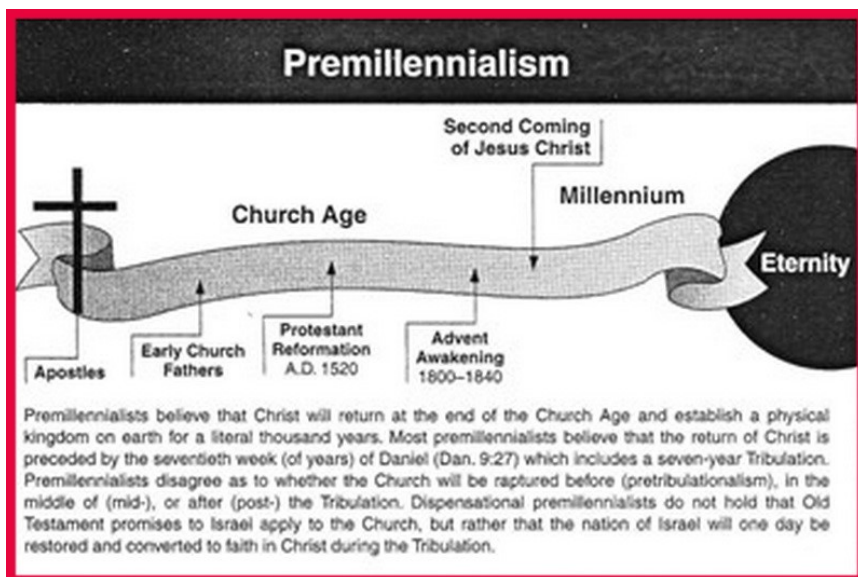


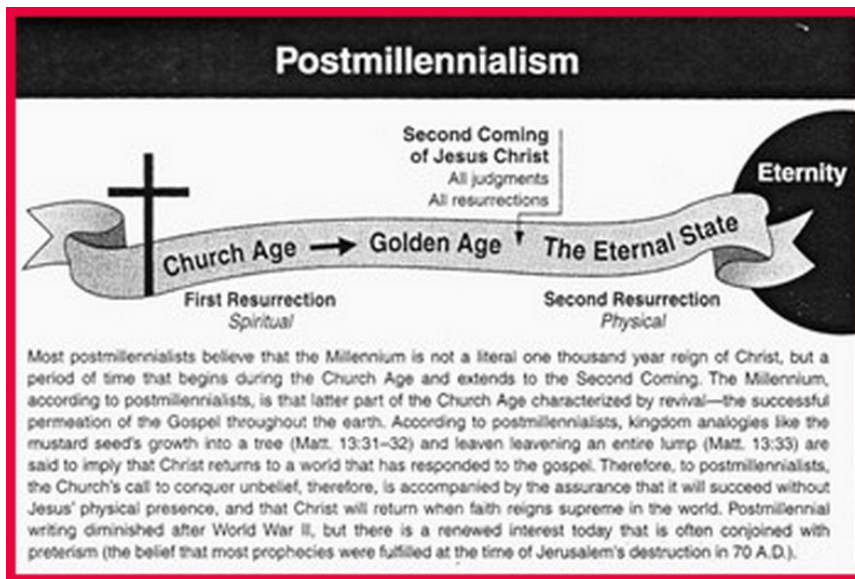
INTRODUCTION:

1. We stand on the threshold of Revelation chapter 20. According to the book of John’s Revelation chronology, the Lord Jesus Christ has just returned in power and great glory.
2. Our great King will have met the combined armies of the world who will stand against Him in the grand campaign of Armageddon, and He will have defeated them in a great slaughter.
3. But what will happen next? What happens when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth from His present position at His Father’s right hand on high?
4. As most of you know, there are many opinions—each opinion, of course, depending on your particular method of interpreting the Word of God.
5. The three prominent opinions take shape in three prophetic systems of thought: premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism.
6. The premillennial view is held by those who interpret the book of Revelation more or less literally, taking as symbolic only those portions of Scripture that would be ridiculous if interpreted literally. This view accepts Revelation and other prophetic books of the Bible at face value. It reflects the opinion that the book of Revelation unfolds chronologically, according to the outline given in Revelation 1.19: “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” The diagram below is the timeline premillennialists believe reflects Biblical prophecy regarding the Second Coming of Christ and His millennial reign.

