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Christ's Kingdom and Judgment
Revelation 20

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PowerPoint Presentation included: None

SermonAudio Blurb: In Revelation 20 we encounter three great events. The establishing of Christ' earthly kingdom, the final resurrection and the final judgment. This is the most controversial chapter in the entire book of Revelation which sadly tends to detract from the wonderful and sobering message that is contained in it. In this message Pastor Henry seeks to find a middle ground in which he addresses the differing interpretations while holding forth the core message.

I. Introduction.

- A. Probably the most challenging chapter due to how various groups approach it.
- B. There are three main sections in the chapter.
 - 1. The first is the establishing of Jesus Christ earthly kingdom. The second is the final resurrection. The third is the final judgment.
 - 2. This is the outline of the sermon.
- C. In reality this chapter is not difficult if you let it simply flow naturally. What happens too often is that those reading or interpreting it are too quick to assume it is not saying what it seems to say and then are too quick to go to other books of the bible to explain what they think it is saying.
- D. I want to try to deal with this chapter by walking a fine line of explaining the passage itself and how it applies to each of us and also address some of the points of contention with regard to how to interpret it.
- E. This chapter is tightly connected to chapter 19.
 - 1. We saw the return of Jesus Christ in that chapter.
 - 2. The result of this event, along with the utter destruction of Babylon which was the center for Satan's work on earth at that time, resulted in what is known as the battle of Armeggedon.

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- a. Not much of a battle as those who arrayed themselves against Christ were simply destroyed by His Word.
- b. But also, two of the three parts of the unholy trinity were taken and cast away into Hell/Lake of Fire. These are not symbols of something evil but are described as people and are cast into Hell alive.
- c. Other things occurred at this point that are not overtly described in the passage. Two key ones are:
 - (1) At Jesus' return all believers are raised from the dead and all believers meet Him in the air. This is described in passages such as 1 Corinthians 15:51ff and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
 - (2) This is also the event that results in the conversion of Israel to their Messiah. Zechariah 12:10-14 and Romans 11:25-26.
 - (3) At the end of this event of Christ's return much of the population will be destroyed. What remains will be unbelievers who did not gather to war against Jesus Christ and Israel. This is where many of the Old Testament passages prophesying of God returning Israel to Himself finally takes place.
3. Now in chapter 20 we see the final person of the unholy trinity dealt with. It happens in two stages which we will see today.
- F. What stands out in this chapter is how key events are dealt with in a very quick manner. The entire reign of Jesus Christ on earth is resolved in a few verses. The destruction of Satan is dealt with in the same way. And finally, the final judgment of the unbeliever is the same.
 1. This means I don't want to take a large amount of time on any of these today. Rather I want to explain the text as John wrote it.
 2. I am including a lot of passages for you to look up on your own that are designed to help broaden your understanding of these events or to support my position on the interpretation.

II. The Kingdom of Jesus Christ (1-6).

- A. The binding of Satan (1-3).

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1. The angel.
 - a. Consider the pleasure that this angel had in doing this task.
 - (1) Satan was an angel and had rebelled.
 - (2) He brought about the fall of mankind.
 - (3) He was the essence of hating God.
 - b. He held the key to the abyss and a chain.
2. The binding.
 - a. How a spiritual creature is bound is not understood by us.
 - (1) In some way, however they are. Remember 9:4 showed bound angels as well.
 - (2) Some will try to dismiss this as mere symbolism because how can a chain hold a spiritual creature like Satan.
 - (a) Problem is to assume he has no body. Also to assume that the chain is like we have.
 - (b) It also randomly chooses in the passage what is symbolic and what is literal. Is the angel a symbol? Is the abyss or the key merely a symbol? What about heaven?
 - (3) It is easiest to accept it for what it says and understand that what and how this chain works is not revealed. Nor is the chain the point.
 - (4) The great image before us is now our constant enemy is now bound and banished.
 - b. There is a debate on what type of binding occurred and when:
 - (1) For A-mils and most post-mils make this binding occurred with Jesus' first advent.
 - (a) Luke 10:17-18.
 - i) Jesus told His disciples that He saw Satan fall from heaven.

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- ii) Prior to this time, there is no indication of demons being exorcized. Now with Christ there, they suddenly obey.
- iii) But the more obvious problem is that nothing, except the name Satan, in this passage parallels Revelation 20.
- (b) Revelation 12:9.
 - i) The claim is that this is parallel to chapter 20. This is partly because of the view of recapitulation where the book simply retells the story.
 - ii) But they are clearly not parallel. I made notes for chapter 12 and you can do chapter 20 on your own or with your CG.

12:9	20:1-3
removed from heaven	
removed by Michael and angels	
thrown down to earth	
deceiving the world	
a short time	

- (2) But the biggest point that these position try to make is the binding is viewed as some sort of limiting or curtailing.
- (3) The purpose was to prevent Satan from hindering the missionary work of the Church. The gospel could now go out among the Gentiles. The problem is that this is not what the passage says. Take a moment and note what vs 3 says about him and then vs 8 and what he immediately does.

