

THE MILLENNIUM:

THE DRAGON'S

POWER IS

RESTRICTED

Introduction:

One of the biggest challenges in interpreting Revelation 20 is determining whether or not it follows chapter 19 chronologically. The two beasts are thrown into the lake of fire in 19:20-21, and many commentators see chapter 20 as a continuation of that judgment. It's easy to understand the confusion, since it is difficult to understand the cyclical nature of Revelation. But, that is what is going on here.

Chapter 20 is not a continuation of 19, but rather shows another depiction of Satan's doom. Thus, when we get to 20:1, John takes us back, via the cyclical teaching method, to the casting out of Satan from heaven (Rev. 12), where Satan is being bound and thrown into the Abyss.

Cyclical Teaching Method



Then, we get a look at the entire NT era, in which the saints rule with Christ for “1000 years.” Then, we see Satan’s release (his short season) just before the Second Advent and, finally, Satan’s ultimate judgment (lake of fire). Thus, what we are taught in Chapter 20 is a vision from the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus to His Second Advent!



+ We must interpret chapter 20 in light of Scripture (Scripture interprets Scripture). There is no other text in the NT that discusses or even teaches us about two physical resurrections; nor is there any text that talks about an actual earthly reign of Jesus Christ before the resurrection. If we look at chapter 20, independently, we will certainly *misinterpret* it. This is the mistake of dispensationalists, who start with this text and then use it as a template to interpret other biblical texts (cf. 2 Thess. 4; Dan. 9; et al). The only way to understand this text is to interpret it in light of clear texts, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture!

Rev. 20:1-3

+ *“And I saw an Angel coming down from heaven having the key of the Abyss....”* – This angel, though some believe to be Jesus...isn't! How do we know this? By the absence of the Greek article (τόν). Thus, the angel is indefinite and unidentified. If it was Jesus, John would have certainly recognized Him and would have identified Him by the use of τόν or ό!

The angel is **“coming down from heaven”** which represents that this angel is coming from the presence of God and he has the key to the Abyss, which he has received from Christ; since only Christ has the key to death and Hades (1:18).

Rev. 20:1-3

+ *“And I saw an Angel coming down from heaven having the key of the Abyss....”* – Also, Christ has the power and authority to bind Satan. He speaks of binding Satan in Matt. 12:25-29, where He binds the *“strong man.”* Also, John 12:31, where Christ speaks of the *“ruler of this world”* being cast out as a result of His ministry and crucifixion.

Therefore, the angel, who is from the presence of God has the authority of Christ, via His Word:
“And He seized the dragon . . . and bound him for a thousand years”

Rev. 20:1-3

+ *“And He seized the dragon . . . and bound him for a thousand years”* - The binding of Satan takes place during Christ's ministry, and ultimately, at His crucifixion. Some object because they look at the world and see that Satan still has so much influence in it. But, this binding is not the final judgment or total destruction of Satan. The devil still has power, but is bound from preventing the Gospel from being proclaimed throughout the world and he is forbidden (bound) from entering into the presence of God to accuse sinners.

Rev. 20:1-3

+ *“And He seized the dragon . . . and bound him for a thousand years”* - Satan is like a chained dog, which will bite you if you come into his sphere; yet, cannot harm you as long as you stay out of reach.

Since Christ's crucifixion, *“one little word can fell”* Satan. He is judged and cannot harm us, unless we fall under his sphere of influence by entering his world of evil. We have a beautiful and comforting picture of the extent to which Christ's work has bound Satan in this passage.



Rev. 20:1-3

+ **“1000 years”** – We have seen many symbolic numbers throughout Revelation (144,000, 42 months, 3 ½ years, 1,260 days), so how can we possibly take this number literally? To do so would be simply absurd! It is symbolic of the complete New Testament era, from Christ’s First Advent until shortly before His Second Advent. Those who take the **“1000 years”** literally and look for a future earthly reign of Christ are denying the fact that Jesus has already established His Kingdom. Each time a person is converted and baptized, he begins his reign with Christ.

Rev. 20:1-3

+ ***“It is necessary”*** for Satan to be loosed after the 1000 years for a short time – this is of divine necessity; God looses Satan before He brings about His final judgment. Why? Well, God doesn’t reveal His reasoning; perhaps so that Satan will have no grounds to question God’s justice on Judgment Day. Satan will not be able to cry “foul” on that Day, since he will have been unbound for a time to pursue his evil desires.



