

the
REVELATION
of JESUS CHRIST

Session 24 -The Millennium

Satan bound 1,000 years

(20:1-3) “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut {it} and sealed {it} over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.”

Chapter 20 comes at the immediate heels of the destruction of Babylon, the judgement and removal of the false Christ, the false prophet and the final distribution of God’s wrath on the nations resulting in the death and removal of the unredeemed from the face of the earth. It is important to acknowledge the “chronological” path that Revelation continues to forge. “Then I” (kai eidon) once again shows up and in it’s normal grammatical usage indicates that what is witnessed next followed after what was previously seen.

The beginning of the kingdom can only begin after the source of all the rebellion’s madness is incarcerated. This key component to the Millennium proves that it has not yet been realized. The notion that Satan has been bound in the Abyss already is hard to maintain. The testimony of the New Testament is that Satan is actively planting lying hypocrites in the church (Acts 5:3), schemes against believers (2Cor 2:11; Eph 6:11), deceiving people as an angel of light (2Cor 11:14), attacking the body of Christ (2Cor 12:7; E 4:27), one whom we must resist (James 4:7) and can lead believers astray (1Tim 5:15).

The position of many amillennialists and postmillennialists is that Satan’s power was bound at the cross which renders him powerless to deceive the nations any longer, particularly the Gentiles. But Gentiles, like the nation of Israel are saved by the power of God and the great salvation of multitudes from every tongue, tribe and nation is because of His plan, not because of Satan being bound.

The proper contextual understanding of his binding is important because it is connected directly to the return of Christ and the 1,000 years of Christ’s reign on earth. It is also interesting to note that he is imprisoned where the Genesis 6 angels are being held for future judgement which probably has to do with the actions that he will engage in to bring about “his seed”. His binding will be very important for the Millennial reign for the sake of justice. The Word of God claims that mankind under sins curse is deceitful and desperately wicked and without excuse. The final rebellion of the nations after 1,000 years of the influence of Satan, powers and principalities being bound up will demonstrate this verdict of sinful man given by God’s Word.

Finally the fact that the millennium is mentioned again in connection with his release is the second time out of six that God makes it clear that 1,000 years will be the duration of the kingdom on earth.

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(20:4) **“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”**

John makes a distinction here between two groups of authorities. Who are the “they” that have thrones and judgement which Christ gave to them? There are several places in scripture where promises to rule with the Lord are given and can be broken down into 4 main groups.

- 1) The Saints of the Old Testament or of Israel. (Dan7:27; 12:2)
- 2) The Apostles over the 12 tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28)
- 3) The rest of the body of Christ (1Cor 6:2; 2Tim 2:12; Rev 2:26; 3:21; 5:10)
- 4) The surviving saints, both Jew and Gentile from the tribulation

Then John says “And” or “in addition to” to describe the saints who specifically surrendered their lives in martyrdom as a result of their refusal to worship the beast, his image or his mark. The fact that they “came to life” shows that these are they who were before the throne of God in the 5th seal that were crying out for God to avenge their blood and His name (Rev 6:9-11). They are also mentioned in 7:9-17. Once again John states that the reign of these saints with Christ will be for 1,000 years.

(20:5-6) **“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”**

The tally is now 5 times that 1,000 is used to describe the duration of Christ’s reign on this earth. The “first resurrection” is now used to divide all of the redeemed of history from all of the unredeemed of history who are of the “second death”. Even though the specific role of redeemed Israel can be defined pretty thoroughly from the Old Testament, John describes the entire first resurrection as priests of God and Christ that will also reign with Him during the 1,000 year earthly phase of His eternal kingdom. So what does this 1,000 years look like?

7 total judgements

We can’t study the subject of the kingdom / eschatology without becoming acquainted with the reality that our Holy God will judge both the righteous and the unrighteous as part of their resurrection and also Satan and fallen angels. There can be determined 7 specific judgements from scripture:

- 1) **The transformation and judgement of the church** (Rom 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:11- 16;4:1-5; 9:24 27; 2Cor 5:10-11; 2Tim 4:8). This will be the final “purification” of the body of Christ as the Lord Himself will cause our works to pass through fire. The wood, hay and stubble that is our works not associated with the glory of Christ will be consumed. The gold, silver and precious stones will be the treasure that comes from our faithful investment into the cause of Christ. This judgement will be to determine our reward which will also result in our assignments in the kingdom.

