

**Chapter summary** – (Again), *Chapters 19 and 20 of Revelation blend together these events which bring history to an appropriate conclusion. These events vindicate the saints in history. They put an end to the struggle between good and evil in history. They show the triumph of the church glorious in history. They return Christ to the theater of history where He will manifest Himself, the Lord of history. In the unfolding drama of redemption's plan we have now come to the grand finale of history.*<sup>1</sup>

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IV. the vision of the Final Days, (Chs. 6-22)

### F. THE EVENTS FOLLOWING THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON - (19:1-22:5)

#### 5. The defeat of Satan, (20:1-3) - "*THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT!*"

#### INTERPRETATION:

- <sup>1</sup> **Then** (following the dreadful carnage), **I saw an angel coming down from heaven** (God's abode), **having the key** (the means to access), **to the bottomless pit** (Hades), **and a great chain in his hand.**
- <sup>2</sup> **He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan** (the mastermind behind the Roman Prince and the Antichrist in his attempt to defeat Christ in taking back dominion of the earth), **and bound him** (with the chain), **for a thousand years** (for the duration of the millennial reign of Christ);
- <sup>3</sup> **and he cast him** (the devil), **into the bottomless pit, and shut him up** (incarcerated him), **and set a seal** (of God), **on him, so** (guaranteeing), **that he should deceive the nations** (with his evil schemes), **no more till the thousand years** (of Christ's reign upon the earth), **were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while**, (a brief time).

#### F APPLICATION:

- Satan set his seal on Christ in the garden, but it could not restrict Christ from accomplishing the will of the Father who sent Him. The devil will tell you that he has you sealed up in your sin; that you can't brake his chains. Don't believe him. Christ has the power to brake the chains you allow the devil to put you in, no matter what the circumstance is.
- The Abyss was the place that the demons feared most to go. It was the full penalty for their sinfulness. The demons were willing to live with most of the consequences of their sin, but the Abyss they dreaded. They thrived upon the hope of being able to ultimately avoid the full consequences by over throwing Christ, but the inevitable eventually happened. We are much like the demons when we sin.

#### COMMENTARY:

<sup>1</sup> Benson, *Revelation: The Grand Finale of History*, pp. 82

We are willing to live with many of the effects of our sin, but our hope is to escape the most severe consequences. If we persist in our sin though, the inevitable will come, and the thing we feared the most will come to pass.

- Sin caused the devil to be cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:9), and later caused him to be cast out of the earth as well. For the believer, sin will cast us out of the joy of our salvation (Psa. 51:12), and could eventually lead to illness or even premature death, (1 Cor. 11:29, 30). For the unbeliever, it ends up the same for them as it did for the devil himself. Because of their rejection of Christ they are cast into the Abyss, (John 3:16-18; Mat. 25:41).
- Some believe that this binding of Satan took place right after Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. They say that at this time Christ not only defeated Satan, but had him put in chains and cast into the Abyss. But this can't be true if 1 Peter 5:8 is, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Ephesians 6:10-20 is pretty clear about this matter as well. Someone has said that, "If Satan is bound today, it must be with a terribly long chain!"

#### 6. The millennial Kingdom, (20:4-6)

##### INTERPRETATION:

<sup>4</sup> **And** (after the capture and incarceration of the devil, Roman Prince, and Antichrist), **I saw thrones** (seats of authority), **and they** (possibly the Apostles and some of the saints [Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; and 1 Cor. 6:2]), **sat on them, and** (the task of), **judgment** (sentencing), **was committed to them. Then** (as the judges were seated), **I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness** (godly testimony), **to Jesus and for the word of God**, (which would be the faithful tribulation saints [Rev. 6:9; 18:24; 19:2]), **who had not worshiped the beast** (the Roman Prince), **or his image** (set up by the Antichrist in the Jewish temple), **and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands**, (either). **And** (as a result), **they lived** (were resurrected), **and reigned with Christ for a thousand years**, (upon the earth).

<sup>5</sup> **But** (in contrast to the saints), **the rest of the dead** (those who rejected Christ and the Word of God, who worshiped the beast, his image and took his mark), **did not live again** (were not resurrected), **until the thousand years were finished. This** (the

<sup>2</sup>Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Logos Library System.

resurrection of the saints), **is the first resurrection**, (or before the last resurrection).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>6</sup> **Blessed** (happy), **and holy** (consecrated, set apart), **is he** (the believer), **who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death**<sup>4</sup> (eternal separation from God), **has no power** (no jurisdiction over him), **but they** (who are of the first resurrection), **shall be priests of God and of Christ** (they shall have open and free access to the God the Father and the Son), **and shall** (as well), **reign with Him** (i.e., exercise political influence as well as spiritual influence in the name of Christ), **a thousand years**, (during the entirety of Christ's earthly reign).