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- (4) Some will say that the binding of Satan is progressive. As the gospel goes forth and the 'golden age' grows into a reality, the power of Satan shall fade.
- c. The other view is that this binding is a yet future event.
 - (1) The purpose of the binding was more than merely preventing the gospel from spreading.
 - (2) By putting him in the abyss, he is effectively shut off from humanity.
 - (a) Luke 8:31 is where a large number of demons are confronted by Jesus. They beg Him not to cast them into the abyss.
 - (b) Genuine fear here. No sense of reducing their impact.
 - (3) The entire imagery of vss 1-3 is not merely a restraining or slowing down of activity, but a total removal of influence from the earth.
 - (4) Activities of Satan presently:
 - (a) Luke 22:3, 31: Satan enters Judas and tempts Peter.
 - (b) Acts 5:3: Stirred up Ananias to lie.
 - (c) 2 Corinthians 12:7: sends someone or something to torment Paul.
 - (d) 1 Thessalonians 2:18: Prevents Paul from traveling to specific places.

Look up the other passages with your CG or on your own and note what you learn about Satan's activities.

- (e) Matthew 13:19.
- (f) Acts 26:18.
- (g) 1 Corinthians 7:5.

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- (h) 2 Corinthians 2:11.
 - (i) 2 Corinthians 4:4.
 - (j) 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14.
 - (k) Ephesians 2:2.
 - (l) Ephesians 6:11-12.
 - (m) 2 Timothy 2:26.
 - (n) 1 Peter 5:8.
 - (o) 1 John 5:19.
- (5) The point in all of this is that having seen the massive ways that Satan resists, deceives, blinds both believers and unbelievers, how can we call him “bound” in any reasonable way?
3. 1000 years.
- a. For the a-mil and post-mil there are one of two views:
 - (1) This simple refers to a very long, undefined time.
 - (2) Or an ideal/complete time. This coming from combining the numbers 7 and 3 which are sacred and when combined means holy perfection. Then when it is cubed, it simply means absolute completeness.
 - (3) The argument is generally that the book is filled with symbols and this should be taken as one as well.
 - (a) There is no precedent in the entire bible where it is used in a symbolic sense.
 - i) Two passages are used often to argue for it though:
 - ii) Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8.
 - iii) However, both of these are using the number literally. The point is that what is a long time for us is nothing to God.

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- (b) This number is used in Revelation 20 six times, giving it great emphasis and specificity, meanwhile John uses a very vague, indefinite term “short time” (3) along with it.
- B. The first resurrection (4-6).
1. We see this vision of thrones and the question arise about who are the “they” who are sitting on them?
 - a. It is not clear and certainly could be either angelic beings or even the Apostles.
 - b. However I see them as the resurrected saints who are to judge with Christ.
 2. But the bigger question here is what is meant by “resurrection.” There is no debate that the “came to life” of vs 4 and the “first resurrection” are referring to the same event. The only debate is what is meant by it.
 - a. The positions that see the Revelation is essentially purely symbolic view is that this as a symbolic reference to regeneration or the new birth that is part of becoming a Christian.
 - b. Why? The reason is simple, to make it a physical one requires it to be yet future.
 - c. It is best and most obvious to see that the resurrection is a physical one from death.
 - d. Every time in the New Testament that the word for “to live” is used in connection to a physical death, it is a physical life.
 - e. It is clearly connected to the martyrs of the tribulation. This means little if there is no actual time of tribulation as the other two views hold.
 - f. However, notice the flow, **the souls were faithful to whom?** Jesus Christ. **What did they refuse to do?** Worship the beast or take the mark. **What do these things tell us about these people?** They were Christians. **What does “came to life” mean if you spiritualize it?** They were regenerated. Notice

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- though that they were already Christians, who had be killed, and only then were they regenerated? That is impossible.
- g. Also the word for resurrection is used 42 times in the New Testament and never (unless this is an exception) is it used of regeneration.
 - h. The word for life in vs 4 is the same one in vs 5. All sides agree that the second one refers to a physical resurrection, but that would require to totally different meanings of the same word used in the same context.
3. And so this speaks of that day I already spoke of in the introduction. The day our Lord returns and in that return raises all who are His.
4. The millennial reign.
- a. Jesus promised to return. But He is also fulfilling many Old Testament passages that speak of YHWH reigning on earth.
 - b. But these passages can't refer to the new heavens and earth for death and sin still occur.
 - (1) Isaiah 65:20ff speaks of living extraordinarily long lives, but that some will be thought "accursed."
 - (2) Zechariah 8:20-23 speaks of the nations flocking to Jerusalem to see the Lord. They come because they heard that God is with Israel.
 - (3) Zechariah 14:16-19 speaks again of the nations coming to worship the Lord in Jerusalem. But those who don't the Lord will strike them.
 - (4) It will be our Lord, Jesus Christ reigning in perfection with His Church ruling alongside Him.
 - (5) A time of unparalleled peace and truth and justice.
 - (6) During this 1000 year period the unbelievers are still in hades awaiting the second resurrection (5).
 - (7) Vs 6 speaks of the 'second death' (20:14; 21:8)

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(8) So you have two resurrections and two deaths. All are literal.

c. Additional passages related to this time of reign:

(1) Jeremiah 23:5-8.

