

Revelation 20 – Part 1

At the end of Chapter 19 we read:

Revelation 19:20-21 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (21) And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Last week we discussed the Lake of Fire. We talked about what it isn't and what it is. It is an actual place of fire and sulfur. It is a place where the enemies of God will exist forever. The antichrist and the false prophet were cast into the lake. The two beasts that appeared to be symbolic of anyone who opposes Christ and anyone who worships any idol, are two actual persons who are thrown into the Lake. We didn't talk about where it is because we have not been told. I've heard some ridiculous teachings that is located "east of Eden", as if we knew where that was. Good teachers are those who keep silent on what they do not understand.

The 7-year tribulation is about to end. There's some "prep" work to be done before the Millennial Kingdom is established by our King.

There are things about which we will read today that include many OT prophecies that are still to be fulfilled. We cannot study all of them because it'll take another year or two to get through them all. However, there are some that must be studied because once again, the LORD gave no descriptions of what the Millennial Kingdom will like. Again, between verse 6 and 7 of chapter 20 is the white space of one thousand years. If Mark had written this book, it might have read "(6) Suddenly the Millennial Kingdom of God was established. (7) Suddenly, it was over". We're not given any information, but not to worry, we don't have to dream up what our "best Kingdom today" will be like. We just have to hunt for it.

Let's begin with the "almost" end of the Devil.

(Revelation 20:1) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (2) He laid hold of the dragon, **that serpent of old**, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; (3) and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the **thousand** years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Who is the angel? Is this passage to be interpreted literally? Is it actually satan, a spiritual being, who is bound and cast into the pit? Is it actually 1000 years? What does 'a little while' mean?

The angel is either Christ (a.k.a., the Angel of the LORD) or some unknown angel. Those who favor Christ say that it is fitting for the one who opposed Jesus for so long to be cast into the lake by Him. The devil facing His Accuser! Is there any satisfaction on Jesus' part that He is throwing the adversary into the lake?

Those who say it's just an angel say that the devil does not deserve to have the Son of God do the tossing. That would just feed satan's already inflated ego. No, wouldn't it be more fitting that "some random, low level" angel do it to prove how powerless and insignificant he really is. So again, we are left with a mystery.

Speaking of mysteries: What is "a little time after he is released"? And why not just toss him into the lake right away? There is an answer to both. **First**, after exhaustive research, I have concluded that "a little while" means exactly, that is, no more and no less than "a little while". **Second**, We might understand why God would bind up satan, rendering him harmless, but we might not completely understand why he would release him. The answer is, satan once again will achieve the purposes of God, much like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar and others like them. But what would God's purpose be? I'll come back to this in a while, or more precisely, a little while.

Next up for discussion is the 1000 years of the Kingdom on earth. Is the number 1000, symbolic or is it literal? The answer that makes the most sense is "literal". I don't have the time to go into great detail of why many believe it is symbolic. Their main reason is that they think they know better. Other reasons center around their penchant for making most Scripture symbolic, especially this Book. My best argument for it being literal is that numbers in Scripture are all literal. Was Jesus symbolically dead for 3 days before His resurrection? Did God symbolically create everything in 6 days and then allegorically rest on the 7th Day? Were there actually 10 plagues or did God throw in a couple for good measure. If you spiritualize one thing you are forced to spiritualize everything and when you do that, your interpretations can be anything you want. No, the truth is, Scripture is consistent. You can't talk about the 7 seals, trumpets, and bowls as actual 21 judgments and then turn around and say the 1000 years isn't a specific number.

Our approach to Scripture is simple, "if the plain sense of the text is adequate, seek no further". I would also add, "if there is a mystery, let it lie".

Before I get into the next section that describes some of the Millennia, I need to address two things:

1. A strange passage out of Daniel and
2. A major Millennial issue – the 4th Temple.

Daniel 12:11-12 NKJV "And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and **ninety days**. (12) Blessed *is* he who waits, and comes to the **one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days**.

We understand from Daniel 12:11 that this describes the 2nd half of the Tribulation because of the reference to the Temple. But there's small issue: each half of the Tribulation is 1260 days. Is verse 11 incorrect? God forbid. Then in verse 12, there's a blessing promised to those to survive until the 1335 day. What's going on? Obviously, it's another mystery but this one can be understood.

