

# Revelation 20

## Outline of the chapter:

**Incarceration of Satan: verses 1-3**

**Old Testament believers participating in the 1st Resurrection: verses 4-6**

**The Last Revolution: verses 7-10**

**The Great White Throne Judgment: 11-15**

**20:1: Then I saw [in a vision] an angel descending from Heaven, having the key of the Abyss [one of four compartments of Hades] and a great chain [like giant handcuffs] in his hand.**

The arresting angel coming directly from the throne room of God as he did in Revelation 14:15 is a six winged angel, the highest ranking category. This particular seraph is The Officer of Arms, the second highest angel from the Angelic College of Heralds. God never sends a boy to do a man's job. Furthermore, God always follows protocol both in blessing and in judgment. In this case God selected a powerful, high ranking angel to make the arrest. Thus, the arresting angel doesn't need any armament to help him, just his inherent power.

Note: R. B. Thieme Jr. developed terminology from English heraldry to help Christians better understand angelic hierarchy. If you are interested in listening to R. B. Thieme's teaching regarding the doctrines of the "Angelic College of Heraldry" and "Angelic Hierarchy" you may contact Tapes and Publications.  
(see: [www.rbthieme.org](http://www.rbthieme.org))

Initially, Satan, a Cherub, a four winged angel was the most powerful angel, but during the angelic conflict, the Lord promoted certain angels to a higher and more powerful class called Seraphim, six winged angels. This we understand through deduction.

Satanic influence must be removed before perfect environment can commence, so the need for an arresting angel. The chain will be used to control Satan after his arrest and to bind him for the thousand years in the Abyss, a compartment of Hades (a Greek word; Sheol being the Hebrew equivalent). There cannot be the perfect environment until Satan, his fallen angels and all the religions and worldly philosophies which Satan has authored are removed. (See *The Doctrine of Hades (Sheol)* by R. B. Thieme Jr.)

Although Satan in his arrogance gained more power by revolting by which he gained authority over a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4a), he will lose that authority over those fallen angels at the 2nd Advent. Being a lone Cherub he will be no match for this Seraph (a higher rank created after the fall of Satan). One of the great manifestations of arrogance is greed (selfish and excessive desire for something), not only for

monetary gain, but also for approbation and power. Satan wanted to displace God, but instead God replaced him.

Satan in his eternal body will enter prison in good health and will depart prison in good health (an eternal body neither ages nor deteriorates). In addition, we know that after his release, he will have the mental and physical vigor to mastermind a revolution against the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:7-8).

Application: In prehistoric angelic history, the arresting angel started out lower than Satan in rank, position, power and glory et cetera, but ended higher. Thus, it is not how one starts in life which is important, but how he ends up.

Principle: No one ever loses by choosing the plan of God.

**20:2: And he** [the Officer of Arms] **seized** [with violence] **the dragon** [a term of beauty], **that ancient serpent** [so named because he indwelt the serpent to tempt the woman] **who is the Devil** [slanderer, accuser, defense attorney] **even Satan** [the Hebrew word for devil], **and bound him** [with the chain] **for a thousand years.**

The Greek verb “krateo” means to use force. This Seraph will have to use force to bind and imprison Satan. This angel once inferior to Lucifer [the morning star], the Son of the Dawn will be able to easily arrest and bind Satan at the 2nd Advent.

This dragon is not some long snake-like creature breathing fire as many writers portray him. Rather the Scripture depicts this dragon as the quintessence of beauty. Ezekiel states in chapter 28:12b, “You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” and in verse 17a, “Your heart [mentality] was lifted up because of your beauty; you distorted your wisdom because of your glamour.”

**20:3: And he cast him into the Abyss and shut him up and sealed it over him so that he should not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years should be fulfilled. And after that he must be released for a short time** [for his closing statement].

This was prophesied in Isaiah 14:15, “Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol [The Hebrew word for Hades], to the recesses of the pit [a reference to the Abyss, the last compartment of Hades].”

Remember that human history is the appeal trial of Satan and his fallen angels. There was a prehistoric trial in which Satan and his minions were sentenced to the Lake of Fire. Matthew 25:41, “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from me accursed ones into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Satan appealed, and God the Father, the presiding judge graciously granted him an appeal. The appeal spans human history which explains the following: why God created the first two human beings (If one is going to have a trial, one must have witnesses), why angels are permitted to participate in human history, why Satan was permitted to tempt the woman in the garden, and to cross examine Job, why human history is broken down into the different parts of a trial, why Satan and his angels were not immediately cast into the Lake of Fire, and why they will not enter the Lake of Fire until after human history comes to a close (Satan loses the appeal).

