

The Reign of Christ and the Great White Throne Revelation 20:1-15 (Part 27)

Key characters: Christ who reigns for 1,000 years, Satan who is bound for 1,000 years, unbelievers at the Great White Throne Judgment

Big idea of chapter 20: Jesus Christ will reign for 1,000 years with resurrected believers and earthly believers. Also, all unbelievers will appear at the Great White Throne Judgment after the 1,000 year reign.

The Millennium: The Bible teaches us that when Christ returns to the earth He will establish Himself as king in Jerusalem, sitting on the throne of David (Luke 1:32–33). The unconditional covenants demand a literal, physical return of Christ to establish the kingdom.

- ❖ The Abrahamic covenant promised Israel a land, a posterity and ruler, and a spiritual blessing (Genesis 12:1–3).
- ❖ The Palestinian covenant promised Israel a restoration to the land and occupation of the land (Deuteronomy 30:1–10).
- ❖ The Davidic covenant promised Israel a king from David's line who would rule forever—giving the nation rest from all their enemies (2 Samuel 7:10–13).
- ❖ At the second coming, these covenants will be fulfilled as Israel is re-gathered from the nations (Matthew 24:31), converted (Zechariah 12:10–14), and restored to the land under the rule of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Premillennialism: The word “millennium” comes from the Latin words “mille” (thousand) and “annum” (year). The word “pre” before the word “millennialism” refers to the time of Christ's second coming as it relates to the millennium, and thus the term “premillennialism” refers to the millennium (1,000-year period) being preceded by Christ's return to the earth.

Revelation 20:1-3 *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.*

An angel ...holding in his hand the key ...and a great chain: The authority to bind and imprison Satan during the earthly reign of Christ is given to an angel.

Bound him for a thousand years: Satan is bound for 1,000 years. 4 names are used to identify exactly who is bound (dragon, serpent,, devil, satan).

- ❖ Satan has been the ruler of the earth since the fall of Adam and Eve
- ❖ He has been limited to a degree by God during this time.
- ❖ He becomes unrestrained during the tribulation especially the last 3 1/2 years.
- ❖ He and his earthly systems are destroyed at the end of the tribulation.
- ❖ He is bound for 1,000 years during the millennial kingdom.
- ❖ He is released at the end of the 1,000 years to deceive people into rebelling against God.
- ❖ He is defeated for the last time and throne into the Lake of Fire or Hell forever.

1. Satan's method is deception

Revelation 20:4-6 *Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who 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 for 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 is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*

I saw thrones: In Christ's kingdom there will be those who have authority and who rule and help govern the kingdom. **Matthew 19:27-28, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3**

I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded: Believers who were killed during the tribulation.

They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years: There are resurrected believers living and reigning with Christ during the millennial kingdom.

First resurrection: These are not the first to be resurrected, but the first resurrection is any believer who is resurrected. Jesus, raptured believers, tribulation believers.

The rest of the dead: All unbelievers are part of the rest of the dead. They will be resurrected after the 1,000 years.

Second death: All unbelievers will experience the second death. This could be called the second resurrection but the Bible calls it the second death.

Revelation 20:7-10 *And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

Satan will be released: For the thousand years of the direct reign of Jesus over this earth, Satan was bound and inactive. But after the thousand years are over, he will be released and successfully organize many people of the earth in another rebellion against God.

They...surrounded...the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them: The sinfulness of humanity is highlighted at the end of the 1,000 years as Satan successfully deceives millions to rebel and revolt against God.

❖ Gog and Magog is a reference to Ezekiel 38–39 of an invasion against Israel that happens either before or during the tribulation. Here the phrase stands for the enemies of God among the nations of the world. They march on the city of Jerusalem, where King Jesus reigns over His worldwide kingdom.

The devil...was thrown into the lake of fire: The devil is cast down in to finally reside in the Lake of Fire which was prepared for he and his angels (Mat. 25:41).

2. Man's heart is sinful and rebellious

Revelation 20:11-13 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.*

Great white throne: This is the throne of God where He will issue the final judgment upon those who refused to believe in Christ or who have placed their faith in their works or anything or anyone other than Christ.

The dead, great and small, standing before the throne...Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them: All unbelievers of all time will have one last opportunity to stand before God and demonstrate their works to receive heaven.

❖ Believers will not be judged for salvation, because Christ was judged in our place.
❖ All believers will go before the Judgment (Bema) Seat of Christ to receive rewards for how the eternal work done as a follower of Christ.

Books were opened...(they) judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done: Unbelievers will present their works before God as they will not be enough to remove their sins and give them entrance into heaven.

Revelation 20:14-15 *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

This is the second death, the lake of fire: Eternal separation from God in the lake of fire or hell is the second death.

❖ Only those whose names are not written in the book of life will go to hell. Those who do not have the righteousness of Christ or have not received forgiveness of their sins through Christ's sacrifice.

3. Our decisions have an eternal impact

I believe Premillennialism is the best view:

1. It is the view that best honors normal, historical, and grammatical interpretation.

- Chapter 20 clearly follows chapter 19. The word “millennium,” meaning 1,000, occurs 6 times in verses 1-7. Never in Scripture when the word “year” is used with a number is its meaning not literal. There are resurrected people reigning with Christ.

2. The promises to Israel have not been transferred to the church.

- The complete fulfillment of the Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenant have not taken place yet.
- Israel has not been rejected: **Romans 1:1**, *I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means!*
- Israel has been temporarily blinded: **Romans 11:25**, *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*
- Israel will be saved: **Romans 11:26-27**, *And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; 27 “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

3. Consistency in interpretation.

- Premillennialism maintains that its interpretation is consistent (since the prophecies about Christ’s first advent were fulfilled literally, the prophecies about His second advent can be expected to be fulfilled in the same way).

4. The kingdom is a universal kingdom of peace and prosperity with the Anointed Messiah ruling over the whole earth.

- There will be a supernatural peace on earth during the millennial kingdom (Isaiah 11) this is not happening now or for any extended period of time since Christ ascended.

5. The Words of Jesus.

- **His promise to the 12 apostles: Matthew 19:27-28**, *Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” 28 Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- **His words to the apostles: Acts 1:6-7**, *So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.*