
Date: February 28, 2018
 Title: The Final Judgment
 Text: Revelation 20
 Theme: The enthroned Christ (Rev. 1) encourages His persecuted church (Rev. 2; 3) by presently reclaiming what is His as Creator (Rev. 4) and Redeemer (Rev. 5) and ultimately reconstituting His Garden (Rev. 21; 22) for the joy of His people and the destruction of His enemies (Rev. 20).

Introduction:

Our intent in our study of Revelation 20 is not to discredit a literal 1,000 year reign of Jesus on Earth. If, however, no number in Revelation is to be taken literally, then there is no reason to think the 1,000 year period of time is to be taken literally. To think there was a starting point that cause the clock to begin ticking would be erroneous. The pages of the calendar are being removed and we are moving ever closer to the coming of Jesus, but God controls the time table.

The only way to understand Revelation 20 properly is to see how John continues to fold events into each other. What he has said, he says, and will say. Each repeating of events looks at it from different angels and perspectives. This is no less true of Revelation 20 and the judgment of God's people and enemies.

If one thinks sequential, there will be a difficult time reconciling all of the elements.

THE BIG PICTURE:

- ⁸ **"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss** [cf. Rev. 9] and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. . .
¹¹ **The beast which was and is not**, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction" (Rev. 17:8, 11).

Revelation 17 has already prepared us for Revelation 20. The Dragon was, and is not [bound], and is about to come up out of the abyss (Rev. 9).

"IS NOT"

"That the beast 'is not' refers to the continuing effects of his defeat by Christ at the cross and resurrection."¹

From Matthew we know Satan seeks to stop the plan of God (Matt. 4:10; 16:23). We also learn from Matthew's account of Jesus having bound Satan and "plundering his house" (Matt. 12:25-29). This same story occurs in Mark 3:20-27. Mark will use the same words as Matthew. The word for "plunder" means "to seize, to spoil." It is a compound word made up of the prefix **dia** and the word **harpazo**. Harpazo is a strong word used of a violent taking (Matt. 11:12), of being taken by force against one's will (John 6:15), of wolves catching sheep (John 10:12), of no one able to pluck anyone out of God's hands (John 10:28, 29), of Philip being caught away by the Spirit of the Lord (Acts 8:39), of Paul almost being pulled apart (Acts 23:10), of Paul being caught

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up to Paradise (2 Cor. 12:2, 4), of God's people being caught up by the Lord at His coming (1 Thess. 4:17), and of the Christ being caught up into heaven at His ascension (Rev. 12:5). The same word used in Matthew 12:29 for "Satan" being bound [**deo**] is the same one used in Revelation 20:2 for Satan being bound.

Satan was defeated at the cross (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8). This initial defeat although inaugurated, has yet to be consummated (1 Cor. 15). However, right now, He is cast out of heaven (Luke 10:18; John 16:11; Rev. 9:1; 12:8, 9). Despite his immediate defeat, he is currently the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2) and the prince of this world (John 16:11) for an indefinite period of time known only to God (Rev. 20 ["a thousand years"]). As a prince, he has a "kingdom" marked by darkness (Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18). As a prince, he has authority. This is seen repeatedly from Revelation 12 and 13. "Authority" to do what?

We know from Mark's gospel that the devil seeks to snatch the Word of God from bearing fruit (Mark 4:15). He still "binds" people (Luke 13:16). It is the same word occurring in Matt. 12:29 and Rev. 20:2. He is still entering people, energizing evil through people (John 13:27; Acts 5:3).

As noted earlier, Satan was defeated at the cross. Moreover, there is still a fuller and final expression of this defeat (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20), but this opening conquest empowers perseverance in the people of God. Satan has been and continues to be under the authority of God (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20). He does God's bidding.

- 1.** What is the **author's structure** of this passage?
Please a) show *sections with verse references*, b) state the *author's emphasis*, and c) explain what *strategies* you used to see this structure.

