

The Book of Revelation Chapter 20

Outline:

Incarceration of Satan: verses 1-3

The 1st Resurrection: verses 4-6

The Last Revolution: verses 7-10

The Great White Throne Judgment: 11-15

20:1: Then I saw [a vision] an angel descending from Heaven, having the key of the abyss [the fourth compartment of Hades] and a great chain [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, a seraph, the highest ranking category. This particular seraph is The Officer of Arms, the second highest angel from the Angelic College of Heraldry. 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 to better understand angelic hierarchy. So, if you are interested, read the following doctrines: Angelic College of Heraldry and Angelic Hierarchy.

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. It is also important to note that angels do not need their wings to fly, but that wings are an insignia of rank. The two-winged angels that you might see at the top of a Christmas tree or in a religious-themed painting are just figments of human imagination. Rather, the large majority of angels, i.e. those that are not Cherub or Seraph ranked-angels, do not have wings at all.

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 perfect environment upon the earth until Satan, his fallen angels and all the religions 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 against God - eventually convincing one third of the angels to submit to his authority - he lost authority over those fallen angels at the Second Advent. Being alone he was no match for this seraph. 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 replace 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, but how he ends up which matters. 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 equivalent 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 the devil since Satan will not go willingly to the Abyss. (No sane criminal ever willingly seeks imprisonment.) 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 Second 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 [arrogance] because of your beauty; you distorted your wisdom because of your glamor.”

20:3: And he cast him into the abyss and shut and sealed it over him so that he would not deceive the nations any more until the thousand years have been completed. After these things [the closing statement of Jesus Christ as chief prosecutor in the Angelic Appeal Trial and other events of the Millennium], **he must be released for a short time** [for his closing statement].

This was prophesized in Isaiah 14:15, “Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to Sheol, 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. The Millennial reign of Christ is the closing statement of the Lord functioning as the prosecuting attorney. The justice of God demands that Satan also be allowed 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 made in the Garden of Eden 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 phase as presented by Christ, the prosecuting attorney; the Tribulation is Satan’s rebuttal against Christ’s presentation and in defense of himself.)

20:4: And I saw [also in verses 1, 11] **thrones** [of judgment], **and they** [the 144,000] **sat on them, and judgment was given** [culminative aorist: a result of fulfilling their spiritual lives] **to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been decapitated because of the witness** [testimony] **for Jesus** [the 144,000 martyrs] **really because of doctrine from God, and these who had not worshiped the beast nor his image, nor had received his mark on their foreheads, nor on their hands. And they came to life** [ingressive aorist: received their resurrection bodies at the Second Advent] **and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

Old Testament believers and Tribulation martyrs will not receive their resurrection bodies until the age of Israel is complete. Thus, since the Tribulation is the last part of the Age of Israel (Daniel's 70th week), people who believe during the seven year Tribulation are considered as belonging to the Dispensation of Israel. These believers will receive their resurrection bodies together with all other Old Testament believers at the completion of the Tribulation (coterminous with the beginning of the Second Advent).

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 (including Tribulation-believers as mentioned above) at the Second 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 and sanctified [emphasis on ultimate sanctification: receiving a resurrection body] **is the one who has part in the first resurrection** [all believers]. **Over these, the second death** [the Lake of Fire] **has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years].**

All believers in human history participate in the First Resurrection and will be happy in the eternal state no matter what is their stage of spiritual growth or retrogression. However, the great believers of history will have great rewards, whereas those who fail to execute God's plan will suffer loss of rewards in the Eternal State. Regarding a group who do succeed, for example, the 144,000 who were beheaded in the Tribulation will rule with Christ and function as priests in the Millennium Temple, though the high priest will come from the line of Zadok (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].

A short brief on the Appeal Trial: There was a prehistoric trial in which Satan and his minions were sentenced to the Lake of Fire. Matthew 25:41 says: “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 to have the sentence removed, and God the Father, the presiding judge graciously granted him an appeal. The appeal spans human history which explains many events we read of in the Bible and see carried out in human history, including the following:

1. Why God created the first two human beings (If one is going to have a trial, one must have witnesses)
2. Why angels are permitted to participate in human history.
3. Why Satan was permitted to tempt the woman in the garden, and to cross examine Job.
4. Why human history is broken down into the different parts of a trial.
5. Why Satan and his angels were not immediately cast into the Lake of Fire, but instead will be thrown into the Lake of Fire only after human history comes to a close (Satan loses the appeal).