The Millennial reign of Christ is the closing statement of the Lord functioning as the prosecuting attorney. Satan also must have a closing statement which explains why he must be released for a short time at the end of human history. (The opening statement of the appeal trial is the garden with the initial two witnesses; the formal phase of the trial is the Old Testament; the First Advent and the Church Age is the rebuttal of Christ, the prosecuting attorney; the Tribulation is the rebuttal of Satan, followed by the closing statements of both sides, as mentioned above.)

**20:4: And I saw** [vision: also in verses 1, 11] **thrones** [of judgment], **and they** [mature believers who will be martyred in the Tribulation: the 144,000 and others] **sat on them, and judgment was given** [culminative aorist: a result of fulfilling their spiritual lives] **to them** [these will function as judges in the Millennium]. **Furthermore, I saw the souls** [martyrs identified] **of those who had been decapitated** [with an ax; the martyrs of the Tribulation identified] **because of the witness** [testimony] **for Jesus** [the 144,000 martyrs and other mature believers as well] **really because of doctrine from God** [Since they were mature believers they would not compromise doctrine.], **and these** [martyrs of the Tribulation] **who had not worshiped the beast nor his image, nor had received his mark on their foreheads, nor in their hands** [doctrine was more important than life]. **And they came to life** [ingressive aorist: will receive their resurrection bodies at the Second Advent] **and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

All Old Testament believers who have died before the 2nd Advent will receive their resurrection bodies at that time. Those who had obtained spiritual maturity will be rewarded with the greater blessings. Daniel 12:13 states, "But as for you, go to the end [of your life], then you will enter into rest [interim body] and then rise again [receiving his resurrection body at the Second Advent] for your allotted portion [his eternal reward] at the end of the age [the Tribulation completes the Age of Israel]." Though this will be true of all Old Testament believers, this passage is emphasizing the Tribulation-martyrs who will function as judges, rulers and even priests (verse 6) in the Millennium.

**20:5: (The rest of the dead** [unbelievers of the Tribulation and all other unbelievers of human history] **did not come to life** [will not receive their eternal bodies] **until the thousand years have been completed.) This is the first resurrection** [continues from Revelation 20:4].

The parenthesis is to bring out a contrast between the first and second resurrection. The first resurrection includes the resurrection of the humanity of Christ three days after entering the tomb, the Church Age believers at the Rapture, the Old Testament believers at the 2nd Advent and finally Millennial believers at the end of the Millennium. The Second Resurrection is the resurrection of all unbelievers. This will occur at the end of human history. At that time all unbelievers will receive a resurrection body and will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment. Those in the First Resurrection may have suffered in time, but in the eternal state will never suffer again. On the other hand those in the Second Resurrection may have obtained much power, approbation, wealth etc. in time, but they will spend all eternity in the Lake of Fire.

**20:6: Happy** [mentioned in Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14] **and sanctified** [emphasis on ultimate sanctification: receiving a resurrection body] **is he who has part in the first resurrection** [all believers]. **The second death** [the Lake of Fire] **has no authority over these, but they [a reference to the 144,000] will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years.**

All believers who die will immediately be happy regardless of their level of spiritual growth or their depth of reversionism. However, these 144,000 mature Jewish believers who will be beheaded in the Tribulation will rule with Christ and function as priests in the Millennium Temple (However, the high priest will come from the line of Zadok as stated in Ezekiel 40:46).

**20:7: And when the thousand years have been completed, Satan will be released from his prison** [to make his closing statement].

**20:8 And he will go out** [predictive future] **to deceive** [culminative aorist: results in a revolution] **the nations, those in the four hemispheres of the earth, Gog and Magog** [code referring to Satan and his armies] **to concentrate** [military word] **them for battle** [Satan uses violence] **whose number is like the sand of the sea** [sand on beaches or under the oceans: an extremely large army].

People do not believe the lie until they first reject the truth, and once a person believes the lie, his life becomes a lie. This process involves lying to self and then lying to others. After rejecting the truth, Satan became the greatest and most effective liar in history, the first pathological liar. (A pathological liar has no truth in him so he has no qualms about lying because there are no true norms and standards in his conscience, much different from a person lying to get out of a jam.) So, also in the Millennium many will reject the truth. For the unbelievers in the Millennium this rejection of truth will leave them with no capacity for life, love and happiness and so no capacity for the perfect environment of the Millennial reign of Christ. In this state they will lust to serve their sin natures which will have been hindered and frustrated by perfect government.

