

>>>>>> Lesson 28 <<<<<<<

- 1) When we left last time, we were almost ready for the millennial reign to begin.
 - a) The battle of Armageddon has been fought
 - b) The beast and the false prophet have been dispatched to the lake of burning sulfur
 - c) We have one last order of business to attend to.

What is the big thing that is left to do?

- 2) Continuing then in chapter 20 beginning with verse 1 >>>>>>

Rev 20:1-3 (NIV)

- 3) This is obviously describing the imprisonment of the spoiler – Satan himself.
- 4) Christ’s reign on the earth for the millennium cannot be the reign it is meant to be with Satan roaming the earth causing problems.
- 5) One thing to keep firmly in mind at this time is that this is not the final punishment for Satan, this is only confining him.
- 6) He will shortly have one more great hoorah before his eternal punishment begins.

Continuing ...

Rev 20:4-6 (NIV)

- 1) Here we have a very brief description of the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth.
- 2) I’m sure we all wish John’s vision would have included a more detailed description which told more of the details of what it will be like during that 1000 years.
- 3) Here are some possible ideas of how it might be:
 - a) Imagine a world dominated by righteousness and goodness.
 - i) A world where there is no injustice, where no court ever renders an unjust verdict, and where everyone is treated fairly.
 - b) Imagine a world where what is true, right, and noble marks every aspect of life.
 - c) Our personal relationships, commerce, education, and government are all governed by Christian ideas and God’s principles.
 - i) Not just lip service but true heart felt principles.
 - d) Imagine a world where there is complete, total, enforced, and permanent peace.
 - e) A world where joy abounds and good health prevails, so much so that people live for hundreds of years.
 - f) Imagine a world ruled by a perfect, glorious Ruler, who instantly and firmly deals with sin.
- 4) This may be fantasy – perhaps wishful thinking.

5) But it might also accurately describe conditions during the future earthly kingdom of the Lord.

6) John MacArthur comments:

“The restored and radically reconstructed earth of the millennial kingdom will constitute paradise regained. The thousand-year reign of the Savior over the earth is the divinely planned and promised culmination of all of redemptive history and the realization of the hope of all the saints of all the ages.”

7) There are a few points that the apostle makes in this short description that we should take a look at.

8) First, John sees thrones of “those who had been given authority to judge.”

a) The Scripture does not identify them specifically.

b) Many interpreters believe that these are those who had been martyred for their faith, but the problem with this idea is that the martyrs are not mentioned until the last part of the verse.

c) Some suggest that this is only the twenty-four elders (4:4) or, that this forms an angelic court of some kind.

d) In Matt 19:28, the apostles are promised that they will judge from twelve thrones.

e) First Corinthians 6:2-3 says that the saints will judge the world.

f) Bottom line is, we don't really know.

g) What we can determine is that this is a court in heaven composed of those whom God wants to assist in judgment

9) Next, the passage discusses those who will reign with Christ during the Millennium. Again, we step into an area that has a wide variety of opinions and interpretations.

a) The NIV breaks this next sentence into two sentences.

“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.”

b) By translating it this way, the inference is made that the second sentence is more describing the subject of the previous sentence – those who had been beheaded because of their testimony.

c) However, if we look at the Greek it is one sentence.

d) That plus the wording, leads to is some uncertainty regarding the second sentence.

e) Should it be further description of the first group or actually describing a second group?

f) The LABC describes this dilemma this way:

“Between the sentence describing the martyrs and the sentence that says they had not worshiped the beast . . . nor accepted his mark, the Greek includes the words "and who," which can be taken as a further description of the martyrs, or as a description of an entirely different group. If the latter is the case, John saw the martyrs, whom he had described in 6:9-11, as well as others who were martyred during the Great Tribulation. Then he saw a separate group, those who "had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their foreheads or their hands.

If "those who had not worshiped the beast" is merely a further description of the martyrs, then it appears that only the martyrs came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years — a reward for their ultimate faithfulness to Christ by giving up their lives.”

