that says “*beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*” But notice the wording of this phrase carefully as it says, “**with the Lord** one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”. The bible was not written for the Lord it was written for you and I, and as such for us a day is a day and 1,000 years is 1,000 years. It has well been said that if satan has been bound with a chain now then it must be a very long chain. True satan has been bound partially at the cross as Col. 2:15 tells us saying that Jesus has, “*disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*” James 4:7 reminds us that we are to “*submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*” Why would we need to do so if he is bound? Furthermore, Peter admonishes us in 1 Peter 5:8-9 to “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith*”. It is clear by this passage that he is not bound and that he can only be resisted in the “faith”.
2. **Postmillennialism**: This position does not deny that there will be a literal 1000-year reign of Christ upon the earth, but it is their position that this will happen before Jesus returns to earth. It is their belief that this will occur as the Church becomes revitalized and this will usher in the 2nd coming of Christ. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in his 2nd letter saying, “*concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that*

Day will not come unless the falling away comes first". Then to Timothy he said concerning this time saying that "men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

3. **Premillennialism:** We take this passage literally and as such believe that there will be a yet future 1000-year reign of Jesus upon the earth, the fulfillment of many prophecies. The word appears six times in this chapter and cannot possibly fit any other view as it has well passed the 1000 years since the cross of Jesus.

II. Vs. 1-3 Satan is bound

Vs. 1-3 John in these verses describes four ways in which satan will be bound during the 1000-year reign of Christ upon the earth. In the 19th chapter we were told that the antichrist and the false prophet were placed in hell (Gehenna) and satan will be placed there in the tenth verse of this chapter but at the start of the 1000-year reign just as he was cast out of heaven he is now cast out of the earth. There are four symbols John sees to describe satan's imprisonment each of which give us a vivid picture of how his influence upon the earth will come to an end.

- a. Vs. 1-2 "*a great chain in his hand...and bound him for a thousand years*": This picture is that of complete restraint and as such declares that during the 1000-year reign of Christ upon the earth satan will have no ability nor power to function as he once did upon the earth.
- b. Vs. 3a "*he cast him into the bottomless pit*": Not only is he bound but clearly John sees him removed from the earth all together.
- c. Vs. 3b "*shut him up*": Here John describes the angel shutting the door to the abyss and locking it which suggests that it will be impossible for satan to get out from within the abyss.
- d. Vs. 3c "*set a seal on him*": Finally, John sees that the abyss has a seal placed upon it from the outside which tells us that no one will be able to release him from the outside.

What this means is that **all that satan is now able to do on this earth will be completely ended for the 1000-year reign of Christ.** Yeh, but what about his demons? Well, the bible tells in Isa. 24:21-22 that, "*It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished.*" It appears that what John sees lines up with what Isaiah sees and that Isaiah includes the demons as well. To further understand what impact satan's imprisonment will have during this time John in the 2nd verse uses **four names to describe his influence while upon the earth.**

- a. "*The dragon*": This word is used to describe him 12 times in Revelation alone and it speaks of his fearfulness as well as his power of insight into the ways of man. Yet

- these we are told will be bound by a great chain, imagine for a moment all of his powers of persuasion and influence no longer being around?
- b. *“That serpent of old”*: This phrase is used to describe his cunning evil, his crafty ways, which in his case is the author of evil.
 - c. *“Who is the Devil”*: This word means “false accuser or slanderer” which he does as he continually gives forth-false ideas about God and to God about us.
 - d. *“And Satan”*: Finally, John calls him by the name which means “adversary” and we are told that there will be a seal placed over the abyss which tells me that he will not have the ability to do this again.

The bible gives some insight into what life will be like during this 1000-year reign of Jesus

upon the earth:

1. Ps. 72 Tells us that there will be equality for all as the poor receive justice. This will be possible because of the universal reverence for the Lord who will be the central focus of all praise and prayer. There will be an abundance of food so no more hunger.
2. Isa. 2:2-4 As the people will have a hunger for the Word of God there will be more wars or violence so no needs of a military presence or police force.
3. Isa. 11:6-9 There will be universal harmony between all of God’s creatures.
4. Isa. 65:18-25 No more weeping over death as premature death as we now know it will end as a child will be thought of 100 years of age as apparently the life span of those people not in their new bodies will revert back to pre-flood ages.
5. Zech. 14:16 Perfect weather conditions will exist based upon people’s worship of Him who holds these things in His hands.
6. Zech. 3:9-10 There will be only one language as the curse of Babel will be removed.

Vs. 3 Finally we are given the purpose of the binding of satan as John says, *“so that he should deceive the nations no more”*. Yes but why does God release him after the 1000-year reign?

Verses 7-10 will reveal the answer to that question but simply put it will reveal what mankind refuses to admit about themselves namely that we are not basically good but rather are sinners.

