

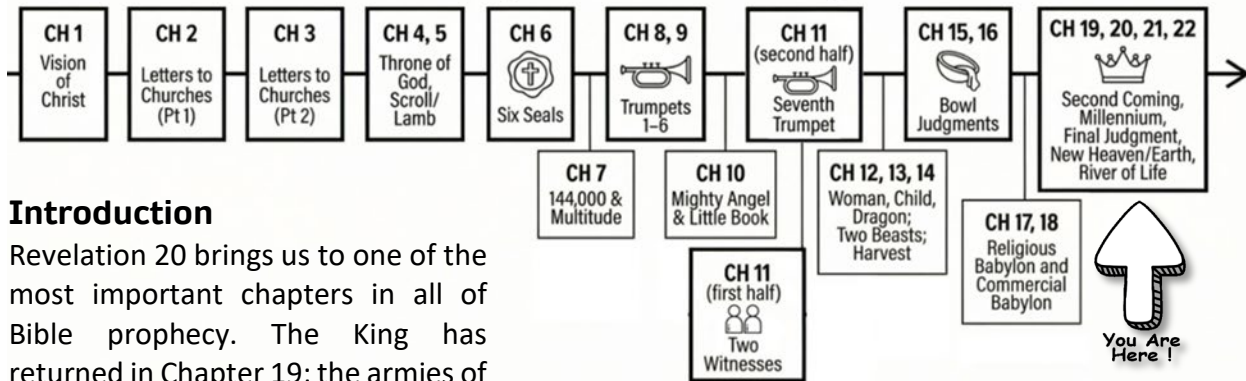


“The Millennium”

Lesson 20: Revelation 20

THE BOOK OF REVELATION – CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE

Parentetical sections provide detail without advancing the timeline.



Introduction

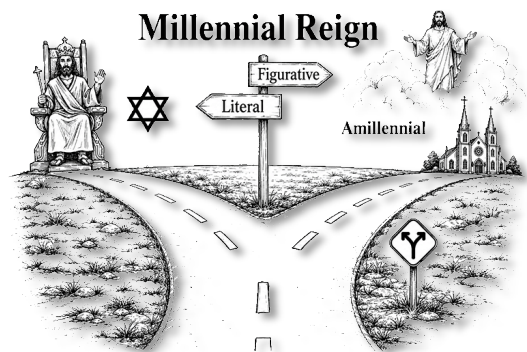
Revelation 20 brings us to one of the most important chapters in all of Bible prophecy. The King has returned in Chapter 19; the armies of the world have been defeated; the

Beast and False Prophet have been cast into the lake of fire; and now Christ establishes His long-promised kingdom upon the earth. This chapter answers some of the Bible's biggest questions: **What happens to Satan? What is the Millennium? Who reigns with Christ? Why is Satan released again? And what is the final destiny of the unsaved dead?**

The chapter naturally divides into three major scenes: **the binding of Satan, the thousand-year reign of Christ, and the Great White Throne Judgment.** It serves as the bridge between the present, fallen world and the eternal state described in Chapters 21 and 22.


Chapter 20 is the great dividing line, or fork in the road, in Christian eschatology. The primary question is simple: **Does God mean what He says when He repeatedly mentions a thousand-year reign, or is the language symbolic of something else?**

Many churches today teach some form of **Amillennialism**, which denies a literal future earthly kingdom ruled by Jesus Christ. Yet Revelation 20 mentions the thousand-year kingdom six times in just fifteen verses.

