

V. Timeless Truth for Timely Topics Truth in Biblical Perspective

What Does the Bible Say?

“The Last Things—From Daniel’s Seventy Weeks to John’s Millennium, Part 2”

Daniel 9; Revelation 20

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I will be referring to a lot of passages in this study. In this study we are taking a look at three very difficult texts from the Bible – Daniel 9, Revelation 20 and Matthew 24. This is like one sermon broken up into five studies. I have some recommendations of some books if you would like further study on the book of Revelation. One is called More Than Conquerors by William Hendriksen in which it would 101. Then 201 would be Dennis Johnson’s book The Triumph of the Lamb. The next one I would call 401 to 701 for it is rich and not necessarily an easy read and this is called Revelation on the book of Revelation by Dr. G.K. Beale. Most today would probably tell you that his book is the standard and he is coming out with a layman’s version so you may want to get that one. Another one I found years ago which is a Puritan treasure, is a commentary on the book of Revelation by James Durham. It is written in puritan-ese which is a whole other language you have to work your way through but it does bear some semblance English and American-ese. This one may be hard to find in print though.

Some of the views I’ll be referring to like pre-millennial, a-millennial, post-millennial and modern dispensational are intermural discussions. Some have taken these positions and gone off into liberalism but it’s not that one is faithful to God’s Word and the other three are aberrations. No these are positions that Bible believing Christians have held to throughout the ages. The newer one, dispensationalism, didn’t come on the scene until about 200 years ago through a lawyer named Darby and then popularized by a Bible expositor by the name of C.I. Scofield and then further popularized by the Scofield Bible. The rest of these views have pretty much been around since the ascension of Jesus and have come up in various ways and times with some being in the ascendancy over others. In my thirty plus years of ministry I have gone through all of them and the view I lean toward will be pretty obvious as we get into this study and go through the Revelation 20 text.

I did not give all the possible interpretations of Daniel’s seventy weeks but I am going to give to you the two major ones that most of you have heard in your life. The first one is the dispensational view and it came into prominence about 200 years ago through Darby who reinterpreted Daniel in ways it had not been interpreted before. The seventy times seven are the 490 years. 483 years take place from the decree to return and rebuild the city which was given by Artaxerxes. The first 49 years were completed in the time of Nehemiah by 409 BC. The next 62 weeks which cover 434 years went all the way up to the anointing of the Holy One and the baptism of Jesus. The clock of the seventy weeks stops there and there was a gap that wasn’t seen until you get to the New Testament. That gap is called the church age. Then the 70th week comes with the rapture of the church that occurs at the beginning of that week which starts the great tribulation. The second coming of Christ comes at the end of that tribulation with the setting up of a 1,000 year millennial Kingdom and thus this is called the dispensational pre-millennial view out of the seventy weeks which says there is a gap between the 69th week and the

70th week called the great tribulation. Then comes a rebellion of Armageddon at the end of that thousand years and then Jesus comes back again. So that is the dispensational view of Daniel 9:24-27.

Next we have the historical view which has been predominate through the years. That is there is no gap warranted in the text. It is a 483 year period that goes from the first seven of the sevens that starts with Artaxerxes in 409 BC with the rebuilding of the temple under Nehemiah. Then comes the next 434 years with the anointing of the Holy One and baptism of Jesus is in place. That leads to the last week, the last seven days which begin with the ministry of Christ and in the middle of it He is cut off as He goes to the cross, making the firm covenant at the cross to redeem us from our sins. He accomplishes six purposes to bring to fruition which are one He will finish the transgression as He wins the victory over transgression, two He wins the victory over sins, three He provides the reconciliation for iniquity at the cross, four He brings in an everlasting righteousness through His perfect righteousness, five He seals up vision and prophet as He fulfills and brings to a completion the Old Testament and six He is anointed the Most Holy. These things now have occurred by the time Jesus goes to the cross and then moves into the millennial reign of the Kingdom of God that is spoken of in Revelation 20. Between that is the desecration of the temple, bringing to a conclusion the Kingdom of Israel in 70 AD. At the end of that millennial reign, Christ returns and then sets up the new heavens and the new earth.