One thousand years in prison will not change the rebellious nature of Satan, for after his release he will make immediate plans for a revolution. He will not have learned even the simplest of principles, namely that the power of God is infinitely greater than the power of his creatures (arrogant creatures do not learn from experience.) The revolution's code named Gog and Magog is universal and international.

The words "Gog of the land of Magog" are found in Ezekiel 38:2, the story in Ezekiel 38-39. This passage prophesies about an evil, anti-Semitic King who will invade the Land of Israel and will lay siege against Jerusalem towards the end of the Great Tribulation. Gog will be the name of this future king from the North of Israel (Ezekiel 38:15) and Magog will be his land and peoples. So, from this king and his armies Satan will code name his conspiracy against the perfect environment of the Millennium. Thus, Gog will represent Satan and Magog will represent those who will join his revolution and become part of this great army of the future numbering in the millions maybe even in the billions.

**20:9 Then, they marched over the wide terrain of the land** [the high desert country of Southern Israel] **and they surrounded the bivouac of the saints** [gentile believers in mortal bodies who will have retreated before this army], **and the beloved city** [Jerusalem, where the Jewish believers in mortal bodies will have fled for security]. **Then, fire** [or something approximating fire] **came down from God out of Heaven and consumed** [destroyed] **them.**

How Satan attempts to destroy all believers in mortal bodies at the end of the Millennium! Satan, an organizational genius will recruit the best minds for the manufacturing of weaponry and the brightest and ablest to train an army for the purpose of attacking Israel. In this way, he will organize all people with negative volition into a strong well equipped revolutionary army. Armed and with overwhelming numbers, the revolutionary army will have great confidence in the evil genius of Satan especially since the Lord will not have equipped and trained an army.

Aggression gives tactical advantage. Thus, Satan and his invading force initially will appear to have the advantage. However, the Lord, operating under the principle of using violence to stop violence will bring fire down upon Satan and his army, bringing to an end the last ever conflict of both human and angelic history.

**20:10 And the Devil** [the enemy] **who had deceived** [durative present] **them, was thrown into the Lake of Fire and burning sulfur, where the beast** [the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire] **and the false prophet** [the false dictator and false messiah of Israel during the Tribulation] **were. And they** [the three just mentioned] **will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

Two people in the human race were evil enough to precede Satan in the Lake of Fire. In the mouth of two witnesses it shall be established. These two unbelievers establish the judgment of all unbelievers to the Lake of Fire. In the case of the angelic creatures it takes one witness to establish judgment for all fallen angels.

The dictator of the Revived Roman Empire has the following aliases: The Feet of the Image: Daniel 2; The Little Horn: Daniel 7; The King of the West: Daniel 7:17; The Prince that shall Come: Daniel 9:26, 27; The god of forces: Daniel 11:38; The Prince of Tyre: Ezekiel 28:1-10; The Abomination of Desolation: Daniel 11:31, 12:11; Matthew 24:15; The Man of Sin: 2 Thessalonians 2; The Anti-Christ (against): 1 John 2:18; Revelation 13:6; The Scarlet Colored Beast: Revelation 17; The Beast out of the Sea: Revelation 13:1-10.

The false prophet of Israel has the following aliases: Dan the Serpent: Isaiah 49; The King who shall do according to his own will: Daniel 11:36-40; The False Messiah (instead of): Matthew 24:23, 24; Revelation 13:11, 13, 14; The Foolish Idle Shepherd: Zechariah 11:15-17; The False Prophet: Revelation 16:13; 19:20 and context; The Beast out of the Land: Revelation 13:11-18.

**20:11. Then, I saw** [constative aorist: the eschatological vision of the last courtroom of human history] **a great** [the importance of the judge] **white** [the integrity of the judge] **throne, and He** [the Lord Jesus Christ] **who was sitting on it** [the judgment bench] **from whose presence** [face] **planet earth and heaven** [earth's atmosphere]

and stellar space] **vanished** [culminative aorist: contemplates the destruction of the universe in its entirety at the end of the Millennium just after the Gog and Magog revolution, but views it from its existing results namely the destruction of the universe] **consequently** [the inferential use of this particle] **no inhabited place was found for them** [culminative aorist: views the destruction of the universe in its entirety with emphasizes on the results: no place for the unbelievers in the New Heaven and the New Earth].

