

## REVELATION 20

### The Thousand Years

This chapter is surrounded by much controversy around the “*thousand years*” in verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. The controversy concerns the 1,000-year period we call the Millennium. There are three dominant views concerning the nature of the Millennium.

Postmillennialism - This view says that the world will get better and better and when the world has reached the proper stage of perfection, Jesus will return and establish His kingdom on earth. Postmillennialism holds that Jesus Christ establishes his kingdom on earth through His redemptive work in the first century and that he equips his church with the gospel, empowers the church by the Spirit, and charges the church with the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) to disciple all nations. Postmillennialism expects that eventually the vast majority of people living will be saved. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history prior to Christ's return in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in all nations. After the world gets better and many people come to Christ, Jesus Christ will return visibly, bodily, and gloriously, at the end of the Millennium to end history with the general resurrection and the final judgment after which the eternal order follows. Postmillennialism was a dominant theological belief among American Protestants who promoted reform movements in the 1850s abolitionism. This was also a very popular view prior to World War II. Nearly anyone can look at this world and all the wickedness and evil and see that the world is getting worse and not better. This is a false view of the Millennium.

Amillennialism – There are several variations of this view. The primary version says that there is no literal millennial kingdom. The kingdom of God is spiritual in nature, and we are already in the kingdom age right now. Many who hold this view believe that Satan is bound right now. The Amillennial view spiritualizes these verses. They believe that the Tribulation has already occurred, and that Jesus has already returned. They believe that Jesus returned in 70 AD and established His kingdom then. Their belief system is far more complex than that, but that is the gist of it. This is also a false view of the Millennium.

Premillennialism - This view holds that humanity will continue to degenerate; the world will go through a literal Tribulation; Jesus will return and defeat the Antichrist and establish a literal kingdom on the earth and reign here for 1,000 years. This is the only view that takes these verses literally. It is my opinion that this is the only true view of the millennium.

Why is there even a need for the millennium? Why not just wind it all up, judge sin and sinners and let the redeemed enter into eternity? The millennium will allow the Lord to accomplish some things, such as: Fulfill His Old Testament promises of a kingdom to Israel. To put Jesus, in all His glory, on public display. To answer the prayer, “Thy Kingdom come.” To fulfill the promise that the saints will reign. To bring about the complete redemption of nature. To give man one final test under the sovereign rule of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is my belief that these verses comprise the fulfillment of many great Old and New Testament promises and prophecies and that these verses describe the final kingdom that will exist in time.

· Peace – All wars will cease. (Isa.2:4; 9:4-7; 32:17-18; 33:5-6; 55:12; 60:18; Eze.28:26; 34:25, 28; Hos.2:18; Micah 4:2-3; Zech.9:10)

