

Introduction

When the discussion comes up about the End Times, there is often the misconception about what the end really is. There are those who look no further into Scripture than the Rapture or the battle when Christ returns on His white horse. The contents of this chapter is actually the most important thing of which Christ warned everyone. In fact, it was a teaching that is recorded seven times in the Gospels to cover everyone including Israel, the Church, and the unsaved alike. This can be found in the Walk with the Word study, "[Weeping and Gnashing](#)". Revelation 20 is **exactly** the thing Christ repeatedly specified will happen to those who fail to live a crucified life through Him.

Read verses 1-3

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and 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.

Q: Does Satan have the same powers as God?

A: No. Satan was thrown out of heaven by the Archangel Michael (Rev. 12:7-9) and here cast even further down into "the abyss" by another angel.

Observation: Satan, sealed in the Abyss for a thousand years by an angel, is quite a contrast to Christ sealed in the tomb for three days from which an angel rolled away the stone. (Mt. 28:2)

Note: Here is where Satan is called the "serpent" and the "dragon" to verify that the correct interpretation of these references to him represent is deception and persecution,

Q: Who has "the keys to death and Hades"?

A: Christ. (Rev. 1:18)

Q: But to whom has Christ given them? What is the contrast?

A: In Revelation 9:1 the key to the bottomless pit was given to a fallen angel in order to release the satanic horde; here He gives the key to a faithful angel who locks away Satan.

Q: What is the abyss?

A: In Scripture it is used to describe the abode of demons who do not want to be there, and a place temporarily holding the dead. It is described in Revelation 20:7 as "prison".

³⁰And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

Luke 8:30-31

⁶But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), ⁷or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."

Romans 10:6-7

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Q: Is this the same as the lake of fire?

A: It appears that this is a separate holding place until God's final disposition sending them to eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

Q: What will be different for those living in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ than from any other time in human history?

A: For a thousand years their will be no satanic influence.

Q: Why is it fair that he "must be released for a short time"?

A: New generations will be born without ever knowing Satan or his influences. Everyone must ultimately face him and choose God's ways over Satan's.

Application: The disposition of **Satan**.

Read verses 4-6

Q: What parallel to the Olivet Discourse does this appear to relate?

A: The judgment of the nations at the beginning of the Millennial Reign.

"when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another".

Matthew 25:31-32a

Q: What are other applicable scriptural references to thrones and judgment?

A: As a fulfillment of Daniel:

⁹"I kept looking

Until thrones were set up,

And the Ancient of Days took His seat;

His vesture was like white snow

And the hair of His head like pure wool.

His throne was ablaze with flames,

Its wheels were a burning fire.

¹⁰river of fire was flowing

And coming out from before Him;

Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,

And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;

The court sat,

And the books were opened.

Daniel 7:9-10

The future role of the Apostles:

And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, **you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Matthew 19:28

There is also the Church's role in judgment:

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²Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

1 Corinthians 6:2-3

Q: But what is to be experienced by everyone participating in “the first resurrection”?

A: “...they will be priests of God and Christ...” (v.6)

Q: How does Scripture address the final disposition for what is here termed “the rest of the dead”?

A: At the Final Judgment their being cast into the lake of fire is called “the second death”. (Rev. 20:5)

Point: “Eschatology” means the study of how things end. The very end is when we either participate in the “first resurrection” or the “second death”.

Application: The disposition of the **faithful** and **unfaithful**.

Read verses 7-10

Q: Where else is Gog and Magog prominently mentioned?

A: Ezekiel 38-39.

Q: Are both of these instances speaking of the same thing?

A: No. Here it involves gathering all the “nations which are in the four corners of the earth”, whereas in Ezekiel only ten comprise a confederation headed by what we would today call Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Also, the instance in Revelation is a direct confrontation of Christ and in Ezekiel it is a localized war centered on the Middle East and parts of Africa.

Point: The Gog and Magog in Ezekiel is a foreshadowing of the one in Revelation to teach something about the final one to come.

Q: What is similar between this conflict and the previous one at the end of the final week of years?

A: No one actually engages in a dramatic conflict with each other. The opposition is divinely destroyed.

Q: Why would people living up to a thousand years under the presence of Christ rebel like this?

A: They have free will do not properly handle Satan’s deception.

Point: They are on the same footing as Adam and Eve, who although fellowshiped with God, chose to disobey God and allow themselves to be deceived by Satan. The Millennial Reign demonstrates that although Satan for a time is absent as a bad influence, man’s fleshly tendencies will still cause him to choose poorly anyway. Remember, the Millennial Reign is not heaven but the last kingdom on earth. There will still be the free will to choose and, unfortunately, many will choose poorly.

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. 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. 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.

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Application: The disposition of the nations.

Read verses 11-15

¹¹Then 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.

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. 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.

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.

Q: Previously in Revelation, what did the unsaved do when faced with the reality that God was working against them?

A: They tried to hide.

Point: In Christ's presence at Final Judgment "earth and heaven fled away"—there is no place to hide.

Q: Will Christians be judged at the great white throne as well?

A: The Greek word for throne used here is "thronos" and is the place where those destined for the lake of fire are individually sentenced "according to their deeds". Believers appear before the "bema", which was the seat of the roman emperor at the Olympic games as he rewarded the athletes. This is where God judges believers according to their deeds.

¹⁰According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Q: What is the standard for the entries in "the the books" which serve to convict them "according to their deeds"?

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; **the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.**

John 12:48

¹⁸I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹It shall come about that **whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.**

Deuteronomy 18:18-19

Q: Why go through this process? Isn't it the same punishment for everyone sent to hell?

A: Scripture makes it clear that there is a variety of punishments.

²⁰Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. ²¹"Woe to

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you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²Nevertheless I say to you, **it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.**

²³And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴Nevertheless I say to you that **it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.**

Matthew 11:20-24

Q: What are the temporary structures that have held those destined for the great white throne?

A: They are “*death and Hades*”.

Q: What is significant about their disposition at this point?

A: There will no longer be any need for them as heaven and earth join everyone together with the Godhead in the New Heaven and New Earth.

Application: *The disposition of **unbelievers***

“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

John 15:6

Overall Application

Although the English word for “eschatology” comes from the Greek “eschatos” to mean the study of how things will end, many make the mistake of not understanding that Revelation 20-22 is the true end of things. Will it be the “first resurrection” or the “second death”? Will it be the lake of fire or the New Heaven and New Earth? It all depends on whether our deeds send us to the “bema” to be rewarded or to the “thronos” to be punished. The quality of our conduct and choices in this life decides the ultimate destination for the next.