

## Revelation 20

### Outline:

- I. Verses 1-3: satan bound
  - a. Verses 1-2: an angel captures and chains satan.
  - b. Verse 3: the devil is confined to the bottomless pit for a thousand years.
- II. Verses 4-6: the resurrection and the rule of the just.
  - a. Verse 4a: all those who were martyred during the great tribulation are now raised from the dead.
  - b. Verses 4b-6: they now reign with Christ for a thousand years.
- III. Verses 7-10: satan is freed and revolts.
  - a. Verse 7: after a thousand years satan is released.
  - b. Verse 8: satan deceives the nations.
  - c. Verse 9a: satans armies attack Jerusalem
  - d. Verse 9b-10: the annihilation: satan's troops are consumed by fires from heaven.
    - i. They are consumed by fires from heaven, but...
    - ii. Satan is thrown into hell.
- IV. Verses 11-15: Judgment at the great White Throne
  - a. Verse 11: Jesus is on the great white throne.
  - b. Verses 12-13: all the unsaved throughout human history are now judged.
    - i. Verses 12a-12b: the books in this judgment.
      1. Various books (12a)
      2. The book of life (12b)
    - ii. The basis of this judgment (12c-13): their deeds done while on earth
  - c. The judgment (14-15): to be thrown into the lake of fire

### ESV Study Bible:

*Interlude: The Thousand Years of the Dragon's Binding and the Martyrs' Reign. These verses are among the most controversial in Revelation. Responsible scholars disagree regarding the meaning of the "thousand years" in vv. 2-7 (see [Introduction: Millennial Views](#)). The three main views are represented by: (1) **Premillennialists** (those who believe Christ will return "pre" [before] the millennium) think that this thousand years (Latin, millennium) is a future time of great peace and justice, which is usually thought to be a literal 1,000-year period that will begin when Christ returns to reign on earth as a physically present King, and which will include resurrected believers reigning with him. (2) **Postmillennialists** (those who believe that Christ will return "post" [after] the millennial period) think that before Christ returns to earth the gospel will spread and triumph so powerfully that societies will be transformed and peace and justice will reign on earth for a thousand years (or for a long period of time), after which Christ will return for the final judgment. (3) **Amillennialists** (those who hold an "a" [non-literal] millennial view) think this thousand years is the same period as this present church age, and that there will be no future "millennium" before Christ returns for the final judgment. Related to this is the question of whether the thousand years are to be interpreted literally (most premillennialists hold this view) or symbolically (most postmillennialists and amillennialists and some premillennialists hold this view). Those holding each view read John's millennial vision in terms of their*

*understanding of other biblical texts and their approach to prophetic literature as a whole. Likewise, each of these views falls within the framework of historic Christian orthodoxy.*