After 7 years of judgments on the earth and the people, the planet will be a mess. Some believe that the Temple, which has been thoroughly defiled is in serious need of cleansing that will take 30 days. There's an issue with this thought: We read in Zechariah about what happens when Jesus returns:

Zechariah 14:3-5 NKJV Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. (4) And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, *Making* a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. (5) Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, *And* all the saints with You.

(BTW: No one knows where Azal is or if it means something else entirely)

I am also putting in these notes 2 significant verses which speaks of the unity of the Godhead.

Zechariah 14:8-9 NKJV **And in that day it shall be— *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea;** In both summer and winter it shall occur. (9) And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be “The LORD *is* one,” And His name one.

I’m including these 2 verses because here the Hebrew word for ‘one’ is ‘echad’ which means a unity. It’s the same Hebrew word used for a cluster of grapes and the ‘one flesh’ that Adam and Eve were said to be. And, every Jew since the time of Moses has often recited

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

Considering the proximity of the Temple Mount, it will be destroyed after Jesus returns. But Jesus will build the His Temple as Ezekiel writes:

Ezekiel 37:26-28 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; **I will establish them** and multiply them, **and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.** (27) **My tabernacle** also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (28) The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." ' "

The Millennial Temple is, of course, the subject of much debate. The description of it spans 9 chapters in Ezekiel’s prophetic writings from chapter 40 through chapter 48. This could be a teaching spanning many weeks, but I will reserve that teaching for another time. But since it is so significant to our understanding of the Millennial Kingdom, I will try to summarize its description and importance.

The Temple, while huge, will be a small part of a plateau that will be on top of a huge mountain where Jerusalem once stood. That Mountain is spoken of in Isaiah 2 as well as Micah 4:

Micah 4:1-3 NKJV Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the LORD’s house Shall be established on the top of the **mountains**, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. (2) Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (3) He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong

nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

According to modern measurements the Temple itself will be one mile square. The Temple complex will be **50** miles square. Some believe that the rebuilt Jerusalem will be included in this complex and itself will be 10 miles square. Unfortunately, many see this temple as a rebuilt/refurbished 3rd temple and therefore many of the diagrams and models are just not right.

Now, we know that the Temple will be used for sacrifices. I'll get to that in a minute. But one thing that is revealing is that there are many things that were part of the Mosaic tabernacle and subsequent Temples that are not mentioned in Ezekiel. This makes sense because of the finished work of Jesus:

- There is no mention of a veil, because since the work of Jesus such a separation is no longer necessary.
- There is no mention of the ark of the covenant because the work of Jesus at the cross fulfilled the place of atonement and propitiation.
- There is no mention of a high priest because Jesus is the high priest.
- There is no mention of a king because Jesus is the king of kings.
- There is no mention of silver and gold, because in a millennial age those things do not have their same value.

But wait, Pastor, did you just say that there will be sacrifices? Yes, I did. This has brought heartburn to students of prophesy, scholars and commentators for centuries. Did we not learn from the book of Hebrews that sacrifices were no longer required because of Jesus? (read chapters 9 and 10 for a thorough treatment of this issue). I will give you 3 reminders:

1. [Hebrews 10:4 NKJV](#) For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.
2. [Hebrews 10:12-14 NKJV](#) But this **Man**, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, (13) from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. (14) For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.
3. [Hebrews 10:18 NKJV](#) Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

So, can we reconcile NT truth with OT prophetic truth? It is unthinkable that God would establish or sanction any kind of sacrificial system or ceremony **after the finished work of His Son**. While this might not satisfy all of you, here's some things to consider.

1. God *does* sanction memorials and ceremonial remembrance of the work of Jesus on the cross. The Old Testament sacrifices had value in pointing forward to the death of Christ, would they not have equal value in the Kingdom to point back to the death of Christ as an accomplished fact?
2. The purpose for these sacrifices is different. The Ezekiel sacrifices seem to be related to ritual purification of the Temple and not for atonement. In the Millennial Kingdom there will be unbelievers born into the world who will be required to come up to Jerusalem. Therefore, the spiritual integrity of the Holy Temple must be maintained.

