

Revelation 20:1 - 15 pt2

1 And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having 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 for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the 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 upon their forehead and upon 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.

7 And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 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. 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. 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.

11 And 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 And 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.

I'm really excited to share what the Lord has shown me this week as I studied this passage.

Last week I walked out of here with no clue what I would say about these verses we are considering tonight. They seemed remote and obscure.

That's nothing new. Most weeks I walk out of here with a vague idea of what the next paragraphs say, but no idea of what I'll ultimately teach.

Then, God is so good, and His Spirit is so gracious to show me things as I study to open His word up to me. He never fails.

Revelation 20:7-15 makes a complete end of everything that was ever soiled or tainted, defiled by sin. Anything Satan touched is going to be gone at the end of this chapter.

Earth, Heaven, Satan, and by inference his demons, sinful angels, sinful men, Death, Hades, all gone. Anything Satan ever touched, anything ever stained by sin . . . gone. Anything that had anything to do with rebellion against the God of gods will be disposed of. Finished. Finality. Removed.

This is the final disposition, and verses like Psalm 34:16 *but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth.*

and; Habakkuk 1:13 *Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor.* take on a whole new meaning.

There's an obscure but interesting little passage in Job 15, where Eliphaz is speaking . . .

14"*What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? 15"Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight; 16How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!...*

That's what we're seeing in this passage tonight. Fallen men, fallen angels, a spoiled earth, heavens that are not pure, anything that Satan touched with his rebellion will come to a final end. So let's jump in and see how this plays out. There's some fascinating truth here. Our very skin should bristle and hair stand up when we think about where we deserve to end up in this passage tonight.

7When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8and 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.

7When the thousand years are completed, I probably beat this drum too much last week, but I'm still stunned that our reformed brethren, who lead the charge for biblical clarity and inerency can read a statement this succinct and come up with either there is no thousand years, or we don't know how long a period this is or when it starts or when it ends or how long the years are etc etc etc.

Mercy! Our only hope in a fallen world is revealed truth. We can't find ANY of this out on our own. All we have is what God has revealed to us. Lifted the veil and graciously provided for us. If the words don't mean what they say, we're in real trouble! There's a thousand years. They start on a particular day. They end on a particular day when 1,000 years are completed! Just like it says.

Let's digress for a minute and ask, why? Why a thousand years?

I think the answer is in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 4:9 says; *There remains, therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God*

6,000 years of violence. 1,000 years of peace. On this earth. As promised.

All of God's promises to His people Israel, fulfilled. But even more than that. As you read through the old Testament, the Psalms and the prophets, you see over and over that there is a promise of Joy to the Nations.

Psalm 67:4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth.

Jeremiah 33: 7 'I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel and will rebuild them as they were at first. 8 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me. 9 'It will be to Me a name of joy, praise and glory before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it.'

One of my favorite Kingdom Promises is in Amos 9

*13 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD,
"When the plowman will overtake the reaper
And the treader of grapes him who sows seed;
When the mountains will drip sweet wine
And all the hills will be dissolved.*

*14 "Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel,
And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them;
They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine,
And make gardens and eat their fruit.*

The increase of the wheat and the grapes is so fast that the guy plowing the field for the next crop will catch up with the guy who's doing the reaping. The same thing with the grapes. Abundance! Sweet wine. Gardens. Rest. Joy.

Apricots! Finally, more apricots than I can ever eat. And peace. Inner peace and rest.

We can hardly imagine 5 years of real peace on this planet. There will be 1000.

We saw the beginning of this 1,000 year reign when Jesus throws the Usurpers, the false messiah and false prophet into the lake of fire, alive. He locks Satan in a pit. But, that thousand year Sabbath will end.

7When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 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.

Why? Why would you let Satan out and start the whole mess over?

In the context of the passage, I think the reason is obvious. Even in a perfect world of peace and joy, evil is still present. Men are still born with Adam's defect. Sin is still possible. Rebellion is still seething, even with Jesus on His throne. And in these next verses, God will have finality. Evil will be finished! Forever and ever.

Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations

How can Satan deceive people when Jesus is on a throne, visible, and peace reigns?

I'm going to get philosophical here for a minute, so bear with me.

How can Pharisees who witness Jesus casting a demon out of someone say He did it with Satan's power?

Matt. 12:22 *Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was*

*brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. 23All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" 24But when the Pharisees **heard** this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."*

31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. 32 "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

You just saw a blind man who is tongue tied and it is caused by demon possession, and Jesus heals him. Sight restored. Speech restored. Demon removed.