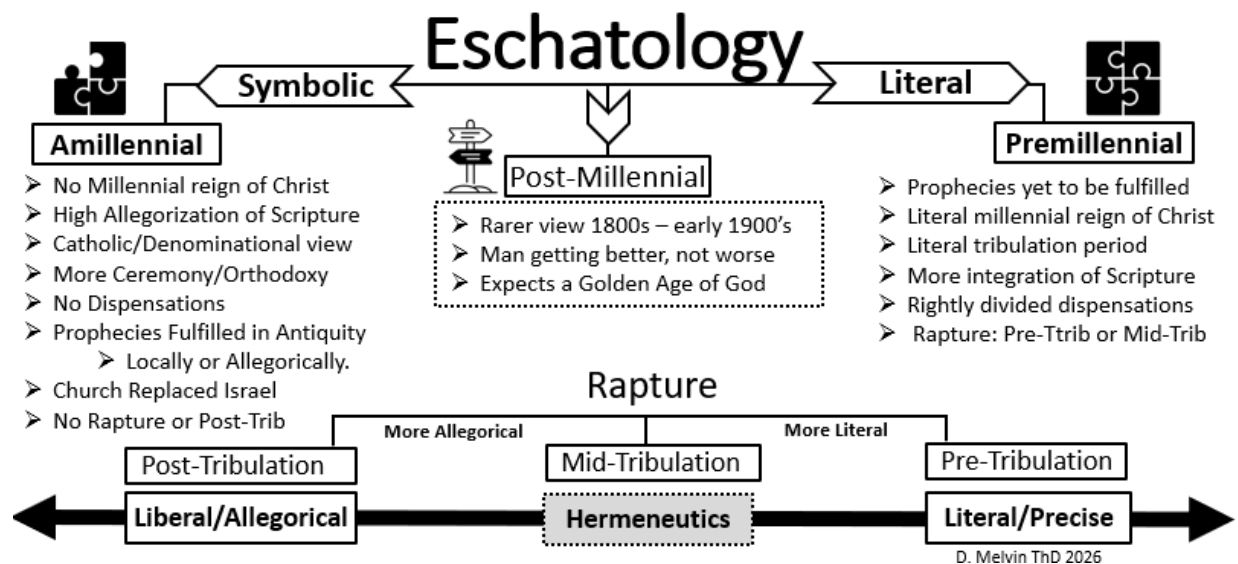


If God intended a literal kingdom, this chapter is exactly how we would expect Him to describe it. Note that the events of Chapter 20 flow directly out of Chapter 19. Christ has already returned. The Beast and False Prophet have already been judged. The armies of the world have already been defeated. The next event in sequence is not eternity—it is the Kingdom.

This should not surprise us because the Millennial Kingdom was **promised throughout Scripture** (2 Sam. 7:12-17; Ps. 89:34-37; Isa. 2:1-5; Isa. 11:1-9; Jer. 23:3-8; Ezek. 40-48; Mic. 4:1-8; Zech. 14; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:6). One of the strongest arguments for the Millennium is the promise given to Mary by the angel Gabriel which we read in our last lesson and you read every Christmas:

 *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: **and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:** And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1:31-33*

Notice that Gabriel **did not promise Jesus the throne of heaven**. He promised Him the **throne of David**. Why is this important? Because David's throne was a **real throne**, in a **real kingdom**, ruling over a **real nation**. If we are to take Scripture for what it says, then these promises tell us that Jesus must one day rule literally from David's throne over Israel and the nations of the earth.



In Christianity, **eschatology is the study of end-times events**. The first major divide comes down to one question: should the millennium be taken **literally or symbolically**? Many believers are unaware of how important this choice is or how deeply it shapes their beliefs. Surprisingly, most major churches—including many Protestant groups, the Catholic Church, and even some independent churches—hold to an **amillennial view**, rejecting a literal reign of Christ on earth. As a result, those who take the millennium literally are in the minority today.

The word **“hermeneutics”** simply means how you interpret the Bible. Everyone has a method of interpretation, **whether they realize it or not**. This is shaped by external influences such as family, pastors, teachers, and life experiences. If you tend to read the Bible more **literally** (as precise and factual), your views in the chart above move towards the **right**. If you read it more **symbolically** (figuratively), in the chart above, your views will move towards the **left**.

Understanding a person's approach to interpretation is important, because whether they see Scripture as literal or symbolic will strongly affect how they understand it. For many, learning new concepts such as pre-flood angelic activity, rapture narratives, the tribulation, structured end-times timelines, and much more can, and often does, feel unfamiliar. However, **these are not obscure ideas, nor are they fringe**; they are **firmly rooted in the biblical text** and add depth and coherence to Scripture. Being unfamiliar with the deeper concepts of Scripture is **not due to a lack of biblical support** but because **these concepts have largely been absent** from mainstream denominational teaching for generations. **That absence did not happen by accident.**

Most historic Christian denominations—Catholic, Protestant, and many of their offshoots alike—operate within an **amillennial framework**. Once that framework is in place, certain doctrines and teachings become unnecessary, awkward, or even disruptive to that theological system.

In the amillennial framework, *Christ is not expected to return to the earth to establish a literal kingdom*. Instead, His reign is understood primarily as spiritual, taking place now in the hearts of believers.

This amillennial framework **did not** originate with the apostles or the early church.

It developed gradually, reaching maturity with **Augustine**, who was deeply influenced by earlier allegorical interpreters, especially **Origen**, who took allegory to an extreme. While Scripture certainly contains symbolism, Augustine's approach increasingly treated many concepts and prophetic passages as figurative by default. Over time, this method became embedded in church tradition.



AUGUSTINE

When the Catholic Church rose to dominance, prophecy—especially prophecy involving the downfall of earthly powers—became politically uncomfortable. Teaching that Christ would return to overthrow corrupt rulers was not welcome in a state-sponsored church. **Allegorizing scripture, especially prophecy, solved that problem neatly.**

The Protestant Reformation recovered many essential doctrines, particularly justification by faith. However, **it did not substantially recover** eschatology (end times) and some other doctrines. Reformers inherited many of the Catholic Church's teachings and prophetic assumptions, which were passed down into modern seminaries largely intact.



MARTIN LUTHER



Why wasn't I taught this? Most Christians are not taught multiple ways of interpreting Scripture. They are taught the system their church **inherited**. For much of church history, replacement theology was simply **the default**. It wasn't presented as a position—it was presented as **THE position**.

Right or wrong, denominations tend to preserve their theological frameworks:

- ↓ **Seminaries** - teach what their tradition holds...
- ↓ **Pastors** - teach what they were trained in...
- ↓ **Congregations** - (deacons, laypeople) inherit it without re-examining the foundation.



