

# 33

## The Millennial Reign

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

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

And cast him into the bottomless pit [the abyss], 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.

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.

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

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 (Rev. 20:1-6).

That revealed in the first six verses of Revelation chapter twenty can be divided into three interrelated sections:

- 1) *The binding and incarceration of Satan (vv. 1-3).*
- 2) *Judgment and two resurrections (vv. 4-6).*
- 3) *The one-thousand-year reign of Christ (vv. 4-6).*

And matters pick up exactly where events at the end of chapter nineteen left off (the Beast and False Prophet taken and cast into the lake of fire, and the corresponding destruction of Gentile world power [vv. 17-21]).

### **The Binding and Incarceration of Satan**

In the first three verses of chapter twenty, a powerful angel (seen earlier in the book in ch. 9 [vv. 1ff]) comes down from heaven with two things in his possession: 1) “the key of the bottomless pit [Gk., *abussos*, ‘the abyss’],” and 2) “a great chain in his hand.”

“The abyss” is *the underworld*. This is the place of *the dead*, synonymous, at least in part, with *Sheol* or *Hades* (Rom. 10:7; Eph. 4:9, 10; Rev. 17:8). This is also the place where *certain fallen angels* were/are confined (Luke 8:31; I Peter 3:18-20; Jude 6; Rev. 9:1-11). And the chain which this angel has in his hand is not just any chain, but “a great chain,” sufficiently strong to hold the powerful one being bound for 1,000 years.

The particular angel assigned this task can only be *a very powerful angel*, for he takes *another powerful angel (Satan)* and not only binds him with this chain but casts him into the abyss and seals it over. The one being chained and bound in the abyss is referred to as “a king” over other angels in the abyss, and as “the angel of the bottomless pit [‘the abyss’]” — the one whose name in the Hebrew language is “Abaddon,” and in the Greek language is “Apollyon,” both words meaning, *Destroyer* (Rev. 9:11).

(According to II Cor. 11:14, Satan appears today as “an angel of light.” But one day the mask will be removed, and he will be seen in a completely true revelation of himself, as “Abaddon” / “Apollyon,” *the Destroyer*. And in that coming day when the masks worn by both men and angels have been removed, revealing everything in a *completely naked sense*, Satan will be bound in a *place void of light, openly revealed to all* in a completely opposite sense to the way he seeks to make himself

known today [Isa. 14:15-17; Ezek. 28:16-19].)

Satan will be kept chained in the sealed abyss for 1,000 years, during which time God's Son, with His co-heirs, will exercise the rights of the firstborn and reign over the earth. Only after Christ's 1,000-year reign has been completed will there be a return to the abyss to unseal the abyss and loose Satan, for a purpose seen in Rev. 20:7-9 (covered in Chapter XXXIV of this book). The whole of the matter — carrying one through the entire sequence of events (the destruction of Gentile world power, the binding of Satan [which can only include his angels as well], the 1,000-year reign of Christ, and the loosing of Satan) — was stated in a succinct form by Isaiah over 2,700 years earlier:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high [Satan and his angels] and the kings of the earth upon earth [Gentile world powers].

And they [the powers previously mentioned — Satan and his angels, along with slain Gentile powers] shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit [Heb. *bor*, ‘prison,’ ‘dungeon’], and shall be shut up in the prison [for 1,000 years], and after many days shall they be visited [after the 1,000 years Satan and his angels will be loosed and subsequently dealt with; and the Gentile powers will be resurrected and judged (Rev. 20:7-15)].

Then [referring back to events during the 1,000 years] the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed [all lesser governmental powers (existing governmental powers among the nations in that day) will recognize that stated in Isa. 2:1-4 — ‘the mountain (the kingdom) of the Lord’s house...established in the top of the mountains’ (above all the world’s kingdoms)], when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously [*lit.*, ‘before His elders, Glory’ (His coming Glory, during the 1,000 years)]” (Isa. 24:21-23).

(*The Lord before His elders* in the last verse is an apparent reference to the Lord in the midst of the Jewish people, for the scene is earthly, in Mount Zion, in Jerusalem [cf. Ps. 2:6ff; Joel 2:27ff]; otherwise, if a heavenly scene were in view [though it isn’t], this could only refer to the Lord in the midst of His co-heirs, *et al.* in the heavens [cf. Matt. 8:11; Heb. 11:13-16; Rev. 1:13, 20].)

