



REVELATION 20 STUDY GUIDE

RECAP UP TO CHAPTER 20

In Acts 1, before Jesus ascended, his disciples asked him if he would restore the kingdom at that time. They were referring to the kingdom where Jesus reigns as king over all—a kingdom mentioned in Revelation 20.

- **John receives vision of glorified Jesus in chapter one.**
 - Relays messages to seven churches in chapters two through three.
 - Scene shifts to heaven in chapters four and five, where the worthiness of Jesus to open the scroll is established.
- **Main narrative cycles:**
 - Chapters 6-20 present six cycles of events from the resurrection to the return of Jesus.
 - Each cycle offers different perspectives and insights into Jesus' reign, salvation, and judgment.
- **Cycle breakdown:**
 - **Cycle 1 (chapters 6-7):** Seven seals, four horsemen of judgment, redemption of God's people.
 - **Cycle 2 (chapters 8-11):** Call to prepare for exodus-like judgments, judgment of oppressors, heavenly celebration.
 - **Cycle 3 (chapters 12-14):** Introduction of enemies of God, fall of Babylon, judgment scene.
 - **Cycle 4 (chapters 15-16):** Seven bowls of judgment, summoning to Battle of Armageddon, fall of Babylon.
 - **Cycle 5 (chapters 17-19):** Judgment of Babylon, marriage supper of the Lamb, Christ's victory over enemies.
 - **Cycle 6 (chapter 20):** Rewind to show the narrative from resurrection to return of Christ one more time.
- **Final culmination:**
 - After chapter 20, leads to the new heaven and earth where Satan is banished and believers are with the Lord.

PREMILL, AMILL, AND POSTMILL – OH MY!

The 1000-year reign of Christ, talked about in Revelation 20, has caused lots of discussions among Christians. Some believe it will happen before Jesus comes back (premillennialism), others think it'll happen after (postmillennialism), and some say it's more symbolic (amillennialism). These views show how people interpret biblical prophecies and the end of God's plan differently.

Bottom-line: I believe that this doctrine of the millennium should not be a cause for division. Discussing and debating it is important, but we should not allow it to create division. It's notable that good and godly individuals who hold firm belief in the Bible may have differing perspectives on this issue.

What matters most: It is finished! God wins! Jesus is coming again!

ESCHATOLOGY: MAJOR VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIUM IN REVELATION 20:1-10			
THE PREFIX BEFORE "MILLENNIUM" REFERS TO THE "TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING" AS IT RELATES TO THE MILLENNIUM	PREMILLENNIALISM "SECOND COMING <u>BEFORE</u> THE MILLENNIUM"	POSTMILLENNIALISM "SECOND COMING <u>AFTER</u> THE MILLENNIUM"	AMILLENNIALISM "NO LITERAL MILLENNIUM"
Definition	Christ's second coming will occur <u>before</u> the millennium.	Christ's second coming will occur <u>after</u> the millennium.	There will be <u>no</u> literal historical reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years. His second coming ushers in the eternal state.
Characteristics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christ will return at the end of THIS AGE with His saints to the earth to reign for 1000 years as King. 2. In the millennium the nation Israel will experience the blessing God promised to Abraham and David pertaining to Israel's Land, Nationality or (seed), and Throne. N.T. believers will likewise share in the covenant blessing having been engrafted into the one people of God (Romans 11). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The church is not the kingdom but it will bring in the kingdom (a utopian, Christianized condition) by the preaching of the gospel. 2. Christ will not be on the earth during the kingdom. He will rule in the hearts of His people, but will return after the millennium. (conservative postmill). 3. No literal 1000-year millennium. The church not Israel will receive the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and David in a spiritual sense. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The kingdom reign of Christ and His saints is in existence for the period of time between Christ's two advents. (The millennium is happening now.) 2. The kingdom is either the church on earth (Augustine's view now perpetuated by the Roman Catholic Church) and/or the saints in heaven (Warfield's view). 3. The promises to Israel about a land, seed and throne are completely fulfilled now in a spiritual sense in the church.
Advocates	Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Tyndale, some Anabaptists, Moravians, Mennonites, John Wesley, Ryrie, Walvoord, Graham, Criswell, Moore, Grudem, Erickson, Akin, Mohler, Swindoll, and MacArthur.	Daniel Whitby, Johnathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Augustus Strong, B.H. Carroll, G.W. Truett.	Origen, Augustine, Roman Catholic Church, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Zwingli, B.B. Warfield, L. Berkhof, G. Beale, W. Hendriksen.