So the question *"Why wasn't I taught this?"* often has a simple answer: **Because your teachers were never taught it either. And beliefs, once settled, are rarely questioned.** They are not just held; they are defended, and the **defense of a belief becomes more important than the examination of it.**

The Problem of Allegorizing Scripture in the Bible, and especially in the Book of Revelation, centers on the turning of **literal promises into symbolic ones**. Here, the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom are redefined into spiritual language. **Once that door is opened, interpretation becomes subjective and unstable.**



Most people don't choose an amillennial viewpoint after honestly weighing other viewpoints. And the shift doesn't come from being persuaded by a teacher or a book. It comes from trying to make the things of Scripture fit together—without forcing meanings onto the text. For some believers, the light bulb comes on, while others choose to remain in the system they are comfortable with. However, many, once they see a better way, cannot unsee it.

The Bible does not portray history as an endless cycle, as people assume. **God intervenes. God judges. God restores.** Jesus fulfilled hundreds of prophecies at His first coming. Prophecies about His second coming and establishment of His Kingdom outnumber those by a wide margin.

- **In the Old Testament:**
 - There are 1,845 references to Christ's **future** rule on the earth.
 - 17 Old Testament books give prominence to the event.
- **In the New Testament:**
 - Of the 216 chapters, there are 318 references to the Second Coming and Rule.
 - It is mentioned in 23 of the 27 books.

Please Notice This



For every prophecy relating to Jesus' First Coming, there are **eight** referencing His Second Coming.

Despite this, most people assume that the future is a linear extrapolation of the present (2 Pet. 3:4). They assume life will just go on, **but the Bible says otherwise**. The idea of the God of the universe once again directly intervening in the affairs of mankind and setting up a Kingdom on earth is, unfortunately, a foreign concept to much of society.



If Jesus came the first time fulfilling hundreds of prophecies, and the prophecies of His 2nd coming outnumber those of His 1st by a ratio of 8 to 1, why wouldn't He come as predicted the 2nd time?

If God kept His promises once, He will keep them again. Prophecy is not about fear; it is about **hope, accountability, and confidence in God's sovereignty**.

Chapter 20



Rev. 20:1] *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*

Notice first that this chapter is a direct continuation of Chapter 19. The chapter divisions in our Bible are useful reference points, but they were added by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the early 13th century and are not inspired. The action in Chapter 20 flows naturally from Christ's victory at Armageddon into the establishment of His Kingdom.




"And continued John's next visual experience as a powerful angel shows up possessing **"the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain."**


The **key symbolizes authority and control**. The angel can open the abyss because God has delegated that authority to him. No one enters or leaves apart from divine permission. The Greek word translated "**abyss**" (abussos) means a deep, immeasurable pit. This location has already appeared several times in Revelation: from where the **demonic locusts emerged** (Rev. 9:1-3), where **a demon king ruled** (Rev. 9:11), where **the Beast ascended** (Rev. 11:7; Rev. 17:8), and where **Satan will now be confined**.



Whether the chain is literal or symbolic is not the primary point. **The purpose of a chain is restriction**. Satan's activities, movements, and influence are about to be completely curtailed.

This verse also destroys the idea that we are currently living in the Millennial reign of Christ. Some claim the thousand-year reign is happening now, but Revelation 20 begins with Satan being bound and imprisoned. "**If the Millennium has already begun, then Satan's chain is too long.**" **Looking at the present world, there is no evidence that Satan's deception of the nations has ceased**. Paul spoke of active spiritual warfare. John warned of Satan's activity among the churches. The New Testament consistently portrays him as operating freely during the Church Age (Eph. 6:10-18; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:9).

 **Rev. 20:2]** *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,*

 **Rev. 20:3]** *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

Notice how God leaves no doubt about the identity of who is being imprisoned. Four names are given:

- **Dragon** — emphasizing his destructive nature.
- **Old Serpent** — connecting him to Eden.
- **Devil** — From the Greek meaning slanderer and accuser.
- **Satan** — From the Hebrew meaning the adversary.



John notes that the angel "**laid hold on**" and "**bound him**". This effortless arrest shatters the unbiblical myth that Satan is an equal counterpart to Jesus Christ; he is merely a created angel facing a superior heavenly executioner dispatched by the Creator. This angel executes a four-fold action to guarantee absolute, maximum-security isolation:

1. **Cast him:** Physically throwing him out of the earthly realm.
2. **Shut him up:** Locking the supernatural gates of the abyss behind him.
3. **Set a seal upon him:** Placing a divine, unalterable legal stamp of authority over his prison, guaranteeing that no rogue spiritual entity can break him out.
4. **Bound him a thousand years:** Defining the exact, literal duration of his containment.

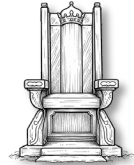
Satan is removed from the earth entirely. The result is clearly stated: "**that he should deceive the nations no more.**" If you have ever wondered why nations repeatedly embrace destructive ideologies, why civilizations seem unable to learn from history, or why mankind continually rejects God's truth, Revelation points to this powerful spiritual deceiver working behind the scenes. However, we read "*after that he must be loosed a little season.*" **If God has Satan imprisoned, why release him at all?** The answer becomes clear later in the chapter.



