

A SERIES THROUGH THE REVELATION

Revelation 20 —THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST | 10.27.22

I. UN-MUDDLING MILLENIAL MISCONCEPTIONS (Revelation 20:1-15)

- A. It's impossible to preach/teach through **Revelation 20** without taking time to discuss the three historic views on the millennium (1,000 years).
1. **Amillennialism** (A-Mil = *no millennium*) –This view doesn't believe that there is a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ. *"This view can only arise in the mind of someone who no longer believes in the inspiration and authority of God's word, who says the Bible may contain the Word of God, but it does not constitute it."* – David Pawson, *When Jesus Returns*, Pg. 248
 - a. This view sees our world as too far gone for it to be reclaimed. Those that hold to his view usually see our world only being destroyed, not recreated. This view is too pessimistic.
 2. **Postmillennialism** (*Christ will return after the millennium*) –This view believes that the Church will eventually Christianize the world, slowly, converting everyone. Their belief is that Satan was bound at Calvary.
 - a. This view is often called, "Dominion Theology" where the belief is that Christians are going to disciple the world, thus converting humanity, and ushering in Jesus to rule an already Christian globe. The thought is, the Church militant will become the Church triumphant not just in heaven, but on earth.
 - b. With all our cultural and global numbers, at our current rate, we seem to be a long way away from accomplishing this task. This view is too optimistic.
 3. **Premillennialism** (*Christ will return before the millennium*) –This view (*which I and Legacy Church ascribe to*) is hopeful for Christ's return, but not apart from the full growth of the tares (**Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43**). This view sees the tares and wheat growing together into full maturity before Christ' return.
 - a. Premillennialism believes that our world will look like Eden again, but only after Christ returns, destroys the beast and false prophet, and locks up Satan. This view believes that God will do in part now, what He promises to do in fullness when He returns (cities).
 - b. During the first three centuries of Church history (0-300 A.D), there is only mention of premillennialism (*Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Hippolytus*). This is why it's often called, "*Historic premillennialism.*" Mike Bickle calls it, "Historical, Apostolic Premillennialism."
 - c. "*Historic premillennialism believes that the world will get much worse before it gets better, but it will get much better after it gets worse (and it will stay that way forever).*" –David Pawson
 - d. This view is realistic.

II. SATAN BOUND FOR 1,000 YEARS (Revelation 20:1-3)

- A. **Revelation 20:1-3** *"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while."*
1. John says, "Then", meaning, after the conclusion of Revelation **19:17-21**, where the beast and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, and all the others who took the mark are killed by Jesus.
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2. I Saw An Angel Coming Down From Heaven, Having The Key To The Bottomless Pit and A Great Chain In His Hand—This bottomless pit is the same one that the demonic locust ascended from (**Rev. 9:1-6**), and the home from which the beast came (**Rev. 11:7**)
3. He Laid Hold Of the Dragon, And Bound Him For A Thousand Years, And He Cast Him Into The Bottomless Pit—Well, this is the last great insult to satan, that an unnamed angel, not Michael, or Gabriel, not even a mighty angel, just, “...*An angel...*” throws binds up satan. In the Revelation it’s not only Babylon who’s falling (**Rev. 14:8; 16:17-21; 18:2; 19:1-6**), but also satan (**Rev. 12:7-12; 20:3, 10**).
 - a. In Revelation 20 alone, the phrase, “1,000 years” appears 6 times (*only 15 verses*). This is where we get the phrase, “Pre-millennial” reign of Christ (*Latin, Mille = 1,000 and Annus = years*).
 - b. There are many groups that don’t see this number as being literal, but figurative for an undetermined amount of time. But I take it literally, like the majority of the other numbers in the Revelation:
 1. *7 Churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls, 4 living creatures, 24 elders, 144,000 (John heard the number of those who were sealed, then another group, which John was unable to count), 4 angels holding the 4 winds, seven heads, ten horns, forty-two months, 1/4th and 1/3rd, and 10,000 x 10,000 (now this is a real number, but it reads, thousands of thousands, alerting us that it’s more than 100,000,000), and 666.*
 2. There are some numbers that are symbolic, such as **Revelation 18:10**, “...*in one hour...*” Or **Revelation 2:10**, “...*you will have tribulation ten days...*” And **Revelation 5:6**, “...*a Lamb...having seven horns and seven eyes...*”
4. But After These Things (1,000 years) He (satan) Must Be Released For A Little While—Well, this is a quite a twist in God’s story. It’s important to note that prior to Christ’s return there will be three types of people on the earth: “*Resistors, Reprobate, and Redeemed.*” –Mike Bickle
 - a. The resistors will be those who didn’t worship the beast, they didn’t worship Jesus, and they didn’t die during the Great Tribulation. They make it into the millennial reign of Christ, as a non-believer. The reprobate are those that took the mark, and were killed by Jesus in **Revelation 19:17-21**. And then the redeemed are those now with resurrected bodies, alive with Christ.
 - b. So, why “...*must (satan) be released...?*” Because, though Jesus is physically on the earth, ruling and reigning, changing everything, He will not forcefully change the heart of those that presently don’t love Him. Jesus desires voluntary love, so He won’t force anyone to love Him, that doesn’t want to.

