

The Revelation

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Revelation 20:1-15

Vss. 1-3

- In Ch. 19 Satan and his armies, the beast and the false prophet, are all defeated in a quick and decisive battle. Here, the beaten Satan is arrested by an unnamed angel who chained and imprisoned him.
- Satan's prison is the abyss. In Luke 8:31, where Jesus is confronting the Gerasene demoniac, the demons beg Jesus "not to command them to go away into the abyss." The abyss is understood to be a vast subterranean cavern, a place even demons fear.
- The angel closes the door to the abyss and placed a seal on the door, as the Romans did with the tomb door of Jesus. Unlike the Romans, no power anywhere could break this seal. No longer would Satan be free to deceive the people and nations of the earth.
- After an imprisonment of 1000 years Satan is released "for a short time."
- Why release Satan? He is placed where he can do no more damage. He has lost. From the first century there has been a great deal of debate. Are we to understand the time as a literal 1000 years, or is it figurative Biblical language, such as the cattle of 1000 hills? And what happens during the 1000 years? Many since the time of the early church have feared that despite Satan being bound, not all people would believe in Christ, accept Him as Savior, and still the infection of sin would linger and a very materialistic and carnal world would emerge, believing perhaps that we must "continue in sin so that grace may increase" (Romans 6:1). So should there be one final sifting, one last day to separate the wheat from the chaff? Two of the greatest tests for Christians are times of great suffering OR great comfort.

Vss. 4-6

- We come now to the first resurrection. The rest of Christ's followers will have to wait until the 1000 years is over, but to those who are martyrs, who have literally lost their lives due to their faith in Christ and to those who the early church called confessors, who were not put to death, but never worshipped the beast or took his mark, these two groups would be bodily raised from their graves. They would reign with Christ and serve Him over those 1000 years and would be given thrones and the power of judgement.
- Jesus tells His 12 disciples in Matthew 19:28 that they would sit on thrones with Christ and judge the 12 tribes of Israel. Paul, in 1 Cor. 6:2, reminds the church that they will judge the world. Whereas in the world, it was the world who acted as judge over Christians, now it is Christians who will judge the world. Life everlasting, fellowship with Christ, bringing believers to Jesus to reign with them – the rewards of faith.

Vss. 7-10

- 1000 years in the abyss has taught Satan nothing. Immediately after his release he goes straight back to the work that got him in trouble to begin with. It seems that he spent his incarceration not repenting of his rebellion against God, but only determining all the more to succeed next time where he had failed before. How like so many people! "I'm sure I'm smart enough. I'm sure I'm strong enough. It was just bad luck before. Next time! Next time!"
- Satan again deceives and gathers the nations to go to war against God and they meet at Jerusalem to first destroy the city of God.
- We first meet Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39 where we are told Gog is the "prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." Over time Gog and his territory of Magog, came to stand for everything and all that stands against God.
- The army of Satan numbered more than the sands of the seashore and surrounded Jerusalem and the camp of God's people, the true believers. On the face of it, what hope did God's good people have

against such odds? But hear the voice of the son of Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 20:15 – “Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s.” Suddenly fire from heaven came down and consumed all of Satan’s army.

- Defeated a second and final time, Satan is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet already were receiving their punishments, and the three of them would “be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Vss. 11-15

- The final battle between good and evil is over. Now comes the final judgement. God sits on His great throne. All the dead are gathered before Him. Even the sea gave up its dead, as well as Death and Hades.
- All the books were opened, (Daniel 7:9-10) and each life was found in the books and each person was judged then “according to their deeds.” Our saving belief is made real NOT by what we say, but by how we live/what we do/the deeds of our life. Every person is the author of their own story and their own judgement.
- Is this not a central idea in the book of James? (See James 2:14-26).
- CS Lewis in his book, “The Great Divorce”, said, “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell, choose it.” (Romans 1:18-20).
- The Book of Life: Moses is willing to have his name removed from the Book of Life if it will save Israel (Ex. 32:32). David asks for the names of his enemies to be blotted out of the Book of Life (Ps. 69:28). Paul declares that his co-workers’ names are in the Book of Life (Phil. 4:3). In Rev. 3:5 the Risen Christ declares to the church at Sardis that the ones who overcome the sin permeating the church will have their names secured in the Book of Life. The Book of Life is the roll book for those who live in the Kingdom of God.
- Death and Hades themselves as entities, are thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone and are no more.

- With all the dead gathered, the body and soul of everyone who has ever lived, all whose names were not in the Book of Life, by whose deeds in life chose to have THEIR will be done rather than God's, thereby choosing NOT to have their names written in God's Book of Life, these were thrown into the lake of fire, into destruction (Matthew 7:13-14).