

**REVELATION – THE TIME IS NEAR****A THOUSAND YEARS AND THE OPEN BOOKS**

Zechariah 14 prophetically declares “a day of the Lord is coming...”

***Messiah’s arrival – second coming to earth physically!***

- the Lord will go out and fight against those nations gathered around and plundering Jerusalem
- On that day [the Lord’s] feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south
- On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. It will be a unique day—a day known only to the Lord—with no distinction between day and night

***Millennial Reign***

- The Lord will be king over the whole earth, there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.
- [Jerusalem] will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.
- This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.
- the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty
- On that day holy to the Lord will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar

This is only one section of OT scripture that affirms the Messiah’s arrival and re-establishment of the Davidic kingdom in Jerusalem. I wholeheartedly believe John’s vision in chapter 20 is a literal 1000 years. In my opinion, the repetitive use of the word ‘**a thousand years**’ six times in verses 2,3,4,5,6,7 is purposeful, to ensure his readers understand this age is literal and the fulfillment of OT prophecy found in most of the major and several minor prophets. Let’s read chapter 20 of Revelation for the full picture.

**Revelation 20:1-2**

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. <sup>2</sup> He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

- We recall in chapter nine after the fifth trumpet sounds an angel who unlocks the abyss releasing demonic forces with permission and power to torment people for five months.
- Here an angel comes down from heaven with the key to the abyss, grabs the fallen angel Lucifer, known also as the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan:
  - **the dragon** – the Greek word used here is also used in the Greek translation of the OT where we find the English word Leviathan. Isaiah refers to the dragon when he prophetically alludes to the Day of the Lord in **Isaiah 26:21; 27:1** <sup>21</sup> See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed on it; the earth will conceal its slain no longer...In that day, the Lord will punish with his sword—his fierce, great and powerful sword—Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea.
  - **that ancient serpent** – Paul and John both use the image of the serpent referring to Satan who was cast down from heaven and deceived Adam and Eve to sin against God!
  - **who is the devil or Satan** – The slanderer, accuser of people before God, diabolical evil fallen angel who has led the world astray!

Reading the first ten verses of chapter 20 we quickly realize this passage is about the divine elimination of this wretched figure. His reign of terror that has impacted lives down through the centuries is about to END once and for all. The antichrist and false prophet, have already been banished to the lake of fire. The mighty angelic messenger from heaven now binds Satan with a chain, throws him into the darkness of the abyss.

### Revelation 20:3

<sup>3</sup> He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

- WHY? Why must he be released “for a short time?” Great question. We can only speculate because there is no definitive reason given in scripture. For a thousand years Jesus reigns as we shall see in the following verses. But the inhabitants of the earth who have survived the great tribulation having lived under the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ will once again be given the opportunity to choose to confess Jesus as Lord or be deluded by the deceptive ancient serpent to rebel against God and march against Israel and the throne of Jesus firmly established for eternity!

**Revelation 20:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.

*God the father has given Jesus, the Son, the authority to judge humanity!*

**John 5:22**

Jesus says, “Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.”

*We also know the disciples, believers, and martyrs will join Jesus on the thrones that John sees in v. 4!*

**Matthew 19:28**

Jesus assures the twelve disciples they will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Revelation 3:21**

Jesus assures those who are victorious are given the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

**2 Timothy 2:12**

Paul assures believers that if we endure, we will also reign with Jesus.

**Revelation 5:10**

...the four living creatures and twenty-four elders around God’s throne assure God’s people that the Lamb who was slain has “...made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.

Do not be confused by the phrase “This is the first resurrection.” John is alluding to two resurrections in his current vision. This in no way applies to the resurrection of the dead believers and rapture of the saints that occurs pre-tribulation, or John would give us that important information.

Think about it this way...

**Resurrection 1** – Jesus came back to life, and his resurrection is the firstfruits for believers resurrection

**Resurrection 2** – Matthew 27:51-53 records at the moment Jesus died tombs were opened and after Jesus rose from the dead, resurrected saints went into the city! “At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.”

**Resurrection 3** – Paul prayed for Eutychus who had fallen out a third-floor window, and he came back to life! We can assume that he and the others mentioned above all had to face death again.

**Resurrection 4** – 1 Thessalonians 4:16 states, “...the dead in Christ will rise first” then the rapture!

**Resurrection 5** – The two witnesses of Revelation 11 are resurrected! “...the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them...after three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them.”

**Minimally there are five resurrections mentioned in the NT alone!**

### **Revelation 20:6**

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

- The first resurrection of Revelation 20 pertains to those who will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ during the great tribulation and die or are martyred for their faith. They are counted as BLESSED and they will not stand before the Great White Throne Judgment, but will reign with Christ over the inhabitants of the earth for a thousand years!

**The Millennial Reign of Christ will be a time of...**

- PEACE for the land, people and animal kingdom!