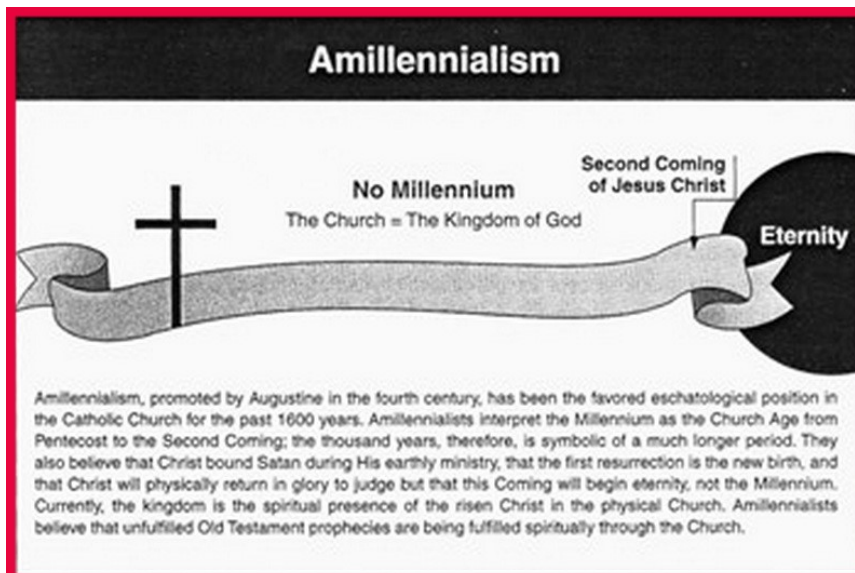


7. The postmillennial view is held by those who literally interpret only parts of the book of Revelation. Other elements they interpret allegorically. For example, postmillennialism agrees with the premillennialists that there will be a one-thousand-year period in which God’s will prevails. Still, they believe it occurs before Christ’s Second Coming, not after. To adopt such

a scheme, you must interpret Revelation chapter 20 literally but assume that the first 19 chapters of Revelation are not chronological and cannot be interpreted literally. It is the classic Protestant view of the Revelation throughout most of the 19th century.



8. The amillennial view is the prevailing view held by Roman Catholic theologians since the time of Augustine. It is the majority position of most Protestant theologians who identify as Reformed. This view recognizes no millennium as a literal period. They think Christ will return literally and bodily, but there is no set period in which Christ will rule the earth in fulfillment of the promise God made to David. To reach this view, you must interpret most sections of Revelation, including chapter 20, allegorically and refuse to accept that the truths that are given are to be interpreted literally.



9. Let us begin our study of Revelation chapter 20. Decide for yourself which of these views is the correct one.

(20.1) And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

1. If you accept John's Revelation literally and chronologically, this is the beginning of the establishment of Christ's millennial reign on earth. In this 1,000-year reign, He will rule as king over the Earth instead of the devil ruling as prince of the power of the air, as he has done since the Fall of Adam.
2. Some people interpret this angel as the Lord Jesus Christ, since He is the Owner of the keys of death and Hell. However, since we are not explicitly told that it is He, I tend to think that this is one of God's holy angels who has been assigned this task.
3. The fact that the angel has the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain makes me wonder, what is the bottomless pit? Let me remind you what I advanced when we were studying Revelation 9.1:
 - a. The word translated "bottomless pit" is the Greek word ἄβύσσος, which means "an immensely deep space."¹ It is also where Jesus went, according to Romans 10.7: "Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)" The word "deep" in that verse being our same word, ἄβύσσος.
 - b. If you are a bit confused, remember two things:
 - i. First, Hell describes a state of being dead more than a geographical location. The "bottomless pit" is a better term for describing *where* the unsaved dead now are, where many fallen angels are, and where Jesus went for three days and nights before His resurrection.
 - ii. Second, the word Hell is generally used in the absence of any distinction between the geographical location where lost people go when they enter eternity, and what spiritual state they are in when they enter eternity. However, if you want to be specific and distinguish between the location of some unsaved person who has died and the spiritual state of some unsaved person who has died, you would use the term "bottomless pit" to refer to the location and the word Hell to refer to his state of being.
4. Notice what this angel does with that chain in his hand and with that key that I think the Lord loaned to him.