III. THE SAINTS REIGN WITH CHRIST FOR 1000 YEARS (Revelation 20:4-6)

- A. **Revelation 20:4-5** “*And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*”
 1. When Jesus said in **Matthew 5:5** that, “*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*”, He wasn’t kidding. This is the reality when Jesus returns. Real people, with resurrected bodies, really reigning and ruling with Christ, on the earth (**Dan. 7:9 (many thrones) Dan. 7:27; Matt. 19:28; 1st Cor. 6:2; Rev. 3:21; 5:9-10; Rev. 20:4**).

2. Then I Saw The Souls Of Those Who Had Been Beheaded For Their Witness To Jesus—This group of people are being highlighted because of their perseverance under great duress and pressure. Jesus is honoring their dedication to Him.
 3. And They Lived and Reigned With Christ For A Thousand Years—This verse right here is at the heart of the millennial debate. Who is here, are they raised to new life, what is the first resurrection? This is not confusing, in my opinion. I think it's really clear.
 - a. These that are alive and reigning with Christ are one large group (*all the righteous throughout world history*), with a smaller subset of this larger group being recognized (*the martyrs*). The martyrs are being highlighted, like we would a Gold Star Family member (*Having a Gold Star family member doesn't make that soldier better than the other soldiers*).
 4. But The Rest Of The Dead Did Not Live Again Until The Thousand Years Were Finished. This Is The First Resurrection—The rest of the dead, is speaking of all the unrighteous dead throughout world history. They don't get resurrected and brought before God until the 1,000 years is completed.
 - a. There is only one resurrection of the dead for the righteous, and that's the "...First resurrection." All the righteous throughout world history, currently, until Jesus appears in the sky, are waiting for a resurrected body (**2nd Cor. 5:8**). Right now, only Jesus has a resurrected, physical body (**1st Cor. 15:20-28**).
 - b. The return of Christ is like a two-sided coin. The first side is the rapture/resurrection/appearing, and the second side is His return. His appearing isn't His return, it's only His return when He touches back down to the earth (*though His appearing is a part of His return*).
 - c. So, who is ruling and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years? Those who were a part of the first resurrection. Who's a part of the first resurrection? All the believers throughout world history, including those who were alive when Christ returned, and those who were martyred.
- B. Revelation 20:6** "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."
1. Blessed and Holy Is He Who Has Part In The First Resurrection. Over Such The Second Death Has No Power—The first death is described as the death that all men will experience (*except for those that are alive when Christ appears*). But, the second death is an eternal death, a death not only of the physical body, but of the soul, eternally (**Matt. 10:28**).
 - a. Believers are assured, that if they die, it will only happen once (*if they aren't alive when Christ returns*). But for the unrighteous, they will die twice; once a physical death, and then a spiritual/eternal death.

IV. SATAN RELEASED FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (Revelation 20:7-10)

- A. Revelation 20:7-8** "Now when the 1,000 years have expired, Satan will be released from prison, and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand on the sea."
1. Well, this change in storyline is a definitive mark of divine inspiration. This gives us incredible clarity into the reality that God is writing this story, not humanity. The reason for this is because humanity in no way would've brought Satan back out onto the landscape of a global garden of Eden.