- Joy – The King’s subjects will be happy. (Isa.12:3-6; 14:7-8; 25:8-9; 61:7,10; 65:18-19; 66:10-14; Jer.31:18-19; Zeph.3:14-17; Zech.10:6-7)
- Holiness - This kingdom will be a holy kingdom. There will be rebellion, but King Jesus will rule with a rod of iron, Rev. 19:15. Capital punishment will be enforced. (Isa. 31:6-7; 35:8-9; 60:21; 61:10; Eze.36:24-31; 37:23-24; Zech.8:3; 14:20-21)
- Glory - This kingdom will be a glorious kingdom, with the glory of God in full display. All the citizens of the world will be able to travel to Jerusalem and see the glorified Savior face to face! (Isa. 4:2; 35:2; 40:5; 60:1-9)
- Comfort - Jesus will fully minister to every need, so that there will be no want anywhere on the earth. (Isa 12:1-2; 30:26; 40:1-2; 49:13; 51:3; 66:21-23; Jer.31:23-25; Zeph.3:18-20)
- Justice - Perfect justice will be administered to every individual. (Isa. 9:7; 32:16; 42:1-4; 65:21-23; Jer.23:5.)
- Fullness Of Knowledge - An increase in the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit will result in enhanced mental capabilities. (Isa. 11:1-2, 9; Isa. 41:19-20; \*54:13\*; Hab.2:14)
- Instruction – King Jesus will instruct His people in the ways of God. (Isa. 2:2-3; 29:17-24; 32:3-4; Jer.3:14-15; Micah 4:2)
- The Removal of the Curse - In Gen. 3:17-19, God placed a curse upon the earth. This curse will be removed; resulting in an increase in the productivity of the earth, and in wild animals will losing their ferocity and ability to injure or kill. (Isa 11:6-9; 65:25).
- Sickness Removed - The King will be a healer, so that sickness and death will vanish from the earth. Death will only exist as a punishment for extreme sin. (Isa 33:24; Jer.30:17; 33:6)
- Healing of the deformed - All deformity will be healed. (Isa.29:17-19; 35:3-6)
- Protection - There will be a supernatural preservation of life during the millennium. (Isa.41:8-14; 62:8-9; Jer. 23:6; Joel 3:16-17; Amos 9:15; Zech.9:8; 14:10-11)
- No Oppression - There will be no social, political, racial or religious oppression in that day. (Isa.14:3-6; 42:6-7; 49:8-9; Zech.9:11-12)
- No Immaturity - It seems that there will be no mental retardation or dwarfed bodies, extreme longevity will also be restored. (Isa.65:20)
- Reproduction by the Living People - The living Tribulation saints and believing Jews who enter the millennium will reproduce. The population of the earth will soar. Yet, all children will still be born with a sin nature, and will therefore need salvation. (Jer.30:20; 31:29; Eze.47:22)
- Labor - A perfect economic system, in which all needs will be met by the labor of men under direction of the King. It will be a fully industrialized world. (Isa. 62:8-9; 65:21-23; Jer.31:5)
- Economic Prosperity - The perfect labor situation will produce economic abundance, so that there will be no want. (Isa.35:1-2, 7; 30:23-25; Jer.31:5; 12; Eze 34:26; 36:29-30; \*Joel 2:21-27\* \*Amos 9:13-14\*; Zech.8:11-12)

- Increase of Light - There will be an increase in solar and lunar light, this will produce longer growing seasons, accounting for the increase in productivity. (Isa.30:26)
- Unified Language - All language barriers will be removed. (Zeph.3:9)
- Unified Worship - The entire world will worship God through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Isa.45:23; 66:17-23; Zeph.3:9; Zech.14:16; 8:23; Mal.1:11)
- The fullness of the Spirit - All who are subject to the King will experience divine enablement and presence. (Isa.44:3; Eze.36:26-27; 37:14; Joel 2:28-29)

#### v. 1-3    A PROPHECY INVOLVING SATAN

***1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.***

V- 1-2 A strong angel descends from Heaven and **“Seized”** the devil. That word implies to have power over; to be one’s master. This angel is empowered by heaven to be the devil’s master. He grabs Satan and binds him with a strong chain that will remain on him for 1,000 years. There is no disputing who the Bible is speaking about in these verses. He is called **“the dragon”**; **“that ancient serpent”**; **“the devil”** and **“Satan”**. Those names reveal all we need to know about his character. As a dragon Satan is looking for those he might devour. As a serpent he is ever seeking those he might deceive. As the devil is the false accuser, always looking for someone to accuse and defame. As Satan, the adversary, he is always seeking someone to defeat. One day, he will get what is coming to him! Right now, from all appearances it seems that the devil is winning the war between good and evil. But, appearances can be deceiving. God will have the last word in this matter. Satan is powerful, but he isn’t all-powerful! Only God can lay claim to that title.

V. 3 This angel removes the devil from the earth for 1,000 years. Imagine a world with no devil! It will be almost like Heaven! There will be no one to tempt people to evil. No one will whisper lies into the ears of our minds. No one will remind us of how wicked we were and are. No one will set traps for us to fall into. A world without the devil will be a wonderful place! Without a devil peace, prosperity, joy, holiness and blessing will be the order of the day. The only temptation and evil we will face is not from without, but within. Sometimes we can be our own worst enemies.

While the earth will rejoice in the Devil’s absence, the devil will be getting a small taste of what awaits him in eternity. We are told that he will go to the **“bottomless pit”**. This term translates the word **“abyss”**. This seems to be an ancient prison where certain demon spirits are incarcerated by the Lord, (1 Peter 3:18-20)(2 Peter 2:4). Between Jesus’s death and resurrection, His living Spirit went to the demon spirits bound in the abyss and proclaimed victory and not salvation. He proclaimed how He triumphed over them, Satan, and sin by dying on the Cross. The demons are bound because of their extreme wickedness during the time of Noah. (Gen. 6:1-8) (Jude 6).