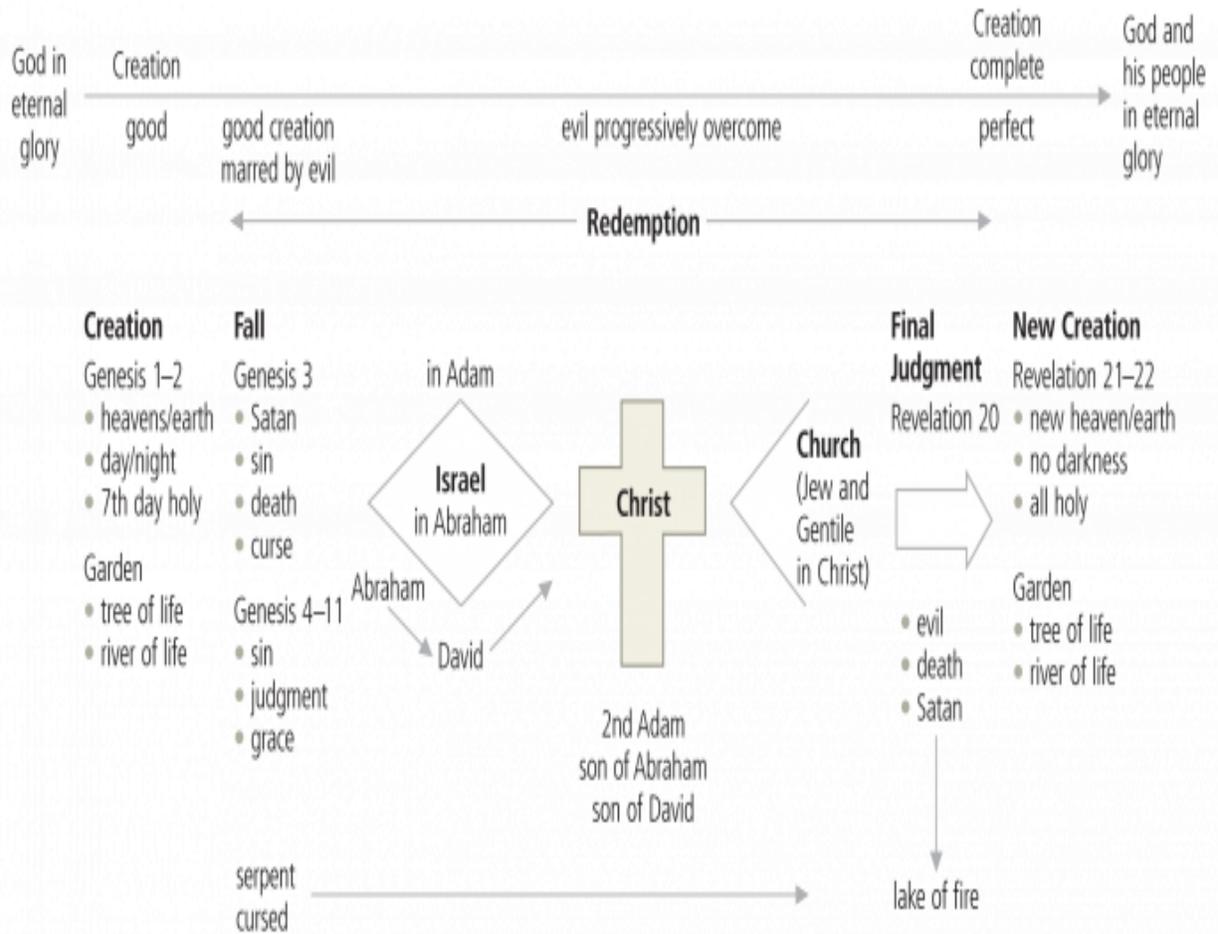
### The “Bookends” of Biblical Theology

*God’s ultimate purpose in redemptive history is to create a people to dwell in his presence, glorifying him through numerous varied activities and enjoying him forever. The story begins with God in eternal glory, and it ends with God and his people in eternal glory. At the center stands the cross, where God revealed his glory through his Son.*

*The biblical story of redemption must be understood within the larger story of creation. First Adam, and later Israel, was placed in God’s sanctuary (the garden and the Promised Land, respectively), but both Adam and Israel failed to be a faithful, obedient steward, and both were expelled from the sanctuary God had created for them. But Jesus Christ—the second Adam, the son of Abraham, the son of David—was faithful and obedient to God. Though the world killed him, God raised him to life, which meant that death was defeated. Through his Spirit, God pours into sinners the resurrection life of his Son, creating a new humanity “in Christ.” Those who are “in Christ” move through death into new life and exaltation in God’s sanctuary, there to enjoy his presence forever.*

*The “bookends” concept of biblical theology illustrates that in the third-to-last chapter of the Bible (Revelation 20) God removes his enemies—Satan, death, and evil—that entered the story line in the third chapter of the Bible (Genesis 3), thus completing the story of redemption. The last two chapters (Revelation 21–22) don’t simply restore the first two chapters (Genesis 1–2); they go beyond them to a world that is fully ordered and holy, in which God is fully present with his people, completing the story of creation. (Chapter divisions in the Bible are, of course, human contributions, not divinely inspired.)*

## The “Bookends” of Biblical Theology



### I. Verses 1-3: satan bound

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup>And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup>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.*

- a. Verses 1-2: an angel captures and chains satan.
  - i. In the previous chapter we saw the beast and the false prophet thrown into the lake of fire.
  - ii. Dr Constable: *The first word, “And,” supports the idea of chronological sequence.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:1.