2. Now When The 1,000 Years Have Expired, Satan Will Be Released From Prison, And Will Go Out And Deceive The Nations... Whose Number Is As The Sand On The Sea—Well, look here, in the bottomless pit satan isn't free to do what he wants, not only was the lid closed, and sealed, there was a great chain that bound him, in prison, like handcuffs.
 - a. But, after 1,000 years in prison, satan is no better, only more enraged. Time doesn't rehabilitate, or transform satan, it only fuels him further. But it's not him alone, in no time, masses among the nations gather together with him.
 - b. During this 1,000-year reign, the resistors have had children, and grown in number. And although they couldn't rebel against Christ externally, because He's on the earth ruling from Jerusalem, they never loved Him internally.
 - c. And after 14 lifetimes (*70-year lifespan roughly, divided by 1,000 years = 14 lifetimes*) the heart of the resistors isn't changed either. It wouldn't matter if Christ ruled for 1 billion years, or 15 trillion years. They simply don't love Him.
 - d. Friends, this passage makes clear that the root of human sin isn't poverty, or social conditions, or our geographic location, it springs from within. Truly, Jesus has played the funeral dirge (*the second coming*) and the wedding march (*intimacy with God*) and neither has moved the people (**Matt. 11:17**).

B. Revelation 20:9-10 *"They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city (Jerusalem). And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them (satan and his followers). The devil who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire that burned with brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*

1. It's clear that the "Beloved City" is Jerusalem, where Jesus will be ruling and reigning from during these 1,000 years. And although the battle lines are drawn up, there is no battle, once again (**Rev. 19:17-21**).
2. And Fire Came Down From God Out Of Heaven and Devoured Them—Because sin can't be rehabilitated, it has to be removed, forever. I think this might be the moment, even with resurrected bodies that the God's family will finally realize why eternal separation/torment is needed.
3. The Devil Who Deceived Them Was Cast Into The Lake Of Fire... Where The Beast And The False Prophet Are. And They Will Be Tormented Day and Night Forever and Ever—The devil, who appears in the 3rd chapter of the Bible, is also done away with the 3rd to last chapter of the Bible. And now his punishment isn't 1,000 years, but eternity in the lake of fire.
 - a. Here satan is stripped of his titles as prince, ruler or even god, and is banished to the same fate of all that reject the Kingship of Jesus Christ. He's not the lord or the ruler of hell, he's sentenced like everyone else.

V. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE OF JUDGEMENT (Revelation 20:11-15)

A. Revelation 20:11-12 *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."*

1. Well, what do we notice that's different about this Throne? There's nothing else there. No living creatures, no 24 elders, no angels, no sounds or thundering, no pillars of fire, no incense, no sea of crystal-like mingled fire! The only thing filling the scene is the Throne itself, and that's the point.

2. Then I Saw A Great White Throne...And There Was Found No Place For Them. And I Saw The Dead, Small and Great Standing Before God—This is the throne of God’s judgment, a judgment of hell. This isn’t the judgement seat that Christians will stand before (**Rom. 14:10; 2nd Cor. 5:10**). This is the judgement seat that the unrighteous throughout world history will stand before.
 - a. What terrible words that there is no place found for this group of billions (*I’d assume*). Standing before the glory of the uncreated, **Genesis 1** God, and there’s no place found for you.
 3. And Books Were Opened—Not a book, or a few books, but books. The idea is that there are as many books as there are people.
 4. And The Dead Were Judged According To Their Works—God is going to open up their web-browser, their debit card statement, the phone history, the most used Apps, sites visited, the lifelong duration of your heart motives, their impulses, and these will tell a story of what they did with their affections, and it’s by this, they will be judged.
 - a. This is a court room, and God’s the judge. But they will be standing without any jury, without a defense lawyer, without a case, without evidence to prove their innocence, without witnesses. It will be God and them and the gavel will fall.
 - b. **Galatians 6:7-8**—*God will not be mocked. A person will have whatever they have sown!*
- B. Revelation 20:13-15** “The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”
1. The word hades in the Bible translated from hell, it’s the intermediate state of the dead without Christ. The unrighteous dead throughout world history have been resurrected and are now standing before Christ to be sentenced.
 2. This is the second death, not a death of the physical body, but a death of the soul, eternally.
 3. And upon being sentenced away from Christ, you don’t just disappear, or get annihilated, you go to suffer, eternally.
 4. Previously it was those who worshipped the beast or took his image that were killed (**Rev. 14:9; 19:20**), but now it’s simply those that aren’t found in the book of life. This is a phrase to include anyone and everyone that’s outside of Christ, whether they worshipped the beast or not.