The unbinding of Satan is the “little season” we have seen referenced in Revelation. Satan will be permitted to stifle the Gospel and will vent his full wrath and fury against the Woman (the Church).

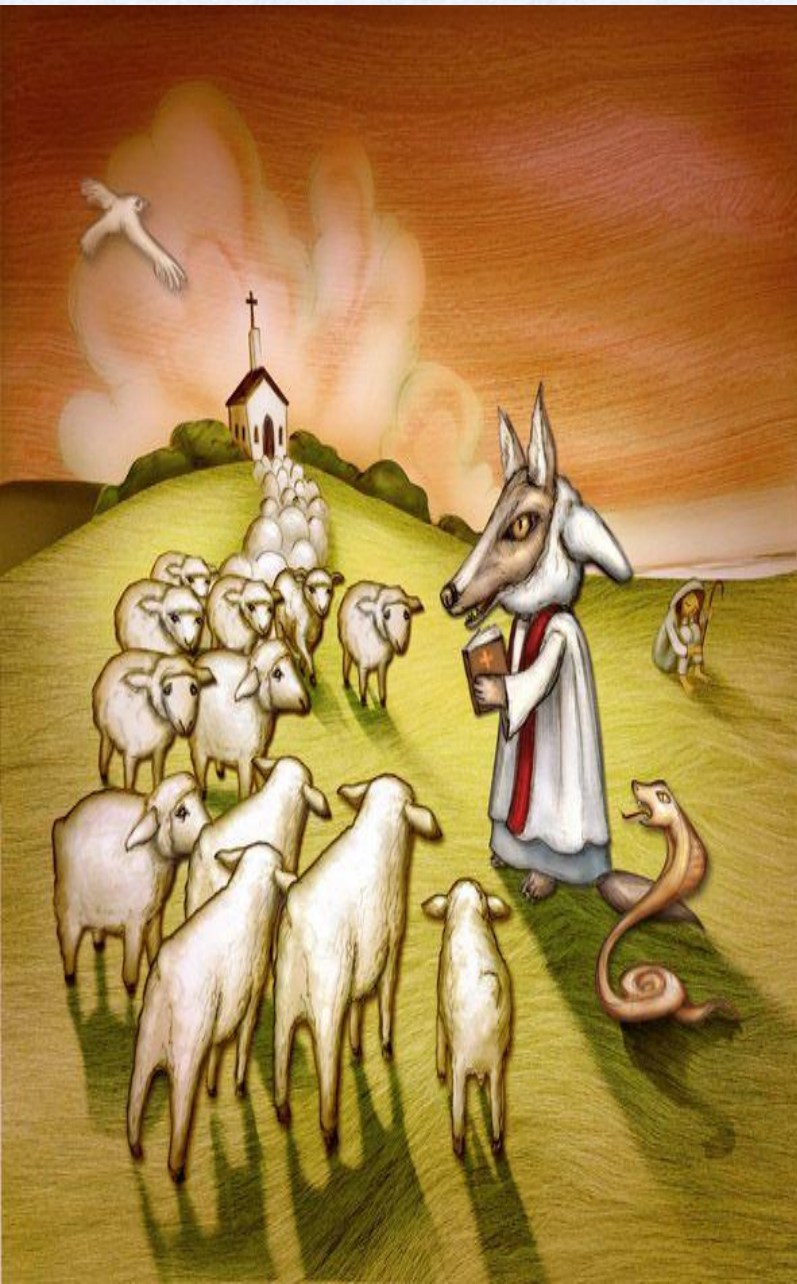
Rev. 20:1-3

It's during this "little season" when Satan will manifest himself through the False Prophet, the Great Harlot and bring his final assault upon the Lord's Bride. There will be a great apostasy during this time and many will fall away from the Truth. The true Christian Church on earth will be very hard to find, for the majority of those who claim to be Christians will actually belong to the false church of the antichrist. They will be deceived by the many false teachers Satan raises up and they will believe their false teachings. This is the time St. Paul warns us about:



"The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Rev. 20:1-3



The fact is, today, we see this occurring before our very eyes with a plethora of false teachers! There should be little doubt that we are already in Satan's "little season." Therefore, the great apostasy we see happening today should serve to awaken us and, thus, lead us to repentance and faith, clinging resolutely to the truth of God's Word!

