

The Church of the Servant King

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PROPHECY SERIES

(Proph21Y_Revelation_chp 20B_Satan Defeated and the GWTJ)

Chapter 20

Satanic Rebellion is Crushed (20:7-10)

7 And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Scripture does not provide us with a specific answer to the question of why God will confine Satan for 1000 years – only to release him at the end of the 1000 years at which time he will lead a rebellion. However, since we have surmised from Scripture that human history provides evidentiary matter in the appeal trial of Satan, it is reasonable to assume that there is a connection between the unique nature of the Millennial period of human history and the evidence it provides in that appeal trial.¹ (The logic of this theory extends to every other dispensation of history as well).

In some way, the restored environment of the Millennial Age and the temporary confinement of Satan for that period demonstrates something within the context of that appeal trial. For one, the absolute incorrigibility of Satan is manifest. Another thing that is demonstrated is the powerful influence of man's sinful nature in spite of the restored environment – an influence so strong that after 1000 years, some men will align themselves with the pseudo-Christ (Satan) in lieu of the real Christ.

Imagine being born during the early years of the Messiah Jesus' reign on this earth. The world is full of Gentile nations and there is one nation, Israel, from which the Messiah rules. The world is at peace and there is no war – for your entire lifetime, a lifetime that may span the length of the Millennium since life-spans will be prolonged. You are provided an opportunity to trust in Christ based upon the gospel as it will then be proclaimed – with the teaching aide of animal sacrifices.

It may be more difficult for you to grasp your need for a Savior since you face no challenges like unemployment, abject poverty, governmental abuses of freedom, tyrannical rulers, world hunger, limitations on the world's natural resources, etc. Resurrected saints from prior ages rule and reign with Jesus during this period.² Evidently, the New Jerusalem is visible

¹ For those who may be unfamiliar with the topic of the Appeal Trial of Satan, I refer you to the "Special" series on our website entitled "*The Appeal Trial of Satan*." Briefly, Scripture contains references to the moral fall of Lucifer (e.g. Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12b-19). When Lucifer fell, he enticed a third of the angelic realm to worship him and follow him in rebellion (Rev 12:4). His sentence was pronounced, but it will not be executed until the end of human history. Thus, there is an implicit correlation between that lapse of time and human history.

² See the previous sessions for an analysis of the passages in support of this statement in addition to our present passage.

to man and the leaders of nations who are believers are allowed entry in order to pay homage to the King of kings (Rev 21 esp. verses 24-27).³ The death of a man at the age of 100 years old will be mourned as if an infant had died (Isa 65:20).

However, man will still possess a sinful nature – a nature that is prone to complacency and a desire for complete independence from God. Man will be in an environment that has parallels to heaven prior to Satan’s moral fall. Mankind born during the Millennium, like Satan, will find it difficult to envision the wreck and ruin that will result from rebellion. Only those who entered the Millennium as believers after having “endured to the end” of the Tribulation will have a tangible frame of reference for the horrors of rebellion against God.

As it is very likely that Satan did not anticipate the full extent of the chaos that he introduced with his moral fall, it is likely that the unbeliever Millennial man will take for granted what he has been provided and he will not anticipate the full extent of his rebellion. This mindset will provide fertile soil for Satan’s deceptive lie when he is loosed from the Abyss at the end of the 1000 years. How tragic will be this revolt! People who have been living in a restored world under the rule of a perfect King, God’s own Son, will finally admit the fact that they actually hate the King and rebel against Him!

The phrase "Gog and Magog" in verse 8 – This phrase evidently refers to the world’s rulers and nations that will be in rebellion against God. Gog, the ruler, and Magog, his land, probably have symbolical significance as well as literal meaning in the same way that the city “Babylon” of Revelation 17-18 did. Gog & Magog signifies the enemies of the Messiah. People will come from all over the world to rebel against Christ (Ezek 38:3-6).

