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REVELATION 20:1-15

I'm so glad we have this chapter all alone today. I'm so glad we don't have it combined with another chapter because it's so rich and so full.

In this one chapter there are contained **three major theological presentations...Three major doctrines...**(By the way, don't be afraid of the word "theology". It simply means "a *rational interpretation of the truths of and about God.*")

In **Revelation 20**, we see the doctrine of the **resurrection**; the doctrine of the **Millennium** and the doctrine of **Satan's destiny**.

Let's keep in mind where we are in the sequence of the events of the end times.

Last week we saw in **Revelation 19** the last great battle of Armageddon, and we saw that our Lord Jesus destroyed the armies of the earth...HOW?

By the sword of His mouth...His Word.

We also saw the fate (or the doom) of the Antichrist and the false prophet.

Numbers 16:25-33...Korah

So, keep in mind that the events of this week's lesson follow these events!

Revelation 20:1-3...

Here we see Satan bound by an angel for 1,000 years. Satan will be bound for a Millennium...(“mille” – 1,000 and “annum” – year).

The word “**millennium**” is not found in God's Word, but don't let that bother you...

The word “**trinity**” isn't found there...

And the word “**Rapture**” isn't found there...

But the theology...the truths of these words are found in God's Word.

We see Satan is bound and thrown into “**the abyss**” or the “**bottomless pit**.”

Now we need to know that this bottomless pit is **not** the lake of fire...it is **not** hell. **This is not Satan's final destiny and we'll see that a little later.**

God has **allowed** Satan to be “god of this age”, the “prince of the power of the air”, the one who goes about like a “roaring lion seeking whom he may devour”...

Satan could **do** and **be** none of these things if God had not allowed it.

By the way, in the little book of **Jude**, Michael, the archangel, dared not bring a railing accusation against Satan...and here we see an ordinary angel becomes his jailer and leads him away captive. **WHY?** Because God has allowed Satan's power to be diminished.

There's a very interesting couple of verses tucked away back in **Isaiah 14**.

Isaiah 14:15-17...(speaking of Satan)

“...you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying,

'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home...'”

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In other words...we were afraid of him?

So, in Revelation 20, we are told that

- 1) Satan is bound and cast into the abyss **before** the Millennium.
- 2) Satan is loosed from the abyss **after** the Millennium.
- 3) Satan is then **finally** cast into the lake of fire.

These are **three distinct acts** and to confuse them is to misunderstand the entire passage.

Now, why is God going to bind Satan for 1,000 years?

Well, just like the prophets of the Old Testament preached “peace, peace” and there was no peace...so men today talk of peace and how the world will have peace...

But, let me tell you something,

The world will never have peace as long as Satan and his demons are free.

Satan is behind the deception and the wars and the evil in this world.

But remember...God promised many years ago that there would be “peace on earth” and so He binds Satan away so that this promise will be accomplished...

When Satan is bound for the time of the Millennium, the entire atmosphere of the earth will be changed!!

There will be a **perfect spiritual environment**.

There will be a **perfect moral environment**.

There will be a **perfect physical environment**.

This will be true not only because Satan is bound and made inactive, but more importantly because Christ Jesus will be reigning as absolute Sovereign.

Now, remember the chronology of this...

The unbelievers have been defeated. The devil and his demons are taken out of the way. So, this sets the stage for the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ to be ushered in...

This chapter of Scripture doesn't expound on the Millennial Reign, but the Old Testament is replete with passages that give us many details and I want to just take a few moments to share with you this morning a little about the few we just mentioned.

1) There will be a perfect moral environment.

We hear so much about morality today...and one of the most frequent statements we hear is “you can't legislate morality.”

But, you **can**...and you **do** legislate morality. In fact morality is what our laws are for, aren't they?

There are many passages we could cite, but let me just say that the environment will be morally perfect because our Lord Jesus Christ will be ruling with rod of iron!!

In the **Book of Zephaniah**, God says, “You will revere Me; you will accept My instruction.”

2) There will be a perfect physical environment.

Nature will respond to Messiah's rule...