Premillennialism

The word "millennium" means a thousand years in Latin, from "mille" meaning thousand and "annus" meaning year. "Pre" before "millennialism" refers to Christ's second coming before the millennium. In simple terms, "premillennialism" means Christ's return before the 1000-year period listed in Revelation 20:1-10.

Premillennialism believes:

1. Christ will come back at the end of this era, after the Great Tribulation, along with his followers, to rule on earth for 1,000 years.
2. During this period, Israel will receive the blessings promised to Abraham and David regarding their land, people, and king. Believers in the New Testament will also partake in these blessings to some extent (Rom. 11).
3. The current church doesn't fully fulfill these promises to Israel (2 Chron. 7:14). Some aspects are being fulfilled now, but others will happen in the future.
4. The millennial kingdom, lasting 1,000 years, will be when Jesus rules over the earth as the promised Messiah. It starts after his second coming and the end of the tribulation, serving as an intermediate phase before the eternal state (Rev. 21-22).

Adherents then-and-now:

Premillennialism was the main belief in the early church and was held by a lot of important people like Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, and others. Later on, it was also supported by many well-known figures such as John Wesley, the Mathers, and various scholars in the 19th and 20th centuries like Ryrie, Walvoord, and MacArthur. "Left Behind" series fans would agree with this, generally.

Some Challenges to this Belief:

- **First, premillennialism tends to view God's kingdom as primarily physical and national.** Scripture—and especially the rest of the book of Revelation—views it primarily as spiritual and worldwide. This is similar to how the New Testament views other Old Testament prophetic terms such as the seed of Abraham or the tabernacle of David or Jerusalem in symbolic terms.
- **Secondly, premillennialism tends to view Christ's Kingdom as yet-to-come rather than already-being present.** Scripture testifies repeatedly that it is already present in New Testament times, even in the life of Jesus (Luke 17:20-21; Matthew 12:28, etc.).
- **Third, premillennialism tends to separate major events of eschatology by many years,** up to a thousand years, while Scripture, especially Matthew 13, sees these events of the last times as transpiring in very rapid succession.
- **Finally, premillennialism teaches that Christ will return to earth physically a thousand years before the end of the world.** However, Acts 3:20-21 and several other texts teach that Christ will be in heaven until the end of time.

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Amillennialism

Amillennialism believes:

Is a belief about the end times that says there **won't** be a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth.

- 1. The Reign of Christ:** According to amillennialism, Christ's reign with His followers happens between His first and second comings. This means we're living in that time right now.
- 2. Understanding the Kingdom:** Amillennialists see the kingdom of Christ either as the church on earth or as the saints in heaven. They believe there won't be a future earthly reign of Christ. What's more, the number "thousand" is symbolic, representing a long period.
- 3. Fulfillment of Promises:** The promises made to Israel regarding land, descendants, and a throne are thought to be fulfilled spiritually in the church.

4. Transfer of Promises: Amillennialists think that because Israel didn't fulfill the conditions set by God, the promises made to them have been transferred to the church.

5. Current Rule of Christ: They believe Christ is currently ruling from heaven, seated on the throne of David. Satan, they say, is currently restricted between Christ's two comings, particularly in his ability to hinder the spread of the gospel.

This belief is supported by passages like Matthew 12:29 (illustrating Satan's restriction), Luke 10:17-19 (describing Christ's authority over Satan), and Colossians 2:15 (depicting Christ's victory over evil powers).

Adherents then-and-now:

Some notable figures who have held this belief include Origen, Augustine, the Roman Catholic Church, Wycliffe, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zwingli, and in more recent times, scholars like B.B. Warfield, L. Berkhof, O.T. Allis, Hendriksen, and R.C. Sproul.

Some Challenges to This Beliefs:

1. Interpretation of the Millennium: Amillennialists interpret the millennium symbolically as the period between Christ's first and second comings, rather than a literal 1,000-year reign. However, this symbolic interpretation can be contentious as it requires reconciling various passages throughout Scripture (Revelation 20:1-10).