It seems quite clear that the total invasion by Gog described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is not in view here, though part of it may be. The Gog & Magog invasion of the Promised Land described in Ezekiel will apparently be fulfilled in two events. In Revelation 20, we see a worldwide rebellion at the end of the Millennium. The earlier battle of Armageddon (cf. Rev 16:14) will be a similar, but limited fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy. That rebellion of the godless forces from the north will have made such an impression on mankind that after one thousand years, the last rebellion of man inspired by Satan will bear the same label—Gog and Magog.

The revolutionaries will occupy "the broad plain" (cf. Ezek 38:9, 11-12, 15-16; 39:2) and will surround the dwelling place ("camp") of believers including the earthly city of Jerusalem. The “broad plain” probably refers to the Plain of Jezreel in northern Israel (cf. Ezek 11-16). However topographical changes will precede and accompany Christ’s second coming, so the location of this plain may change.

The earthly city of Jerusalem will be Christ’s capital during the Millennium (Jer 3:17; cf. Isa 24:23; Ezek 43:7; Mic 4:7; Zech 14:9-11), the center of the world (Ezek 38:12). The rebellious will be destroyed with fire from heaven (cf. Gen 19:24; Lev 10:2; 2 Ki 1:10, 12; Ezek 38:22; 39:6; Lu 9:54). John describes the ultimate destiny of these mortal rebels in verses 12-15.

Many less literal interpreters understand this passage figuratively. They interpret this passage to be a description of the church’s final victory over her enemies. The “city” is equated

³ We will examine this passage in a future study. The immediate context of the verse seems to place it at the end of the Millennium and at the beginning of the eternal state where there will be a “new heavens and new earth.” If so, this verse has some interesting implications for the eternal state, e.g. the existence of nations and rulers of those nations during the eternal state.

with the New Jerusalem, not the earthly, Millennial Jerusalem.⁴ (See **APPENDIX B** for a brief description of the different views of the Millennium).

God will cast Satan, the deceiver, into the lake of fire that He previously prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). God's sentence of Satan that was pronounced at the time of his rebellion (Isa 14:15; Ezek 28:16b, 17b, 18b-19) will finally be executed.

The fact that the beast and the false prophet who were cast into the Lake of Fire 1000 years earlier are still in the Lake of Fire at the end of the 1000 years demonstrates that this is a place of conscious torment, not annihilation (Rev 19:20). Furthermore it is a place of eternal judgment: "day and night forever and ever." This will be Satan's final abode, and this judgment will constitute the ultimate bruising of his head (cf. Gen 3:15; Jn 12:31).

Metaphors in Scripture for the eternal abode of unbelievers – Any list of metaphors in Scripture for the eternal state of the unbelievers will include the following in addition to the "lake of fire" in our passage. This is not meant to be an exhaustive listing; it is only a representative listing.

- Outer darkness (Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30)
- Wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 25:30)
- Never-dying worm (Mk 9:48 cf. Isa 66:24)
- Unquenchable fire (Mk 9:48)
- Furnace of fire (Matt 13:42, 50)

The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)

11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And 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.

The one sitting on this throne is most likely God the Father (Rev 4:2-3, 9 cf. 5:1, 6-7; 6:16; 7:10, 17 where we see a distinction between God the Father Who sits on the throne and the Lamb or Son of God). It is interesting to observe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son as described in various settings in Scripture:

- Both God the Father and God the Son pictured together (Rev 22:1, 3 cf. Jn 8:16; 10:30)
- Jesus Christ granted authority to judge in association with His Coming and Reign (Jn 5:21, 26-27; Rev 6:16)
- Distinctions between God the Father and God the Son in relation to the heavenly throne or throne room (Dan 7:9-10, 13-14 where God the Father is referred to as the Ancient of Days and God the Son is referred to as "one like the Son of Man").