You see for 1000 years mankind will live in a perfect environment, perfect government and all temptation and evil will be removed. So, for this 1000 years mankind will live in total freedom from any outside influence towards evil and in the end will discover what Jeremiah spoke of in

17:9 *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?”*

III. Vs. 4-6 The saint's reign

Here in this section, we discover **three things about the saints** with Jesus during the 1000-year period:

- **Who are the saints**
- **How they have become saints**
- **What they will receive**

Vs. 4-5 Notice that there are **three different groups that John sees here in verse 4 and 5:**

- a. *"I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them"*: The first group is those who are seated and given authority to judge. Clearly based upon Jesus' words in Matt. 19:28 this would include the disciples but based upon Paul's words in 1 Cor. 6:2 where he says to the Corinthian believers that they will judge the world that would include you and I as well.
- b. *"Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God"*: The next group John sees is those who were martyred during the tribulation period that he described in chapter's 6 and 7. John describes why they were martyred:
 1. For their witness of Jesus and the word of God
 2. For their refusal to worship the beast and receive his markSo, then they were beheaded first for following the Lamb which caused them not to follow the antichrist.
- c. *"But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished"*: This is a reference to the unbelievers who died apart from having a personal relationship with Jesus and will be judged as the "great white throne judgement" in verses 11-15.

The phrase *"This is the first resurrection"* belongs with verse 4 and those who reign with Jesus.

The bible in Acts 24:15 speaks of two resurrections saying that, *"there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."* The first resurrection will be for the just and be to everlasting life the 2nd resurrection will be for the unjust and be for everlasting judgement.

Vs. 6 This is the 6th out of seven beatitudes found in this book and it describes four special blessings given to those who share the first resurrection.

1. *"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection"*: Here we are given our final disposition as "Happy and holy" as we will share in His character and nature.
2. *"Over such the second death has no power"*: This literally means the 2nd kind of death and the bible speaks of two types of death physical and spiritual so we are told that we believers will never face the possibility of eternal separation from God.

3. *“But they shall be priests of God and of Christ”*: We will enjoy a special relationship with the Lord as well as those other citizens of the earth during the 1000-year reign of Jesus as their spiritual leaders.
4. *“And shall reign with Him a thousand years”*: We are given the privilege of service in His kingdom ruling over the nations.

IV. Vs. 7-15 The final curtain

Here we conclude with the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ upon the earth and the beginning of eternity. Amazing as it sounds even living during a utopian age will do nothing to change the human heart. Place unbelieving man in a time of peace, prosperity and perfection and we see that given the opportunity he will still chose rebellion.

Vs. 7-8 After 1000-years satan will be let out of prison and will waste no time in resuming his activities upon the descendants of those that survived the tribulation period. During the 1000-year reign of Jesus they had no choice but to outwardly conform to the King of Kings but inwardly they remained rebellious. The nations that are on the four corners of the earth are a part of those in the rebellion during the tribulation period “Gog and Magog”. Satan cannot be rehabilitated as this verse clearly shows.

Vs. 9 Fallen man apart from Jesus will rather follow satan even after living in a perfect government and environment all controlled by Jesus. This will forever stand as a testimony of the hopelessness of mankind’s condition apart from Jesus as clearly man is not converted by education nor environment but only through the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God bringing light upon their sinful condition and God’s abundant grace. Notice that Jesus needs no battle plane to thwart this rebellion instead it fire comes down from heaven. How prideful is man to think they can overcome Jesus.

Vs. 10 Satan is reunited with the antichrist and the false prophet for eternity where each will be tormented day and night. What a different picture hell is compared to what the world is led to believe. Hell is not where the party is and all that live there do so in pleasure, wealth, and luxury.

Satan does not run things in hell, he gives no orders to all the other inmates instead his punishment is most severe.

Vs. 11-15 John sees a great white throne and the One who sits upon it is so glorious that all that has been affected by sin will flee from His face. We are told in John 5:22-30 that this Judge will be none other than Jesus whom Peter said in 3:7-10 will cause the elements to melt with a fervent heat causing everything and everyone's works of goodness to be burned up.

Vs. 12 John sees people from every walk of life standing to be sentenced as several books are opened.

- a. **The book of life:** This book contains the names of all who have trusted in Jesus alone for their salvation. There will not be one unsaved person's name in this book not because God did not want them but rather because they did not want God!
- b. There will be a set of records kept which contain the works of those who died apart from Jesus. Since they didn't want to trust in the one work they will be judged based upon their "good works" which scripture tells us is like filthy rags.

Now look at verse 15 and you will see that there is not one mention of any works instead every name will stand as a testimony of His work, just as John 6:29 says, "*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent*"! There will be recorded for believers all the work that we have done in Christ, and this too will be judged to test and see each one's work. (1 Cor. 3:11-15)

Vs. 13-15 There will be no escaping this judgment no matter how a person has died, and each person will be held accountable for the truth about the Lord they heard in this life. All that wanted to go to hell are there because of their choice and their end will not be annihilation or non-existence they will live forever in the state of their choosing. Sin will at this time be forever put away!