**April 22, 2020 | A Study on Chapter 20 of the Book of Revelation**

**The Thousand Years**

Before we begin our study of chapter 20, following is a brief description of the 3 schools of thought on the subject of this 1000 year period:

**Postmillennialism.**  A literal 1000 year period of peace on earth is accomplished by the church.  At the end of this period Satan rises up but is defeated by Jesus at His second coming.  This belief influenced the writings of 17th and 18th century scholars such as Matthew Henry and Albert Barnes.

**Amillennialism.**   The 1000 year period is considered symbolic of the time between Christ’s ascension and His second coming rather than a literal 1000 years.  R.C Sproul is among modern scholars who hold this belief.

**Premillennialism.** The 1000 year period is a literal time period which is initiated by the second coming of Jesus.  This theory has grown has become the most prominent of the 3 and seems to best conform to a literal interpretation of chapter 20.  Most modern evangelicals are proponents of this.

In the last chapter the Antichrist and False Prophet were captured during the Battle of Armageddon and thrown into the lake of fire.  At the beginning of chapter 20, an angel descends from Heaven and binds Satan in the Abyss where he will stay for 1000 years.  It is important to note the difference between and lake of fire and the abyss.  The lake of fire is the final destination of those whose names are not recorded in the book of life so those who go there will stay there for eternity.  It would seem that the first two inhabitants of the lake of fire are the Antichrist and False Prophet.  The abyss seems to be a place of confinement for evil spirits.  In chapter 9 a star fell from Heaven and was given a key to open the abyss and locusts were released under control of angel of the Abyss called the Destroyer.    In Luke chapter 8 Jesus cast demons out of a man and they begged Jesus not to send them to the abyss.  Peter’s description of hell in 2nd Peter chapter 4 may be the same as the abyss.  He says it is a place where angels who sin are held pending their final judgment.

In verse 4 John sees people on thrones who were given authority to judge.  While we are not told their number, some speculate they are the 24 elders seated on thrones described in 4:4 representing the Old Testament and New Testament church.  In Matthew 19:28 Jesus tells his disciples that those who followed him would sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.  John also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus.  Some believe this to represent the entire resurrected church, however it specifically refers to those who had not accepted the mark of the beast.  It may mean all Christians who accepted Jesus and resisted the temptations of Satan.  We next see the statement that the rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1000 years were ended.  Most commentary writers believe this to be the lost throughout the history of the world.  At this time, it seems that all who are present on earth are either believers who survived the tribulation or resurrected saints.

We are told that Jesus will have an earthly kingdom that will last for 1000 years.  There is substantial prophecy about the future in the Book of Isaiah.  It will be a time of peace.  After thousands of years of constant warfare, nations will not lift up sword against other nations (Isa. 2:4).  Health will be much improved during this period so much so that life spans will greatly increase.  Isaiah 65:20 says that someone dying at the age of 100 would be considered young.  One interesting prophecy is contained in chapter 11 where the predatory nature of animals will be changed during the millennium.  This leads to speculation that humans will once again be vegetarians as they were in the Garden of Eden.

The next section, entitled Satan’s Doom in the NIV, seems to be both prophecy and vision.  John predicts that Satan will be released from the Abyss and deceive the nations to rebel then he describes a vision of the battle.  Despite the pristine conditions of the earth and the righteous reign of Jesus, there will be lost people who are deceived by Satan during this 1000 year period.  This would have to be people who are born during this period since all on earth at the beginning are believers.  Apparently there are enough nonbelievers to populate nations that are gathered together to make war against God’s people.  There is a final battle with Satan after which he is thrown into the lake of fire.  After that, John sees a multitude of people who are judged by God.  It is clear that the lost are judged here and thrown into the lake of fire which is referred to as the second death.  Since there is a reference to names written in the book of life those judged may also include believers born during the millennium.

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