2. Fulfillment of Prophecy: Amillennialists believe that the promises to Israel in the Old Testament are spiritually fulfilled in the church. However, this raises questions about the literal fulfillment of those promises, particularly concerning Israel's restoration and the land promises made to them (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

3. Understanding of Satan's Binding: Amillennialists interpret Satan's binding in Revelation 20 as symbolic of his restriction in hindering the spread of the gospel. Critics argue that this interpretation may downplay the significance of Satan's influence and the reality of spiritual warfare (Revelation 20:1-3).

4. Inconsistencies in Interpretation: There can be inconsistencies in how different passages of Revelation are interpreted within the amillennial framework. For example, while some passages are understood symbolically, others may be interpreted more literally, leading to inconsistencies in interpretation (Revelation 20:4-6).

5. Exegesis of Revelation 20: The interpretation of Revelation 20, particularly the sequence of events surrounding the binding of Satan, the first resurrection, and the reign of Christ, can be challenging and subject to different interpretations, making it difficult to arrive at a consensus among scholars (Revelation 20:7-10).

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Postmillennialism

Postmillennialism:

Is a belief about the end times where Christ's second coming is anticipated to happen after a period called the millennium.

1. The Role of the Church: Postmillennialists view the church as the agent that will usher in the kingdom of God on earth. They believe this will happen through the preaching of the gospel. Some liberals within this view think the millennium will come about through human effort and natural progress, akin to evolutionary advancement.

2. Christ's Presence: According to postmillennialism, Christ won't physically be present on earth during the millennium. Instead, he will rule in the hearts of people. His return to earth is anticipated after the millennium.

3. Duration of the Millennium: Postmillennialists don't necessarily see the millennium as lasting for a literal 1,000 years. It's more about a period of time marked by peace and prosperity.

4. Fulfillment of Promises: In this view, the church, not Israel, is believed to receive the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and David, but in a spiritual sense.

This perspective envisions a future where the world becomes increasingly Christianized and aligned with God's will *before* Christ's eventual return. Biblical support for these ideas can be found in passages such as Matthew 13:31-33 (parable of the mustard seed and leaven), Daniel 2:44 (prophecy of God's kingdom filling the whole earth), and Revelation 20:4-6 (mention of a thousand-year reign).

Adherents then-and-now:

Postmillennialism was first taught by Daniel Whitby (1638-1725), and has been held by notable figures such as Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Augustus H. Strong, James Snowden, Lorraine Boettner, B.H. Carroll, and G.W. Truett. Some scholars would also identify Augustine as a postmillennialist. Although not as popular today, this view has found advocates within movements associated with Theonomy, Dominion Theology, and Reconstructionism. Figures like Rushdoony, Gary North, and Gary DeMars are associated with these movements. Even individuals like Pat Robertson and some associated with the Christian Coalition have shown sympathy towards aspects of this position.

Some Challenges to this Belief:

- **First, it views the last years of this world too optimistically.** It's okay to be an optimistic millennial. That's my (Darin's) own position. But this is a supreme optimism that seems to ignore, in this golden age of peace, some of the texts that Jesus speaks about and Paul that the last days will also be times of unbelief, self-centeredness, worldliness, worshipping of the Antichrist, and great tribulation and persecution (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Matthew 24:4-14, etc.)
- **Secondly, postmillennialism tends to view the present age as sort of smoothly transitioning into the coming age.** But Scripture presents a great catastrophe, a tremendous intervention of God, a passing away of the old heavens and earth, and the establishment of the new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 21, etc.).

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What is your view (Pastor Darin)?

1. The New Testament teaches that God's promises to Israel have already come true in a spiritual, international kingdom, and they will yet be fulfilled in ultimate glory. Perhaps we hope and we pray and we trust in a revival in Israel before the end, but not a nationalistic earthly reign from Israel. We believe that based on texts like Hebrews 12, Luke 17, and Matthew 12.

2. Scripture indicates that Christ's coming in glory—the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, the judgment day, and the end of this age—will all take place together in history, back-to-back. As we have seen these were almost simultaneous, not dispersed over a thousand years. That's implicit in Matthew 13, Matthew 16, Matthew 24, John 5, and Acts 24.

3. Revelation is a book of symbolic visions. We've been seeing that all the way through the book. Both the numbers—such as 1,000 and its images such as binding with a chain here and sealing in a pit and images used elsewhere in the book—and images are not always consistent with a wooden, literal interpretation. It is an apocalyptic book, after all. But they're communicating through strong images, metaphors, and symbols great spiritual truths. So, why would Revelation 20 suddenly be the one chapter to be taken literally?

