

## Chapter 20: The Millennial Reign and the Great White Throne

As chapter 20 begins, we see Satan bound for a thousand years and then let loose upon the earth once again before his final doom. These 1000 years are often referred to as the Millennial Reign of Christ. Just how and when these 1000 years takes place is understood differently among Christian scholars. Here are the 3 major positions:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_ - this view looks at a literal 1000 year period of peace on earth ushered in by the Church. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will be unleashed once more, but then Christ will return to defeat him and reign forever. Christ's second coming will not occur until after the 1000 year period.
  
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ -also views the 1000 years as a literal time period, but holds that Christ's second coming initiates his 1000 year reign and that it occurs before the final removal of Satan.
  
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ -understands the 1000 year period to be symbolic of the time between Christ's ascension and his return. This is the reign of Christ in the hearts of believers and in his church. It is another way of referring to the church age. This period will end with the second coming of Christ.

What's most important about all three of these views is this: Jesus comes back, defeats Satan, and reigns forever! Don't let the issue divide us.

What John saw: (vs. 1-10) Satan is seized and bound for a thousand years having been thrown into the Abyss, locked away and sealed. He is kept there so that he may not deceive the nations until the 1000 years are up.

John then sees the martyrs whose lives were taken because of the testimony of Jesus. Thrones are set up for those whom are given authority to judge. This is the first resurrection and the second death has no power over them. They will be priests of God and Christ and will rule and reign with him during the 1000 years. Let's take it slow again. Those martyred in the Tribulation are resurrected at its conclusion and are allowed to rule and reign with Christ. The "rest of the dead" would be the souls of those who have been confined in Hell since the fall of man through the 1000 year reign. The second death refers to eternal damnation in the lake of fire, a spiritual death of everlasting separation from God.

After the 1000 years are up, Satan is released a final time upon the earth. He will deceive all he can and will gather them for a final battle. He will surround Jerusalem and will be consumed by fire from heaven and thrown into the lake of fire for eternity.

The Bible doesn't reveal a reason as to why Satan is loosed upon the earth. Scholars' best theory is this: During the 1000 year reign, an unknown number of people are will survive the Tribulation and will begin repopulating the earth. Because Satan has been bund, they have not experienced the temptations and struggles that the saints endured prior to Christ's return. Satan being loosed is to introduce and give humanity (not resurrected saints) a choice between himself and God, much like the garden.

This final battle here is around Jerusalem as Satan has surrounded it. This battle is possibly the battle referred to in Ezekiel 38 and 39 depending on placement in the prophetic timeline.

## The Great White Throne Judgement (vs. 11-15)

Let's do some housekeeping quick. There are \_\_\_\_ judgements mentioned in Revelation. The first one is called the Bema seat or Judgement seat of Christ. This is the judgement of believers after the rapture. The judgement John sees here in chapter 20 is the second of the two judgements. This one is called the \_\_\_\_\_ . According to the Bible in chapter 20, verse 15, this judgement is for "Anyone not found written in the Book of Life." All the unsaved dead will be resurrected from creation to the millennium to face final condemnation. Christ Jesus will judge at both judgements. Then the books will be opened. In other words all their deeds both good and bad will be weighed. Then there will be final judgement, a second death: eternal separation from the Lord. The first death is when our physical body stops. The second death is when our souls are judged. Then death and Hell are thrown into the lake of fire. John specifically says that the "lake of fire is the second death." (vs. 14)

This eternal and ultimate separation from God is irrevocable. Chances are over. Prayer is not going to change it. Sacrifice will be too late. Obedience a moot point. There isn't a do-over. This is permanent. Just as Heaven is eternal with Him, so is this judgement eternal without Him. But it doesn't have to be that way. If you're reading this for whatever reason and you know you aren't living in relationship with Jesus right now or you walked away a long time ago, today is your day! The time is right now to come to Him, to call on the name of the Lord Jesus and be saved! To change your mind about Him and call Him Lord of your life. We don't know when our time will come. Tomorrow isn't guaranteed. Don't wait. He loves you more than you can imagine and came to restore you to the place of children with the Father. Pray this with me right now: Jesus I need you as Lord of my life. I believe you died and were raised to life again. I change my mind about you and confess your transforming work completed at the cross over my life. I ask your forgiveness for my sin and know your blood washes me clean. I belong to you and you have chosen me. I am a new creation in you! AMEN!