## Judgment, Two Resurrections

Revelation 20:4-6 deals with *individuals executing judgment from thrones, and with two resurrections*. As will be shown, executing judgment from thrones in this text is synonymous with *reigning from thrones*; and the two resurrections are inseparably related and occur at two different times, 1,000 years apart. And it is clearly revealed from the context that this judgment and one of the two related resurrections are events which have to do with the 1,000 years, also spoken of in these verses.

### 1) Judgment from Thrones

“Judgment” is sometimes used in a synonymous sense to *reign*. For example, in Matt. 19:27, 28, note Peter’s statement and question, along with Christ’s response to not only Peter but to all twelve disciples:

“Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

During the Millennium, the twelve disciples will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (which can only be viewed as *extensions of Christ’s throne, with the power emanating from His throne* [Rev. 3:21]). And, in this respect, the Millennium can be viewed as 1,000 years of *judging*, with Christ and His co-heirs ruling the nations with a rod of iron (*cf.* Ps. 2:6-9; Rev. 2:26, 27).

But who are those seated on thrones in Rev. 20:4, to whom regal power and authority will have been given at this time? Those allowed to ascend these thrones are referred to only as “they,” and there is seemingly no antecedent to the pronoun to tell us who is being referenced.

Pronouns, such as “they” in this verse, are used in the place of preceding, identifying substantives. And a pronoun, used in this manner, *could not* stand alone in Scripture. *There would have to be*

*an antecedent*, for Scripture *has not* been structured in a manner where man is left to his own interpretation, which the absence of an antecedent would necessitate. *God has simply not put His Word together in this manner.*

The verse goes on to tell the reader *who* is being referenced by “they.” It is *the Tribulation martyrs in the latter part of the verse*, seen back in the latter part of chapter seven (vv. 9-17), also briefly referred to in chapters twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen (12:11; 13:15; 14:12, 13; 15:2-4). And, in relation to the antecedent of the pronoun being that far removed from those being referenced, bear a couple of things in mind.

Those having previously been slain (referred to by “they,” and identified in the remainder of the verse) had been slain throughout the time covering the latter part of the Tribulation, throughout the past three and one-half years. Thus, *in relation to time*, events in Rev. 20:4 occur very shortly after the conclusion of time covering the Tribulation saints being martyred.

Then, something else should be considered. With God, both the past and the future exist during *present time*. Thus, with God, the antecedent of a pronoun could only be something *existing during the same present time seen in the pronoun*, not something removed from the pronoun by time. Note Eccl. 3:14, 15 in this respect:

“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

That which hath been is now [the past seen as *present*]; and that which is to be hath already been [the future seen as past, which makes it *present* as well]; and God requireth that which is past [*lit.*, ‘and God seeks that which has been pursued’ (which again makes it *present*)].”

Thus, the identity of those occupying thrones in Rev. 20:4, to whom “judgment” will be given, is easily determined. The complete text, along with the context, makes this quite clear.

## 2) Two Resurrections

Revelation 20:4-6 deals with *two resurrections* — one occurring before the Millennium, and the other occurring after the Millen-

nium. And, as will be shown, the thought of bodily resurrection is *not what is in view* through the use of the Greek word *anastasis*, translated “resurrection” in verses five and six.

(The word *anastasis* appears forty-three times in the Greek N.T. And, as in Rev. 20:5, 6 [which is the only place this word appears in the Book of Revelation], is the word translated “resurrection” different places throughout the N.T.

*Anastasis* is a compound word formed by prefixing a preposition [*ana*, meaning “up”] to *stasis* [meaning, “to stand”]. Thus, the word *anastasis* means “to stand up,” with the thought behind the English word “resurrection” having to do with the impartation of life, allowing the dead to *stand up*. And, when used in the sense of being raised from the dead in the N.T., the word applies *only to the body, to the material part of man* [for that is the only part of man which dies today]. The body *stands up*, with the thought of *life* understood within the meaning of the word *anastasis* itself.)

*Anastasis* is used three different ways in the Greek New Testament:

1) The word is used referring to the resurrection of the body. With only several exceptions (*cf.* Heb. 11:35), this is the way that the word is used throughout the New Testament.

2) The word is used in Luke 2:34, translated “rising again,” referring to a spiritual deliverance of the Jewish people.

3) The word is used in Phil. 3:11, translated “resurrection,” but with an additional preposition (*ek*, meaning “out of,” not seen in most English translations) prefixed to the word (forming *exanastasis* [in Greek, the letter ‘k’ becomes ‘x’ when prefixed to a word beginning with a vowel]).