4. Revelation follows a cyclic structure. We've seen that again and again. John is repeatedly bringing the reader to the return of Christ at the end of each cycle. So, chapter 19 ends the cycle of the conquest of Babylon. And remember that covered chapters 17 through 19 with a victorious return of Christ. Chapter 20, just like chapter 12, steps back to consider the whole era. And like all the cycles of the book of Revelation, the beginning of each cycle steps back to the first advent and moves then from the first advent to the second advent in the entire gospel age.

Again, what do Christians agree upon at Jesus' return, even we disagree on the 1000-year reign? He will come ...

1. Suddenly & unexpectedly (Matthew 24:44).
2. With great power and glory (Mark 13:26).
3. Swiftly like lightning (Matthew 24:27).
4. Triumphantly & visibly on the clouds (Revelation 1:7).
5. Majestically with angels (Matthew 25:31).
6. Imminently & without warning (Matthew 24:42).
7. Gloriously in the sky (Titus 2:13).
8. In a blaze of light (2 Thessalonians 1:7).
9. Decisively with a shout (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
10. Victorious over darkness (1 Corinthians 15:57).
11. Suddenly like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2).
12. Mercifully for the faithful (2 Timothy 4:8).
13. Dramatically with signs (Matthew 24:30).
14. Loudly with a trumpet call (1 Corinthians 15:52).

15. Sovereignly to gather believers (Mark 13:27).
16. Eternally with everlasting joy (Isaiah 35:10).
17. Boldly with flaming fire (2 Thessalonians 1:8).
18. Gracefully with love and compassion (Luke 6:36).
19. Righteously to judge the world (Acts 17:31).

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1. **Binding of Satan (20:1-3):**

- Jesus has come back and conquered evil on Earth (Revelation 19:11-21).
- **John witnesses an angel descending from heaven to Earth.**
 - The words "I saw" are frequently repeated towards the end of Revelation (19:11, 17, 19; 20:1, 4, 11; 21:1).
- **An angel holds the key to the bottomless pit, symbolizing authority. The abyss is mentioned seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3).**
 - In Revelation, the abyss serves as a temporary prison for certain demons, not their final punishment destination (Matt. 25:41).
 - Despite this, it's a place of torment feared by demons (Luke 8:31).
 - Additionally, the angel wields a **great chain**, emphasizing the binding and confinement of a significant prisoner.
- **This angel captures the former master of rebellion against God, known by four names or titles that depict his character and schemes (cf. 12:9).**
 - He is referred to as "the dragon" in Revelation twelve times, representing his terrifying, powerful, cruel, and dangerous nature.
 - As "that ancient serpent," he harks back to Genesis 3 (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3) and the Garden of Eden, symbolizing our ancient adversary who deceived Adam and Eve, leading to the Fall.
 - He is also called "the Devil" (Gr. diabolos), signifying the slanderer and accuser, and "Satan" (Gr. Satanos), denoting the adversary and enemy.
 - This figure embodies our ultimate foe, who harbors hatred towards us and seeks our misery, death, and destruction.
 - Some suggest that this list of names serves almost as an official indictment, akin to a legal sentence pronounced upon the condemned prisoner as they are cast into prison.
- **Because this angel possesses the delegated authority of God, he can exercise authority over the adversary described in 1 Peter 5:8 as one who "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."**
 - Four steps are taken to bind and confine our ancient foe for a millennium
 - 1) he is "bound for a thousand years,"
 - 2) he is "thrown into the pit" (Gr. abyss),
 - 3) it is "shut," and
 - 4) "sealed over him."
 - Satan's activity, even his presence on Earth, is entirely restricted and halted for the entire millennium.
 - His deceptive influence among the nations ceases for a thousand years.
 - Only after the millennium ends is he released, and then only "for a little while" (v. 3).
 - This brief release from captivity is discussed in verses 7-10. Mounce makes a perceptive observation at this juncture.
 - This, once again, serves as an indictment on the corrupt hearts of evil beings and humanity.
 - Even after being locked up for a thousand years, Satan's plans remain unchanged, and people still tend to rebel against their Creator even when not influenced by evil for a long time.