- iii. *It is logical that having judged the beast and the false prophet (19:20) Jesus Christ should next deal with Satan. God assigned an angel to bind Satan. Previously God cast Satan out of heaven (12:9), and now He cast him out of the earth. This is the end of Satan's "short time" in which God allowed him to spread havoc on the earth (12:12). This angel now has the key to the abyss (cf. 9:1–2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7). The binding of Satan is real, though the chain must be figurative since it is impossible to bind spirit beings with physical chains (cf. 9:14).*<sup>6742</sup>
- iv. Now, we will see satan bound.
- v. John sees an angel.
- vi. The angel is coming down from heaven.
- vii. The angel has a chain and the key to the abyss.
- viii. Heavy chain: Dr Muholland *This image was used in Jewish and Christian writings to describe how God bound the rebellious angels (1 Enoch 10:4–6; cf. 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6).*<sup>3</sup>
- ix. In Rev 1:18 Jesus said He had the keys of death and hades.
- x. In Rev 9:1 we saw the abyss.
- xi. Verse 2: the devil is bound for 1000 years.
- b. Verse 3: the devil is confined to the bottomless pit for a thousand years.
  - i. Thrown in
  - ii. Locked
  - iii. Sealed
  - iv. So that he would not deceive the nations until the 1000 years are ended.
  - v. Then he must be released for a short time.

ESV Study Bible:

*The dragon is identified as the ancient serpent ... the devil and Satan, as in [12:9–17](#), which portrayed its expulsion from God's heavenly court and the thwarting of its efforts to destroy the church. The dragon's being bound with a great chain and thrown into the bottomless pit, which is shut and sealed, symbolizes God's restriction of Satan's ability to inflict harm for a long but limited era. God's purpose is that Satan might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. The nature of this binding of Satan is important to the three millennial views. Premillennialists read this as predicting a complete removal of Satan from the earth during a future golden age (a "millennium") of social righteousness, international peace, and physical well-being, with Christ reigning on earth. They argue that the phrases "shut it" and "sealed it over him" picture a removal of Satan from the earth too complete to represent the current age. Postmillennialists also think this will be a future golden age, but that Christ will not*

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<sup>674</sup> 674. Though Jesus Christ defeated Satan at the Cross (Luke 10:18; John 12:31; 16:11), He did not bind him then nor will He bind him until the beginning of the Millennium. Presently Satan has considerable freedom to attack God's people and to oppose His work (cf. 2:13; 3:9; Eph. 2:2; 6:10–18; 1 Pet. 5:8).

<sup>2</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:1.

<sup>3</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 576.

return until the end of that time. Amillennialists note that the NT affirms that Jesus' first coming has already bound Satan ([Matt. 12:29](#)) and brought God's light to the nations ([Matt. 4:14–16](#); [Luke 2:32](#); [Acts 14:15–17](#); [17:30–31](#)). Therefore they argue that this binding of Satan for “a thousand years” refers to the gospel's spread among all nations during the present age, and to the present restraint of the church's persecutors until an outbreak of rebellion before Christ's return (see [2 Thess. 2:3–8](#)).

- c. Dr Mulholland, Asbury exegesis lectures session 19 around 45 minutes in:
- d. In Greek they could not say a normal definite article like "the" so it should be "a" thousand years. If John meant for this to be taken literally he would have said "when" not "a."
- e. But "thousand" is the longest unit of time for the Greeks. Dr. Mulholland believes this is meaning "a long time" like we would say "eon" or "era." More proof of this is [Psalm 90:4](#) which Peter quotes in [2 Peter 3:8](#). Another is [Ecc. 6:6](#) which says "live a thousand years twice." Some translations say "two thousand years," but it is literally "a thousand years twice." In Hebrew they could say "two thousand" so why didn't they? Dr. Mulholland believes it is because the purpose is to indicate a long time.
- f. Further, he shares about the binding of the devil:

*Through the cross of Jesus, the citizens of fallen Babylon were provided the possibility of liberation from the destructive and dehumanizing bondage of the beast and false prophet. They were “thrown alive into the fiery lake,” so that Satan might not deceive the nations. If people become followers of the Lamb, Satan's power over them is broken. If, however, they choose to live in rebellion against God, then Satan still holds power over them because the beast and false prophet are still “alive.”*

*John was seeing that the cross is the binding of Satan—a reality for believers and a potential reality for unbelievers. Jesus himself indicated this in John's Gospel: “The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself” ([John 12:31–32](#)). John saw in his vision another dimension of the cross of the Messiah—it is the binding of Satan and the beginning of a new era of God's redemptive purpose for humanity.<sup>4</sup>*

Further, this is a different view:

*If Satan is bound and shut up in the bottomless pit, as John claims, then why is there so much evil in the world? This is the mystery that the vision has been portraying in a variety of ways. Satan's realm is seen first as the “sea” under God's feet ([4:6](#)); obviously God is sovereign over that realm, yet it still exercises its destructive and dehumanizing power in human history. It is seen next as the three riders ([6:3–8](#)) who are allowed (“permission” is another expression of God's sovereignty over the realm of evil) to spread destruction, famine, and death through human history. Then John saw the fallenness of creation ([8:6–12](#)) and the torment and death caused by sin in human lives ([8:13–9:21](#)). He saw the beast and false prophet ([13:1–18](#)) who lead the citizens of fallen Babylon into a worldview and lifestyle of destructive rebellion against God. The rebellious realm is seen, finally, as the prostitute who leads the world into the dehumanizing bondage of her*

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<sup>4</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., “[Revelation](#),” in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 580.

rebellion against God, a vision of a reality of such magnitude that even John was amazed (17:6). All of these images portray realities that have been incarnated consistently in human history since the cross of Christ. If the cross of Christ is, indeed, the binding of Satan, how is it that evil continues to reign as though nothing has happened?

This is what Paul calls “the mystery of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:7, RSV). John’s vision doesn’t attempt to “solve” the mystery, except to consistently reaffirm that for those who follow the Lamb, for those “purchased from among the people on the earth [i.e., fallen Babylon]” (14:4), for those who refuse to worship the beast or its image and to receive its mark, Satan has no power to hold them in his destructive and dehumanizing bondage any longer. These overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. This does not mean that Christians will never experience tribulation at the hands of fallen Babylon. In fact, the vision makes it unmistakably clear that being a faithful follower of the Lamb all but ensures tribulation from fallen Babylon. The dragon is at war with God’s children (12:17), and his agent, the beast, is allowed to make war upon them and to kill them (13:7). This becomes unavoidably clear when John sees that one group of those who are reigning with the Messiah are those who have been killed “for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God” (20:4).<sup>5</sup>

RSV RSV Revised Standard Version

- g. Dr Constable:
- h. Four titles make the identity of the bound creature certain. The dragon is his most frequent name in Revelation (12:3, 4, 7, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4, 11; 16:13). This title alludes to the serpent of old (cf. Gen. 3).<sup>675</sup> Devil (v. 10; 2:10; 12:9, 12) and Satan (2:9, 13, 24; 3:9; 12:9) are his more common biblical names.
- i. **There is no reason to take this thousand-year time period as symbolic.** All the other numbers in Revelation make sense if we interpret them literally, and this one does too. Furthermore it is impossible to prove that any number in Revelation is symbolic.<sup>676</sup> The repetition of this number six times in this pericope stresses the length of Satan’s confinement. God did not reveal the length of the Millennium (from the Latin mille, thousand, and annum year) before now. Neither did He reveal many other details about the future before He gave John these visions (cf. 17:5).
- j. Morris offered the following reason for taking the thousand years as symbolic.
- k. “One thousand is the cube of ten, the number of completeness. We have seen it used over and over again in this book to denote completeness of

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<sup>5</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., “Revelation,” in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 580–581.

<sup>675</sup> 675. This is an anacoluthon or parenthetical reference (cf. 1:5; et al.; Robertson, 6:257).