Isaiah tells us that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, the lion shall eat straw like the ox...the calf and the young

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lion and the cow and the bear...all will dwell in harmony together, and a little child shall lead them! **Isaiah 11:6**

Isaiah also “ the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped...the lame shall leap...the dumb shall sing...” (There's hope for me!!)

Micah tells us that we shall all live on his own piece of land and enjoy it.

Amos tells us that the land will produce in great abundance.

And I believe one of the most interesting passages...

Isaiah tells us in **Isaiah 65:20**, that babies won't die as babies. They will all live. NO MORE ABORTIONS!! And anyone who does not live to be 100 will be considered accursed. In fact, this passage tells us that one will be considered a youth at 100!! One theologian believes God will give folks 100 years to accept Jesus and if they don't, then they die!

Ezekiel gives us explicit dimensions and descriptions for the Millennial Temple and says that the name shall be called **Jehovah-Shamah... “the Lord is there”**. All nations, all peoples will go to Jerusalem to worship, or they will suffer drought...

Zechariah tells us that even the cooking pots in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord.

Doesn't this make you long for the righteous rule of Jesus Christ?

Verse 4...

John saw thrones and he saw that judgment was given to them...

Who are these who sat on thrones and judged?

Well, I believe we see in this verse three groups of people...

1) “they” – that's you and me, and also the O. T. saints.

Paul said in **1 Corinthians 6:2**... “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?”

2) “those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God.”

These are Tribulation saints who **have been martyred**.

3) “those who had not worshiped the beast or his image.”

These are Tribulation saints who have **survived the Tribulation**.

Have you ever thought about this? Did you know you will judge the world? Now, I certainly don't know what all that means, but you know...

Right now in this world, Christians are **looked down on**, and we're considered **narrow**; we're considered **dense** and **dull**, but

God's Word says one day we will rule the world with our Savior!

Ezekiel 9:3-11...

Verses 5-6...

John hastens to tell us that **“the rest”** (“the rest” are those who died without Jesus) and they will not come to life until after the Millennium.

Many folks think there will a “general resurrection” when everyone who has ever lived and died will be raised all at once...but that's not what God's Word teaches...

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There will be two resurrections...

The first for the saved...for the "blessed and holy..."

The second for the lost...but this won't take place until 1,000 years later...

The resurrection of the believers will take place in three stages...one has already taken place...remember in **Matthew's** account of the resurrection of Jesus, **Matthew** says that many of those who had believed were raised after Jesus was raised?

Another will be the Rapture, when Jesus comes back and we meet Him in the air and another will take place when the Tribulation saints who have been martyred will be raised from the dead.

By the way, what happens to those believing folks who are alive at the end of the Tribulation Period? **They will enter the Millennium in their natural bodies...**

Now, that's important...Just keep that in mind because we'll come back to that in just a few minutes.

But, before we go on...let me ask you, will you be numbered as one of those blessed and holy ones of the first resurrection?

If you belong to Jesus now...

If you have ever given your heart to Jesus in the past and your spirit bears witness with His Spirit that you are His, then you will be a part of the blessed and holy first resurrection.

If you have any doubts, why not get it settled today?

Listen, men who are born twice, die only once...

Men who are born once, will die twice...

Let's review just a little what we've see so far in this chapter...

- 1) We saw that Satan will be bound for 1,000 years.
- 2) We saw the first resurrection.
- 3) We saw that those who take part in the first resurrection and those who are living at the end of the Tribulation Period will enter the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus and will reign with Him for 1,000 years.

Now, let's see what will happen after the Millennium...

Verses 7-9...

Who are these whom Satan will deceive and lead into war?

Remember that we said there will be those saved folks who will survive the Tribulation Period?

These folks will enter the Millennial Kingdom in their natural bodies. What do natural bodies do? What do men and women do in their natural bodies? They reproduce...They get married and have babies, don't they?

Nowadays it's not uncommon for couples to have babies **without** getting married, but during the rule and reign of Christ Jesus, couples will get married and **then** have babies, **because of the righteous reign of Jesus and the fact that He will legislate morality!!**

Also remember, as we saw earlier, folks will live a long, long time. In fact, saved folks will live the entire 1,000 years and not die...so there will many, many, many children born during the Millennium.