FAITH LESSONS FOR 20:1-3

1. In verse two, John describes the dragon, the old serpent, who is the devil and Satan. **This emphasizes Satan's ancient nature, reminding us that persecution and opposition are not new experiences.** Just as others have endured similar challenges throughout history, we're not alone in our struggles. Trust that God provides a way to

overcome these temptations, as Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 10:13. So, don't think you're the only one suffering—Satan has been using the same tactics for thousands of years.

2. John compares Satan to a dangerous beast confined behind bars, like a lion in a cage or a dog restrained by an electric fence. **Though Satan still poses a threat, his power is limited.** He's bound, his influence curbed, and thrown into a bottomless pit (Revelation 20:2-3). Despite his deception, the gospel has been proclaimed to all nations (Matthew 28:18-20), breaking down barriers once separating people. So, don't fear Satan's influence. Follow the Great Commission without hesitation, knowing the gospel has set the nations free from his grasp.
3. **Jesus assures us that Satan is under control.** He encourages us to spread the gospel to all nations without fear. Christ's earthly ministry was already bringing Satan under control, as He declared, "The prince of this world will be cast out" (John 12:31), and "He's being judged" (John 16:11). Through His death, Jesus defeated Satan (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14).
4. **Satan's influence may still be felt, but Jesus' victory is complete.** The gospel marches on triumphantly, bringing salvation to people from all backgrounds. Satan's binding transforms lives, and despite his activity, Christ's victory over him is total (Revelation 20:2). This underscores the importance of missions, prayer for mission work, and evangelism in our diverse society. We should anticipate people from all backgrounds turning to Jesus because Satan's power to deceive is restricted by the gospel.

In summary, the first lesson from this millennium is clear: Satan is bound (Revelation 20:3).

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2. The Saints Reign (20:4-6)

- **John briefly describes the activities of the millennial kingdom in these verses.**
 - Further insights can be found in texts such as Isaiah 11:1-11; 65:17-25; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; and Micah 4:1-5.
- **John sees thrones, with individuals given authority to judge seated on them.**
 - Matthew 19:28 suggests that the twelve apostles will judge the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - While 1 Corinthians 6:3 mentions believers judging angels.
 - Revelation 2:26 indicates that saints will have authority over nations.
 - Could this mean glorified saints ruling over natural-born individuals during the millennium?
 - Revelation 5:10 states that followers of the Lamb "shall reign on the earth."
 - Although exact details remain a mystery, this is all positive news.
- **John then sees another group—the martyred saints (20:4).**
 - These individuals were executed for their testimony about Jesus and their dedication to the Word of God.
 - They did not worship the beast or receive its mark, remaining faithful to the Lamb even unto death.
 - These faithful believers were previously mentioned in chapters 6 and 13, and now they receive their reward through glorious resurrection.
 - They are resurrected bodily and granted the privilege to reign with Christ as co-heirs for a thousand years, as mentioned in Romans 8:17.
 - John refers to this as "the first resurrection," indicating both its bodily nature and its precedence in time.
 - This is evident because unbelievers, referred to as "the rest of the dead," are not resurrected until after the millennium, when they face judgment at the Great White Throne (20:11-15).
 - Believers partake in the first resurrection to eternal glorified life, while unbelievers face the second death, eternal separation from God, at the final judgment.
 - Notably, the term "second resurrection" is not found in Scripture.
 - **20:6 beautifully summarizes the destiny of the followers of the Lamb.**
 - They are called blessed and holy because they partake in the first resurrection, experiencing glorified bodies unto eternal life.
 - But it doesn't stop there!