Not all demons are in the abyss right now (Luke 8:31). Only the extremely evil ones that exceeded God's boundaries. However, one day they all will be sent to the eternal lake of fire (Matt. 25:41 & 46, Rev. 20:10). We saw this abyss opened up in Rev. 9:1-12. When the pit was opened, terrible demons came out and tormented the people on the earth. Satan will be confined to this prison for 1,000 years.

What will Satan do for 1,000 years? He will bide his time because he knows that he will be released for "**a short time**". We will talk about all that in a few minutes. For now, we should rejoice in the truth that Satan will be bound one of these days! Hallelujah!

***4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They 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 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 are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.***

V. 4 This verse tells us that there is coming a day when the saints of God will rule with their Redeemer. Here's a reminder of the events leading up to this moment for the saints of God. Jesus will return in the clouds above this earth in the Rapture. He will take His Bride home to Heaven. We will face Him at The Bema Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), and then we will join Him for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:4-8). Jesus will return to this earth in power and glory, bring His people back with Him. He will defeat all His enemies, establish His kingdom on earth and allow us the privilege of reigning with Him for 1,000 years, (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10).

The next part of verse 4 seems to introduce another set of saints. It speaks of those who endured the horrors of the Tribulation Period without tarnishing their testimonies or denying their faith. Some of these saints died during the Tribulation, but they have been resurrected. Others made it alive to the end of the Tribulation Period. They are allowed to enter the Millennium. All of these Tribulation saints join with the Bride of Christ (the Church) and we reign with Jesus for 1,000 years. Also, according to Dan. 7:27 promises that the Old Testament saints will reign during this time period as well.

Imagine a world where there is no devil. Imagine a world filled with the redeemed saints of God from Pentecost to the Rapture, along with the brave saints of the Tribulation who will be worshipping Jesus with us. Imagine a world where you might walk down the street and bump into Adam, Abraham, David, Moses or Elijah! Or Jesus!!!!That world will exist one day!

V. 5-6 – These verses reveal that there are two resurrections. The first resurrection occurs at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus and includes the saints raised at the Rapture as well as all those resurrected at the end of the Tribulation. The Bible says that those who have a part in this first resurrection are "blessed". Why? They will not have to endure "the second death". However, all those who have rejected Jesus as their Savior, from the time of Adam all the way to the end of the Millennium, will be raised in the second resurrection. The poor, unfortunate souls will all face Jesus at the Great White Throne and they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. If I were you, I would do everything in my power to see to it that I was part of the first resurrection.

**7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison. 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

V- 7 – After being bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years, Satan is turned loose. Why? Someone asked Dr. Frances Schaeffer why and his answer was as follows: *“If you can tell me why he was released the first time I will tell you why he was released the second time.”*

There must be a reason because verse 3 says **“he must be set free”**. I am certain that we will never fully understand all the reasons why, but I will offer one or two for you to consider.

First, this event proves that the devil will always be unrepentant. Even after God has proven to the devil countless times that He is stronger, Satan still continues in his stubborn rebellion against God. God has thwarted every plan launched by the devil. And still Satan stands in defiance and open rebellion to the Lord.

Second, this event will prove the total inability of mankind to save himself, even in a perfect world. It also proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that lost man is totally depraved. There is no good in him, and left to himself, he will always go away from God, (Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 3:10).

V. 8-9 – Where will the devil find this vast army? After all, the world is perfect! There is no poverty, no disease, and no war. It is a perfect world! Why would anyone fall for the devil's lies and rebel against God? Remember, millions of people entered the Millennium in flesh and blood bodies. Some were believing Jews, others were Tribulation saints. These people married and had children. In fact, because of perfect health and perfect living conditions, the population of the earth will explode. People will live to be 1,000 years old again! The children born during the Millennium will be raised in a perfect environment and still they will rebel against God. You see, every one of those little children was born into this world with a sin nature. Every one of them would still need to be saved from their sins by faith in the work of Jesus Christ on Calvary. Think about it. In a world where they will travel to Jerusalem and see King Jesus in Person, they will still refuse to bow to Him in faith and repentance. In a world inhabited by the characters from the Bible; the glorified saints of God and by those who endured the Tribulation Period, many millions will not be saved. They will keep the rules, because they will be forced to. But, in their hearts, they are still rebels in need of a Redeemer. They are still sinners in need of a Savior!