Rev. 20:4] *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

John's attention is immediately drawn to "**thrones.**" This is not the picture of a single ruler governing alone. Christ is the supreme King, but others are given positions of authority under Him. Scripture indicates four classes of redeemed who administer in Christ's kingdom:

- **Old Testament Saints** (Dan. 12:1-3; Isa. 25:8-9).
- **The Church** (Rev. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
- **Tribulation Martyrs** (Rev. 6:9-11).
- **Tribulation Survivors who remained faithful to Christ** (Rev. 20:4).



John then focuses on a specific group: "*I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus.*" During the reign of the Beast, they refused to compromise their faith. They would not worship the Antichrist. They would not worship his image. They would not receive his mark. As a result, many paid with their lives.



Rev. 20:5, 6] *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

John now turns his attention to another group, "***the rest of the dead.***" These are the unbelieving dead from **all ages**. They are not resurrected when the Kingdom begins. Instead, they remain in Hades awaiting their final judgment at the **Great White Throne**, which John will describe later in the chapter.

Then John declares, "***This is the first resurrection.***" This is **not** referring to "*the rest of the dead,*" but instead to those who are "***Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.***" The First Resurrection is not a single event occurring at one moment. It is a category of resurrection encompassing all believers. Think of it as a resurrection program occurring in stages, and to fully unpack this order, it is essential to understand the pattern of the ancient Jewish harvest feasts:



The Firstfruits (The Beginning of the Harvest): Jesus Christ Himself was the absolute first of the firstfruits to rise from the dead in an immortal body. Also note that **Matthew 27:52–54** records that, immediately after Jesus' resurrection, the graves of certain dead saints were opened, and they walked into Jerusalem. This small group served as part of the initial firstfruits category accompanying the King.

The General Harvest: The massive main harvest of the righteous occurs at the ***Harpazo*** (the Rapture) before the Tribulation, when the dead in Christ are raised, and the living Church is instantly transformed into glorified bodies.

The Gleanings (The Completion of the Harvest): The final stage of this righteous category occurs at the end of the Tribulation, right before the Millennium begins, when the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation martyrs are physically raised to life.

Together, all of these stages—spanning from Christ's empty tomb to the threshold of the Millennium—make up the complete category known as the **first resurrection**.

What is the “Second Death” that John mentions? It is the **final separation of the unbeliever from God** in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14-15). Believers may experience the first death, but they **will never experience the second**. The Second Death has no authority, jurisdiction, or claim over those redeemed by Christ. This promise was foreshadowed earlier to the church at Smyrna: "*He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*" (Rev. 2:11). For the believer, the Second Death has already been defeated through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

- ✓ **First Death:** Physical death—the separation of the soul from the body. Every person experiences this unless alive at the Rapture (Heb. 9:27).
- ✓ **Second Death:** The final separation of the unbeliever from God in the Lake of Fire

What Happens During the Millennium?

The Millennium is the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth following His Second Coming. Many Christians are surprised to learn that entire sections of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Micah, and the Psalms are devoted to describing life during this Kingdom. **Revelation 20 gives the duration** of the Kingdom, while the **Old Testament prophets provide many of the details**. Old Testament knowledge is integral to this understanding.

However, the more you study the millennium, the more questions you have. It is safe to say that there are no experts on every detail of the millennium.

Major Changes During the Millennium

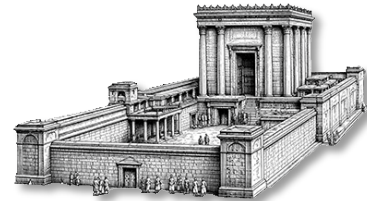
- ▷ **Satan Bound** — Satan is imprisoned in the abyss for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).
- ▷ **Jesus Rules the Earth** — Christ reigns personally from Jerusalem on David's throne (Luke 1:32-33; Isa. 9:6-7; Zech. 14:9).
- ▷ **Saints Reign with Christ** — Believers serve as kings and priests under Christ's government (Rev. 20:4-6; Rev. 5:10).
- ▷ **Israel Restored** — National Israel receives the covenant promises made to Abraham and David (Jer. 23:5-8; Ezek. 37:21-28).
- ▷ **Jerusalem Becomes the World's Capital** — Nations come to Jerusalem to worship and learn God's ways (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-3).
- ▷ **Worldwide Peace** — Wars cease, and military weapons are converted to productive uses (Isa. 2:4).
- ▷ **Perfect Government** — Justice is administered directly by Christ with righteousness and fairness (Ps. 2:9; Isa. 11:3-5).
- ▷ **Creation Restored** — The curse is greatly reduced; deserts blossom, and the earth becomes highly productive (Isa. 35:1-2; Amos 9:13).
- ▷ **Animal Nature Changed** — Predatory behavior largely disappears in the animal kingdom (Isa. 11:6-9; Isa. 65:25).
- ▷ **A Global Flood of Divine Knowledge:** For the first time in human history, spiritual blindness will be completely lifted from the nations (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14).
- ▷ **Human Lifespans Increase** — People live dramatically longer lives, similar to pre-Flood conditions (Isa. 65:20-22).
- ▷ **Disease and Suffering Greatly Reduced** — Physical afflictions are dramatically diminished (Isa. 29:18; Isa. 35:5-6).

