



# gracefellowship

Revelation  
May 5, 2019  
Jesus Reigns (Part 2)

## :: Revelation 20

At the end of chapter 19 we saw the beast (Anti-Christ) and the false prophet attempt to draw the world into war against God. Everyone showed up, but Jesus prevailed by simply speaking. The beast and false prophet were captured and thrown into the lake of fire. But there is still one villain in the story who has not been dealt with. Today we will see the dragon meet his end.

### :: Revelation 20:1-3

**1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.**

**2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.**

**3 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.**

When we looked at Revelation 12 we said that Satan and Jesus are not equals who are locked in a cosmic battle where neither side can prevail. Satan is God's opponent, not His opposite! God allows Satan to operate, but even through Satan's actions on earth, God is at work to bring ultimate glory to Himself. In this passage in chapter 20 we see again that when the time comes for Satan to be dealt with Jesus sends one of His angels to bind Satan and imprison him.

Look at verse 2 again...

He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan and bound him for a thousand years.

John looks at this fallen angel who rebelled against God and tells us this is the one who from the very beginning has been leading people away from relationship with the Father. John names him, connecting all the different ways we have seen Satan represented throughout history.

Naming someone gives power or authority over them. Jewish Rabbis had a model to follow in order to deal with casting out demons from a person. They would attempt to make the demon speak and then make it share its name. Then

they could attempt to drive it out. Jesus occasionally followed this model. Before he drove demons out of a man into a bunch of pigs, Jesus asked the demon's name. (Legion, for we are many.) But he also had times he would just command the demons to flee and they would.

As the end comes for Satan he is named and then he is bound. John says he was bound, locked and sealed in the Abyss to keep him from deceiving the nations.

It has been my experience this is also a good thing to do with the sin that often invades our lives. When we get tired or careless in our pursuit of Jesus it is easy for sin to entangle us and then we may get convicted of that sin in our lives and ask God to forgive us, but sometimes we are not ruthless with our sin, desiring to put it to death. We might pray, "God forgive me of the sin in my life." I think it is powerful to name those sins; bring them into the light of God's grace and through the power of the Holy Spirit put those sins to death!

At the end of this section there is a curious statement that we will come back and look at in more detail later. John tells us that while Satan is bound, he must be set free again for a short time.

#### **:: Revelation 20:4-6**

**4 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.**

**5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.**

**6 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.**

Following the victory of Armageddon, Jesus will establish His earthly reign. John tells us that he saw thrones and those given authority to judge. This is a way to represent John seeing all believers in Jesus reigning with Him on earth. When Jesus returns He brings all who have trusted Him for salvation with Him. We don't participate in the Battle of Armageddon, but now we do have a place of authority in His earthly Kingdom.

John also points out that a specific group has a special place in this Kingdom: "I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the Word of God."

- During the tribulation we know that Christians will be martyred for our faith in Jesus. Here John tells us that many of those who will be killed under the rule of the Anti-Christ will be beheaded.
- **Those who suffered injustice in the world system will be**

## **administrators of God's true justice.**

We are also told in this passage that they come to life to reign with Jesus for 1,000 years. This period of time is referred to as the Millennial Kingdom. While John describes it as 1,000 years, that may or may not be intended to communicate an actual period of time. Some scholars believe it is literally a thousand years that Jesus will reign on earth prior to the beginning of the eternal reign. Other scholars see this as a way of using numbers, as John often does in Revelation, to present an idea: 1000 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> power of 10 = an ideal time.

I personally believe this will not be exactly 1,000 years, but is representative of Christ's ideal reign on earth for a designated period of time. There are a lot of things that people speculate about this period of time and how it will work. The honest truth is, John gives us very little information about the full nature of the Millennial Kingdom, so there is no reason to speculate about what we don't know for sure. No matter if it is a set period of time or 1,000 literal years, here is what we see:

- 1. Believers have authority given to us by God to reign alongside Jesus in His earthly Kingdom.**
- 2. The rest of the dead (unbelievers) are separated from God during this time, missing what John calls the first resurrection.**

**6 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.**

**Believers in Jesus are raised to life to be with Him and there is no fear of the second death. Instead we are given power and serve as priests.**

All followers of Jesus will experience what Jesus experienced on Easter-resurrection to eternal life in our glorified, spiritual bodies that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15. Jesus graciously shares His Kingdom with us and gives us responsibility in His Kingdom.

Earlier we said that while Satan is bound during this period of time, there must be a season where he is released. Look at verses 7-10 with me.

**:: Revelation 20:7-10**

**7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison  
8 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.**

**9 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.**

**10 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 forever and ever.**

Satan is released and immediately goes back to doing what he has always done- act in deception to undermine God's authority.

### **Who does Satan deceive?**

At the end of chapter 19 it is my belief that all the wicked people on the earth, not just those gathered for battle at Armageddon, are destroyed, leaving on the followers of Jesus to be part of the Millennial Kingdom.

- 1. Those born during the millennial reign.**
- 2. The dead are released with Satan in a second (implied) resurrection.**

I would probably be inclined to see the second option as the best one here. When everyone is killed at Armageddon, they are subjected to Hades during the 1,000-year reign. When they are released, along with Satan, they are once again duped by him into thinking they can overtake God.

However, here is the more important thing to understand as we move toward God's final judgment: Whether it is people living on earth during the 1,000- year reign or people who have spent the millennial with Satan:

**The problem is our sin, not our environment!**

The deceived march against God and His people, but are destroyed by fire from heaven.

Satan's Fate: The devil is thrown into hell, joining the beast and false prophet. They are tormented day and night forever and ever...literal interpretation: to the ages of ages.

Now that Satan's fate has been decided John turns his attention to those who followed Satan. Look at the final section of this chapter with me.

### **:: Revelation 20:11-15**

**11 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.**

**12 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.**

**13 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.**

**14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.**

**15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.**

John sees a great white throne and God sitting on it. He describes God coming in immense power saying the earth and heavens fled from His presence. He also says the oceans give up their dead and death and Hades give up the dead in them. These are all ways of describing the fact that when it comes time for God to judge there is no place you can hide!

Who is being judged?

Not Christians- the dead. We have already been raised with Christ.

Books were opened- containing the deeds of mankind by which Jesus is able to judge and bring to light all the wicked things making his judgment valid. There will be no doubt as these things are held in the light of God's holiness that anyone can argue that their deeds are not worthy of punishment.

Then John says another book (singular) was opened. This book simply contains the names of those who follow Jesus. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

That's bad news! And it's really bad! It means they get the same treatment as the devil, beast, false prophet and the demons: torment day and night forever and ever. This is not a case, like so many people in our world believe, of annihilation- where after a period of time these souls are ultimately destroyed, this is an eternal punishment. When people sin against an eternally holy God there are eternally unholy consequences.

But if there is bad news there is also good news! If your name is written in the book of life you will be with Jesus in heaven forever, enjoying the glory of God and the perfection of His new creation!

John finally tells us that not only were people cast away from God, but death and Hades were also thrown into the lake of fire- which is the second death.

**:: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26**

**19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.**

**20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

**21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.**

**22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.**

**23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.**

**24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.**

**25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.**

## **26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

God is true to His word and does away with death! From here forward we will see what the new creation looks like and how God restores all things.