When you've had that level of revelation and all you can come up with is Satan made it happen. When God reveals Himself in front of you at this level and you don't bow down to Him, there's only one thing left for you. Destruction. The unpardonable sin is to take all of God's revelation and weigh it in the balance, and decide, I can't give up my sin, and so you come up with Beelzebub. The excrement god. The lord of the flies.

These people in the kingdom of God who have had Jesus ruling over them in bliss for a thousand years. How do they fall for Satan's deceit. How can that even happen?

I had a quote stuck between my ears and I had to go look it up. The mathematician / philosopher / christian, Blaise Pascal 1620's said this;

*All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. **This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.***

I fear you may hear this quote from me often. I believe it is the baseline of

human behaviour. Fallen human behaviour. The will never takes the least step but to this object.

We can't help asking ourselves, how could a generation of people living in the paradise of God, for a thousand years, with Jesus on the throne, still fall under the deception of Satan?

Easy. Satan will tell them, follow me. Sin will make you happy. You don't have to do what Jesus says. Sin will be more fun.

That's how deceit works with fallen men. We're broken. Anyone born from Adam's seed is broken. *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* Proverbs 14:12

Every act of the will gets weighed in the balance, the broken balance, the Adamic balance, and men proceed to what they believe is the treasure, and it turns out to be death.

So Satan is let loose, and he tells the nations, *Hath God said?* It's the garden of eden all over again, except this time there are hordes like the sand of the seashore! Hath God said . . . You Shall Not He's just spoiling your fun. He's just ruining your happiness. Rebel! and you'll be happier. We can take Him. Come on, let's go get Him! There's billions of us, there's one of Him.

7When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 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.

Gog and Magog. Meshek and Tubal. Traditional enemies of Israel. Hordes that come down from the north. Think of Israel as a funnel. You enter from the north. You come down the funnel from the north.

Scholars believe Ezekiel 38 pictures a Russian invasion. Some time in the tribulation period. Gog and Magog, Meshek and Tubal. Here, the name, I

think, just means . . . here we go again. Hordes from every direction coming upon the Holy City.

The four corners of the earth isn't a phrase written by ignorant ancient men who thought the earth was flat. North South East West. As far as the east is from the west, as far as the north is from the south, from every direction on the globe, hordes will come and organize for a war against Jesus who reigns on the throne of David.

9And 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.

Remember that at the time of the second coming, the hills around Judah are flattened. Jerusalem is elevated on a mountain and everywhere else surrounding physical Jerusalem, the city of God, the throne of David, is leveled flat.

The armies, the hordes of angry deceived men will surround Jerusalem and all the saints on all sides like the sand of the sea shore, billions of them, and God will begin this final disposition of anything tainted with evil, right here.

Fire comes down from heaven and devours them. Laps them up like Sodom and Gomorrah. No trace left. Their souls removed to Sheol, maybe, first in line for the judgement that is imminent.

The rest of the chapter is a brief list of final things. Satan. Earth and Heaven. Souls of men. Death and Hades. First the devil;

10And 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.

And here we come face to face with one of the most, if not THE most frightening verses in all of the Bible.

And we wouldn't mind it so much, except for what that last phrase so plainly says. Torment. Day and night. No rest. Forever and ever. Never ending torment.

We have technology in our day to look at the surface of the sun. There's a YouTube called Surface of the Sun as you've never seen it. Look at that gigantic sea of burning sulphur, so enormous our little planet is just a speck of matter in comparison. Now that's a lake of fire we can just begin to comprehend. It literally is a lake of fire and brimstone.

Thank you to NASA for giving us a visual image that matches how this book describes hell.

And we don't like to talk much about hell, do we. It's OK for Satan, and the beast and the false prophet. Hitler, we're glad he's there. Charlie Manson. Sure. But our next door neighbor? Really? Are you sure God? They're so nice! Sweet people in hell? Forever? Now Wait a minute God! Are you sure that's fair?

The Bible teaches free choice, free will. Unfortunately, the church has largely failed to teach these ultimate things. A day is coming when every remembrance of evil is going to be removed. Hell is one of the final solutions to that problem. No one born of Adam is going to be in eternity with God, our neighbors included, no matter how dear they seem to us, if they are stained with sin.

The modern church shuns this doctrine. What we're left with is Far Side cartoons. Gary Larsen! I love his cartoons, don't get me wrong. They're right up there with Calvin and Hobbs.