- **Economic Prosperity** — Agricultural abundance and material prosperity characterize the Kingdom (Amos 9:13-14; Joel 3:18).
- **Each Person Will Own Land** — Each person will live securely on their own land (Micah 4:4).
- **Universal Worship of Christ** — The nations recognize Jesus as King and worship Him (Zech. 14:16-17; Phil. 2:10-11).
- **The Temple Kingdom System Restored** — A Millennial Temple functions as a memorial of Christ's completed sacrifice (Ezek. 40-48).
- **Righteousness Becomes the Standard** — Open wickedness is immediately judged and restrained (Isa. 11:4; Rev. 19:15).
- **Death Still Exists for Mortals Born During the Millennia** — Kingdom citizens in natural bodies can still die, though lifespans are greatly extended (Isa. 65:20).
- **Children Continue to Be Born** — Survivors of the Tribulation populate the earth during the Kingdom (Isa. 65:23).

Not Eternity...Yet: As wonderful as this sounds, this is not eternity. There will be limited sin and death. Because all true believers who enter the mortal kingdom are structurally preserved by God, many scholars conclude that physical death during the Millennium will occur *only* among those who choose to reject Jesus Christ (Isa. 65). Also, there will be a **final test of humanity**, as at the end of the 1,000 years Satan is released and many will choose to join a final rebellion as we will see coming up in Rev. 20:7-9.

The Millennial Temple: Ezekiel 40 - 48

The final nine chapters of the Book of Ezekiel provide an incredibly exhaustive, architectural blueprint for a glorious temple complex **that has never been built in human history**. Many people treat this temple allegorically, but it is hard to do so because it is treated with such precision in its details.



According to Ezekiel's precise geographic references, this spectacular temple will be located slightly north of Jerusalem, atop a newly elevated mountain complex. It will be open to the public every Saturday and on the New Moons. The temple is not merely for the nation of Israel; it is a house of prayer for all nations.

Interestingly, within this spectacular Millennial Temple, the ancient Ark of the Covenant is nowhere to be found. It is no longer the focus of worship because the shadow has been replaced by the direct, physical substance. The Ark is completely replaced by the literal, visible Throne of the Lord. King Jesus will sit in bodily glory upon His throne in the tabernacle, ruling the nations of the earth with perfect majesty from the heart of Israel (Isa. 16:5; Matt. 25:31; Zech. 6:12-13).



Rev. 20:7,8] *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

John marks a massive, dramatic transition in the prophetic timeline with the phrase, "**And when the thousand years are expired,**" confirming once again the Millennium's duration. Yet, precisely on schedule, according to God's timing, "**Satan shall be loosed out of his prison**".

The immediate question that arises is: **Why would a holy, sovereign God release this monster back into a perfect world?** The answer is that God is about to demonstrate something for all eternity. Throughout history, people have blamed society's problems on:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Government | | ✓ The King is perfect. |
| • Economics | ...but the Millennium | ✓ The government is perfect. |
| • Education | removes every one of those | ✓ The economy is perfect. |
| • Environment | excuses because... | ✓ The environment is restored. |
| • Upbringing | | ✓ Satan is absent. |
| • Culture | | |

Yet when Satan is released, millions willingly follow him. The final rebellion proves that the fallen heart of man is the real problem. Notice how quickly Satan returns to work **"...and shall go out to deceive the nations."** Despite his incarceration, he has learned nothing, he has repented of nothing, and he immediately resumes the very activity that resulted in his imprisonment. **Deception has always been Satan's primary weapon.**

After 1,000 years, Satan instills a rebellion that is worldwide, as John describes the nations in **"the four quarters of the earth."** This expression simply refers to the entire globe. The revolt is **not localized** to a single nation or region. Satan's influence spreads across the world, gathering rebels from every nation. This also tells us that the Millennium is populated by vast numbers of people born during Christ's reign. While resurrected saints reign with Christ in glorified bodies, mortal men and women continue to live, marry, and raise families throughout the Kingdom (Isa. 65:20-23). Over the course of one thousand years, the earth becomes enormously populated.

Gog and Magog: John identifies the rebels as: "Gog and Magog." Because of this, many scholars avoid addressing these verses, which makes them among the most misunderstood references in Revelation. This is **not** the same battle as the Ezekiel 38 and 39 war:

Ezekiel 38-39 Battle	Revelation 20 Rebellion
Before the Millennium	After the Millennium
Limited coalition of nations	Worldwide rebellion
Israel dwelling securely	Christ already reigning
Satan not bound	Satan released from abyss
Leads into Kingdom	Occurs after Kingdom



I believe that John is borrowing familiar Old Testament imagery to describe a final worldwide rebellion against God. Just as **"Waterloo"** became shorthand for a decisive defeat, **"Gog and Magog"** become symbolic names for the ultimate enemies of God's Kingdom.