- Three additional blessings are bestowed upon them:
 - first, they are immune to the second death, which is eternal spiritual death (Revelation 20:6);
 - second, they serve as priests of God and Christ, ministering to Him during the millennium and for all eternity (Revelation 20:6);
 - and third, they reign with Him for a thousand years (Revelation 20:6).
 - In other words, it will be a time of:
 - universal, absolute, and righteous rule under Christ and his saints,
 - with spiritual conversion and restoration for Israel,
 - worship from all nations, and marked by righteousness, peace, and joy (Psalm 2:6-8; Daniel 2:35; Isaiah 11:4; Jeremiah 30:5-8; Romans 11:26; Micah 4:2; Zechariah 14:16; Isaiah 32:17; 12:3-4; 61:3, 7).
 - Physically, it will be a time of abundance, health, and longevity, lifting the curse and bringing forth prosperity (Isaiah 11:7-9; 30:23-24; 35:1-2, 7; Joel 2:21-27; Isaiah 33:24, 35:5-6; 65:20).
 - Ultimately, the millennium will be a glorious era under the reign of King Jesus.
- Remember, this vision is simultaneous with the one we've been examining—the binding of Satan and the reigning of the saints coexist. They stand side-by-side.
 - But what does it mean?
 - Do the saints reign in this gospel age?
 - And what about the first resurrection?
- **It appears that the reign of the saints is linked not only to the first resurrection but also to a special role for martyrs.**
 - This is a spiritual and heavenly resurrection.
 - What does it mean exactly?
 - There are two possibilities, both of which may be true.
 - **#1 - It's a reference to the intermediate state—what happens to our loved ones who die in the Lord.**
 - They are with Christ, not only enjoying His presence but also actively serving him.
 - They're ruling with authority, sitting on thrones with Jesus, and serving as priests and kings unto God even in their disembodied spirits.
 - This is deeply comforting, especially to those witnessing fellow believers being martyred.
 - John reassures them, "Don't be discouraged. Those believers are sitting on thrones in glory with Christ."
 - This echoes what Paul did for the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 4:16.
 - Despite their outward struggles under imperial Rome, Paul reminds them not to lose heart. Their afflictions are temporary, leading to an eternal weight of glory.
 - No matter our afflictions here, they are small compared to the glory to come.
 - The message is clear: the saints reign. Praise God.
 - **#2 - It can also be seen as a present reality here on earth.**
 - You don't have to wait for the afterlife to reign with Christ.
 - So, this first resurrection can be interpreted not just in terms of physical death.
 - But also in terms of Jesus' resurrection and our spiritual resurrection from the dead.
 - Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection in him—this is what we call regeneration or being born again (John 11; 3).
 - In the New Testament, there's only one resurrection of central importance: Jesus' bodily resurrection.
 - He's the first resurrected one, our Savior and Lord.
 - John 11: Lazarus was temporarily resurrected, but Jesus is permanently resurrected.
 - His resurrection is supremely important because he's the firstborn among many brethren. He's raised from the dead, and believers follow as the first fruits.
 - Thus, the first resurrection can also refer to Christ's resurrection and our incorporation into his resurrection.

- As believers, we suffer with him, die with him, and are resurrected with him, as Paul teaches (1 Cor. 15).
 - Therefore, the first resurrection that believers experience in this life is not a resurrection in ourselves, but in Christ.
 - He regenerates us, bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life, and that becomes our first resurrection.
 - You have on the side of the saints a second physical resurrection, which is the resurrection of the body, not of the soul now but of the body on the great last day.
 - And you have the second physical resurrection of the wicked—they shall be raised in body as well, one to life everlasting and one to eternal separation from God's favor.
- **Now, is there support for this view anywhere else in Scripture?** I want to just give you one text, 1st Corinthians 6.
 - Paul says something very interesting here in verses 2 and 3.
 - He's dealing in the context with why Christians shouldn't be taking each other to court.
 - He says something very, very interesting: "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know you not that you shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life pertain to this life?"
 - You see, there's a future and there's a present aspect here.
 - These Christians were falling out with each other, having legal difficulties, and going into court to settle their affairs.
 - Paul says, "This is scandalous. Don't you realize that the church shall judge the universe? Don't you realize you're going to sit on thrones with Christ and judge angels?"
 - Well, that's true of you.
 - If that's going to happen, surely you're capable of judging the affairs of this life, of this world.
 - If you're going to reign and judge, then surely you can reign and judge now in the matters of this life and of this existence.
 - You're called now to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus by faith. You're called now to be kings and priests unto God by faith.
 - You're called to reign in this life now.
 - What a glorious thing this is!