(2) Jeremiah 33:14-16.

III. The Judgment of Satan (7-10).

A. Notice that Satan is released.

1. No escape, rather he is let out, for God's purposes with him is not yet complete.
2. It is another indication of the sovereign control of God over all things and beings.

B. What is the first thing he does?

1. Deceives the nations.
 - a. Realize that the world is a different place. People are living a long time and it is much like after the flood.
 - b. In a very short order simply because of the nature of compounding the population of the earth would have easily replenished the world's population.
2. Remember, deception is what Satan does best. Not possession, not sickness, but "the father of all lies."
3. There is not repentance, no sorrow. 1000 years locked away, and all he can think to do is deceive.
4. What is happening in all of this? I see at least two things:
 - a. First, we see that the power of sin is not dependent upon the presence and work of Satan. 1000 years of righteous, perfect rule by Jesus Himself and a horde of humanity immediately turns against Him when given the opportunity.
 - b. Second, how a fallen, sinful heart results in the ultimate self-deception.

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- (1) He watched Christ destroy the armies at the Second Coming. He watched the Antichrist and False Prophet be taken. He, himself was made captive via a mere angel.
 - (2) Yet, here he is, allowed to leave the abyss and he remains true to his vile nature. He is by nature an enemy of God.
- C. Who are Gog and Magog?
1. We don't know.
 2. Magog first appears in Genesis 10:2 but both appear in Ezekiel 38:2.
 3. No explanation is given as to whom these represent, but most see that the names are representative of those who are enemies of God, which is my view as well.
 4. This is seen by the very broad reference to the appositional phrase “. . . the nations which are in the four corners of the earth. . . .”
- D. The great battle itself is a disappointment
1. Picture a massive, innumerable army coming from all directions, descending on Jerusalem.
 2. Jesus is seated on His throne, and He doesn't even get up. Imagine the thoughts of the believers there! “Do something!”
 3. And then, His Father acts and it is all done.
 4. Isaiah 17:13; 40:15.
 5. Jeremiah 10:10.
 6. This is YHWH, be encouraged.
- E. Satan now joins the anti-Christ and the false prophet for all eternity.
1. Very, very few teachers will try to make Satan here out to be a symbol of something. He is a person. But to keep him as a person and try to make the beast/Antichrist and the False Prophet to be mere symbols makes no sense.

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2. Note the casualness of this statement. We make much of Satan, God makes little of him. He is used for God's purposes and then is discarded and forgotten.
3. Note the horror of the place, tormented means to torture and to bring about great distress. God hates sin and hate rebellion.
4. Note the greatness of our salvation. This end of theirs was also ours yet Christ became sin on our behalf.

IV. The Judgment of Mankind (11-15).

- A. The great white throne.
 1. Throne represent rule, power, authority and judgment. "Great" emphasizes the importance and vastness of the judgment and authority flowing from it. "White" likely speaks to the idea of truth.
 2. This is the final judgment, the end has come and there is no more time.
 3. This picture is amazing and frightening. Heaven and earth flees from the throne, no place to hide, there is just you and God.
 4. I wish we all could burn this into our hearts.
- B. God is seated upon His throne. All those alive during the 1000 years and all who died throughout time who rejected Him shall now face their maker.
- C. Now those who were not part of the great army in the end are raised.
 1. They are judged. But notice the basis of the judgment.
 2. Their deeds. What each did or did not do both in thought and deed shall be the evidence against them. No trumped up charges. Simply the acts of rebels.
- D. The book and books.
 1. The books (plural) appear to a registry of deeds.
 2. The book of life is the listing of the names of those redeemed.
- E. Death and hades are cast into the lake of fire as well.
 1. What is unique about this verse?

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2. How that happens I don't know.
 3. This is one of those places where some seek to make Hell symbolic, but because death and hades are not entities or physical and therefore how are they cast away?
 4. Hades is an actual place in the spiritual realm so that I understand.
 5. I take death to be symbolic, in that it is bound up inextricably with Satan and sin, both of which is currently in the lake of fire.
- F. Pictures of hell in the bible:
1. Matthew 3:10, 12; 5:22; 7:19; 13:42; 18:8–9; 22:13; 25:30, 46.
 2. 2 Thessalonians 1:9
 3. Jude 1:7, 13.
 4. Hebrews 6:2; 10:27.
 5. 2 Peter 2:17.

V. Conclusion.

- A. We near the end now. The enemies we cannot fight are now fully defeated. The sides are clearly defined. The judgments of God are shown to be final.
- B. All that awaits us in what all of creation longs for, the remaking of all things.

VI. Benediction/Doxology.

May you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Small Group Questions

- Talk about what was the “take-away” of the people in this sermon.
- Due to the many ways this chapter gets interpreted take the time to look up the various passages throughout the sermon and make observations in relation to whatever point was made in the sermon itself. This is not a time to get into significant debates. If there are questions that seem to be of some importance direct the person to take advantage of “Ask The Matts” on the app.