V. 9-10 – Satan raises his vast army and leads them in one final assault against King Jesus in Jerusalem. They do not stand a chance! God Himself ends the battle by raining fire down from Heaven. The rebels are destroyed in a moment of time and they all drop off into Hell to await judgment.

Satan himself is cast into the Lake of Fire, where he will spend eternity being tormented along with the Antichrist and the False Prophet. When the smoke clears and dust settles, the Lord God Almighty will have the last say in this matter! God wins, end of story! Who's side are you on? Have you joined forces with the devil? Or, have you enlisted in the Lord's army?

Right now it appears that the devil is winning the battle. It's kind of like that little league game I heard about. A little boy was sitting in the dugout and a man walked by and said, "Hey son, what's the score." The little boy said, "They're beating us 25 to 0." The man responded, "Isn't that a little depressing?" The boy answered, "Naw, mister, we ain't even got up to bat yet!"

That's where this thing stands today. If you look at all the score cards, it appears that we are entering the fifteenth round and that the devil's won the other fourteen. It just looks that way! When the bell rings and the final round begins, King Jesus is going to deliver the knockout punch!

### The Judgment of the Dead

Some time ago there was a young foreign student who flunked out at the University of Michigan. In shame he decided to disappear. For the next four years he hid in the unused attic of an Ann Arbor church. Taking great pains to conceal himself, he quietly prowled around only at night, living off food and water from the kitchen. He never left the building or spoke to anyone. No one ever suspected he was there. Then one day a slight mistake gave him away. Accidentally the young recluse made some noise, the police were called, and he was finally discovered.

How foolish this young man was to try to hide from his failure. Still, he is not as foolish as that person who thinks they can hide from God. The world is filled with people who live as though they have no sin. They live as though God did not exist. They live as though they will never face God in judgment. What they hope for will never come to pass. These next verses tell us about Judgment Day. They speak about that terrible day when every lost sinner will face the Lord in judgment. There will be nowhere to hide on that day. No one will hide behind excuses, ignorance, false professions, etc. Everyone will face Jesus Christ as Lord and Judge and they will all receive a just sentence for their sins at the The Great White Throne Judgment. There will not be one single born again individual that will stand in judgment here. This is a judgment seat for the lost.

***11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.***

It is called Great - This word refers to "its power". This is the highest court in the universe! This is no small claims court! When judgment is rendered from this throne, there is no appeal to a higher court, for there is no higher court! This is the place of highest authority and final judgment.

It is called White - This speaks of "the purity" of this court. All human courts are tainted by sin, prejudice and fallibility. This court, on the other hand, is absolutely perfect and the judgment rendered here will be perfectly fair and righteous. The Judge who occupies this bench is infallible. He cannot be tainted by sin or prejudice, but He renders judgment in perfect righteousness and fairness. Not a single person judged here will cry "unfair" when their sentence is handed down. Every sinner judged and sentenced will know that they have received perfect and fair judgment. There will be no pretending and no pretense on that great judgment day, but only a sure recounting of every sinful deed and every sinful thought, (Luke 8:17; Eccl. 12:14). Nothing will be hidden!

The Bible tells us that this throne is occupied by a Person. However, His identity is not revealed here. The Bible tells us in other places just Who is on this throne.

The man on this throne is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, ( John 5:22, 27, 30; Acts 10:40-42; 2 Tim. 4:1). The Savior will be the Sentencer in that day! This is not the poor, humble carpenter. This is a resurrected Conqueror. This is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. His appearance is described for us by the prophet Daniel, Dan. 7:9-10. His presence is so terrible and powerful that even the heavens and the earth flee from before Him. This probably where the earth is purified by fire, 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1. God destroys this ruined creation and remakes the universe as it was before sin invaded and devastated it.

