

REVELATION CHAPTER 20

Introduction

- the doctrine of the Millennium carries differing interpretations

“The most popular form of premillennialism in the twentieth century is supported by premillenarians who consider the millennium an aspect of God’s theocratic program, a fulfillment of the promise given to David that his kingdom and throne would continue forever over the house of Israel. Advocates of this position include many twentieth century premillennial scholars such as Lewis Sperry Chafer, Alva McClain, Charles Feinberg, Charles Ryrie, Wilbur Smith and Merrill Under, and many popular writers and Bible teachers such as C.I. Scofield, A.D. Gaebelain, H.A. Ironside, William Pettingill, and numerous others. Advocates of this view hold that the millennium is a period in which Christ will literally reign on earth as its supreme political leader and that the many promises of the Old Testament relating to a kingdom on earth in which Israel be prominent and Gentiles will be blessed will have complete and literal fulfillment. Because the distinctive character of this millennial reign of Christ is maintained in contrast to the present age, this view is sometimes designated as the dispensational interpretation. In the interpretation of the book of Revelation, they consider all material from (Rev.) 4:1 on as future, and are often named futurists.”

(taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by John F. Walvoord)

1. The binding of Satan—Rev. 20:1-3

- v. 1—an angel with authority from God with a key and chain, authority to open the pit

“According to the prediction the angel is empowered for six functions: (1) to lay hold on the dragon, (2) to bind him for 1,000 years, (3) to cast him into the abyss, (4) to shut him up, that is, to use the key which will lock up the abyss, (5) to set a seal upon Satan which will render him inactive in his work of deceiving the nations, (6) to loose him after the thousand years.”

(taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by John F. Walvoord)

- the angel binds Satan for 1,000 years
- Why? So he could deceive the nations no more
- after the thousand years Satan will be released

2. The reign with Christ—Rev. 20:4-6

- v. 4—reference is to enthroned elders representing the church
- correlates with Lk. 22:29-30
- judgment is given to them

“Judgment was given to the first group only, that is, those sitting on thrones, designated kings and priests, consequently

the glorified church. Had the latter two groups been included in the exercise of judgment, the phrase, *judgment was given unto them*, would no doubt have been placed at the end of verse 4. That this high distinction belongs to the church alone is implied in the passages already quoted.”

(taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by J.D. Smith)

- v. 5-6—first resurrection

“Perhaps some clarification would help. Some people think that the first resurrection means only one resurrection, but that is not the case. The first resurrection is a resurrection that began more than nineteen hundred years ago and occurred in four phases...:

Phase 1—the resurrection of Christ and some Old Testament Saints

Phase 2—the resurrection of the Church at the Rapture

Phase 3—the resurrection of the two witnesses

Phase 4—the resurrection of the Tribulation Saints and the remainder of the Old Testament Saints at the end of the Tribulation Period

Second Resurrection—the unbelievers at the end of the Millennium”

(taken from *The Book of Revelation: The Smart Guide to the Bible Series* by Daymond R. Duck)

- we shall be priests of God and reign with them 1000 years

“*They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* The meaning is, they came to life again. The reference is to the three groups above mentioned. John in his Gospel uses the word in a similar sense, e.g. “though he were dead, yet shall he live” (11:25); again, “because I live, ye shall live also” (14:19). The three groups in a glorified state are: (1) the throne sitters (chapters 4 and 5), (2) the robe wearers (chapters 6 and 7), and (3) the “Conscientious Objectors” (chapters 14 and 15. These were noted in conjunction in chapter 19:1-6 and are brought together in 20:4 in order to indicate plainly their joint participation in the future glory. The reign of the three groups is contemporaneous with the binding of Satan. In others, the reign with Christ is of equal duration with the binding of Satan.”

(taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by J.D. Smith)

3. Deception of the Nations—Rev. 20:7-9

- Satan is released to deceive the nations
- Why?
- the sinful nature is demonstrated by the loosing of Satan (7-9a)