¹ Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), page 2.

(20.2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

1. This is the verse in which many great Scriptural truths are suggested and introduced. This verse is also a tremendous theological battleground among different scholars.
2. First, notice that this angel from God laid hold of Satan and bound him. Do you remember Jude 9? “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Some four thousand years ago, Satan’s power and might were so tremendous that the angel Michael, that great archangel of God, treated him with great respect as he struggled for the body of Moses. Now, his power is reduced to zero, and an ordinary angel from the lower ranks of the angelic hierarchy apprehends him. This angel will not be able to do this without God weakening and humbling Satan. However, this weakening was predicted in Isaiah 14.12-16:

¹² How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

¹³ For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

¹⁵ Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

¹⁶ They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms.

3. Next, notice the descriptions and names given to this being. The two terms and definitions show that Satan is not a mystical force or influence, although he does influence people. These four words establish him to be a living being of great wickedness. He is evil personified.
 - a. First, he is referred to as the “dragon.” There are some 24 or 25 references to dragons in the Old Testament, and not all refer to Satan. Whenever this word is used, it always carries the idea of defilement and uncleanness. Satan is the foulest of all foul spirits. It is he who defiled a host of angels. He defiled the human race by tempting Eve with the serpent in the Garden of Eden to sin.
 - b. Second, he is referred to as that “old serpent.” This, of course, references the subtlety of Satan and the fact that in the Garden of Eden, he used the serpent as his instrument to tempt Eve. Is it not interesting that, as the serpent or snake was cursed by God to crawl in the dust, so also Satan, that old serpent, that ancient serpent, is now, after all these years, brought as low as the dust and bound? He is not there yet, mind you, but when Revelation chapter 20 happens, as surely as the Bible is God’s Word, he will be.

- c. Third, he is referred to by the first of his two present names. When he was a holy cherub of God, his name was Lucifer, and he was the highest and most beautiful of God's creatures. Now a fallen being through his wickedness, his name is the Devil, which means liar or slanderer. The Lord Jesus Christ said that "he is a liar, and the father of it."²
- d. Finally, he is referred to by the name Satan. This is most correctly his proper name, and it means adversary.³ Whereas Jesus Christ is our advocate, Who seeks our best interests, Satan is our adversary, who seeks our ruin.

This is a terrible enemy we have. He is not to be taken lightly or ignored just because he cannot be seen with the naked eye. And though he will be frail and impotent in the future, he is mighty and influential at this present time.

4. Finally, in this verse, notice the use of the phrase "a thousand years." Here is the controversy: Should this phrase be interpreted literally or figuratively, which is to say symbolically? The arguments go back and forth, but basically can be reduced to two points:

#1 Is there any real reason, other than prejudice, for not interpreting this phrase normally and literally? I believe that the answer is "No."

#2 Is there any reason for thinking that Jesus Christ cannot come back and rule this world for 1,000 years, casting Satan into the bottomless pit? I think not. Not a Scriptural reason, in any case.

This verse introduces the truth that there will be a unique and future period in humanity's history when we will be free from the temptations of Satan for 1,000 years.

(20.3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

1. Including the facts of verse 2, we can see six distinct things that God's angel does to Satan, the once mighty prince of darkness.
2. First, from verse 2, "he laid hold on the dragon." As mentioned before, no created being was previously powerful enough to do that.
3. Second, "bound him a thousand years," probably using the chain we see him with in verse 1.

² John 8.44

³ Bauer, page 916.