The destruction of the universe is mentioned here to give us the order of events.

1. After the Millennial reign of Christ, Satan is released for a short time.
2. Satan initiates the Gog-Magog revolution.
3. The divine victory over the revolution.
4. The universe is destroyed (planet earth is annihilated along with all stellar space).
5. The Great White Throne Judgment is convened in heaven.
6. The creation of the New Heaven and earth (Revelation 21).

Just before this judgment, all unbelievers are removed from planet earth; namely those who had just been executed in the Gog-Magog revolution and any other remaining unbelievers; those in Torments, and the Nephilim (half angelic/human beings referred to in Gen. 6) in their sea prison. These unbelievers will be arraigned in heaven before the Great White Throne Judgment, as is described in the rest of this chapter.

2 Peter 3:7, 10 provides information regarding the destruction of the universe by God. 2 Peter 3:7 states, “But the present heavens and the earth by His Word [Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17] are being reserved [the stored up gases and molten rock] for fire kept for the Day of Judgment, [destruction of the universe: Revelation 20:11; 21:1] and destruction of Godless mankind [unbelievers: Revelation 20:12-15]. 2nd Peter 3:10 states, “But the Day of the Lord [a portion of the Day of the Lord: the destruction of the universe and the judgment of all unbelievers] will come like a thief [suddenly, unexpectedly] in which [day: genitive of time within which] the heavens will vanish with a roar and the elements [chemical structure of the universe] will be dissolved with intense heat [thermal action possibly from nuclear fusion], and the earth and its works will be incinerated [Though there are some manuscript problems with 2 Peter 3:10, this is the translation that both the New American Standard Bible and R. B. Thieme Jr. found to be accurate, and the only one which makes sense under doctrinal analysis].

Application: All the synoptic writers mention the destruction of the universe and contrast it with the eternity of God’s Word (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). So, if we were rational, we would concentrate on what will last forever.

**20:12. Then I saw the dead** [all unbelievers of human history arraigned before the Supreme Court in Heaven], **the great** [famous and successful] **and the insignificant** [the hoi polloi] **standing** [unbelievers in their resurrection bodies as a result of the Second Resurrection] **before the throne** [the Great White Throne]. **Then, the books were opened** [to function as evidence that they are not righteous enough], **and another book was opened which is the Book of Life** [to verify that they do not

possess eternal life]. **Then, the dead** [unbelievers] **were judged from the things which had been written in the books according to their deeds** [self-righteous deeds and accomplishments].

In a just judicial system, if a person is to be accused and tried for some offence or crime, there must be two or more eyewitnesses and bona fide evidence. In the trial of the Great White Throne Judgment, the unbelievers of human history will be accused and tried by the Lord Jesus Christ, the presiding judge, for rejecting His work on the cross, and so will not be qualified (not possessing perfect righteousness (“+R”) and eternal life) to enter into an eternal relationship with God. Not only will they not enter into God’s kingdom, but they will also suffer eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire. The eye-witnesses will be God the Father, God the Holy Spirit and God the Son, all equally being omnipresent and omniscient. The evidence will be taken from two books namely the Book of (eternal) Life and the Books of Deeds. The Book of Life will be present as evidence of their rejection of Jesus Christ as their Savior (the unbeliever’s name having been blotted out at the moment of physical death). The Books of Works will show a complete list of all the unbeliever’s deeds by which he hopes to obtain salvation, but will in fact be used as evidence against him. No matter how many and how noble the unbeliever’s deeds are, they will always add up to “-R”, or “minus righteousness”. Please also note that sin will not be mentioned at this trial since the punishment for the sins of the human race have already been paid for by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: Revelation 20:13 not only provides us with more details as to those who will be at this future trial, but also sums it up.

**20:13. And the sea** [the sea-prison of the Nephilim of Genesis 6: half human and half angelic beings] **gave up their dead which were in it, also Death** [those involved in the Gog-Magog revolution and possibly the remaining unbelievers still alive in their physical bodies at the conclusion of the Millennium ] **and Hades** [all unbelievers in Torments will be changed from their interim bodies into their eternal bodies] **gave up the** [spiritually] **dead** [the second resurrection of all unbelievers] **which were in them** [two locations: The Death and The Hades] **and they were judged each one of them** [individually] **on the basis of their deeds** [human good deeds / deeds of the flesh].