Additionally, Magog is an ethnic people, so some of those ethnicities will survive into the millennia. We also learn from the Greek Septuagint translation of Amos 7:1 that Gog is a demon king; more precisely, it calls him the **"King of the Locusts,"** and from other scriptures we learn that locusts are demons (Prov 30:27; cf Rev 9).

To me, the most astonishing statement comes at the end of the verse: **"the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."** The rebellion is obviously immense. After a thousand years of living under the direct rule of Jesus Christ, countless millions still choose rebellion when given the opportunity.



Those who rebel at the end of the Millennial Kingdom have enjoyed every blessing of that age, living in righteousness, peace, and prosperity, yet they still join Satan's revolt when he is released. Their rebellion forever settles the question of whether man's problem is primarily his surroundings or his sinful nature. The final revolt demonstrates that lasting transformation requires more than improved circumstances—it **requires a changed heart.**



Rev. 20:9] *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

This final rebellion moves across the earth toward one destination: "**they went up on the breadth of the earth.**" John describes a worldwide move as Satan's followers come from every corner of the globe, converging upon the center of Christ's earthly government. What began as deception in verse 8 now becomes open rebellion.

An important aspect of the passage is what does **not** happen. There is no military engagement, siege or counterattack. The armies surround Jerusalem, but before any battle begins, "**fire came down from God out of heaven,**" and the rebellion is crushed immediately.



Rev. 20:10] *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night **for ever and ever.***

Following the instantaneous destruction of the global rebel armies by heavenly fire, God executes final, permanent judgment upon the ultimate mastermind behind all cosmic and earthly rebellion. John records that "**the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.**"



John notes that Satan is thrown into the lake "**where the beast and the false prophet are.**" If you remember, this 'terrible twosome' were thrown into the lake of fire one thousand years earlier, at the same time that Satan was bound in prison. Now, after one thousand years, when Satan is then cast into the lake of fire, the 'terrible twosome' are still there; there is no "annihilation" in the Bible; they are still there burning forever and ever.

Annihilationism is an incorrect doctrine — adhered to by various modern cults and theologically progressive — which claims that when an unbeliever or a rebellious spiritual entity is thrown into hell, they are instantly vaporized, wiped out of existence, or extinguished. Their reasoning is that a loving God would not allow ongoing suffering. This comes from a misuse of verses such as Matthew 10:28 ("*destroy both soul and body in hell*") to defend this view. However, the Greek used for "destroy" (*apollumi*) never means to terminate existence or annihilate; rather, it consistently means to be delivered up to eternal misery, ruin, or loss, as seen throughout the New Testament (e.g., Matt. 9:17; Luke 15:4; John 6:12).

Nature of Eternal Retribution: The word "**tormented**" requires conscious awareness. The phrase "**day and night**" indicates a complete lack of relief or interruption. The translated phrase "**for ever and ever**" from the Greek (*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*) is the strongest expression for absolute eternity available in the Greek language.

In other words, if God lives forever and ever, then this **punishment lasts forever and ever**; it has no endpoint, no escape hatch, and no parole.



Rev. 20:11] *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

Now John witnesses the most solemn courtroom scene in all of Scripture—the **Great White Throne Judgment**. This is the final judgment of the **unsaved dead** before the creation of the new heavens and new earth. **Every unbeliever from every age** will stand before the Judge of all the earth and answer for their rejection of God.



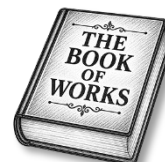
This court will operate with perfect knowledge, justice, and righteousness. Here, nothing is hidden, forgotten, or misunderstood. The Judge sees everything exactly as it is, and the Judge is identified in the Scriptures as Jesus Christ Himself (John 5:22; Acts 17:31). This judgment is specifically for "**the dead**" mentioned in the following few verses. These are the **unsaved dead who were not raised in the First Resurrection**.

The "great white throne judgment" is not to be confused with the Bema Seat Judgment where crowns and rewards for faithful service are bestowed upon believers (see appendix).



Rev. 20:12] *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**.*

John sees "**the dead, small and great, stand before God**." These are **not believers**, but the unsaved dead referenced earlier in **Revelation 20:5** who were not raised at the beginning of the Millennium. No distinction is made between rich or poor, powerful or powerless, famous or forgotten. Kings, presidents, celebrities, and ordinary people all stand equally before the Great White Throne. Then "**the books were opened**," revealing God's perfect record of every life. Nothing has been forgotten, overlooked, or hidden. Every deed, word, and motive is known to God. Alongside these books is "**the book of life**," the registry of those who belong to God. Rev. 20:5,12.



This passage unmasks the deadly trap of religious legalism. A staggering portion of humanity believes they will go to heaven because they are "basically a good person" or because their good deeds outweigh their bad. In fact, a study of modern worldviews found that nearly half of adults believe they can "earn" their way into heaven through good behavior (see appendix).