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- 2) **The resurrection and judgement of the Tribulation Saints** - those we previously looked at who did not take the mark of the beast in worship of him and his image and were therefore martyred.
- 3) **The resurrection and judgement of Old Testament Saints** - Daniel was given some of the most detailed information concerning Israel and the nations in relation to history and the future. The most crucial part of these insights were how history and the nations would be used by God to bring about the final salvation of God's nation. Daniel 12 gives the time framework of this event:

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."
Dan 12:1-3 (NASB)

Daniel, like John, contrasts those who are resurrected to glory vs. those who are resurrected to everlasting shame. Like John Daniel is merely contrasting the quality of the two groups and by doing so is in no way saying that they happen at the same time.

- 4) **The judgement of the living Gentiles** - Over and over again the Old Testament prophets link this judgement to the end result of the nations gathering against Israel and her King just prior to the kingdom age (Isa 63:1-6; Joel 3:1-2, 12; Zeph 3:8 and Zech 14:1-19; etc.). This is also the same event described in Matthew 24:37-42 and 25: 31-46, the primary text on the matter:

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"
Matt 25:31-46 (NASB)

This event will be associated with the "Son of Man coming in His glory" and will take place on earth, unlike the judgement seat of Christ for the church which will take place in heaven. The Jewish audience would be familiar with the use of the term "the nations" as it is frequently used to speak of the Gentiles. It is a term used to distinguish the uniqueness of God's people Israel from the rest of the peoples of the earth. Clearly the sheep are believers who "hear the voice of the shepherd and are brought out of the Gentile nations.

The term nations is also important in that it speaks specifically to the physically living as the bible never uses the term "nations" to describe people in the context of having physically died. The dead are always referred to within the context of facing individual judgement and as Rev 20:12-15 puts it, they are "the dead". So "nations" can only be taken to mean those Gentiles that are still living at the return of Christ, and the believers from the various Gentile nations will continue into the Millennium and exist in subordination to Christ's rule through Israel. This detail is another reason

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why we can say that this is not “the church” because within the context of the church there is no distinction of “nations” from the Jews. There is simply the body (Rm 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12; Eph 4:12; 5:30; Col 3:15; etc), bride (Eph 5:31; Rev 19:7) or one new man (Eph 2:15). Within the context of the tribulation the bible clearly distinguishes believing Jews and Gentiles as it does within the context of the Millennium.

- 5) **The judgement of living Jews** - Even though the nation of Israel has had a history of temporal judgements carried out by God because of their violation of His ordinances, there remains a future devastating judgement that will destroy two thirds of the Jews (Zech 13:8-9). This, of course is the great tribulation. The tribulation is meant to purge Israel of the rebellious and it will be only the believing remnant who will enter the kingdom given to Israel:

"As I live, " declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, " declares the Lord GOD. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD." Ezek 20:33-38 (NASB)

As we have looked at already, part of their judgement will be to be deceived by and enter into a false covenant with the one who comes in his own name, but he and the nations will turn on the Jews and seek to destroy them. Only the faithful remnant will be supernaturally protected in the wilderness and then delivered by their returning King to enter into the kingdom. Unlike Daniel who speaks of resurrection, this passage makes clear reference to living, redeemed Jews and will be a fulfillment of the New Covenant.

- 6) **The binding of Satan and his later judgement**- As previously discussed, he will be shut up in the Abyss for the duration of the 1,000 year reign of Christ. He will at the very end be released to lead the final rebellion of this created order against Christ and His people. This will result with Satan joining the beast and the false prophet in the lake of fire.
- 7) **The Great White Throne judgement** - This will take place after the current created order is taken out of existence and will be for the final placement of those of the “second death” into eternal destruction. This will be further discussed in verses 11-15.