That leads to the various millennial views that flows from Revelation 20. So let's look at this text and we'll start with the dispensational view to match up the seventy weeks. There is the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus in 33 AD. 66 to 70 AD is the destruction of the temple and the time of distress that comes upon Jerusalem. This view now says there is the church age, the time of the Gentiles which will go until the rapture of the church which will take place in front of Daniel's 70th week. It is not a full second coming but a secret second coming where the church is raptured out. Then comes the 70th week which is known as the great tribulation and that is brought to a conclusion by the second coming of Christ in which He sets up a millennial Kingdom by restoring the kingdom of Israel for a 1000 year reign with Christ upon the earth. That then ends with the final rebellion of Armageddon, the second coming of Christ and the judgment which lead to the new heavens and the new earth. That is the dispensational view.

The next one is the historic pre-millennial view. This view has no gap in the 70 weeks. They come to fulfillment in Christ and then Christ is bringing to an end the kingdom of Israel by the destruction of the temple and the temple mount in the city of Jerusalem. Then comes the Gospel ministry or the Great Commission fulfillment that takes place until a great tribulation occurs with no rapture but then after that tribulation comes the second coming of Christ. He sets up a 1000 year millennial reign and then that concludes with a battle of Armageddon, a final rebellion, a final judgment and the enthronement of Christ for the new heavens and the new earth.

Both of these positions believe the one thousand years are an actual 1000 years with 365 days in each year. The notion of pre-millennial is the notion of when Christ comes. In the dispensational view He comes two and a half times and the half time is to rapture out the church and then He comes back at the end of the tribulation to set up the thousand years and then He comes again at the end of that 1000 years in that rebellion.

In the historical pre-millennial view there are two second comings. There is the coming of Christ where He sets up the millennial Kingdom and then the coming of Christ at the conclusion of it to bring to an end the rebellion of Armageddon and set up the new heavens and the new earth.

I want to follow this up with the historical post-millennial view. Just as the pre-millennial where Christ comes prior to the thousand year reign, the notion of the post-millennial is that Christ comes after the one thousand year reign. The post-millennial views have many nuances and different dynamics but basically their position is that the seventy weeks are fulfilled in Christ. Then comes the destruction of the temple and the time of distress. The tribulation that falls upon the kingdom of Israel comes to a conclusion in 70 AD. Then the Gospel ministry begins to go forward with the Great Commission fulfillment and at some point in time there is a tipping point where the victory of the Gospel and the spread of the Kingdom of God to the kingdoms of this world, is of such power that we enter into as it were a Gospel golden age for a thousand years. Many people thought that was going to occur in 1900 and interestingly more people were killed in wars in the 1900s than in all of history combined prior to that. We missed that one, didn't we? This isn't a time of perfection but the predominance of the Gospel will promote peace, righteousness, reconciliation and conversions and then that will take place in the thousand years.

Many of the forefathers of this country were post-millennialists. They actually believed they were coming to set in place a country that would be a key point in that post-millennial reign. That's why they would use language like 'a city set on a hill.' Many of the puritans were post-millennialists. That then ends with a final rebellion and then Christ comes with the final judgment and the enthronement and sets up the new heavens and the new earth.

Finally there is the historic a-millennial view. This doesn't mean they don't believe in the millennium but it just means they don't believe in any of the others you just heard and they don't believe the thousand years is literal. The a-millennial believe the thousand year, like all the other numbers in the book of Revelation, is not a literal, physical thousand years, but a symbolic term that describes a complete era of the Kingdom of God from the Advent of Christ to the second Advent of Christ. The 70th week of Daniel occurs when Christ is cut off and then comes the end of the kingdom of Israel in 70 AD. Then the King of Israel, Christ, is also now the King of Kings and He initiates the millennial Gospel reign of His Kingdom as He rules and reigns from heaven with the weapons of the Spirit, spreading the work of the Gospel throughout all the world. The thousand years is actually a period of time that is complete. It's the ten that means complete times ten, times ten so ten to the third power is the thousand years and that means simply a complete time. The Alpha and Omega knows the beginning when He sends the Son and the end when He brings it to consummation.