See R. B. Thieme Jr.’s Revelation series 457, lessons 673-674.

Hades (Sheol) is located in the heart of the earth. It has four compartments:

1. Abraham’s bosom, also known as Paradise.
2. Torments, separated from Abraham’s bosom by a great gulf-fixed.
3. Tartarus
4. The Abyss.

Abraham’s bosom was where all Old Testament believers went to, and resided in their interim bodies until the ascension of Christ, at which time they were led in a procession to the third heaven. Torments is where all unbelievers go upon their physical death and reside there in their interim bodies until they are resurrected to face the Great White Throne Judgment. Tartarus is the prison for all the fallen angels who

cohabitated with the human race. This story is found in Genesis 6:1-4, Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Tartarus and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment,”. The final compartment of Hades is called the Abyss. This is where Abaddon (in Hebrew, Apollyon in Greek) is located with many other fallen angels. (All fallen angels who violate the rules established by God for the Appeal Trial granted to Satan and the fallen angels are imprisoned there. They will be released during the Tribulation (Revelation 9:1-12, see also *The Doctrine of Hades* by R. B. Thieme Jr.))

Because the Nephilim (the descendants of fallen angels and female members of the human race) have never been judged, and because they were in human history, they will be judged with all unbelievers at the Great White Throne Judgment. Revelation 20:13a states, “And the sea [the Greek word *thalassa* in its technical sense is the sea prison where the Nephilim are located] gave up the dead [the Nephilim-unbelievers] which are in it.”

Since the Nephilim were neither true angel or human, but a mixture, they could not have been sent to the following prisons: Torments (the location of all human unbelievers of history); Tartarus (the fallen angels of Genesis 6), or the Abyss (the location of fallen angels who have violated the rules of the appeal trial of Satan and his fallen angels). Instead they were imprisoned (in their interim bodies) in a compartment in the sea after they were all killed by drowning in the Noahic Flood, possibly entering via the sea gates (Job 38:8a; 17). As there is no specific mention of the prison for the Nephilim in Scripture, and as we already know the prison-locations of the unbelieving angels and humans, then logically we can deduce that the ‘dead’ who were given up by the sea as mentioned in Revelation 20:13 can only be the Nephilim.

The Bible emphasizes the two births of the believer (John 3:3, 5, 7); conversely it mentions the two deaths of the unbeliever - the first death being his physical death, and the second death being eternity in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14). In this verse Death and Hades are mentioned as two different locations. Though in the English we don’t translate these two nouns as possessing articles, the Greek manuscripts show that both nouns have articles. According to the Granville Sharp Rule, if two nouns with articles are connected by the Greek conjunction ‘καί’ (kai), those two nouns are referring to two different things, functions, locations etc. Thus, the phrase ‘the Death and the Hades’ are referring to two different locations. ‘The Death’ most likely indicates the location where the first death (physical death) of those involved in the Gog-Magog Revolution took place, as there is no need for them to be sent to Torments and given interim bodies. Rather, their souls will be transferred directly into eternal bodies to be arraigned before the Great White Throne Judgment. Hades (specifically Torments) is from where all the other unbelievers are resurrected to face the Great White Throne Judgment which will be convened in the third heaven.

This is not a mass trial of all the unbelievers of history. Rather, each person will be judged individually by the Lord “and they were judged each *of them...*” The Lord always treats people as individuals: he never punishes or blesses the masses - although there is the concept of blessing or cursing by association. In this trial, we have already seen that the charge against the unbeliever is related to his accomplishments, his good (self-righteous) deeds. His accomplishments or good

deeds are not sufficient to satisfy the perfect righteousness of God. (God demands perfect righteousness which can only be obtained through the imputation of God's righteousness.)

**20:14. Then Death** [apparently those unbelievers, involved in the Gog-Magog revolution] **and Hades** [the temporary location of the unbelievers now in their eternal bodies] **were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death, the Lake of Fire.**

**20:15. And, if anyone's name having previously** [allowed by context] **been written in the Book of Life** [at physical birth] **was not found** [in the Book of Life at the Great White Throne Judgment], **he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.**

Since it is the will of the Lord that all believe in him (1 Timothy 2:3, 4), all are entered into the Book of Life at birth. However, if a person does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ before his physical death, the first Death, he will be blotted out of the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12) and cast into the Lake of Fire, the second Death. The exception would be children who die before reaching God awareness, and others who fail to reach God consciousness due to some mental disability.

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