4. In verse 3, we see that the angel “cast him into the bottomless pit,” or the great abyss. Remember, this is not the lake of fire. This is that place of imprisonment and torment where fallen angels have been imprisoned. This is the geographical location where the spiritual state of Hell exists. When this verse is fulfilled, it will be Satan’s turn to be imprisoned there.
 5. Fourth, we read that the angel shuts Satan up. The angel of God closed the door to the shaft, which leads to the bottomless pit, thereby isolating Satan from the outside world for 1,000 years.
 6. Finally, the angel set a seal upon him. The effect of that seal will be that Satan cannot deceive the nations during those 1000 years of imprisonment. What this tells me is that now Satan *can* deceive the nations. This is something Christians ought to realize and pray against. We ought to pray that Satan will be hindered from deceiving our leaders and the mass public.⁴
 7. At the end of the 1000 years of imprisonment, Satan will be loosed for a time. How long? Not long. The Bible says, “a little season.”
 8. Before we move to the following passage, let me remind you of something that is frequently overlooked by sinners who reject the Gospel. If you reject the Gospel of my Lord Jesus Christ, you are siding with “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan.” You might not ever have considered this before, but the passage we are examining shows that Satan will be defeated. In other words, your side loses if you remain loyal to the Devil by rejecting the Gospel. God will overthrow you and suffer eternal damnation unless you repent your sins and come to the victorious and triumphant Savior—something to consider when you pillow your head tonight.
- (20.4-5) ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
- ⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

We have a great deal of information packed into these two verses.

1. First, we see that there are thrones that are occupied. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them.”
 - a. Those who sit on the thrones are judges of some sort, but we are not given specific information about their identity. It is suggested the occupants of these thrones could be those mentioned in Revelation 6.9-11:

⁴ 1 Timothy 2.1-2

- ⁹ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:
- ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?
- ¹¹ And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

- b. Could these be those same people? I think this verse tells us partly who they are. There are other passages that also indicate who these judges are. First Corinthians 6.2:

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?”

- c. What we seem to be talking about in Revelation 20.4-5 has to do with a proper understanding of the first resurrection. Many people are confused with the term “first resurrection.”

2. Let me deal with the “first resurrection” before we continue with these two verses.

- a. Many erroneously believe that “first resurrection” describes a single event when that is not the case at all. It represents one *kind* of resurrection and identifies the *type* of person resurrected.
- b. Everyone who participates in the “first resurrection” has been redeemed. Following are some passages that refer to this “first resurrection.”

Luke 14.14: “And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

First Corinthians 15.23: “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”

Hebrews 11.35: “Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

- c. All who die unrepentant and without Christ will be resurrected in a subsequent resurrection, or what the Lord Jesus Christ termed the “resurrection of damnation” in John 5.29: “And shall come forth; they that have done good,

unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

- d. There are three parts to the “first resurrection.” First, there is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some dead believers were resurrected when He rose from the dead, but not with glorified bodies. They lived just as Lazarus did for a period and then died normal physical deaths. Only Christ, to that point, had received a glorified body. Matthew 27.50-53 tells us what happened:
- 50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.
- 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;
- 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,
- 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.
- e. When the Rapture occurs, the Church Age believers, both living and deceased, will be caught up and taken to heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, that will be the time of our resurrection (we who are saved) and when we will receive our glorified bodies. Moreover, when we are taken to heaven by Christ, as the bride of Christ, we will be forever united to Him in holy matrimony. That is the second event of the “first resurrection.” First Thessalonians 4.13-18 is one passage that speaks to that phase of the “first resurrection.”
- 13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
- 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.
- 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
- 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
- 17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
- 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.
- f. Then, seven years later, in Revelation 20.4-5, the resurrection of Old Testament believers and Tribulation saints occurs. When this last group of believers receives their glorified bodies, the “first resurrection” will have been completed.

- g. According to verse 5, the rest of the dead, the unjust dead who died without Christ, must remain in Hell for another 1,000 years and then be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity.
3. “and judgment was given unto them”
- a. If you consider Revelation 6.9-11, which we looked at along with First Corinthians 6.2, we have a good idea that those judging will be Christians. This is the conclusion reached by Alva J. McClain.⁵
- b. What kind of judgment will be committed to Christians? The chronology of this passage suggests that believers will play some part in the judgment of the nations.
4. “and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”
- a. This is a description of Tribulation saints. We can be sure of this because the beast will not appear on the world stage until after the Rapture, at which time he will institute a worldwide policy requiring that people worship him and his image and receive his mark on their foreheads or hands.
- b. Just as there were those who did not bow their knee to Baal in Elijah’s day, courageous and determined believers during the Tribulation will not worship the beast no matter the cost.
- c. When all is said and done, will it be worth it to them to endure great suffering and hardship for Christ? In Romans 8.18, Paul proclaimed, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”
- d. Judge for yourself. Will ruling and reigning with Jesus Christ for a thousand years, after He has wiped away all your tears, be a fair trade for a few hours, a few days, a few months of persecution and suffering, or a violent end to this life? As with those who gripe and complain about how unpleasant the Christian life is, the only ones who think it is not worth it will be those who have not paid the price.
5. “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.”