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3. Satan is Loosed (20:7-10)

- There are five aspects of this scene:
 - the release of Satan,
 - his deception and gathering of the nations for the final battle,
 - their surrounding of God's people,
 - fire descending from heaven to devour the nations,
 - and the casting of Satan into the lake of fire.
- **Why does God allow the evil one a final desperate grasp at power?** I believe the answer is twofold.
 - First, it serves to demonstrate Satan's inherently evil intentions, which ultimately consume him.
 - Second, it reveals that even in a nearly perfect environment devoid of Satanic temptation, humanity is still capable and willing to rebel against their gracious and loving God.
- Satan is released from his prison (v. 7) and immediately sets out with a two-fold agenda:
 - 1) to deceive the nations and 2) to gather a great army to wage war against the Lord (v. 8).
 - The reference to "Gog and Magog" recalls Ezekiel 38-39 and represents the enemies of God among the nations.

- They march on "the beloved city" (v. 9), Jerusalem, where King Jesus reigns over His worldwide kingdom.
- Suddenly, "fire came down and consumed them." In an instant, the final battle concludes.
- An army as vast as "the sand of the sea" is instantly annihilated.
- This "battle" is, essentially, an "execution."
- However, even in the face of this assault, the church will prevail because Christ will intervene, consuming the devil and his allies with fire and casting them into the lake of fire.
 - This fate awaits Satan, the Beast, the false prophet, and all who align with them.
- The day of reckoning is imminent, where Satan, the beasts, and unbelievers will be destroyed.
 - Those who persist in following Satan will meet their demise alongside him.
 - Satan has already lost his battles in heaven and on earth, and his final destination is the lake of fire.
- Those not written in the book of life will suffer eternal torment with Satan and his cohorts, experiencing perpetual spiritual and mental agony.
 - This is the second death, an everlasting separation from God.
- The tragedy is that one doesn't need to face this fate, yet many choose to reject salvation through Christ, opting for eternal destruction.
 - The call to repentance is urgent, urging people to turn to the Savior and avoid the torment of hell by embracing His mercy and grace.

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20:11

- **After the millennial kingdom and the devil's final defeat, John sees a vision of a "Great White Throne," representing final judgment.**
 - Some have described it as the most solemn and tragic passage in the Bible, symbolizing God's holiness, purity, and sovereignty.
- **Scripture suggests that while both God the Father and God the Son share the heavenly throne, it appears that the Lord Jesus will preside over this significant event (John 5:22, 26-27; Acts 10:42; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:15-16; 2 Timothy 4:1).**
- **King Jesus reigns on the eternal throne of judgment, before whom all must give an account.**
 - As the scene unfolds, there's striking imagery of the universe "uncreating" itself.
 - Both earth and sky flee from the presence of the Son.
 - Isaiah 51:6 foretells this event, describing the vanishing of heavens like smoke and the wearing out of the earth, yet God's salvation and righteousness endure forever.

20:12-13

- **Acts 10:34 states that "God shows no partiality." (Evil: Rev. 19:18, 13:16, 11:18 | Godly: Rev. 8:9, 5:13)**
- At the great white throne, there will be no discrimination based on ethnicity, social status, or wealth.
 - However, there will be a spiritual discrimination.
 - While some debate this, there seems to be a distinction between the great white throne judgment and the judgment seat of Christ.
 - Jesus Christ is the judge in both instances, but what and who are judged differ significantly.

**CONTRASTING THE "JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"
AND THE "GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT"**

Issue	Judgment Seat of Christ (The Bema Seat of Judgment)	Great White Throne Judgment
Persons Judged	Believers Only Who Have The Imputed Righteousness of Christ	Unbelievers Only who Have Only Their Own Righteousness
Key Scriptures	Romans 14:10 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 2 Corinthians 5:10	Revelation 20:11-15
Basis of the Judgment	Faithfulness in Christ and resultant good works (even to the motivations)	Rejection of Christ and thus one's own righteousness
Results	Rewards or loss of rewards but not salvation which is secure	Eternity in Hell, the "Lake of Fire"