- **LAND - Amos 9:13** “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. [abundance of harvest]
- **PEOPLE - Micah 4:1-3** In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. <sup>2</sup> Many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.
- **ANIMALS - Isaiah 11:6-9** <sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. <sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

**Revelation 20:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.

<sup>9</sup> They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

<sup>10</sup> And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Here we see the final battle with Satan. He is released and through his wicked scheming, deceives a large number of the inhabitants of the world to rebel against the Lord whom they have served for a thousand years, reaffirming that the heart of humanity is **desperately wicked!** The armies amassed by

the devil will march toward Jerusalem one last time and be destroyed by fire from heaven before they can do any damage! The evil plot of the enemy of our soul will be crushed and he will be banished to suffer in torment for all eternity along with the antichrist and false prophet!

With the elimination of the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan; John now sees a momentous vision impacting all of God's creation, that we cannot just rush past:

### **Revelation 20:11**

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

- Did you catch what just happened – what John saw?! The throne of God from chapter four now breaks through the divide of heaven and earth, and the earth and skies FLEE from the omnipresence of their creator! God makes his presence known for ALL to see and there is no room for anything else! No longer is there an invisible realm of the spiritual world, but we are engulfed in the presence of our creator, Father and Lord of all! **But this is not a social call.** It is the day of reckoning for all who have rejected the mercy, abundant grace and lavish love of God.

### **Revelation 20:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

<sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.

- Scripture asserts that believers are ALIVE in Christ, so John is not talking about individuals who are born-again! This judgment is also NOT for believers because our names are recorded in the Lamb's book of Life! We will have been judged at the Bema Seat of Christ after the rapture!
- Standing before the Throne of God are the DEAD, not the Grateful Dead: trust me there will not be anyone who is grateful to be standing before this throne! John sees ALL those who are

spiritually DEAD. The dead are mentioned four times (2x each in vv. 12-13) and it can only refer to those who are **dead** in their transgressions and sins.

- **Great and small** – no one will elude this moment! All sinners are called to appear!
- **Sea** - In ancient culture, people who died while on the ocean were cursed. It was a horrible way to die – but God is able to bring back to life those lost at sea! Regardless of the circumstances of one’s death (natural cause, fire, water, disease, war, etc.) God is able to reanimate the body and reunite it with the living soul!
- **Death & Hades** – All those who have died not knowing Jesus as savior and Lord will be released from the grave and Hades to stand before God as well! (the second resurrection)
- **Books and the Lambs book of Life are opened!**
  - **BOOKS** – within the pages of these heavenly accounts are the recorded thoughts, words, attitudes, and deeds of fallen humanity. Also included must be the moments when these individuals heard the truth, the good news of salvation, and **rejected the LOVE of God** expressed in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ! Each and every person will stand before God to account for their life and that fateful decision. The author of Hebrews solemnly declares, “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:26-31)
  - The **LAMBS BOOK OF LIFE** will also be opened and if the name of the individual is NOT recorded in it, they will fall to their knees and declare, “Jesus is Lord!” for scripture declares, ...God exalted [Jesus] “to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

- ***Jesus in turn will respond with tears in his eyes***, “Depart from me, I do NOT know you.” Understand that Jesus knows everyone he is interacting with at this moment...
  - He absolutely knows **WHO** they are because he knit them together in the womb!
  - But He does not have a **personal, intimate relationship** with them.
  - Their **NAMES are NOT written in the Lamb’s book of Life**. The redemption offered by the all-sufficient blood of the Lamb, for the sin of humanity, is applied only to the those who hear the gospel and believe! “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by [God’s] grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.”
    - What can wash away my sin – nothing but the blood of Jesus!
    - We have been bought with the precious BLOOD of Jesus!

<sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.<sup>15</sup> Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

- **If you are BORN twice (physical and spiritual) you will never die!** Your body may cease to function, but Jesus declared to Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, “**I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?**” (John 11:25-26). In reality, when the rapture happens there will be believers who will never face physical death!
  - Believers will NOT stand before the Great White Throne Judgment, nor will they experience the second death.
  - They will reign and rule with the Lord Jesus Christ and spend eternity in the presence of their savior and Lord!
- **If you are born once you will die twice (physically & spiritually).** Revelation 20:9 makes it very clear that all those who follow Satan on his last attempt to overthrow God will be devoured by fire! They will then be resurrected and stand before God’s Judgment Throne where they will receive the due penalty for their rebellion and refusal to be washed in the blood of the Lamb!
  - Unbelievers will be sentenced to the Lake of Fire along with Satan, the antichrist, the false prophet, the angels who followed Lucifer having lost their place in heaven, as well

as death and Hades, where they will experience incomparable torment knowing they rejected God and they will weep and gnash their teeth in darkness for eternity!