<sup>676</sup> 676. Smith, *A Revelation . . .*, p. 269; Walvoord, *The Revelation . . .*, p. 295; Hoehner, p. 249.

some sort, and this is surely the way we should take it here. Satan is bound for the perfect period.”<sup>677</sup>

- l. Morris acknowledged that God will release Satan at the end of this period (v. 8).<sup>678</sup> To him the thousand-year reign is a reign of martyrs in heaven that has no relation to the second advent.<sup>679</sup> However, there is no reason in the text or context to assume that we should interpret 1,000 symbolically. In fact, in view of the other numbers in this book we would expect another literal number here.
- m. “If 1,000 is a symbol, what about 7,000 (11:13), 12,000 (7:5), or 144,000 [I don’t take the 144,000 literal] (7:4)? Are these symbols also? If 1,000 years is a symbolic term, what about 5 months (9:60), 42 months (11:2), and 1,260 days (11:3)? To ask these questions is to show the absurdity of regarding the numbers as figurative, for on what ground could one consistently hold that one, 1,000, is figurative, and the others, including where multiples of 1,000 are used, are literal?”<sup>680</sup>
- n. Dr Constable:
- o. The nations in view will be the descendants of mortal believers who do not die during the Great Tribulation but live on in the Millennium (11:13; 12:13–17). All unbelievers will evidently perish when Christ returns to the earth (19:19–21). Life spans will be much longer in the Millennium (Isa. 65:20), so the earth’s population will increase rapidly, as was the case before the Flood. The children who are born during the Millennium will need to believe on Jesus Christ for salvation, and some of them will not do so. This group will constitute the unbelievers whom Satan leads in rebellion at the end of the Millennium (vv. 8–9). God will release Satan out of divine necessity (Gr. *dei*) to fulfill His plans after the thousand years.<sup>681</sup>

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<sup>677</sup> 677. Morris, p. 235. Another amillennial writer who took this passage as symbolic is Vern S. Poythress, “Genre and Hermeneutics in Rev 20:1–6,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36:1 (March 1993):41-54.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Constable, [\*Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible\*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:2.

<sup>678</sup> 678. Morris, p. 236.

<sup>679</sup> 679. Ibid., pp. 234, 237.

<sup>680</sup> 680. Smith, *A Revelation . . .*, p. 269.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Constable, [\*Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible\*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:2.

<sup>681</sup> 681. R. Fowler White, “On the Hermeneutics and Interpretation of Rev 20:1–3: A Preconsummationist Perspective,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42:1 (March 1999):53-66, argued that the epic ideology of victory over the dragon followed by house building constitutes a fundamental hermeneutical paradigm for the historical-grammatical, yet non-literal interpretation of Revelation 20:1–3. “Preconsummationist” is a synonym for amillennialist.

<sup>8</sup> Tom Constable, [\*Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible\*](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:3.

- p. *“The final answer as to why God sees this as a necessity with its fruition in another rebellion is hidden in the counsels of God (cf. 1:1; 4:1; Isa. 55:8; Mark 8:31; 13:7; Luke 24:26, 44) . . . Yet one purpose may be a partial answer. Through his release the whole universe will see that after the thousand years of his imprisonment and an ideal reign on earth, Satan is incurably wicked and men’s hearts are still perverse enough to allow him to gather an army of such an immense size.”*<sup>682,9</sup>

II. Verses 4-6: the resurrection and the rule of the just.

*<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> 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.*

- a. Verse 4a: all those who were martyred during the great tribulation are now raised from the dead.
  - i. First John sees thrones.
  - ii. They sat on them... We don’t yet know who “they” are. I am guessing that is either connected to the previous thrones or the next few verses.
  - iii. Dr Constable: *Those sitting on them are probably the faithful saints who have returned with Christ to the earth (19:7–8, 14, 19; cf. 2:26–28; 3:12, 21).*<sup>684</sup> *They receive authority from God to take charge of the earth, the beast’s domain, under Christ’s rule.*<sup>10</sup>
- b. Verses 4b-6: they now reign with Christ for a thousand years.
- c. Now, all those martyred during the great tribulation.
- d. Notice it says for their testimony of the Word of God.
- e. Notice the connection that they would not worship the beast, or his image or take the mark.
- f. Dr Constable: *The “first” resurrection cannot be first in temporal sequence since God has already resurrected Jesus Christ (Matt. 27:52–53). Furthermore, Christians will have experienced resurrection by this time (1 Thess. 4:16). Various groups of the*