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** [code name for Satan] **and Magog** [code name for the conspiracy], **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 whole life becomes a lie. Without truth, a person will have no choice but to lie to self and consequently lie to others. For example, many children are brought up in a family and culture that promotes a religion of some sort, saying that good works can provide entry to heaven. If the child accepts this lie (having rejected God at God-consciousness and then Christ at Gospel hearing) he will live his life with false values, false motivations and a false purpose. These concepts will be communicated to others in their periphery throughout their lives and in this way they become agents for Satan.

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 regarding lying, much different from a person lying to get out of a jam.) Just as Satan has rejected all truth so in the future the unbelievers in the Millennium will reject all truth. This rejection 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 criminality of Satan, and so, after his release, he will immediately implement his plans for a revolution. He will not have learned the simplest of principles, namely that the power of God is infinitely greater than the power of his creatures. (In this, we see another principle: arrogant creatures do not learn from experience.) The revolution code-named “Gog and Magog.” Satan will take his code name from a future ruler in

the Tribulation (Gog, king of the North) and his people (Magog) (Ezekiel 38:2, 15). The revolutionary army will number 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** [culminative aorist] **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** [constative aorist] **from God** [according to the best manuscripts] **out of Heaven and consumed** [destroyed] **them.**

Satan (without angelic help) is able to manufacture weaponry and to train an army very quickly for the purpose of attacking Israel. As an organizational genius he will organize all the negative volition into a strong revolutionary army. (World peace and disarmament never prevent war since the power of arrogance is greater than the power of stability and prosperity.) Well armed and with overwhelming numbers, the revolutionary army will have great confidence in the evil genius of Satan.

Aggression gives a tactical advantage in the opening stages of warfare. Thus, Satan and his invading force initially will have the advantage. However, the Lord will apply the principle of using greater violence to stop violence and so use his divine flame thrower (or possibly some kind of divine laser or nuclear weapon) to destroy this invading army.

20:10 And the Devil [the enemy] **who had deceived** [durative present] **them, was thrown** [culminative aorist] **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 messiah of Israel] **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 into 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: 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: 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] **fled** [ingressive aorist: will attempt to escape figuratively from the justice of the Lord. Since the earth and heaven were the locations of many sins, pseudo good and evil, they must be destroyed.] **Consequently, no place was found for them** [culminative aorist: The earth and heaven (earth's atmosphere and stellar space) will be destroyed to be replaced by the New Heaven and the New Earth].

The destruction of the universe is mentioned here to give us the order of events and to emphasize that neither place nor person can escape the justice of the Lord.

1. After the Millennial reign of Christ, Satan is released for a short time.
2. Satan initiates the Gog and Magog Revolution.
3. Divine victory over the Revolution.
4. The Second Resurrection, whereby all unbelievers (human along with the half-cast human-angelic unbelievers of Genesis 6) will be resurrected from the dead into resurrection bodies.
5. This present universe is destroyed (planet earth along with its atmosphere and stellar space).
6. The Great White Throne Judgment of all unbelievers is convened in heaven.
7. 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, those in Torments and the nephilim in the sea prison in the depths of ocean. These human unbelievers and the half angel-half humans will be arraigned in heaven before the Great White Throne Judgment to be described in the rest of this chapter.

The verses 2 Peter 3:7 and 10 provide information regarding the destruction of the universe by God. 2 Peter 3:7 states, “**But the present heavens** [postdiluvial heavens] **and the earth** [postdiluvial earth] **by his Word** [Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17] **are being reserved** [the stored up gases and molten rock] **for fire** [possibly nuclear destruction] **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]. 2 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** [i.e. in that 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** [Manuscript problem: R. B. Thieme Jr. chose this word from one of the several manuscripts].”

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** [losers in history] **standing** [unbelievers in their resurrection bodies as a result of the Second Resurrection] **before the throne** [the Great White Throne]. **Then, the books** [which register the deeds of the unbelievers] **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** [good deeds and accomplishments].