But scripture warns: **You do not want to be judged by your works**. Human works cannot save anyone. Those who profess legalism for salvation run into trouble. The moment an individual stands before God relying on their personal resume, they have entered a legal system that demands absolute perfection. Because every human being is born with a fallen nature and has sinned, trying to present your personal works before a blazing, holy God is an automatic losing case.

Before God can usher in His new heavens and new earth, He must finally deal with sin; this His Son will do at the Great White Throne.



Rev. 20:13, 14] *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

John sees every unsaved person summoned before God. No one escapes this resurrection. Whether buried at sea, lost to history, cremated, or forgotten by mankind, every unbeliever is brought forth for judgment. The phrase "**death and hell**" refers to death and Hades, the temporary abode of the unsaved dead. Their occupants are released, resurrected, and judged according to their works. Hades is a temporary place that once had a good side (Paradise) and a bad side (torment). Christ descended to Paradise, proclaimed His victory, and transferred the Old Testament saints from Abraham's Bosom into Heaven itself (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Eph. 4:8-10). The good side was abolished, and what was left was a place of torment for the unrighteous dead (Luke 16:23).

Note: The reference to "*the sea*" is fascinating. Demons took temporary refuge in the sea (Matt 8:30). This could be a remez.

Once judgment is complete, death and Hades themselves are cast into the Lake of Fire. Death, mankind's oldest enemy, is finally abolished forever. Hades, being only a temporary holding place, is no longer needed. John calls this final judgment "**the second death.**"

First Death:

The separation of the soul and the body is what we call physical death.



Second Death:

is eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire.

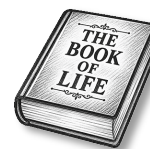


For born-again believers who partook in the first resurrection category, the second death is completely nullified and has absolutely no legal power or hold over their lives. However, for those who rejected the Savior, the second death becomes their unchangeable, conscious eternal reality.



Rev. 20:15] *And whosoever was not found written in **the book of life** was cast into the lake of fire.*

The judgment reaches its final verdict. The issue is not wealth, status, education, religion, or even good works. The decisive question is whether one's name is recorded in the **Book of Life**. Those standing at the Great White Throne have already been judged **according to their works**, and those works have demonstrated their guilt before a holy God. Those who have accepted Jesus Christ are found in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Ex 32:32, 3; Ps 69:28; Rev 21:27; Phil 4:3; Rev 13:8; 17:8).



Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16): Much of what we know about what happens after death comes from the story (not a parable) of Lazarus and the Rich man in Luke 16:19-31

Next Lesson: Our final Lesson, lesson 24. Read Chapters 21 & 22 covering Eternity and Revelation study wrap-up. Be thinking about which Bible book we want to study next.

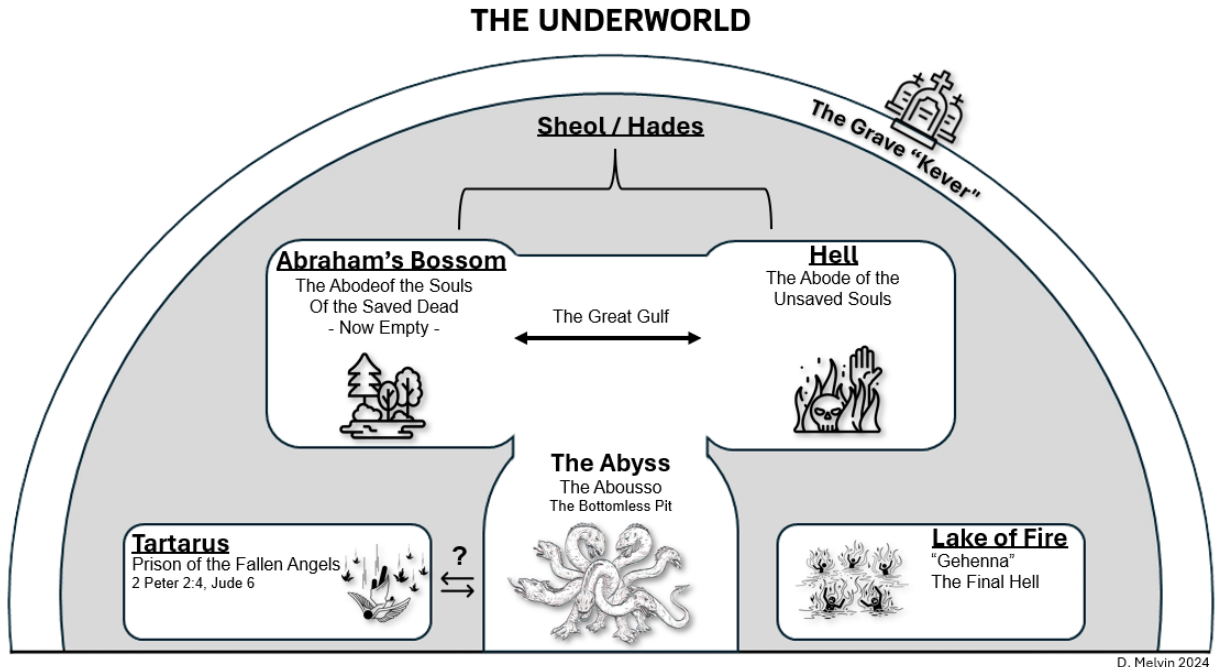
Appendix – For Lesson 20

A 2020 American Worldview Inventory study found that only about one-third of U.S. adults embraced the traditional Christian belief that salvation comes through Jesus Christ rather than through personal merit or good works. At the same time, nearly **half believed that a person could earn a place in Heaven through good behavior**. Subsequent American Worldview Inventory studies suggest that biblical understanding has continued to decline, with only about 4% of American adults now possessing a consistently biblical worldview.