⁵ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), pages 483-485.

Revelation Chapter 20

- a. The fate of the redeemed, as it relates to the resurrection to glorified bodies suited for timeless eternity, is revealed. Only those who are damned remain to be dealt with.
- b. Why is there no second chance for the unsaved dead in this passage? Because there is no second chance. If a person dies separated from Christ, he will be forever separated from Christ.

(20.6) Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

1. Notice the way those participating in the “first resurrection” are described. They are “blessed and holy.” This verse establishes that only saved people participate in this resurrection. Those who are not saved will be taken in what Jesus calls “the resurrection of damnation.” It is referred to by John as “the second death” for reasons you will shortly see.
2. Although only Christians comprise Christ’s bride, believers of all ages will serve God and Christ as priests. This verse also helps establish why neither you nor I need a priest to speak to God for us, now or ever, if you are a Christian. I am a priest, according to Revelation 1.6, and will be forever, according to this verse.
3. Once again, we see the phrase “a thousand years.” Keep track of the number of times John refers to this period. It is important.

(20.7) And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison

1. Verses 1-6 of Revelation chapter 20 occur at the beginning of the 1,000-year reign of Christ and the 1,000-year imprisonment of Satan. But notice how verse seven jumps to the end of the millennium.
2. Why does John not teach about the millennium except to declare its duration and the fact of its occurrence? Probably because the Old Testament has an abundance of teachings relative to the millennium and the order of life during this future period, this time when Christ literally rules and personally reigns upon the Earth in righteousness.
3. In verse 7, we find the second reference to the fact that Satan, once bound for 1,000 years in the great abyss, will be loosed at the end of the millennium for a little season.
4. Why will Satan be loosed at the end of the 1,000 years? Before addressing that logical question, allow me to point out something in verses 1-7 that every student of prophecy needs to address.

- a. A PACE in our Accelerated Christian Education Christian school curriculum directs students to ask the pastor several questions about Revelation 20.1-7, primarily concerning the nature of the 1,000 years referred to in this passage. This is to avoid offending any pastors concerning their understanding of the 1,000 years referred to and its implications on their beliefs about the Rapture, Revelation, and the millennial kingdom. Directing the student to ask the pastor ensures that the pastor's view is advanced in the Christian school at his Church.
- b. When I am approached by students working that particular PACE, I always take the same approach. I ask the student to count the number of times a specific reference is made to a thousand years in Revelation 20.1-7. I would like you to take a moment and do the same. Count the number of times John refers to a thousand years in these seven verses.
- c. If your count is the same as mine, you noticed no reference to a thousand years in Revelation 20.1, but there is a definite reference to a one-thousand-year period in each of the following six verses. Let me ask you, if the Apostle John wanted to make a specific reference to a literal 1,000-year period, how could he be more specific to be taken literally and not figuratively than he is in these six verses?
- d. If words in context have any meaning at all, then the apostle refers to a period of ten centuries, a time of 1,000 years. If this is to be somehow taken to be a symbolic reference for some indeterminate period then there is no way any portion of God's Word can be rightly understood.
- e. If a literal understanding of this future period does not fit into your eschatological scheme, meaning that your understanding of prophecy requires that this passage be taken in a symbolic rather than a literal way, then you need to change your method of interpreting prophetic portions of the Bible. A system of theology is supposed to fit what the Bible means, not vice versa. This passage, taken by itself, shows amillennialism, the denial of a literal 1,000 reign of Christ on Earth, to be wrong.

(20.8) And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

1. When Satan is released from his prison in the great abyss, the bottomless pit, he will go out to deceive the nations. This master deceiver, who first deceived himself into thinking he could become like the Most High God, will continue to deceive even after being in prison for 1,000 years.
2. What an example of the utter futility of trying to change someone's heart by imprisoning him. Not that some criminals should not go to prison for their crimes, but we should not expect any amount of prison time to change anyone's heart.