John saw earth and heaven flee from God's presence (cf. Ps. 114). This represents the end of God's dealings with this earth as we know it. God, through His Son, the Messiah, will deal with the earth differently at the time of His 2nd Advent (cf. 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12). Here, in Revelation 20:11, there is evidently a discarding of the old earth and heaven in preparation for the "new heaven and new earth" (Rev 21:1) of the eternal state.

⁴ An example of one of the proponents of this position is Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 2nd edition (London: MacMillan & Company, Ltd., 1907), 268-69.

The dead before this throne are evidently the unsaved of all ages who now stand resurrected (v. 5; Dan. 12:2). They represent all classes and groups of humanity. (See **APPENDIX A** to these notes for a presentation of the various resurrections in Scripture).

At this judgment at the end of human history, John mentions two distinct sets of records. One is the "books" containing a record of the deeds or works of unbelievers and the other is the "book of life" which contains the names of God's elect.

The "books" contain a record of their deeds (cf. Dan. 7:10; Mal. 3:16). The "book of life" contains the names of God's elect (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27; Ps. 69:28; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3).

In our passage (Rev 20:12-15), at the judgment at the end of human history, God will condemn those whose names are not written in the book of life. Their "deeds" that are recorded in the "books" will include both acts of human good and evil and it is likely that unbelievers will appeal to their acts of good in a futile attempt to appease the absolute righteousness of God. It will be to no avail, since man's relative righteousness has never been sufficient to satisfy God's absolute righteousness.

When are the names of believers recorded in the "book of life?" First, there is the view that God wrote only the names of those who would believe in the "book of life" in eternity past (Rev 13:8; 17:8 cf. Dan 12:1; Lu 10:20; Phil 4:3).

Second, there is the view that the names of all humans are written in the "book of life" in eternity past or at the time of their physical birth and the names of those who die in unbelief are stricken or removed from the book of life (Rev 3:5; 20:15; Psa 69:28).

Third, there is a view that the names of believers are written in the book of life at the point they believe. However, this view is flawed in my opinion since Scripture explicitly indicates that names can be "blotted" from the book of life. This view is contradictory to the Scriptural doctrine of the eternal security of the believer. If true, it would be consistent with the Armenian view of eternal security, i.e. a security conditioned upon the believer's obedience.

There is no major doctrine that hinges upon one's answer to this question. However, there are major doctrines (i.e. predestination and election) with which one's view on this issue need to be reconciled. Personally, views #1 and #2 seem complementary and consistent with my understanding of the doctrines of election and predestination.

"Death and Hades" (v. 14) – "Hades" is the place where the dead reside – believer and unbeliever awaiting their resurrection. In the Old Testament, it is referred to as *Sheol* (Psa 16:10; 86:13). There are evidently two compartments. In Luke 16:19-26, Jesus describes the fate of a rich unbeliever who, while in *Hades* ("in torments in *Hades*") can observe the poor, beggar named Lazarus, who is in Abraham's bosom (a.k.a. paradise).

APPENDIX A – RESURRECTIONS IN SCRIPTURE

There are actually several resurrections that are mentioned explicitly or implicitly in Scripture. The book of Revelation distinguishes between a "first resurrection" of believers at the 2nd Advent of Christ and at the beginning of the 1000 year reign of the Messiah (Rev 20:4-6) and a "second death" experienced by unbelievers in association with the resurrection and judgment at the end of human history (Rev 20:6, 14). We could name this "second death" the "second resurrection."

However, Scripture outside of the book of Revelation also explicitly or implicitly mentions other resurrections. For instance consider the following:

- The resurrection of Jesus – Christ is the first fruits (1 Cor 15:23; Col 1:18).

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor 15:20-28)

13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. (Col 1:13-18)

- Dead in Christ and Living Believers at the Rapture (1 Thess 1:10; 4:13-18).

9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1 Thess 1:10)

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thess 4:13-18)

- Tribulation believers who have died and all Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:13 implies that Old Testament believers must be resurrected prior to the Millennium; Rev. 20:4-5).