## 7. The final demise of Satan, (20:7-10)

### INTERPRETATION:

#### The Liberation of the Devil

<sup>7</sup> **Now when the thousand years** (of Christ's literal earthly reign), **have expired, Satan** (who was incarcerated in Hades by the angel), **will be released** (set free), **from his prison**

#### The Ambition of the Devil

<sup>8</sup> **and will** (immediately), **go out** (into the earth), **to deceive the nations** (again, as he did during the tribulation), **which are in**

<sup>3</sup> John stated that what he was seeing **is the first resurrection**. Posttribulationists refer to this as proof that the church will not be raptured before the Tribulation and that no resurrection has taken place prior to this point in fulfillment of God's prophetic program. It should be obvious, however, that in no sense could this be the number-one resurrection chronologically because historically Christ was the first to rise from the dead with a transformed, resurrected body. There was also the resurrection "of many" (Matt. 27:52-53) which took place when Christ died. In what sense then can this resurrection in Revelation 20:5 be "first"?

As the context which follows indicates, "the first resurrection" (vv. 5-6) contrasts with the last resurrection (vv. 12-13), which is followed by "the second death" (vv. 6, 14). It is first in the sense of *before*. All the righteous, regardless of when they are raised, take part in the resurrection which is first or before the final resurrection (of the wicked dead) at the end of the Millennium. This supports the conclusion that the resurrection of the righteous is by stages. Christ was "the Firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:23), which was preceded by the token resurrection of a number of saints (Matt. 27:52-53). Then will occur the Rapture of the church, which will include the resurrection of dead church saints and the translation of living church saints (1 Thes. 4:13-18). The resurrection of the two witnesses will occur in the Great Tribulation (Rev. 11:3, 11). Then the resurrection of the martyred dead of the Great Tribulation will occur soon after Christ returns to earth (20:4-5). To these may be added the resurrection of Old Testament saints which apparently will also occur at this time, though it is not mentioned in this text (cf. Isa. 26:19-21; Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:2-3). Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System.

<sup>4</sup> The **first death** occurs when a believer dies here upon the earth, is separated from his physical body, and is present with the Lord Jesus. The **second death** is experienced by an unbeliever after his first death. The unbeliever is not only separated from his body, but he is also separated from God and His heavenly abode because of dying in his sin. Thus the unbeliever cannot enter heaven, but must be cast into hell and suffer eternal judgment, (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:10-11; 20:11-15).

**the four corners of the earth** (i.e., from every hemisphere like), **Gog and Magog** (all over again only worldwide this time!),<sup>5</sup> **to gather them together to battle** (against Christ and His government), **whose number is as the sand of the sea**. (Satan's army was so large it couldn't be numbered.)

<sup>9</sup> **They went up on** (or across), **the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp** (the headquarters, or company), **of the saints and the beloved city**, (Jerusalem). **And** (at that time), **fire came down** (quickly and supernaturally), **from God out of heaven and devoured them**, (instantaneously and completely).

### The Re-incarceration of the Devil

<sup>10</sup> (and), **The devil, who deceived them** (again with his evil tyranny and idolatry), **was cast into the** (newly created), **lake of fire and brimstone** (shipwrecked in a sea of burning sulfur), **where the beast** (the Roman Prince), **and the false prophet** (the Jewish Antichrist), **are. And they will be tormented day and night** (nonstop), **forever and ever**, (none of them will ever be released again).

### F APPLICATION:

- Government will never save a nation, even with perfect officials. It will set a precedence, but that is all. Neither will a perfect environment ever save a single human heart. Man is utterly depraved and if God does not draw him to Himself, it doesn't matter what the government or the environment is; He's not going to place saving faith in Christ. Someone has well said that you can take the person out of the slums, but you can't take the slums out of the person.
- Another thing we can notice here is that death is not permanent annihilation, it's permanent relocation. Everyone either goes one place or another. You either go to heaven or to hell. Everyone has a choice to make, but after death the decision can never be changed for all of eternity.