***12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.***

Here we are told that those appearing before the throne are the “dead”. This proves that there will not be a single born again believer in the group. Why? The Bible tells us that we who have trusted Jesus as our Savior have “crossed over from death to life”,( John 5:24). We have been given eternal, abundant life through the blood of the Lamb and can never lose that or die again.

This can only mean one thing: that this mass of humanity will be made up completely of those who are physically and spiritually dead, (Eph. 2:1). God raises their dead bodies from their tombs. He knows where every particle of human dust is located and He is well able to bring it together and raise it to life. He calls their bodies from the ground and their souls from Hell and He reunites them for judgement. None will escape and none will hide, but all will face the Righteous Judge in judgment that day! Every person who chose wickedness over righteousness, will be before the throne to face their judgment! There will be no escape and there will be no exceptions. Every person who has ever died without Jesus Christ will face Him in this Judgment on that day.

The Bible tells us here that the “books” will be opened. Only one of these books is named and it is called the “Book of Life.” Every name of every person who would ever be born will be in this book, (Rev. 3:5; Rev. 17:8). When a sinner dies without trusting Christ as his Savior, their name is removed from this book. While your name remains, there is hope for you, but when you die, or you reject Jesus for the last time, you are numbered with the eternally dead and there is no more opportunity for you to be saved.

I don't know all the other books that will be used that day, but I am sure of a few that will be opened, like the Bible. Jesus Himself reminded us that we would be judged out of His Word( John 12:48). Maybe the Book of Deeds. In Heaven, a record is being maintained of the deeds of all men. One day, every lost person will stand before the Lord and hear the record of his life read from the throne. Every deed, both good and evil will be mentioned. Every sin will be read aloud: Sins of commission, sins of omission, flagrant sins, secret sins, sins of the heart and sins of the mind. All will be brought out into the open on that day. Verse 12 makes it clear that the lost will be judged according to their works.

The last phrase in verse 13 tells it all. When these books are opened, judgment is rendered based on the evidence found in the books. You can be sure that the evidence is accurate, and that the record is complete. Every person will stand on his/her own. There will be no excuses. It won't make any difference who hurt you, who stood in your way, what hypocrite you looked at, or whatever. It will come down to you and Jesus. In this day there is still hope for salvation, than in that day when there is hope for nothing but judgment!

**14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.**

The sentence rendered from this bench is "Death". Not just physical death, but the second death which is eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire, (2 Thess. 1:9-10). This death involves no dying! There will be no end to the torment, to the hell, to the awful nature of what the sinner will face. It will be an eternal state of dying apart from the presence of God or anything good! It will be Hell! It is the "death" Paul refers to in Rom. 6:23 as the "wages of sin".

Imagine the horror of hearing Jesus say the words that will condemn you to eternal torment! Imagine hearing Him say, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels", (Matt. 25:41).

Or, perhaps you are a religious person, a church member, a regular attendee of church, and have to stand before Him and have Him pass judgment on your life. This is the scene spoken of in Matt. 7:21-23. Don't let this happen to you! Come to Jesus while there is time. Come to Jesus while there is grace. Come to Jesus while there is hope! Come to Jesus now! There will be no appeals; all judgments rendered from this bench will be final and they will be binding. This will be the last day any of these sinners ever see. This will be the end of the road for them, for they are forever consigned to the Lake of Fire to suffer torment for eternity! Many don't believe this is true. They deny the reality of Hell and claim that such a notion is old fashioned and out of date. The Bible tells us that Hell is real and that lost sinners do indeed go there to spend eternity. (PS. 9:17; Luke 16:19-31.) It is foolish because it did not have to happen! Any sinner, who is willing to repent and turn to Jesus, by faith alone, can be eternally saved. The precious blood Jesus shed on Calvary is sufficient to the saving of any sinner who calls upon Him, (Rom. 10:13).

I think that this is the most horrible scene mentioned in the Bible. The concept of people perishing forever is terrible beyond description. However, as horrible as it is, it is true nonetheless! To those of us who are saved, this passage reminds us of the terrible need of the world around us. If nothing else, it ought to move us to come before the Lord and cry out for the souls of our friends, neighbors and loved ones who need Jesus. It ought to stir our hearts so that we will not rest until we have tried to tell every lost person we know that salvation is available to them if they will come to Jesus! Unless we've become so hardened that the thought of Hell no longer moves us.