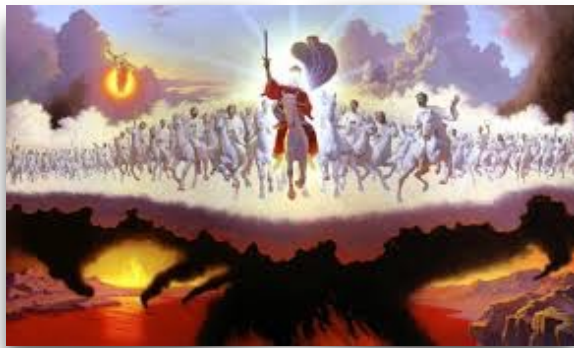


## Revelation - Chapter 20

### The Reign of Christ

John has just seen God's final judgement, the seven bowls of wrath poured out on the earth by seven angels. The bowl judgments will be the most severe with plagues, all living things in the waters will be killed, the sun will scorch the earth's inhabitants, darkness will overcome the earth, the great river Euphrates will dry up to give way for the kings from the east to cross into Armageddon, and the final bowl will cause a great earthquake to renovate and reconfigure the earth in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom.



Babylon will be utterly destroyed as will Antichrist and the ten nations who unite to wage war against the Lamb. The Lamb returns as King of kings and Lord of lords and overcome the Beast and the kings of the earth. Christ will be accompanied by those who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior ("the called and chosen and faithful" Rev 17:14).

### The Millennial Reign of Christ

This is one of the great chapters of the Bible. Jesus Christ establishes His Millennial Kingdom for a thousand years. Here is where hundreds of Old Testament prophecies will be fulfilled, such as Jeremiah 23:5-6:

*"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'"* (Jeremiah 23:5-6, NASB95)





In John's vision he sees only the fact and duration of the millennial kingdom. The character of Christ's reign on earth is fully described in many Old Testament passages such as Psalm 72, Isa 2:2-4; 11:4-9 and many others. From these Scriptures we learn that Christ's reign will be over the entire earth, Israel is regathered and brought back to her ancient land, the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, there will be no more war, His Kingdom will be peaceful and tranquil with economic justice for all

along with physical health and well-being. There will be deliverance from satanic oppression and evil, the natural ferocity of animals will be abated and God's prophetic word will be fulfilled.

After the purging experience of the Great Tribulation, those who survive become the citizens of the kingdom after the rebels are purged out (Eze 20:34-38). John saw God's people sitting on thrones reigning with Christ. Judgment is given to them to rule subordinately over every aspect of life in the Millennial Kingdom and carry out His perfect will.

The martyred believers from the Tribulation were resurrected to reign with Christ for the thousand years. John calls the resurrection of the saints from all ages, the first resurrection.

Israel is rejoined to God in the symbol of marriage, being transformed from an unfaithful wife to one who reciprocates the love of Yahweh.



Satan is bound with a great chain and thrown into the abyss for one thousand years. He will no longer be able to deceive the nations.

Gentiles who share in the Kingdom blessings have unparalleled spiritual and economic benefits, and the thousand-year reign of Christ is a time of joy, peace, and blessing for the entire earth. God's purpose in originally placing man in charge of the Garden of Eden will have its ultimate fulfillment in the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will reign over the earth.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Return of Satan**

In God's perfect will, Satan will be released from the abyss after Christ has reigned for one thousand years. After his release Satan will lead a final rebellion of sinners. Even

though the initial inhabitants of the Millennial Kingdom will be redeemed, they will still possess a sinful nature and will pass that sin nature on to their children. Each generation born during the Millennial Kingdom will be in need of salvation. Despite the personal rule of Christ on earth, despite the most moral society the world will ever know, many will love their sin and reject Christ (Rom 8:7). Satan will set out on his final act of rebellion, deceive the nations, and gather Christ's enemies to come against Christ in battle.

Like Armageddon a thousand years earlier (Rev 19:11-21), there will be no battle. Fire comes down from Heaven and destroys God's enemies. They are instantly exterminated. Satan's forces will be killed and their souls will go into the realm of punishment awaiting their final sentencing to eternal hell. Satan is thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet have been for one thousand years. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev 20:10).

### **The Great White Throne Judgement**

We now move to the most serious, sobering and tragic passage in the entire Bible. John describes a terrifying scene before him. Christ is seated on His throne of judgement and all the accused, the unsaved of all generations, are standing before Him.



Sitting on a white throne to depict His pure, holy and just nature Jesus will sit in final judgment of those who have rejected Him throughout the ages. Since their death the unsaved have been tormented in a place of punishment. Now they are standing for their final sentence. Judgment is made on the basis of the books that are opened, both the book of life and the other books which are probably the divine records of their works. The Book of life determines where they will spend eternity; their deeds will determine their degree of punishment in hell. This is the second death.

### **Uncreation of the Universe**

At the same time as the Great White Throne Judgment, John describes another startling reality; the uncreation of the universe. The earth will still be tainted with sin and subject to the effects of the fall so it will be destroyed also. In its place God will create a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1). The present earth will not be moved or reshaped. It will go out of existence. John states that "no place was found for them" (Rev 20:11).

Peter describes the final expression of the day of the Lord:

*“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”*

While it may be difficult to understand why God releases Satan from the abyss where he was chained for one thousand years, it does reveal the incurable evil of the human heart that does not experience the saving grace of Christ. Satan’s release shows the power and necessity of the righteous judgment of God.

Those who reject God’s grace and mercy in this life will inevitably face His justice in the life to come. Unrepentant sinners will experience God’s justice at the great white throne judgment. Those who have accepted God’s grace and forgiveness of sins by believing in Christ will enter the new Heaven and new Earth.

There is only one way to avoid the terrifying future of hell. Those who confess their sins and ask God to forgive them on the basis of Christ’s substitutionary death on their behalf will be delivered from God’s eternal wrath (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9)