But since the church is shy about teaching the doctrine of hell, we've got a funny funny satan with a pointy tail and flames leaping around him and lots of funny jokes going on in hell. Hell is really very funny! Almost as funny as the cartoons of God with the long white beard and the throne in the clouds and

the long line of people waiting, and a couple of guys in the line have some really funny funny things to say.....and the church is . . . silent.

Last time we talked about hell, Gary Larsen made fun of us. It's all very embarrassing. Meanwhile, the nice people across the street that always wave at me when I drive by in the Model A, are going to be cast into the surface of the sun.

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.

This is the end of the planet we called home. It's also the end of the starry firmament we called the universe.

This shouldn't surprise anyone. It kind of puts a lid on worrying about greenhouse gas and global warming. Drill drill drill, I say. This old ball is temporary.

Jesus said so. Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The words we're studying tonight will outlast this world. Think about it.

Peter describes this event. 2Peter 3:7 *But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

The world is actually going to be un-created. 2Peter 3:10 gives more detail; *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*

That word that is translated elements is quite scientific. It's talking about tiny things. Tiny building blocks. Molecules. Atoms. Neutrons, electrons,

protons. The nuclear glue that holds everything together is time. If electrons are spinning around neutrons, the time it takes for revolutions is measurable. When time stops, it all collapses. Vanishes in intense heat.

The sin spoiled world and the heavens are going to vanish in un-creation. It says they flee away from the face of God. Into virtual No Place. Non-existence is what No place was found means.

12And 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.

More finality. Satan's gone. Earth and heaven are gone. These are the living souls of people. Your neighbors. The great and the small. The kings and the pathetic. The rock stars and movie stars, and the petty thieves and liars. Presidents and aides. Great and small. Taxi drivers and Prime Ministers. Congress and supreme court justices. Neighbors from my street.

Note, they are standing. They have bodies. Resurrection bodies that can experience torment.

The books were opened. How complete are the books that are recorded of all the evil we have done? Jesus says; Mt.12:36 *"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37"For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

I've got a LOT more than idle words in my book. I have a huge mountain of sin against me. But, all it would take is one idle word to sentence me for eternity.

But wait. There's another book. It's the book of life. We'll find out that if your name is written in *that* book, the book of sins against you is cancelled out.

and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds

Notice it says books, plural. I picture that the judge will check to see if your name is written in the book of life first, and if you're not found in there, then the book of judgements against you will be opened.

Can you appeal. What about all the good stuff you did? All the diapers in the church nursery you changed. Doesn't that count for something.

We have a similar case for us in Matthew 7. 21“*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.* 22“*Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’* 23“*And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’*

Lots of very religious folk in this mass of people standing at the throne of God awaiting judgement.

13And 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.

More finality. All of the dead wherever they are at. All of them come forward to the judge. Not one will be passed over. Every person that ever lived through all the ages since Adam will be judged according to their deeds. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one.

14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

We're closing in on every place that sin ever soiled. Death and Hades are places that held the dead. They're fouled.

And then that awful verse 15! This is a tragedy. Jesus blood was sufficient to save every one of these. This is the end of the line for sin. God is going to create a new heaven and a new earth and no blot or stain will be there. These former things will have passed away.

Now I want to come full circle and say, 'what about us'. When God removes the stain of sin from His sight forever, what about us?

This passage gives new meaning to a LOT of scripture, but I want to touch on 2 or maybe 3.

Take a look again at Ephesians 5:26 and 27 where Paul talks about the presenting of the church as a spotless bride. *26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

Again Paul says to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:2 *I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.*

A day is coming when we will be with Jesus beyond what this chapter tonight talks about. Holy and spotless sinless perfection. Yes, you. Yes, even me. When God removes every remembrance of sin far from His sight and memory, we will be there. Safe and spotless, in Jesus. *As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.* Ps.103:12

I'll finish with the verse that really makes this truth possible. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 5:17, *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; (just like the earth and the heavens) behold, new things have come.*

The only way to make it beyond all of this final disposition of sin and corruption is to be re-created without any blemish. Paul says if we are "in Christ" we are new. All the old corruption is gone. New things have come.

This is a positional truth. Positionally, God sees me perfect in His Son. Practically, for now at least, with this old body of sin, I'm hauling around a lot of old baggage. But, this one thing I have. I have the down payment, the good faith deposit that confirms that I am in fact a new creature. I have the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ living inside of me.

I may look old to you. But I am, in fact, a new creature. Perfect. Spotless. Blameless. Pure. In Christ. I'll be there when the spotless new heavens and new earth are created to replace the old soiled ruined heavens and earth.