

As we've been reading through this book, chapter by chapter and verse by verse, we've arrived at a truly glorious scene. We are looking at the Millennial Reign of Christ. Can you imagine it? One thousand years of absolute peace right here on earth under the direct rule of our Lord.

Now, there are a lot of people who try to conform the passage to fit the theological belief system by "spiritualizing" this away, but we simply like to see what the Word says and let it speak for itself. As the chapter indicates, we believe this is a literal period of time where Jesus Christ returns to claim His purchased possession.

The Binding of the Accuser

Revelation 20:1-3 tells us:

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years..."

Notice the terminology here. This "bottomless pit" is the *abyssos* in the Greek. Earlier in Revelation, we saw this pit opened to release demonic hordes, but here, the key is used for incarceration.

John uses four names for our enemy: the Dragon (his ferocity), the Serpent (his craftiness in Eden), the Devil (the slanderer), and Satan (the adversary). For six thousand years, since the fall of Adam, this world has groaned under his influence. But Church, the day of redemption is at hand! Jesus paid the price with His shed blood on the cross to redeem this world, and when He returns, He isn't just coming as a Savior; He is coming as the King to take possession of what is rightfully His.

The Thrones of the Faithful

In verse 4, John sees thrones.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them..."

Who are these sitting on thrones? This is the Ekklesia—the Church! Remember the promise to the church in Laodicea in Revelation 3:21? Jesus promised that those who overcome would sit with Him on His throne.

But notice there is another group: those beheaded for their witness during the Great Tribulation. They refused the mark of the beast, stayed faithful unto death, and now they live and reign with Christ. This is part of the First Resurrection.

The First Resurrection actually began with Jesus—He is the "firstfruits." When He rose, the resurrection declared for all eternity that He is God, Savior, and Lord. This resurrection continues through the Rapture of the Church and concludes with these Tribulation martyrs. Verse 6 says, *"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection."* On such, the second death has no power.

The Final Rebellion and the Great White Throne

Now, this is the part that humbles us. After 1,000 years of perfect environment, perfect justice, and the physical presence of Jesus, Satan is loosed for a "little season." And incredibly, a multitude as the "sand of the sea" gathers to rebel against the Lord (verses 7-9).

This proves once and for all that man's problem isn't his environment—it's his heart. Even in paradise, without a new birth, the human heart remains rebellious. But God settles it quickly. The Devil is cast into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna), where the beast and false prophet *are*—not were, but *are*. It is eternal, Church. I don't claim to understand the "how" of eternal torment, but I believe the "Who" behind the Word, so I accept it as it is written.

Finally, we see the Great White Throne Judgment in verses 11-15. The "books" are opened, including the Book of Life.

"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

Practical Application: How Then Shall We Live?

Knowing that we will one day reign with Him in glorified bodies—bodies that won't have "gimpy knees" or fading eyesight—should change how we view our trials today.

1. Perspective: Your current suffering is light and momentary compared to the glory of the Kingdom.
2. Priority: If this world is going to be folded up like a garment, why are we investing so much in things that don't last? Invest in the Kingdom!

A Challenge for the Believer

I challenge you this week: live as a citizen of the Millennium today. If we are going to judge angels and reign with Christ, let us walk in a manner worthy of that calling. Let your speech be seasoned with grace and your life be a reflection of the King you serve.

An Invitation to the Unbeliever

If you are reading this and you don't know Jesus, I want you to look at verse 15 again. If your name is not in that Book of Life, the end is permanent and absolute separation from God. But you don't have to face that judgment.

Jesus Christ loved you so much that He came to earth, took your sins upon Himself, and shed His precious blood on the cross to pay your debt. His resurrection is the proof that the payment was accepted! He is alive today and He is knocking on the door of your heart. Simply turn from your sin, trust in His finished work, and ask Him to be your Lord and Savior today. Your name can be written in that Book right now.