3. In Ezekiel chapters 37 and 38, we read of Gog and Magog, which are involved in a war, probably at the beginning of the Tribulation. Understand that the Gog and Magog mentioned in Revelation 20 and Ezekiel are not likely identical. Remember, over 1,000 years separate these two Gogs and Magogs.
4. However, it is entirely possible that John uses the terms Gog and Magog in Revelation to show that this rebellion against God and this threat against God's city resembles the character of the attack that Gog and Magog, which I believe to be Russia, mounted in Ezekiel.
5. What size army will Satan raise in this last desperate rebellion? There will be multiplied millions, in my estimation.

(20.9) And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

1. During the millennium, the Lord Jesus will use His saints to rule over this Earth in righteousness on His behalf. In addition, since the armies of Satan will be unable to approach and attack the throne of heaven and will be unable to attack the New Jerusalem, which will hover over the Earth at that time, the only other way to strike out against God is to attack His earthly capital city of Jerusalem.
2. But the enemies of Christ will not get very far. God, the God of patience and mercy, will finally run out of patience and mercy and destroy Satan's forces as soon as they encompass the city. This time, his time will have finally run out. His 6,000+ years age of rebellion against God will finally be terminated.
3. And all of those who will be born during the millennium, who will chafe under the righteous rule of Christ, and who will side with Satan when they have the opportunity, will be destroyed with one infernal blast from the nostrils of Almighty God. Once again, this universe, which God created for His pleasure, will know only one will ... the will of her Creator, Jehovah.
4. John does not provide details of the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in his Revelation but skips completely over it because his readers were thoroughly versed in Old Testament Scripture, where the Theocratic Kingdom is dealt with at length.

(20.10) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

1. Several things from this verse are highly sobering to people or should be sobering. First, Satan will be bound for a thousand years, according to Revelation 20.1-2. Then, at the end of the millennium, he will be cast into the lake of fire after being released and leading a last desperate revolt. Thus, Satan will not be cast into the lake of fire any sooner than 1,007 years from now. This means that he is roaming this Earth seeking whom he may devour right this minute and will do so until the

Second Coming of our Lord Jesus. Many Christians are not consciously aware of this fact.

2. Second, Satan, the beast (the antichrist), and the false prophet will suffer the torment of the lake of fire for all eternity. How many people picture Satan as the master of Hell torturing those whom he has lured into his private little kingdom? But no, Satan will suffer the greatest torments in the fire lake. Keep in mind that this word “shall be tormented” translates βασανισθήσονται, referring to torture.⁶ It is a future passive verb in the third person plural, meaning someone else will cause them (Satan, the beast, and the false prophet) excruciating suffering. Who do you think will punish them in that manner in the lake that burns with fire?
 3. Third, notice the duration of the suffering in the lake of fire. The late John Walvoord, former president of the Dallas Theological Seminary, tells me in a book and as an expert on the book of Revelation, that the Greek phrase αιῶνας τῶν αιῶνων, translated “for ever and ever,” is the strongest possible phrase in the Greek language to express eternity.⁷ There is no more forceful way to inform readers that the lake of fire will be a place of eternal torment and punishment than John used here.
 4. So, to the Seventh Day Adventists, to the Jehovah’s Witnesses, to an ever-increasing number of new evangelicals, and to any others who might deny the eternal damnation of the lost, we say, “Look to God’s Word before you decide.”
 5. A final comment before we consider the following verse: Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet are the most powerful of God’s enemies, yet their fate is inevitable. What must your fate be, my friend, so long as your sins remain, so long as you continue to reject the Gospel, so long as you maintain your refusal of Christ’s command to come to Him, so long as you persuade yourself that you will not end up where you most certainly will end up? What must happen to you should you die without Christ?
- (20.11) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.
1. Notice the way the throne is described. “Great” indicates magnitude and immensity, for this is the judgment of the great God. “White” represents dazzling holiness, excruciatingly painful to the creatures of sin and darkness that must stand before the Lord Jesus Christ to receive their eternal sentence. “Throne” represents authority, right, and sovereignty. In addition, this passage shows Jesus Christ, the One to whom all judgment has been committed by the Father, to be the Righteous Judge.
 2. “Him that sat on it” must undoubtedly refer to the Lord Jesus. John 5.22, 26-29 verifies this:

⁶ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 858.