So at the ascension of Jesus the millennial kingdom is inaugurated and it goes from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria and to the utter most parts of the world. When all the kingdoms of this world have been reached with the Gospel and all the elect have been brought from the kingdoms of this world then Christ comes again at that point. Before that happens, the end of this millennial reign there will be a loosening of Satan for a little while and during that time he'll move among the nations and bring an all out assault upon the church to try and bring it to extinction. That will come with the great cataclysmic

event that is described by the plains of Megiddo which are the crossroads of the world. Many battles have taken place there. This is the language of Ezekiel 37 and 38 where the Gog and Magog are used and it will be ultimately and finally fulfilled when Christ shall come with power and glory from the heavens. He will bring of the kingdoms of this world to an end and they shall become the Kingdom of God as He wins the victory and brings the final judgment at that time. This comes from Revelation 20 which is where I want to look now.

I want to try and give you the foundation of this a-millennial perspective which is where I have arrived in my life just from consistent study of the Word of God. This is not a discussion between unbelievers and believers but it is an intermural discussion. These are believers trying to deal with difficult apocalyptic literature – Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Revelation. This literature is very difficult to read because it's panoramic, large and not detailed. It gives pictures in this language from 2000 years ago that we have a hard time grasping now. We either under interpret it or over interpret it but we do try to deal with it.

Revelation 20 can be divided into four sections. I want to start with the first section. Revelation 20 does a recapitulation of what has happened throughout all the ages and this is the way it is described for us. This is the text that gives us the thousand years which is where the Latin term anglo-sized millennium is drawn. Revelation 20:1-3 says *[1] 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.*

Here is a mediating angel. We don't know who he is. It could be Michael or Gabriel. Back in Revelation 12 these same events are covered and it is Michael the arch angel who is bringing the information. It could be Gabriel because he was the one who gave the seventy weeks and he was also the one who announced the 70th week when he announced the birth of Christ to Mary and Joseph. This angel has been empowered by the finished work of Christ to bring the implications of what Christ has done and the binding of Satan. The bottomless pit is not hell or the lake of fire. This is a realm that Satan is being consigned to. The ancient serpent is a reference for Satan from the book of Genesis and there he deceives Eve and Adam. Note that this binding has something to do with deception and it's a very specific binding. This can't be done by the angel for it is done by One who has secured the victory and has more power. The angel as a mediator is applying. There are four names here for Satan. So this angel acting on behalf of the victory of Christ now binds Satan and then at the end of the thousand years he will loosen Satan.

When Jesus spent time with His Disciples and asked them 'who do people say that I am?' And they answered 'you're the Christ, the Son of the Living God' He tells Peter 'Upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' In other words Christ is securing your victory and hell or Satan cannot stop you and what you bind on earth is bound in heaven and what you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Why is it that the church has the keys to the Kingdom to bind and loose upon the earth and what we bind and loose is bound and loosed in heaven? It is because from

heaven, Christ's victory binds Satan until for His own purposes He loosens him again. Because he is bound and He is within us now we can resist the evil one and he must flee from us. Satan is limited in terms of what he can do among the nations. It doesn't mean he is passive or inactive so something has changed.

Up until the victory of Christ our Lord was working in the nation of Israel with little forays out to a family or to an individual but in one nation. Now when the purposes of that nation have come to fulfillment in which the Seed (Christ) has come through which the promise to Abraham was that all the nations would be blessed. Now because of that occurring Satan has had free movement to deceive the nations and can no longer deceive the nations. In other words he is bound from stopping the saving purposes of King Jesus to send the Gospel to all the nations. That is pictured for you when Jesus gives the Great Commission. All authority has been given to me on heaven and earth.