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<sup>682</sup> 682. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, p. 411. For an able exposition of this pericope, see David J. MacLeod, “The Third ‘Last Thing’: The Binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1–3),” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156:624 (October-December 1999):469-86.

<sup>9</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:3.

<sup>684</sup> 684. Seiss, pp. 457–58; Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, p. 414. Other views are that they are the 24 elders viewed as representatives of the church (Smith, *A Revelation . . .*, p. 270; Walvoord, *The Revelation . . .*, p. 296;), Tribulation saints (Charles, 2:182–83; Caird, p. 252), or the apostles and perhaps some other saints (Swete, p. 261; Beasley-Murray, p. 293).

<sup>10</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:4.

righteous will experience resurrection at various times. However, God will raise all the wicked at one time, namely, at the end of the Millennium (vv. 12–13).<sup>11</sup>

- g. The times when God will raise the righteous are as follows. First, He raised Jesus Christ who is the Firstfruits of those who sleep (1 Cor. 15:23). Second, He raised some saints near Jerusalem shortly after Jesus' resurrection (Matt. 27:52–53), though this was probably a temporary resuscitation like that of Lazarus. Third, He will raise Christians at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18). Fourth, He will raise the two witnesses during the Great Tribulation (11:3, 11). Fifth, He will raise the Tribulation martyrs at the beginning of the Millennium (vv. 4–5). Sixth, He will raise the Old Testament saints, probably at the same time (Isa. 26:19–21; Ezek. 37:12–14; Dan. 12:2–4). Seventh, He will apparently raise the saints who die during the Millennium (cf. vv. 12–13). The idea that the resurrection of believers takes place in stages also finds support in 1 Corinthians 15:23.<sup>68812</sup>
- h. Verse 6: 1 of 7 macaisms, or blessings in Revelation

ESV Study Bible:

Premillennialists argue that “coming down from heaven” (v. 1) and the reference to “the nations” (v. 3) show that these “thrones” are on earth (during Christ’s millennial reign). Amillennialists argue that the echoes in these verses from Daniel’s vision (cf. Dan. 7:9, 22) signal that the thrones are in heaven. Whatever view one takes of the millennium, the souls of those who had been beheaded probably represents just a few of all the people represented by the words and those who had not worshiped the beast (“and those” represents Gk. kai hoitines, “and whoever, and everyone who”). These faithful believers came to life. Premillennialists think this means that deceased believers will experience bodily resurrection at the beginning of the millennium, and that is what is meant by this is the first resurrection (they say this is the clear meaning of the aorist indicative of zaō, “live, come to life”). Amillennialists think “they came to life” and “the first resurrection” means their souls entered into the presence of God in heaven after they died, and their deaths were in fact their victory over the dragon and beast (Rev. 12:11; 15:2), imparting to them a foretaste of the final resurrection (20:12–15). Some postmillennialists agree with the amillennial view of “the first resurrection,” while other postmillennialists think it refers to the future victory of Christianity in the world after its earlier persecution. and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Premillennialists think this means that these resurrected believers will assist with Christ’s thousand-year reign as righteous King over the whole earth. Amillennialists think this means deceased believers now (and during the entire “thousand years,” which means the time from Pentecost to the second coming) are “reigning” with Christ from heaven. Postmillennialists see it as a future triumph of Christianity in the world.

III. Verses 7-10: satan is freed and revolts.

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<sup>11</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:5.

<sup>688</sup> 688. See Roy Aldrich, “Divisions of the First Resurrection,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 128:510 (April-June 1971):117-19. He believed the first resurrection refers to the resurrection of the righteous and the second resurrection refers to the resurrection of the unrighteous. Newell, p. 330, also held this view.