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Now, even though these children are born to saved parents, they must accept or reject Jesus Christ on their own...WHY ON EARTH WOULDN'T THEY ACCEPT HIM??? What possible reason could they have to not claim Him as their Savior?

Well, let's think about this for a few minutes...

What are our three areas of temptation? The **world**, the **flesh**, and the **devil**.

- 1) The world will be perfect. We've seen that it will be a perfect physical world and a perfect spiritual world and a perfect moral world.
- 2) The devil will have been taken captive during this period of time. And he won't be allowed to tempt folks until after his release.

So, what's left? The **flesh**...the old human nature. Man's heart will still be deceitful and wicked if it's not regenerated. Paul said, "In my flesh dwells no good thing." Dr. John Phillips: "Just as today, many children of believers have become 'gospel hardened', children of that day will become 'glory hardened'."

Now, remember, we're not talking about believers. Jesus isn't going to take believers saved into the Millennium only to let them get lost again!

We're talking about folks who are born during this 1,000 year reign. We're talking about children born to believers and also children born to those children...1,000 years is a long time, folks!

There will no doubt still be **preaching** and **teaching** and **witnessing** in the Millennium because there will still be folks who will need to be saved. Those who reject the salvation that is theirs in Christ Jesus will be "model citizens" on the "outside", because Jesus is ruling and reigning. They cannot rebel...**Jesus won't allow it**...but inwardly, they will still be depraved...and they will still need salvation!

Listen, Beloved, a perfect environment never saved anyone! **Adam and Eve** lived in a perfect environment and **they** fell!

I believe this is why Satan is loosed. God didn't make folks to be puppets...He gave us a choice and He will give them one, as well. Will they follow **Jesus** with all their heart, soul and mind? Or will they follow **Satan** with all their heart, soul and mind?

Well, **verses 8 and 9** tell us that those who reject Jesus Christ will gather together for war. But this isn't much of a war..."fire came down and devoured them."

Verse 10...

The devil will finally be put in his place...Jesus said that this place has been reserved for the devil and his angels. Satan's last ditch effort will fail!

Verses 11-15...

Remember back in **verse 5**, we saw "**the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed**"?

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Well, that's who we see here... "the rest of the dead"...the unsaved dead.

The **Book of Daniel** tells us that the saved will be raised to everlasting life, but the others (the rest we see here) "to everlasting disgrace and contempt."

Today, sin isn't considered shameful, is it? Just in **our** lifetime, think of the sins that have become commonplace! Think of what's been put forth by the convention that's taken place this past week – folks openly supporting homosexuality and abortion! America used to know how to blush at sin, but no longer!

Well, one day, those who have said, "Anything goes," and "If it feels good, do it!" and all the rest of the cliches we always hear, will stand before the Great White Throne...and they will stand in disgrace and contempt.

Look first at the Throne...It's great and white...This Throne is pure and holy and we won't have to wonder about this Throne being abused or misused...because of the One who sits on it.

John 5:22... "The Father judges no man but has committed all judgment to the Son."

Authority to execute judgment belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, the One who came to be the Savior of the world, will one day judge the world.

Remember, the Great White Throne is not for believers. We saw last week that believers have already been judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ...not to determine their lostness or their salvation, but to determine whether their deeds done on earth will stand the test.

Verse 11...tells us that heaven and earth shall flee from the presence of the Judge...

What does that mean? This judgment won't take place on earth or in heaven but somewhere in God's created universe.

"no place was found for them" Every stone, every refuge, every familiar thing will be gone... There's an old spiritual that says, "I went to the rocks to hide my face and the rocks cried out, 'no hiding place.'"

All the small and the great...the little folks and the big folks...the educated and the uneducated...all who had rejected Jesus will stand before Him.

I believe there will be at least four groups of people there...

1) The out and out sinner...

This is the person who has shaken his fist in the face of God and said, "I'll live my life the way I want to" and he did...he lived in open rebellion against God...not caring at all that Jesus shed His precious blood for him.