⁷ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), pages 304-305.

- 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:
- 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;
- 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.
- 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,
- 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

What we are studying right now is the judgment associated with the resurrection of damnation.

3. The fleeing away of heaven and earth indicates possibly two things:
- a. First, it refers to the fact that this present heaven and Earth will be burned with a fervent heat, according to Peter, and a new one will take its place, according to Peter and John.

Second Peter 3.10-13: ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

¹¹ *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness,

¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Revelation 21.1: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

- b. Secondly, we see that when heaven and Earth flee from this judgment, there is no place for the resurrected lost to hide from the judgment of God. There you will stand if you die without Christ, naked before the piercing gaze of the righteous and holy Christ Whom you rejected.

- c. Walvoord writes, “The most natural interpretation of the fact that earth and heaven flee away is that the present earth and heaven are destroyed and will be replaced by the new heaven and new earth. The additional statement in 21:1 also confirms this where John sees a new heaven and a new earth replacing the first heaven and the first earth that have passed away. Frequent references in the Bible seem to anticipate this future time when the present world will be destroyed (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; 21:33; II Peter 3:10). According to this last reference, II Peter 3:10, ‘The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.’ Peter goes on to say, ‘Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?’ (II Peter 3:11)”⁸
 - d. Since Second Peter 3.10 seems to be a non-scientific description of some nuclear cataclysm, I concur with Walvoord.
4. Think of it. More than 1,007 years in Hell, the Great White Throne judgment is so dreadful that all try to flee. Hebrews 2.3 asks, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” The answer, of course, is that escape is impossible. There will be no place to run and hide from the fearsome face of the Righteous Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 5. Comments from Alva J. McClain about Revelation 20.11-15 are in order:
 2. *The Final Judgment* (Rev. 20:11-15)
I saw a great white throne. - Rev. 20:11
 - a. The *Judge* here must be our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him alone, according to His own claims, has been committed “all judgment”: “the Father judgeth no man” (John 5:22). And for this immense adjudication our Lord is perfectly fitted; for He not only has the requisite divine ability, but He alone of the Persons of the Godhead has had a personal experience of human life, being not only Son of God but also “Son of man” (John 5:27).
 - b. The *purpose* of this judgment is not to determine who is to be lost or saved. This is a matter which must be settled before death. In this respect, all men are always living in a day of judgment, a time when by the grace of God personal destiny is determined by human decision. As our Lord once said, “He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18, ASV). The purpose of final judgment is to exhibit the character of the judged and award to them “according to their works.”
 - c. The *subjects* of this judgment are named in the passage as “the dead” (Rev. 20:12). And since they are to be judged “according to their works” (vss. 12-13), the implication points strongly to a class of people who are dead spiritually as well as physically. “By works of law shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (Rom. 3:20, ASV margin). For the saved, on the other hand, there can be no such judgment, because their judgment with reference to sin took place at Calvary. It is a very solemn fact, of course, that the believer’s *works* must be brought into judgment for reward or loss (I Cor. 3:12-15), but this will have taken place at some point between the Rapture of the Church and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom; and it will have nothing to do with salvation. Furthermore, since all those saved before the Millennial Kingdom will have a part in the “first resurrection,” and during the Millennium none of the

⁸ Ibid., page 305.

saved will die, there appears to be no reason for any resurrection for saved people afterwards. If there are any of the saved in this final resurrection, nothing at all is said about their destination, whereas that of the unsaved is specifically stated (Rev. 20:15).

d. The *books* mentioned must include at least the written Word of God and the divine record of human deeds. In the latter perhaps there will be other books; such as the book of *memory*; and the book of the *universe* where, it has been suggested by some, there could be found a physical recording of the image of every act committed and the sound of every word uttered from the beginning of the world. As to the “book of life” which appears here, this seems to be definitely set apart from the books out of which the dead are to be judged according to their works. It is not one of “the books,” but “another book.” Its purpose is to testify silently, by its omissions, against those who had rejected the mercy of God. Significantly, there is here no book of death, for while men are elected to salvation, none are elected to damnation. It is their own choice, not God’s, that brings them at last into the place of doom.