When did this binding take place? It was when Christ arrived that it began and it was secured at the cross. When He sent the seventy out they came back and said 'even the demons are subject to us' and Jesus said 'I saw Satan falling like lightning from the sky.' He tells His Disciples that He had bound the strong man so go and plunder his house. He no longer rules and reigns among the nations. He cannot deceive the kingdoms of this world to the point that the Gospel cannot come and the spreading of the Kingdom of God to go to the nations. He cannot bring to an end the church. Now individual churches and denominations may come to an end but Christ's church will prevail and the gates of hell will not prevail against it because Satan and the power of his kingdom has been curtailed with the binding work of Christ who holds him back. Now Christ tells us to go and do not fear him for he has been bound so go and plunder his house. Here is a very specific binding.

It's not that he can't be active or won't be active but there is a very specific binding and it is very specific with both the name that is emphasized, the serpent and the statement 'he cannot deceive the nations any longer.' The Gospel does not go unopposed but it cannot be stopped from achieving its purposes because Christ has won the victory over Satan and his power over the kingdoms of this world has now been curtailed. Now Christ's church will now move but that is only for a while. In God's purposes Satan is God's Satan. Not only has Christ won the victory so that Satan is bound but no longer can he accuse the brethren. No longer can he bring condemnation. No longer can he deceive the nations. No longer does he rule with the fear of death because death has been defeated. Now the Gospel goes forth with power but God's purposes will be to loosen him for a while at the end.

What does that loosening mean? The final thing that God will do is that He will loosen Satan who then will begin to deceive the nations again. He will bring the nations to bear against the Kingdom of God by trying to bring an end to the church of Jesus Christ. Then comes a cataclysmic event as all are gathered against God's Kingdom and His church. Our Lord then will bring to consummation what He inaugurated at the cross and the resurrection. It is then that He has gathered them together for that final judgment and the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of Jesus Christ. So in this first part of Revelation 20 we have seen this moving of the Gospel as Christ is reigning from heaven. Let's continue now in Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:4-6 says [4] *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.

Who are we talking about here? We are talking about believers, the saints. Now that Christ has won this victory, those who died the martyr's death and endured have a throne. Back then when you met someone you were to say 'Caesar is lord' and if you did you'd get a mark so that you could do business. If you didn't then you were liable to be put to death because you had stood against the god of the state and the deity of Caesar. That is exactly what is happening when this is written in 105 AD. This is happening as the persecution of Rome is increasing. They know exactly what John is writing about on the Isle of Patmos. So John begins to describe those who are on the throne, who died for the testimony of Christ and endured. It is not their endurance that saves them but it was their endurance that evidenced their salvation. So when they die they are with the Lord and they are ruling and reigning with Him. They sit on the thrones around the Throne and are joint rulers with Him. That is where all who in this Kingdom who are faithful in Christ die, they go to be with Him.

There are many passages I could use to show you this but I'll just show you one from II Timothy 2. II Timothy 2:10-12a says [10] *Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. [11] The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; [12a] if we endure, we will also reign with him.* This is the first resurrection. This is not the resurrection of their bodies but of their souls. Their bodies are still in the grave. They are resurrected spiritually to be with the Lord and we call this the intermediate state. What are they doing there? They are ruling, reigning and judging with the Lord.

So John in Revelation is picking up on Paul's theme that those faithful in Christ with their faithfulness being evidence through their relationship with the Lord and that when they die they have gone through the first death. The encounter the first resurrection which is coming to life in the presence of the Lord – being absent from the body is being present with the Lord. They are ruling and reigning with Him throughout this millennial kingdom until He comes again. When He comes again then will come the resurrection of the body. When that resurrection takes place there are those who have died not in the Lord but in their sin and they will be brought to life to die the second death but these will not face the second death. As one person said 'you are either born once and die twice or you're born twice and die once.' Those who are in Christ will encounter a first resurrection of being brought into the presence of the Lord in that intermediate state. When Christ comes again death has no power over them and they face another resurrection which is their bodies being united to them and now prepared to be like the Lord in His glorified body with the new heavens and a new earth.