Rev. 20:4-6

+ *“They lived and reigned with Christ for 1000 years”* – refers to all saints throughout the NT era, who live (have New Life; regeneration) and reign (share Christ’s rule) with Him. When believers are converted and baptized, they are brought to life and they live on after death and will live forever. We reign with Christ already now and will reign with Him forever in His Kingdom to come.

Rev. 20:4-6



Rev. 20:7-10

+ In these verses, we receive a summary of the final battle Satan will unleash upon Christ's Church just prior to our Lord's Second Advent. "*Gog and Magog*" are not literal nations! They are a spiritual representation of all the pagan nations of the earth that Satan will raise up in opposition against the Church (cf. Ezek. 38 and 39, where "*Gog and Magog*" represent the archenemies of Israel).

What we have depicted here is another picture of the Battle of Armageddon (cf. Rev. 16:16), in which Satan gathers his army for the final assault on the New Israel, Jesus, and His Bride, the Church.

Rev. 20:7-10

+ *“... fire came down from heaven and consumed them”* - The devil's final assault is a complete failure. His army is destroyed and thrown into the “lake of fire” as is Satan. The defeat he suffered at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ will finally come to fruition. He will finally receive the eternal punishment he deserves, as he, and all the evil angels and unbelievers of all time, *“will be tormented day and night forever.”*

Rev. 20:11-15

+ *“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it”* - This is a picture of the Final Judgment, when Christ returns in great glory with all His holy angels (cf. Matt. 24:29-31). All people will appear before Christ on that great and dreadful Day. Those who have died will be resurrected, both unbelievers and believers. Their spirits, which have been residing in either Paradise or hell, will be reunited with the bodies they had while living on earth. Those who are living will appear in their bodies before the throne of Christ.

Rev. 20:11-15

+ *“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it”* – Believers have the promise that their resurrected bodies (or “changed” bodies, if they are alive when Christ returns) will be glorified and perfect (*cf. 1 Cor. 15 – The Great Resurrection Chapter*).

Unbelievers, however, will go into eternity in their corruptible bodies.

Rev. 20:11-15

+ *“... books were opened ... the Book of Life”* – the opening of the books signifies God’s omniscience. He knows all things. He knows who will enter the Paradise of His Eternal Kingdom and who will be thrown in the *“lake of fire.”* Furthermore, He has the evidence; the documentation. And, this documentation reveals all who belong to Him, and all who do not belong to Him.

That the Judgment is pronounced upon each person *“... according to what they had done...”* must be understood in relation to faith. It is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, that we are declared righteous (cf. Rom. 3:28). We cannot merit this grace by our works.

Rev. 20:11-15

But, the Final Judgment is based on works. It is not merely arbitrary. There will be no cause for complaint or appeal, for it will be shown to all what each person has done. Believers, since they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and forgiven of all sins, have no bad works to be put on display. Only the good work that Jesus the Christ has done through them will be revealed!

Rev. 20:11-15

Unbelievers, on the other hand, have absolutely no good works. Even the most civilly decent among them, those who may have accomplished many wonderful and charitable works while living on earth, have no good works, for all their works are tainted with sin.

Thus, they only have bad works put on display on that Day. So, in the end, the Final Judgment is actually based on whether or not people had faith; believed Jesus to be their Redeemer, since works are completely dependent upon faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Thusly, His works are for His glory. **The unbeliever's works, since they have no faith, and Christ could work through them, are not for Christ's glory.**

Rev. 20:11-15

+ What a Grand Scene this will be! When Christ appears in great glory upon His throne, *“the earth and sky will flee away from His presence.”* The old order of things will pass away to make way for the New Heavens and New Earth. We cannot even begin to fathom any of this!!!

People have asked, *“How will all people be able to see Christ coming on the clouds at the same time?”* People ask such questions because they can't wrap their minds around how people living on opposite sides of the globe can witness this event at the same time. Well, here we're given the answer – the earth and sky will flee away! As Christ returns in great glory upon the clouds, the cosmos will simultaneously change in such a way that all people will witness His Coming and will be gathered before His great white throne. What a Grand Scene, indeed!

NEXT WEEK

+ The Final Judgment having occurred and the devil, his demons, the two beasts, and all unbelievers having been cast into the eternal “lake of fire,” the last two chapters of Revelation deal exclusively with the Eternal Kingdom, where all believers (us) will dwell with the Lord in the New Heaven and New Earth!