## 8. The Great White Throne Judgment, (20:11-15)

### INTERPRETATION:

#### The Scene at the Judgment

<sup>11</sup> **Then** (after the devil was dealt with), **I saw a great white throne** (white symbolizing the absolute purity and thus high stan-

<sup>5</sup> The question has been raised as to whether this war is the same one discussed in Ezekiel 38-39, where Gog and Magog are also mentioned (Ezek. 38:2). These are two different battles, for in the war of Ezekiel 38-39 the armies come primarily from the north and involve only a few nations of the earth. But the battle in Revelation 20:7-9 will involve all nations, so armies will come from all directions.

Furthermore nothing in the context of Ezekiel 38-39 is similar to the battle in Revelation, as there is no mention of Satan or of millennial conditions. In Revelation 20:7 the context clearly places the battle at the end of the Millennium, whereas the Ezekiel battle takes place in connection with end-time events. (Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System)

dards of this court),<sup>6</sup> **and Him who sat on it** (probably Christ as all judgment was committed to Him by the Father [cf., Jn. 5:22]), **from whose face** (or regal presence), **the earth and the heaven fled away**, (were destroyed with fire [cp., Matt. 24:35; Mk. 13:31; Lu. 16:17; 21:33; 2 Pet. 3:10]). **And there was found no place for them**, (they were gone, never to return again as they once were—thus the Great White Throne Judgment probably takes place somewhere in space).

### The Souls Who Are to Be Judged

<sup>12</sup> **And** (after the destruction of the earth and heaven, while in the courthouse), **I saw the dead** (those who died without saving faith in Jesus Christ, those not raised in the first resurrection, those who are not blessed or happy), **small and great** (of every stature of life), **standing before God** (their Creator), **and books** (which contained a complete record of the unbeliever's life), **were opened**, (examined). **And** (in addition to them), **another book was opened, which is the Book of Life**, (which only contains the names of believers—not the record of their life, as all are clothed in the righteousness of one Man, Jesus Christ [cf., Phil. 3:9; Jn. 3:18; 5:24]).

### The Standard By Which Unbelievers Are to Be Judged

**And the dead** (unbelievers who were not clothed in the righteousness of Christ), **were judged according to their works** (deeds [cf., Isa. 64:6]), **by the things** (their records [cf., Ecc. 12:14]), **which were written in the books**.

<sup>13</sup> **The sea gave up the dead who were in** (or committed to), **it, and Death and Hades** (the temporary holding place of all who died without saving faith in Christ), **delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were** (all), **judged** (sentenced), **each one according to his** (own), **works**.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It is not indicated who sits on this throne, but probably it is Christ Himself as in 3:21 (cf. Matt. 19:28; 25:31; John 5:22; 2 Cor. 5:10—though the throne in these references is not necessarily the same throne as in Rev. 20:11). While Christ is now seated on the throne in heaven and will be seated on the Davidic throne on earth in the Millennium (Matt. 25:31), this white throne judgment is a special situation. (Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Logos Library System)

<sup>7</sup> Dr. David Jeremiah, in his book *Escape the Coming Night*, (pp. 217-218), believes there are five books of works that a person is judged by.

First, the *Book of Conscience*. [People] who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them. Romans 2:15  
Second, the *Book of Words* that Jesus explained, "For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:37).

Third, the *Book of Secret Words*. "This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ" (Romans 2:16).

Fourth, there's the *Book of Public Works*. "...he will reward each person according to what he has done" (Matthew 16:27).

Finally, the last one is the *Book of Life*. "If anyone's name was not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

### The Conclusion of the Judgment

- <sup>14</sup> **Then Death and Hades were cast into the** (newly created and eternal), **lake of fire**, (as death would never claim another victim and Hades would never incarcerate another resident). **This is the second death**, (being separated from God and heaven and cast into eternal torment).
- <sup>15</sup> **And** (without exception), **anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast** (for eternity), **into the lake of fire**, (burning sulfur).

#### F APPLICATION:

- For those who may struggle with anyone being judged with such severity or even at all, think hard on the following comments.
  - ◆ The severity of the judgment is equivalent to the crime; the rejection of Jesus Christ, God's only Son who died a horrible death for the sin of the world.
  - ◆ The need for the judgment is mandated by the holiness of the Judge; Jesus Christ, God the Son.
  - ◆ The criteria of the judgment is according to absolute truth; God's Word. The truth sets some free while it incarcerates others.
  - ◆ The legitimacy of the judgment is because of ownership; God is the Creator of all life.
- The Great White Throne Judgment will not be like any courtroom experience anyone has ever had. There will be a Judge, but no jury; a Prosecutor, but no defender; a sentence, but no appeal. This is the final judgment of the world.<sup>8</sup> This judgment is for all eternity. Don't die without placing saving faith in Jesus Christ or you will regret it for all of eternity.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*, p. 217