- I. The Final Judgment of God Against the unholy Trinity (vv. 1-3, 7-10)

¹ "**Then I saw** an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and **bound him** [cf. "**is not**"] for a thousand years [e.g. "**long time**" during this period the gospel spreads to all the nations]; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time" (Rev. 20:1-3).

⁷ "When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison [cf. Rev. 9:1-12], ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore [cf. Rev. 13-19]. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them [cf. Rev. 17:8-14; 19:11-21]. ¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:7-10).

II. The Final Judgment of God Against the Woman's Seed (vv. 4-6)

⁴“**Then I saw** thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6).

III. The Final Judgment of God Against the Serpent's Seed (vv. 11-15)

¹¹“**Then I saw** a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

Author's Emphasis: The final judgment of all things by the one who sits on the throne.

Author's Strategies:

- “Then I saw” vv. 1, 4, 11
- Subject Matter

Dragon (vv. 1-3, 7-10)

The people of God (vv. 4-6)

The judgment of humanity (vv. 11-15)

- 2.** How does the **context inform the meaning** of this passage? Answer this question using a) the *literary context* (the passages on either side), b) the *historical context* (circumstances and culture of the audience), and c) the *biblical context* (connections to other places in the Bible).

Literary

With the coming of Jesus (chap. 19), evil is destroyed (chap. 20), His people are delivered, and His Garden is Restored (chaps. 21; 22).

Historical

All the enemies of God have been and will be destroyed.

- Babel (Gen. 11)
- Egypt (Exod. 14:26-28)
- Assyria
- Babylon
- Rome
- Etc.

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Biblical

Read Daniel 7; Ezekiel 38; 39

- 3.** In light of the emphasis of this passage in its context, state the **author's main idea** for *his audience* (in one short sentence).

With the coming of Jesus (chap. 19), evil is destroyed (chap. 20), His people are delivered, and His Garden is Restored (chaps. 21; 22).

- 4.** What parts of this passage **connect to the gospel** of Jesus Christ? What *particular facet of the gospel* is in view? [What are its Christological / Christo-centric contributions?]

Jesus is worth dying for (v. 4a)

His people will co-reign with Him (vv. 4b, 6)

The saints of God will be gathered in the city of God (v. 9)

God will deliver His people from the serpent's rage/wrath (v. 9b)

God will judge all of humanity (vv. 11-15). No one will escape this judgment.

Q. How does this descriptive contribute to the idea of judgment in this chapter?

A. It describes for us the outcome of the judgment.

- 5.** In light of your gospel connection, what **argument** (one short sentence) will you make to **your audience**? What **applications** from this argument will you make for the believer? The unbeliever?

To the believing: Hold fast to Christ, for He is coming and His reward is with Him.

To the unbelieving: Repent now for the judgment of God is final and furious.

- 6.** What is your **preaching outline**?

Drilling down with Simeon Principles

1. How does this vision of Christ expand on our understanding of Him in this Book, Testament, and Canon?

Book: When Jesus returns His reward will be with Him for the unbelieving and the believing.

Canon

OT

NT

2. Where is the surprise in this text? You should expect the text to surprise you.

The overwhelming weight [awe] of His judgment.

3. What is the unique contribution this text, passage, chapter make to the Book as a whole?

Its finality and fullness of judgment.

4. Always look to link the pieces to the whole.

- a. How is this text informed by the melodic line?

In the return of Jesus, He fully and finally reclaims all that is His as Creator and Redeemer and reconstitutes His Garden through the delivering of His people and the destruction of His enemies.

- b. How does it contribute to the melodic line?

It shows the fulfillment of God's initial judgment in Genesis 3:15, carried forward at the cross, and culminating at His return.

5. Can we trust the A.I.M. of the text to be relevant, applicable, and creative / profitable?

Keep looking to Jesus for He is the author and finisher of faith.

You must accept Jesus as Savior or you will bow before Him as Judge.

¹ G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC, p. 864.