10) Looking further at the definition of the word οἱτινες (hoitines) that LABC mentions here I found a definition in Strong’s that says the word can also mean “any that.”

11) Reading the single sentence that way (with the “... and any that” in place) to me, would indicate more strongly for an interpretation that John is describing a second group beyond just describing the martyrs.

12) John then states that

“This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part 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.”

13) Note, some translations have a parenthetical expression before these verses:

“(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended).”

- a) This normally indicates it was an added comment not in the original manuscripts.
- b) However, it is in NA27 which indicates that it was part of a requisite number, or it would not be there.

c) Comment on manuscript differences

14) This first resurrection, then, could be a resurrection only of the martyrs and those who had not worshiped the Beast.

15) If so, then the rest of the believers along with the unbelievers are described as the rest of the dead who do not come to life until the thousand years are over.

16) At this point, God will separate the unbelievers from the believers, sending the former to the lake of fire and granting the latter eternal life.

17) However, some commentators think that all believers partake of the first resurrection because all believers have been freed from the second death — that is, the lake of fire.

18) MacArthur states flatly that

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“These are the unbelieving dead of all ages, whose resurrection to judgment and damnation is described in verses 11-15. John calls the resurrection of the saints from all ages the first resurrection.”

- 19) The phrase "come to life" refers to a physical resurrection of their bodies. These believers will have new bodies, as described in 1 Cor 15:51-53.
- 20) It occurs to me that it is possible that one reason for that amillennialist' view is amount of things that are open for interpretation here.
- 21) On the other hand, I personally find the number of specific facts given here to be evidence that the amillennialist' view may not correct.
- 22) I do however want to make the point again that the correctness or incorrectness of this view is not a salvation issue. IT IS OPINION!
 - a) If we are faithful and true to our God, we will be part of His kingdom forever.
 - b) How all of this finally plays out is interesting but – AGAIN, WE WIN!!!
- 23) We may not have an exhaustive description of the earthly millennial kingdom; however, this passage does give us four essential truths about it:
 - a) The removal of Satan
 - b) The reign of the Saints
 - c) The return of Satan
 - d) And the revolt of society.
- 24) We have covered the first two and next, we will look at Satan's return and the revolt of society.

Rev 20:7-10 (NIV)

- 1) Unfortunately, this section of the passage is one more area that becomes controversial and confusing at the same time.
- 2) First, we must return to a fact that may or may not have been clear to this point – the millennial reign of Christ though wonderful and peaceful, is NOT heaven.
- 3) These are living breathing human beings that make up the kingdom over which Christ rules.
- 4) As indicated, there are those who reign with Him that are raised to life (again physical corporeal life) to reign with Him for this 1000 years.
- 5) We might think of this like unto the time Noah and his family spent in the Ark.
 - a) The world had been destroyed – all were gone except for those in the Ark.
 - b) Once they started life back on terra firma, Satan's influence was there, and sin began anew.
- 6) Additionally, it is not totally clear as to the disposition of rest of the population of the world after the battle of Armageddon –
 - a) was the earth totally devoid of life after that and the millennial reign started fresh?
 - b) or were there people remaining?

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- 7) These are simply questions we have no concrete answers to.
- 8) However, what we do know from these verses is that the “nations” (again made up of people) are capable of being deceived.
- 9) And they are going to be deceived in numbers “like the sand on the seashore.”
- 10) Gog and Magog symbolize all the nations of the earth that join together under Satan to battle God.
- 11) It is inferred throughout scripture that Christ will reign from Jerusalem and that is here referred to as the “beloved city.”
- 12) As we see, like Armageddon 1000 years earlier, this battle really becomes a mass execution – last vestige of sinful man will be wiped from the face of the earth in preparation for its final destruction and replacement.
- 13) And the final act here is placing Satan and all his demonic angels in their final home – the lake of fire with the Antichrist and the false prophet – EVIL IS ENDED!!