Here we see unbelievers arraigned before the supreme court of heaven with Lord Jesus Christ as the presiding judge. For proper court function there must be at least two to three eyewitnesses. In this case, the eyewitnesses will be God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Book of (Eternal) Life provides the evidence that the unbeliever has rejected God's imputed righteousness in favor of his human righteousness. The Books of Work will provide the evidence that the unbeliever is not righteous enough to enter into eternal relationship with God. Observe that there is no book registering the sins of the unbelievers since all the sins of everyone in human history were judged upon the cross (1 John 2:2). Sin is not an issue at this final trial except the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ (John 16:9) which sin causes them to be blotted out of the Book of Life. (Psalm 69:28)

20:13. Then, the sea [the sea prison of the nephilim] **gave up their dead which were in it, also Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them** [two locations: the Death and the Hades according to the Grandville Sharp Rule] **and they were judged each one of them** [individually] **on the basis of their deeds** [good deeds].

The unbelievers who were involved in the Gog-Magog revolution were all killed upon history's last battlefield. However, there will be no need for them to be sent to Torments and to take on interim bodies as this point which also marks the end of human history. Instead they are changed from their mortal bodies directly into their eternal bodies and are arraigned before the Great White Throne Judgment. In contrast, all unbelievers in Torments, some who have been there for thousands of years in their interim bodies (Luke 16:23, 24), will be changed (resurrected) from their interim bodies into their everlasting bodies. It is in this body that the unbeliever will go before the Great White Throne and then be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Hades (Sheol) is located in the heart of the earth. It has four compartments: Abraham's bosom (the former paradise); Torments (separated from Abraham's bosom by a gulf-fixed); Tartarus; and the Abyss. Abraham's bosom was where all Old Testament believers went to and resided (very comfortably) in their interim bodies until the ascension of Christ at which point Christ led the procession of the Old Testament saints into 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 but will be released during the Tribulation (Revelation 9:1-12)). From deduction, we can also assume that these fallen angels will be removed from the earth during the Millennium in order to facilitate perfect environment. (See the doctrine of Hades by R. B. Thieme Jr.)

Because the nephilim 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] which are in it." (Many Christians think that this verse is discussing unbelievers who have died at sea. If that were true then there would have to be a comparable verse stating that the earth gave up the dead in it.)

There could be a sea entrance to Hades at the bottom of the sea, for two verses in Job seem to confirm this. Job 38:8a states, "Or who closed the sea with doors [gates]?" In Job 38:17, "Have the gates of death been revealed to you" [the gates that a person would have to go through on his way to Hades (Sheol)]? Remember that all the nephilim were killed by drowning in the Noaic Flood. After death their souls would normally have gone to one of the compartments of Hades via the sea gates. However, being half angelic and half human they were not allowed to enter either Torments for humans only or Tartarus for the , and since Revelation 20:13 confirms the sea as the prison for the Nephilim, it appears that they were imprisoned at the bottom of the sea near the entrance of the sea gates leading to Hades.

Just as believers at the Rapture will go from mortality (the present human body) to immortality (the resurrection body), so those unbelievers killed as a result of the Gog-Magog rebellion will go from mortality (the present human body) to immortality (the resurrection body of the unbeliever). As soon as the Gog-Magog revolution is put down, the Lord will destroy this universe. Thus, there would be no reason for these dead unbelievers to be sent to the Torments in the heart of the earth.

The Bible emphasizes the two births of the believer (John 3:3, 5, 7); and conversely it also mentions the two deaths of the unbeliever - namely the first death, being his physical death, and the second death, the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14). Now, in this verse Death and Hades are mentioned as two different locations. In the English we don't translate these two nouns as possessing articles, however in the Greek both nouns have articles. According to the Granville Sharp Rule if two nouns with articles are connected by the Greek conjunction *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' refers to where the first death (physical death) of those involved in the Gog-Magog Revolution took place, and 'the Hades' (specifically Torments) is obviously from where all the other unbelievers are resurrected to face the Great White Throne Judgment.

This is not a mass trial of all the unbelievers of history. Rather, each person will be judged individually by the Lord, for this verse (Rev. 20:13) tells us "and they were judged each of them'. The Lord always treats people as individuals who are to be held responsible for their own individual decisions: he never punishes or blesses the masses as a singular group, 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” deeds. His accomplishments or good deeds done in human righteousness 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 and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death, the Lake of Fire.

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

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