Philippians 3:11 is the only place in the New Testament where *anastasis* appears with the preposition *ek* prefixed to the word, making the word to literally mean “to stand up out of.” And, contextually, *the word has nothing to do with bodily resurrection* in this text. Rather, the word has to do with one group of individuals *standing up out of* another group of individuals, with the context clearly relating the matter to that which awaits both faithful and unfaithful Christians at

the judgment seat. One group (the faithful, the overcomers) will *stand up out of* the other group (the unfaithful, the nonovercomers).

(*Anistemi*, the verb form of *anastasis* [formed from *ana* (“up”) and *histemi* (“to stand”), which can only carry the same meaning as *anastasis*] is used one hundred eleven times in the Greek N.T. And, unlike *anastasis*, the word *anistemi* refers to bodily resurrection only about thirty of these times. In most instances the word does not refer to the dead at all but to living individuals rising up in both literal and non-literal senses [e.g., Matt. 9:9; 12:41; 17:9; 20:19; 22:24; 26:62].)

As will be shown, textually and contextually, one group of Christians *standing up out of* another group of Christians in Phil. 3:11 is exactly what is in view in Rev. 20:4-6 relative to one group of Tribulation saints *standing up*, with the remainder of the Tribulation saints not being allowed *to stand up* at this time, though they will be allowed *to stand up* at a later time (after the 1,000 years). Bodily resurrection is in view in these verses *only in the sense that it is understood to have occurred prior to the exercise of judgmental rule in verse four* — the same as that seen in the judgment of the unsaved at the end of the Millennium in subsequent verses (vv. 11-15), where no mention of bodily resurrection is made either, *though it would be understood to have occurred prior to judgment*.

Neither the judgmental rule of the Tribulation martyrs nor the judgment of the unsaved dead (vv. 4, 11-15) can occur apart from a resurrection of the bodies of those in view. Individuals simply will not rule or be judged apart from *the complete person* being present, *which necessitates a resurrection of the body* (Dan. 12:2, 3; John 5:29; cf. I Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 1:10-20).

In this respect, the word “lived” in Rev. 20:4, 5 is not a synonym for *bodily resurrection*, as it is often understood, for “lived” in these verses *occurs subsequent to resurrection and judgment*. Contextually, the word has to do with *living and reigning with Christ during the 1,000 years*.

Also, note John 5:29:

“And shall come forth [all in the graves]; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

The word “resurrection” in this verse is used in connection with both “life” and “damnation [*lit.*, ‘judgment’].” It is evident that neither word (*life, judgment*) refers to or has to do with *bodily resurrection*. *Life* and *judgment* are opposite counterparts, and both must be seen having to do with *the same thing* — both having to do with Christ’s reign, not with the resurrection of the body (for that would necessitate seeing “judgment” associated with *life*).

The word “lived” in Rev. 20:4, 5 would be separated from a resurrection of the body in this same sense, which is the sense seen through Christ’s words in John 11:25 — “I am the resurrection and the life” (*cf.* Acts 2:24). The manner in which this is worded in the Greek text, “resurrection” and “life” *are not synonymous*, though “life” would have to be involved in resurrection (pertaining only to the body). But life in connection with the physical body is not the thought through the subsequent use of the word “life,” for this word (Gk., *zoe*, used one hundred thirty-four times in the N.T.) is not only used in a separate sense from “resurrection” but is used throughout the New Testament pertaining more to *the whole man*, not just the body.

The word “lived” is not only associated with Christ’s reign in Rev. 20:4 but is referred to as “the first resurrection” in verse five. That is, it is referred to as *one group of previously judged individuals standing up in relation to Christ’s rule and reign*, with another group of previously judged individuals not being allowed to stand up at this time, being denied a part in Christ’s rule and reign.

*A second standing up* — those not being allowed to stand up before the Millennium, “the rest of the dead” — is clearly stated in verse five. And this standing up will occur only *after the Millennium*.

The word “again” (KJV) in verse five should not be in the translation. That is, the verse should read:

“But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”

(The word “again” appears in a couple of Greek texts, including the Textus Receptus, the main Greek text used for the KJV, which accounts for the KJV translation. However, the vast majority of Greek manuscripts do not have the word “again” in

this verse. And, resultingly, almost any English translation since the 1901 ASV does not include the word.

Beyond the preceding, contextually, it is evident that the word does not belong in the text. If in the text, the words “lived” and “resurrection” would have to be viewed as synonyms and relate to bodily resurrection, for *living bodily* would be something that the individuals in view would do again. But this is not the case in the text. These individuals had *never lived* in the sense seen here. But they will live in this sense after the 1,000 years.

Saved individuals not living and reigning until following the 1,000 years is dealt with in the concluding chapter of this book, Chapter XXXVI.)