- a) the loosing of Satan is effected at the end of the 1,00 years
 - but this loosing is only for a short season
 - the scriptural foresight is encouragement to all who know the terror of this great incorrigible being
 - it is evident that God has him completely in his control, and there is nothing to fear
 - God is not yet through with this creature, and therefore the delay and the loosing of Satan and his subsequent activity prove that 1,000 years of punishment has not changed him
- b) the deception practiced by Satan upon the nations (8a)
 - it is apparent from the text that he goes out and deceives the nations over the whole earth
 - Gog and Magog are names indicating nations of men and women whose hearts are against God
 - this means that even though the kingdom was started with born-again people, many were born of these parents and came into the kingdom without the new nature
 - in spite of righteousness and holy rulers and a perfect environment, they have not changed during this 1,000 years
 - some will be saved during this period, but it will not be the environment that will effect the change it will be the grace of God
- c) the purpose of Satan is to gather these nations for battle (8b)
 - his deception is quite successful
 - the number is great as the sand of the sea
 - they easily follow Satan and his suggestions and go forth to do battle
 - here is evidence that the old nature is still present and acts in the same old way in response to Satan
- d) the success of Satan is indicated by the siege of the city (9a)
 - ultimately the hatred of Satan and sinful men is against God
 - the old sinful nature is the same, and all the perfection of earth, righteousness and rulers does not change it
 - only one thing will ever do that, and that is the new birth (Jn. 3:3, 5)
 - but inasmuch as these enemies of God cannot touch him, they encompass the camp of the saints, which is the beloved city of Jerusalem
 - Satan has been a thousand years in the Abyss under torment
 - but in all that time he has not changed
 - he is still the same incorrigible creature, whose corrupted wisdom causes him to imagine that he may yet defeat God
 - and thousands upon thousands there are whose carnal hearts rush them after this dragon of destruction to perdition

4. Swift doom comes upon Satan and his followers—Rev. 9b-10

- a) the immediacy of destruction is marked at the outset (9b)
 - apparently Christ does not intervene at all in his own behalf
 - the Father, without delay, sends fire down out of heaven and devours the whole army of sinners arrayed against the Holy City
 - these all go into Hades and await the resurrection and the judgment of the wicked
 - Gk. text leaves out “from God”—if “from God” is correct it means the Father

- b) the method of destruction is clearly marked here as fire
 - this fire is from heaven
 - whether this may be electric fire, such as lightning, is not clear from the passage but it is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29)
- c) the objects of destruction are all the wicked in the earth
 - the deception of Satan was universal—four quarters of earth
 - the number deceived was numberless—as the sand of the sea
 - this number encompassed the camp of the saints
 - this entire number was consumed by fire
 - now it appears that this means that every last wicked person, every unsaved person suffers from the fire from heaven
 - when the wicked come before the great throne, only the dead appear there
 - then all the wicked must have died
 - at last it is proven that except a man be born again he cannot experience the dominion of God (Jn. 3:3,5)
- d) the devil and leader has eternal doom inflicted upon him (10)
 - without resources this great evil being is cast into the Lake of Fire with the beast and false prophet
 - his judgment was sealed at the Cross (Jn. 16:11)
 - it is now inflicted
 - the place that was prepared for him and his angels, and of which he has already had a thousand years foretaste, now becomes his eternal abode (Mt. 25:41)
 - ceaselessly through the ages he shall be tormented
 - and eternity will never satisfy the wrath of God nor be sufficient to atone for what he has done

5. The sentence for sins is decided at the Great White Throne—Rev. 20:11-13

- a) the appearance of the throne betokens no mercy (11)
 - this throne is great and white
 - there is no green nor any other colour to relieve its awful whiteness
 - nothing but the holiness of God is marked by this, a holiness which now will demand the last farthing for breach
- b) the awesomeness of the face of those who sit there is great
 - even the earth and the heavens seem to react to the presence of this one
 - they must flee
 - and so far reaching and inescapable is this face that no place is found for a fleeing universe
 - this may mark the cataclysmic changes of 2 Ptr. 3:10-12
- c) the array of criminals is clearly pictured in the text (12a, 13a)
 - the entire number of the wicked dead through all time stand there
 - they are resurrected in the same body in which they lived
 - the sea and death (grave) give up the bodies of the wicked
 - Hades yields up the souls of all the wicked
- d) the accuracy of the judgment is marked by the books (12b, 13b)
 - God keeps books—this means that He is absolutely accurate
 - the book of life shows that this number do not appear there, and they deserve to be brought before this throne
 - the works recorded in the other books determine the degree
 - upon the basis of the degree of wickedness, they are sentenced to punishment with the degree they deserve

6. **The second death is meted out to all the wicked**—Rev. 20:14-15
- a) the experience of separation, namely, death is with Lake of Fire (14a)
 - all the wicked have been raised from the dead and all will suffer death again
 - but this experience of separation of body and soul will take place in the Lake of Fire
 - b) the place of separation, Hades, will be merged with the Lake of Fire (14a)
 - “Hell” A.V.; “Hades” R.V. is the place where the wicked soul and spirit were confined there in torment (cf. Lk. 16:19-31)
 - this will no longer be needed as a temporary prison house so it will be merged with the Lake of Fire
 - c) the identity of separation is the second physical death (14b)
 - since all the wicked are to be cast into the Lake of Fire, they will suffer the second physical death there
 - the body will be consumed by the flames and the spirit and soul will be confined there throughout eternity
 - e) the victims of separation are those whose names do not appear in the book of life (15)
 - here is the warning to all who today are rejecting the Lamb of God
 - today He is a Saviour
 - tomorrow he will be the judge
 - let no one imagine that there will be any mercy at this throne
 - if the book of life does not contain the name, then that person will be cast into the Lake of Fire