2) The self-righteous person...

These people don't think they're sinners. They don't think they need a Savior. They refuse the grace of God because quite frankly, they just don't need it! Hell will be filled with "self-righteous, holier-than-thou" type people.

3) The procrastinator...

The story is told of three evil spirits...three of Satan's demons who had been summoned by Satan for a meeting.

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Satan asked,

“Who will go to earth and persuade man to accomplish the ruin of their souls and how will you do it?”

The first demon said, “I will go.” And Satan said, “What will be your strategy?”

“Oh,” the first demon said, “I will tell them there is no Heaven.”

But Satan replied, “That won’t work, you will never be able to force man to believe there is not a Heaven. This belief is too deep-seated in the hearts of men.”

The second demon said, “I will go.” And Satan asked him, “What will **you** tell them?”

“Oh, I will tell them there is no Hell.”

And again, Satan said, “That will never do. You’ll never be able to convince most men that there is no Hell. We must have something else...something that will appeal to **all classes** and **all ages** and **all races**...**something that will be acceptable to the human race as a whole.**”

Then, the third spirit said, “Satan, I will go, and I have a **masterful** plan, one that will surely work!”

And Satan said, “Well, tell me your masterful plan!”

To which the demon replied, “**It’s simple...I’ll simply tell them there is no hurry!**”

And Satan said, “Yes, that will work...Don’t tell men there’s no Heaven, and don’t tell them there’s no Hell...go and convince men that there’s no hurry!”

The procrastinator is not an out and out vile and wicked person. Neither is he a self-righteous person. **This person intends to get saved one day!**

“The road to hell is paved with good intentions!!”

Well, we’ve seen the out and out sinner, and the self-righteous person, and the procrastinator, let’s look at **the saddest one of all...**

4) The unsaved church member

These folks have been **active in church**. They’ve served on **committees**. They’ve sung in the **choir**. They’ve served as **deacons**. They’ve taught **Sunday School**. They may have even **pastored** churches...

but they’ve never put their trust in the Lord Jesus. They have trusted in all their involvement with church to save them.

Verse 12...

Books were opened...

Scripture is not perfectly clear what these books were...

Let me give you several opinions about these books...

- 1) that when a person is saved his name is written in the Book of Life.
- 2) that this book contains every name of every person who has ever lived, and if that person dies without accepting Jesus, then his name is blotted out.
- 3) that there are **two** books...the Book of Life and the Lamb’s Book of Life. The book of life contains all the names of all the people ever born, and the Lamb’s Book of Life contains the names of all the saved people.

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Some folks believe there is also a book which has been written containing all the deeds of all the unsaved people. Some believe the Book of the Law somehow ties in...

Which view is correct? I don't know. And you know, it really doesn't matter, does it? **Whatever these books contain, or don't contain, they condemn these folks...**

"the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, **according to their deeds.**"

What's so important about these deeds? Well, it's because there will be **degrees of punishment** in hell. Hell will be hotter for some than others. That's why the deeds of these folks are judged.

"...death and Hades gave up the dead..." ***Death has the body...Hades has the soul...***

When were the body and soul of the **believer** reunited? At the Rapture!!

Well, here the body and soul of the **unbeliever** will be reunited!

Man will not be able to crawl into the grave and pull the dirt over his head and never be heard from again. Don't you think that's what some folks believe?

"It's appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment..."

Let me ask you one question and we'll be through...

Are you certain which judgment you'll attend?

Will it be the Great White Throne Judgment? It certainly doesn't have to be. You can accept Christ today and be sure you'll miss it!

Will it be the Judgment Seat of Christ? If you know it will be there, what about your works? Will they all be burned up? Are your works wood, hay and stubble? Or are they gold, silver, and precious stones? Will you have some works survive so that you'll have some righteous acts to be clothed in, as we saw last week?

If you know Jesus Christ, there is now no condemnation for you. You have passed from death unto life! You're **not** lumped with "the dead" in **verse 12**...you have been given life...abundant life...eternal life!!

My sincere, heart-felt prayer is that no one in this room will be at the Great White Throne Judgment!