Then, further textual evidence that “lived” is not synonymous with *bodily resurrection* in these verses can be seen in a mention of “the second death” *not having power* over those who live and reign with Christ, though there is a clear inference that *it will have power* over those not living and reigning with Christ.

“The second death” was previously seen in the Book of Revelation in connection with Christians overcoming or being overcome in the message to the Church in Smyrna (2:11). The promise given to this Church was that overcoming Christians would “not be hurt of the second death.” But, the clear inference in the promise to overcoming Christians was that non-overcoming Christians *would be hurt of the second death*.

And exactly the same thing is seen in Rev. 20:4-6 relative to Tribulation saints and “the second death.” Tribulation saints who had died, been raised from the dead, and judged are in view. Those overcoming (as seen in vv. 4-6) will be the ones standing up, with “the second death” *having no power over them*. And exactly the opposite will be true for those not overcoming in this manner. They will not be allowed to stand up (in a *regal* respect) until after the 1,000 years, and it is clearly inferred that “the second death” *will have power over them* (cf. Rom. 8:13).

(Note that *millennial verities*, not eternal, are in view throughout Rev. 20:4-6. The passage is dealing with *two types of saved individuals*

*coming out of the tribulation, just as Rev. 2:11 is dealing with two types of Christians removed from the earth before the Tribulation. And in relation to both groups, judgment pertains to individuals either overcoming or being overcome, the second death either not having or having power over them, and the entire matter is with a view to these individuals either ruling and reigning or not ruling and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years. Matters pertaining to eternal salvation are simply not dealt with in either passage.*

For additional information on “the second death” in the previous respect, refer to Appendix IV in this book.)

### **The One-Thousand-Year Reign of Christ**

It is often stated that Rev. 20:1-7, where the 1,000 years are referred to six different times, is *the only place in all Scripture* that one can find mention made of the length of this future period of time, the Messianic Era. However, a statement of that nature is *quite misleading and not true at all.*

The matter is as stated by Nathaniel West in his book, *The Thousand Years in Both Testaments*, written over one hundred years ago:

“What we find in the New Testament as its outcome in respect to the ages and the kingdom has already lain in the bosom of the Old Testament from the beginning... Nothing appears in the later revelation that was not hid in the earlier, nothing in John that was not in Moses...”

If we study the eschatology [doctrine of last things] of the Old Testament, we will find the *Eschata* there identical with the *Eschata* of the New Testament, and the Eschatology of both Testaments the same... Such is the organic and genetic character of revelation and of prophecy that if ‘the thousand years’ are not in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, they have no right to be in John.”

*A septenary structure, introduced in the opening two chapters of Genesis, pervades all Scripture. And within this septenary structure there are six days of restorative/redemptive work, followed by a day of rest.*

God’s pattern concerning how He restores a ruined creation *has forever been set forth in an established, unchangeable fashion at*

*the very beginning of His Word, in the first thirty-four verses, in Gen. 1:1-2:3. This pattern was established through God's restoration of the ruined material creation. And God's subsequent work surrounding restoring ruined man following the fall in Genesis chapter three must follow the established pattern.*

God, in His restoration of ruined man, is presently working six days. Then, following six days work, God will rest the seventh day, *exactly as in the established pattern.* And each day in the latter restoration is 1,000 years in length, in perfect keeping with "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" in II Peter 3:8 (note that II Peter is an epistle which has an internal septenary structure of its own [II Peter 1:15-18; 3:3-8; cf. Matt. 16:28-17:5]).

"The Sabbath" was given to Israel as *a sign* to keep this thought ever before the Jewish people throughout their generations during Man's Day (Ex. 31:13-17). Every time that the Israelites kept the Sabbath, following six days of work, *they were calling attention to that which God had set forth in the beginning.* They were calling attention to the fact that, *according to the unchangeable Word of God, at a future time God would rest one day, 1,000 years, following six days of restorative/redemptive work, following 6,000 years of restorative/redemptive work (cf. Heb. 4:1-9).*

And this septenary structure, pervading all Scripture, *allows for the numerous prophecies covering both Man's Day (lasting 6,000 years) and the Lord's Day (lasting a following 1,000 years) to be properly understood and placed in their proper perspective.*

Thus, *nothing further* than a simple announcement concerning the 1,000 years is needed in Revelation chapter twenty, for this 1,000-year period has pervaded the whole of previous Scripture, with everything moving toward this goal.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE, Chapter II, "The Septenary Arrangement of Scripture.")

Also, see the foreword to this book for information on how John began his gospel in this same septenary manner.)