The 4% figure does **not** mean that only 4% of Americans claim to be Christian, attend church, pray, own a Bible, or even believe in Jesus. In fact, recent Barna research found that about **66% of Americans say they have made a personal commitment to Jesus** that is still important in their lives. **However**, if any of the self-identified Christians in the 66% answered **yes or agreed to any of the following statements**, they were excluded from being defined as an integrated Christian.

- Believe Jesus is Savior but reject absolute moral truth.
- Believe in Heaven but also believe all religions lead to God.
- Attend church but embrace relativism.
- Believe the Bible is inspired but not authoritative.

After excluding anyone who agreed with any of the above statements, the percentages dropped to only 4%, according to Barna’s definition of an "**Integrated Disciple**"—someone whose beliefs and behaviors align with a biblical worldview across multiple categories simultaneously, including moral truth, salvation, God, human nature, purpose, family, lifestyle, and spiritual practices.



Lesson materials available at: www.TrustingInGrace.com

“Hell”

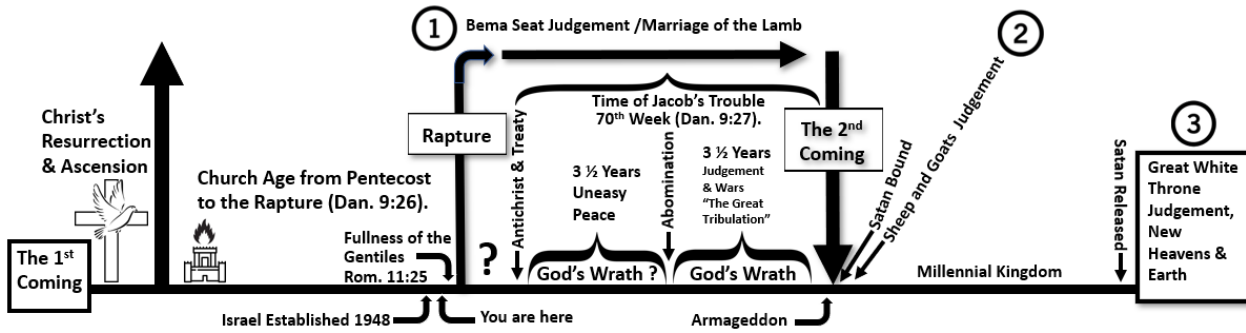
Hades	VS	Gehenna
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary • Will be cast into Gehenna (Rev. 20:14) • Down in the earth (Matt. 12:40) • Associated with the bottomless pit, the aboussou – the abyss 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forever • It is not the “outer darkness” referred to in Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30.

! We need to understand the differences between Hades and Gehenna since both are translated into the word “Hell” in many English bibles which is confusing.

CONNECT TO GOD



The password is:
PRAYER



REVELATION CHAPTER TWENTY

M	U	T	E	D	A	R	N	E	D	L	E	G	N	A	ANGEL	GREAT	
U	T	E	A	E	B	B	D	U	E	T	O	E	N	D	S	BATTLE	HEAVEN
I	S	H	L	E	A	P	E	E	R	T	S	P	E	D	N	BEAST	IMAGE
I	M	F	R	T	R	E	V	I	A	L	T	N	E	A	T	BELOVED	JUDGED
E	B	A	T	O	T	G	O	L	A	R	E	I	T	R	S	BLESSED	LAI
K	I	L	G	I	N	G	L	F	O	P	T	A	R	E	A	BOOKS	LAKE
A	E	S	H	E	D	E	E	P	O	I	S	H	E	W	E	CAST	MAGOG
L	O	W	F	I	R	E	B	D	E	S	S	E	L	B	B	CHAIN	NUMBER
E	S	S	E	N	T	I	W	T	U	S	K	O	O	B	O	CHRIST	OPENED
I	C	G	D	G	O	J	O	E	D	R	I	N	K	N	O	DEATH	POWER
D	O	H	O	E	U	T	E	H	T	E	E	T	E	R	S	DEVIL	PROPHET
G	E	G	R	D	V	E	E	P	S	U	B	V	E	R	R	EARTH	SATAN
B	A	A	G	I	V	I	N	O	A	B	A	M	E	A	N	FALSE	THRONE
M	E	E	T	I	S	H	L	R	C	E	O	W	U	P	S	FIRE	WHITE
I	D	A	S	H	I	T	S	P	H	B	O	A	T	N	Y	FLED	WITNESS
N	I	A	H	C	H	E	A	P	A	P	Y	D	I	A	L	GOG	WRITTEN