3. Some maintain that this has to do with Israel as a nation and not the “Church”. Therefore, God still has a different program for Israel, saved or unsaved, than the rest of the Church during the Millennium.
4. Quite frankly, the only thing that satisfies my mind and heart is Jesus. Just because I don’t understand something fully doesn’t mean I have to question the entire revelation of God given in His Word.

Once the Temple is complete, there’s another 45 days to consider. It appears from Matthew 25:31-46, there will be a judgment of the nations who survive the Tribulation. The judgement will include both believers and unbelievers. This is NOT the White Throne Judgment of Chapter 20 because that is for unbelievers only. While this was described after 2 parables, this is not a parable but a prophetic picture of the 2nd Coming. When Jesus returns and His Throne is established in Jerusalem, He will judge those He calls Sheep and Goats.

They are first divided so their fate is sealed even before the judgment so therefore, it is not a second chance. The first thing Jesus does is to tell the Sheep:

'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...'. He tells them that during the Tribulation He was pleased with their “good deeds” towards Him. They, knowing that Jesus was in heaven the whole time, are stunned. When did they do these things for Him? Jesus answers: 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

“My Brethren” is most likely the Jews who underwent severe persecution by the Antichrist and False Prophet. However, some believe that it may also include the gentiles who came to Messiah as well for believers are referred to as brethren in the NT.

But to the goats on the left He says, *'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'*. Jesus also explains that they did nothing for Him. Perhaps knowing what He will say next, they lied and said that they did minister to Him when they saw Him. Jesus responds: *'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'* After this, Jesus reiterates their destiny to the disciples: *And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*

This isn’t salvation by works as some teach. There is a wide gulf between **doing good to earn righteousness** and **doing good in response to the righteousness of Jesus**. The sheep were the ones who heard His voice and followed Him and His commandment to love one another. The Goats didn’t lift a finger for Him as shown by their lack of love towards anyone but themselves. And like those enemies of God throughout the ages, they will go into everlasting punishment when they die (not Gehenna) and then onto the White Throne judgment.

With Satan bound and the preparatory work done, we get back to Revelation 20 verse 4.

[\(Revelation 20:4\)](#) And I saw thrones, and **they** sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their

foreheads or on their hands. **And they lived** and reigned with Christ for a **thousand** years. (5) But the rest of the dead did not live again until the **thousand** years were finished. **This is the first resurrection.** (6) **Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.** Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a **thousand** years.

(Revelation 20:7) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison (8) and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. (9) They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (10) The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Once again, there are more questions. Who is able to enter the Kingdom? Are we looking at a scene in heaven or earth? How can this be the first resurrection when the church was raptured 7 years prior? What is the second death? Will there be a priesthood? And then, what is the White Throne Judgment all about? And who ends up in the Lake of Fire.

And most importantly, what will the Millennial Kingdom be like and why is nothing about it here? Is the battle in verses 8 and 9 the same battle described in Ezekiel 38-39?

All this and more will be discussed next Sunday!

Today, even if we do not have the details of the coming Millennial Kingdom, we can truly find rest and satisfaction in what lies ahead.

But we sometimes do not feel this way as if it's not "real" enough for now. When we fight against the reality of God's future, we will become angry, we will deny His reality over our own, our feelings may make us feel guilty. As we continue in this state, we become angry and frustrated with everyone around us, especially with those we know are the "real problem" (this includes those who simply don't agree with our "truth"). This is emotional quicksand from which we can escape by our own strength!

But God has not given us a vision of the future. He has given us the reality of our future. We are witnessing our Savior fulfilling all of His promises. We are witnessing our Savior become our King! We are witnessing His perfect judgment and justice as our enemies experience what they deserve for their hate filled, rebellious and unrepentant hearts.

What I am saying is that we must be so grounded in the Truth of Christ that this world begins to fade and His world begins to become the substance of things unseen and all that we hope for. And, as His reality takes shape in our hearts and minds, we will work for His purposes instead of trying to fix a fallen and broken world. We cannot heal this world which is shaping up to be hell on earth but we can point others to a better hope, better treasures, a better country all because of a better sacrifice which brought a better covenant.