John has gone from the heaven to the earth, the binding of Satan and the loosening of Satan on the earth at a later time. Also those who died in Christ are with Him blessed and holy and they shared in the first resurrection for there will be no second

death for them. They will reign with Christ for this thousand years and then when that second resurrection comes they will reign with Him in the new heavens and the new earth. Now what happens? Let's look back at Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:7-10 says [7] *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.*

The beloved city referred to in this passage is not Jerusalem. Revelation 21:1-2 [1] *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* The new city of Jerusalem is not the old city destroyed in 70 AD, for it is the church of Jesus Christ which is also called the bride of Christ. So what will happen in this last cataclysmic event? The kingdoms of this world will come against the Kingdom of God and its embassy the church of Jesus Christ. It will be surrounded as in the ultimate fulfillment from the Gog and Magog prophecy from Ezekiel 37 and 38. They will try to extinguish the church of Jesus Christ.

What does that final victory lead us to? Here is the fourth section in Revelation 20 and notice how they are chronological as each section starts 'then I saw... and when...' Now we have this great rebellion. Revelation 20:11-15 says [11] *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. [14] 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 telling you that when the Kingdom of God has finished its work, Satan has been loosened, we come to that great cataclysmic event where Christ comes in His final judgment and His church, instead of being extinguished prevails because of His intervention, He then takes all into the throne of judgment before God. There is only one judgment and here is the judgment that takes place. All the dead come to life to stand before the Lord and there is just one question – where is your name written? If your name is in the books then you will stand accountable for the deeds you have done and the wages of sin is death and all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Where do you want your name written? I want to be in the book of Life. The way you get into the book of Life is that the ink is the blood of Jesus that paid for your sins. He gives you a new name and writes it down in glory. On that day we stand because we are in the book of Life. That is just the simple reading through the text which is consistent throughout the text.

I am out of time and I still have ten things to tell you about the text. In the next study I'll cover the ten things I want to tell you about this text. I'm going to ask you not to use the term a-millennial on the basis of the Biblical nature I have just shared with you. I like the term my professor used. It is the inaugurated millennium. It was inaugurated in the first Advent and it will be consummated in the second Advent. In the next study I'll tell you about the ten things Revelation 20 tells you about the inaugurated millennium and the Kingdom of God that has been placed and spreading from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and the utter most parts of the world. It will be here spreading and Jesus won't come back until all the kingdoms have heard and all of the elect have been drawn from every tribe and nation to Himself. Then there will be that loosening and there will be a great tribulation such as would be almost insurmountable to understand. The only thing that may be a close description is what Josephus wrote of what happened from 66 to 70 AD in Jerusalem.

There are four kingdoms in the Bible. There is the Kingdom of God, the kingdom of Satan, kingdoms of this world and there is the kingdom of Israel. God established the nation of Israel as a theocracy and they said they didn't want that. They wanted a king like the other nations. So God gave them a kingdom through which He gave a king and from that king He would bring a Messiah to fulfill the Seed that would bless all the nations. So that King of Israel came and He was rejected. He told them in a generation that this kingdom would be no more and it was no more. Its capital, temple, and sacrifices were called an abomination.

I don't know why God's people are so fascinated with them in this day for Jesus called them an abomination to continue those sacrifices after He had rent the veil with the Sacrifice of all sacrifices, would bring an end to the kingdom of Israel but not until they had the King that had been promised. He is not only the King of Israel but He is the King of Kings. Now His Kingdom is going to the kingdoms of this world and the kingdoms of this world will end. The kingdom of Satan will end and the kingdom of Israel will end and has ended but the Kingdom of our God made up of Jew and Gentile from all over the nations of this world is forever and ever and He shall reign forever. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Thank You Father that we could be together in Your Word and how I love Your Word. I pray You give us faithfulness and diligence to study it. God, I want to thank You that while the kingdom of Israel is through, You're not through with the Jewish people and I look forward to talking about in the next study. Thank You for Romans 9 through 11 that, that Gospel is going to go and pick up all those branches that have fallen off and bring them and graft them in through a Gospel movement. I long to see that, the Kingdom of our God going to the nation of Israel, the nations of this world, and Lord I pray that soon we will hear the trumpet and the King comes back in glory. Father, help us to learn from this text and be faithful, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.