<sup>12</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 20:5.

<sup>7</sup> When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

- a. Verse 7: after a thousand years satan is released.
- b. Verse 8: satan deceives the nations.
- c. Notice how it says the 4 corners of the earth which would mean all over the world.
- d. Gog and Magog goes back to Ezekiel 38.
- e. The Moody Bible Commentary: *The term Gog and Magog (v. 8) is symbolic for the nations from around the world that will gather, one last time, against the saints and Jerusalem. It is probably used here to remind readers of the terrible slaughter of God's enemies in Ezk 38–39 (see the comments on those chapters), but the details vary too much to be the same event. There will be no need, in the millennial kingdom, for Christ to come to be known by Gentiles (Ezk 38:23) or Israel (Ezk 39:7) after reigning for close to 1,000 years. Nor does it make sense for there to be a seven-year cleanup on the threshold of eternity (Ezk 39:7). Here, as with the earlier militants, God will destroy these last rebels with fire. Not even experiencing the wonderful leadership of Christ and the ideal environment of the millennium will convince these insurgents to obey. After this, the devil (v. 10) will be cast into the lake of fire to join the beast and the false prophet. The worst enemies of God's people in the history of the world will be tormented forever and ever. God's faithful will overcome! The early Christians could look forward to reigning in a kingdom many times greater than that of their Roman persecutors.*<sup>13</sup>
- f. The numbers are like the sand on the seashore, which means there is a great rebellion.
- g. ESV Study Bible: *Amillennialists see this as the same battle as the one described in 16:13–16 and 19:17–21. Premillennialists see this as a separate, later battle. The gathered armies are called Gog and Magog, titles of Israel's pagan oppressors, who would be destroyed by fire ... from heaven (Ezek. 38:22; 39:6) and consumed as carrion (Ezek. 39:1–6, 17–20; Rev. 19:17–18, 21). Although the saints are exposed as a camp and, as inhabitants of God's beloved city (11:2; 21:2), are besieged by foes as countless as the sand of the sea (see 12:17), their enemies will be consumed by God's fiery judgment. The deceiver will be thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur.*
- h. Verse 9a: satans armies attack Jerusalem
- i. Verse 9b-10: the annihilation: satan's troops are consumed by fires from heaven.
  - i. They are consumed by fires from heaven, but...
  - ii. Satan is thrown into hell.
  - iii. **Notice how quickly the victory comes.**

#### IV. Verses 11-15: Judgment at the great White Throne

*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. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened,*

<sup>13</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 83378-83382). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- a. Verse 11: Jesus is on the great white throne.
- b. Notice how he describes Jesus' presence. All earth and heaven fled away from His presence.
- c. Moody: *John saw a figure from whom earth and heaven fled away (v. 11). This hyperbole communicates abject terror. The one from whom men will desperately wish to escape is Christ (Jn 5:22-23). The great white throne upon which He sat is one from which sentences of eternal separation from God will be issued. Every person ever born who sinned and had not trusted in God's revelation to them was there. Whereas their spirits will go to hell immediately upon death, they will on this day stand before their Creator in resurrected bodies. He will judge them by His infinitely perfect knowledge according to their deeds (v. 12; cf. also Rm 2:6-11, 15-16). This should not be understood as teaching salvation by works. Rather, it means that one's deeds indicate one's spiritual state (1Jn 3:7-10). This second death (v. 14) indicates a lasting loss far beyond the extinction of life in this world. Christians should trust God to righteously address all evil done to them (Rm 12:17-21). The great white throne should not be confused with the judgment seat of Christ, where believers will have their service considered for reward (Rm 14:10-12; 1Co 3:10-16; 2Co 5:10).<sup>14</sup>*
- d. Verses 12-13: all the unsaved throughout human history are now judged.
  - i. Verses 12a-12b: the books in this judgment.
    1. Various books (12a)
    2. The book of life (12b)
  - ii. The basis of this judgment (12c-13): their deeds done while on earth
- e. The judgment (14-15): to be thrown into the lake of fire

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<sup>14</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 83397-83403). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.