e. The *outcome* of this judgment is eternal perdition in the lake of fire (vss. 14-15). No other destination is even mentioned in the context of the passage. If any are saved out of this judgment and ushered into heaven, strangely nothing is said about them. Such an idea seems to be excluded by the opening words of this passage: the Judge sits on a “(great white throne” (vs. 11). Encircling this throne there is no “rainbow” of bright hope, as in the case of the pre-Kingdom judgment throne (4:3), bringing salvation to an innumerable multitude (7:9-14). But the color of the final judgment throne is the ineffable whiteness of absolute holiness and justice, unrelieved by any semblance of grace. At this solemn adjudication the matter of rebellion and discord in the universe receives its final disposition in preparation for the Kingdom in which God will be “all in all.”⁹

(20.12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books, according to their works.

1. “The dead” can only refer to the unsaved since God has previously dealt with all of the saved graciously. “Small and great” points out that God is no respecter of persons. All unsaved men, no matter their level of so-called success in this life, shall be summoned to this judgment.
2. “According to commentators the ‘Books’ are: the Book of Law for judging those who lived under the law during the Old Testament period; the Book of Works of the Old Testament that list all of a man’s works; the Book of Life where the names of every person are included at birth, but whose names can be blotted out if they are not saved by the time they die; and the Lamb’s Book of Life where a person’s name is entered when Christ is accepted as Savior and Lord. Everyone is judged by what is written in the Books according to their works.”¹⁰
3. The Puritan William Ames believed this other book was the sinner’s conscience.¹¹ If that be so, and it may be so, even the sinner’s conscience will be used against him at the Great White Throne judgment.

⁹ McClain, pages 508-510.

¹⁰ Bob Kollin, *Revelation Unlocked*, (Springfield, Missouri: 21st Century Press, 2003), page 194.

¹¹ Williams Ames, *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof*, (1639), page 21.

4. Read Revelation 3.5: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”
 5. It seems that when a person dies without having received Christ his name is blotted out of the Book of Life. This verse further indicates that only those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, only those whose names were not preserved by receiving Christ, will face judgment. This judgment, then, will be a judgment of their works, apparently to determine the severity of their eternal torment in the lake of fire.
 6. This means that those who die without Christ will receive varying degrees of punishment, depending upon the amount of light they received but did not respond to during their natural lives. The more light they received and ignored, the greater their punishment. Alternatively, the more they violated their conscience, the greater the penalty.
- (20.13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
1. Child of God, believer in Christ, are you not glad you will not be judged according to your works to determine your punishment in the lake of fire?
 2. As commonly understood, “death and hell” refer to the physical body’s location and the immaterial soul’s location. The body lies in the grave, referred to as “death,” and the soul is held captive in “hell.”
 3. But what if another meaning is attached to this phrase? What if “death” is the name of one of God’s angels, the angel responsible for the custody of the physical bodies of the damned who have died, and “hell” is the name of an angel responsible for the possession of the incarcerated souls of the damned after death? What if the angels are named according to their duties and responsibilities and function as jailors until they turn their prisoners over for a resurrection of damnation at the time of the Great White Throne judgment? Some hold to that view.¹²
 4. In any event, it appears that at this point in the future, the bodies and souls of lost men and women will be reunited together to face judgment and prepare for eternal torment. This is the damnation side of the glorious first resurrection that believers will someday enjoy.
- (20.14) And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
1. The bleak reality of this verse is staggering. There is no hint of escape. There is no suggestion of pardon or parole. This summary judgment immediately results in the capital punishment of the soul. However, notice that it “is the second death.”

¹² Ibid., page 195.

2. The first death occurred when Adam and Eve were cast from the Garden of Eden and the presence of God. This second death follows the second occasion in which the sinful race of Adam is thrown from the presence of God.
 3. After the first death, there was always the possibility of rescue from spiritual death, always the glimmer of hope that some sinners would be saved from their sins through faith in Christ. However, after the second death, there is no such possibility. For the dead, there is only death. For the sinner, there is only the execution of the sentence.
- (20.15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.
1. I suspect that when a person is conceived in his mother's womb, his name is written in the Book of Life. During his or her physical life, the name remains in that book. However, the name is blotted out when a person dies without Christ.
 2. Whatever the details, everyone, without exception, whose name does not appear in that Book of Life, will suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire. There will be no second chance. There will be no exceptions.