12:1 "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. 2 "And 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. 3 "And 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)

- Millennial believers (Rev. 20:12-15 esp. v. 15 which implies the presence of believers cf. Isa. 65:17-20 which indicates that people will die during the Millennium). There is no specific passage that explicitly states when believers of the Millennium who have died will be resurrected; however, it is fairly clear that they will have to receive their resurrection bodies at some point. The two options are: 1) immediately upon death so as to participate in Christ's rule and reign; or 2) at the end of the Millennium. To choose either option is speculative, but one thing is for certain. If they are believers, they will not experience judgment at the great white throne judgment.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. 14 And 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. (Rev 20:12-15)

- The resurrection of all unbelievers at the end of human history and at the beginning of the eternal state (Rev 20:11-15).

11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And 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. (Rev 20:11-15)

APPENDIX B – DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIUM – BRIEF OVERVIEW⁵

There are three major schools of interpretation that deal with millennial prophecies. Amillennialists interpret the Millennium figuratively and believe it does not correspond to any specific era. Some amillennialists teach that the millennium refers to Jesus Christ's rule in the hearts of His people presently living on earth. Other amillennialists teach that it refers to Christ's rule over His people in heaven throughout eternity.

Postmillennialists believe that Christ will return after the Millennium. Some of them believe we should interpret the thousand-year reign of Christ figuratively as referring to the present age in which we live. Others believe it is a literal thousand-year period yet future preceding the return of Christ. Postmillennialism has not been very popular since the first World War. While there has been progress in many areas of life, it seems clear that worldwide peace and the other millennial conditions described by the prophets will never come without divine intervention that will change the course of history.

⁵ There is much more to examine regarding each of these views. However, this brief summary was largely derived from Thomas Constable, "Notes on Revelation," www.soniclight.com. Other sources consulted include Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1983, 1984, 1985), 1206-17.

Postmillennialism takes an optimistic view of the course of human history until the 2nd Coming and tends to emphasize the goodness of man. Amillennialism allows for a recognition of the spiritual depravity of man and its effect upon the future of human history.

Premillennialists understand the revelation in these passages more literally as a description of events that will proceed chronologically in order. We believe the Second Coming will precede a literal earthly millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

Among premillennialists there are two main groups. "Historic premillennialists" believe that God will fulfill His promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; et al.) through the *spiritual* seed of Abraham, namely, believers whom the Old Testament writers called Israel and the New Testament writers called the church. They understand the Gentile-centric church, rather than ethnic Israel, as prominent in the Millennium. They also understand the Rapture and the 2nd Advent to be simultaneous events. Historic premillennialists' understanding of eschatology is consistent with Replacement Theology, the view that God replaced Israel with the Church Age Body of Christ. Under Replacement Theology, the church is now the recipient of all of the promises previously made to Israel.

"Dispensational premillennialists" believe that God will fulfill His promises to Abraham through the *physical* seed of Abraham, namely, the Jewish people whom the writers of both testaments referred to as Israel. Jesus Christ's earthly reign will be the fulfillment of many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the reign of a completely faithful descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:10-16; et al.).

God promised David that one of his descendants would reign over the Israelites forever, that His kingdom would have no end. Most dispensationalists have believed that this reign will begin after Jesus Christ returns to earth at His second coming, and it will continue through the Millennium and on into eternity forever. We believe that since David's kingdom was an earthly kingdom and since David and his successors ruled on the earth, the coming fulfillment of Davidic kingdom promises will take place on the earth.

Progressive dispensationalists, on the other hand, believe that Jesus' rule as David's successor began when He ascended into heaven following His resurrection and that it will move to earth at the second coming and will continue throughout eternity. They view the promised Davidic kingdom as having heavenly (already) and earthly (not yet) stages.

Almost all dispensationalists believe that what is in effect now is some form of God's kingdom program. The difference of opinion is over whether the present form of the kingdom is a stage of the promised Davidic Kingdom.