- **John sees only "the dead," spiritually dead (cf. Ephesians 2:1-3), those who died apart from Christ, mentioned four times.**
 - It's emphasized seven times that they are "dead" or facing "death."
 - Status in life won't matter at this judgment; it's the "great and small" before the throne.
 - John sees multiple books opened, containing every action, thought, and emotion of all unsaved individuals.
 - This comprehensive judgment finds biblical support:
 - Psalm 44:21
 - Ecclesiastes 12:14
 - Matthew 12:37
 - Luke 8:17
 - Romans 2:16
- Notice: Those whose names aren't found in the book of life and who rejected Christ's righteousness stand spiritually naked before the all-seeing Judge.
 - No one escapes, as verse 13 clarifies.
 - The sea, symbolizing worldly turmoil, yields its dead; death releases its hold, and Hades surrenders its captives.
 - With resurrected bodies fit for judgment, people from all corners of the earth face King Jesus.
- **Verse 12 states that the spiritually dead are judged by what's written in the books of works, according to their deeds.**
 - Verse 13 reinforces this, emphasizing that each person is judged based on their actions.
- **This reveals a crucial theological principle: everyone at the great white throne will be judged fairly, but not all will receive the same punishment.**
 - While all face being cast into the lake of fire, the severity of punishment varies. This concept aligns with Jesus' teachings:
 - **Matthew 10:14-15:** Jesus suggests that it will be more bearable for certain cities on the Day of Judgment than for others.
 - **Matthew 11:21-24:** Jesus pronounces woes on cities, indicating that their judgment will be more severe because of their rejection despite witnessing miracles.
 - **Mark 12:38-40:** Jesus warns about the greater condemnation awaiting those who exploit others for personal gain while appearing righteous.
- These teachings illustrate that knowledge and rejection of truth lead to greater accountability and punishment.

- While there will be varying degrees of torment in the lake of fire, it's crucial not to be deceived. All in hell will suffer intensely in a place devoid of any good.
 - Why?
 - Because God's grace, love, and mercy are absent there.
 - But they are now in his wrath!

20:14-15

- Human language falls short in depicting both the wonders of heaven and the horrors of hell.
 - Even if we multiply all the biblical images, like "the lake of fire" (vs. 14-15) and "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur" (21:8), by ten billion, it still wouldn't suffice to adequately describe the experience of those facing the second death.
- **Death and Hades, representing both body and soul, are thrown into the lake of fire, marking the second death—a permanent separation by and from God, alone and imprisoned with no escape or second chance.**
 - Hell entails the dreadful punishment of never encountering God's presence.
 - While God is omnipresent, the lost won't sense his grace, only His wrath.
- Those whose names aren't in the book of life are all cast into the lake of fire, leaving no room for universal salvation, purgatory, second chances, or annihilation.
 - This eternal punishment, both physical and spiritual, matches Jesus' descriptions of misery (Matthew 25:41, 46).
 - The wicked will face ceaseless torment, day and night, forever (Revelation 14:11).
 - Remember, after death comes judgment (Hebrews 9:27), a day unavoidable for all.

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15 Sobering Reminders About Hell (And What It Means for Us) | (Source: old TVBC Blogpost on www.towerviewkc.com)

Resolution 55: "Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to act as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of heaven, and hell torments. *July 8, 1723.*"

As I've recently re-read more of Jonathan Edwards, I am amazed at the man's focus on eternity and his diligence to live in light of it. Both heaven and hell, at age 18, occupied him.

As Edwards pursued holiness in his life, he purposed to listen with one ear to the hallelujahs of heaven and the other ear to the shrieks and groans of tormented souls in hell. Such a sober estimation and meditation on these souls gave Edwards an eternal perspective that marked his life's every step.

If we are to teach and preach like Jesus, we must address the subject of hell. Here are fifteen biblical truths about hell as we consider eternity and our ministry in these days. After reading these, I will offer some practical pastoral faith lessons and application.

1. Hell is a real place on God's map (Matt. 8:12; Luke 16:28). Hell isn't just a nightmare in someone's mind. Those who go to hell go to a very real geographical place.

2. Hell is absolutely necessary. There has to be hell. The very attributes of God necessitate that it be so. God's holiness (Hab. 2:4 – no sin can be in the presence of God), God's righteousness (Heb. 2:2 – every sin shall receive a just punishment.), God's love (Eph. 1 – God loves his own people so much that he wants to protect them from all kind of vile people in this world), and God's wrath (Psalms 5, 7, 11, etc. – God is angry with the wicked every day) show us more than "Smile, God loves you" is worth considering.

3. Hell is heavily populated. More people will go to hell than heaven. Broad is the way to destruction (Matt. 7:13). Hell will be filled with the worst people and the best people (1 Cor. 6:9ff). Even those people who think they are serving God in the church—but who are never truly saved—will be in the bowels of hell (Matt. 7:21-23). There are many roads to hell, but only one narrow road to heaven (Pro. 14:12).

4. Hell is eternal separation. Hell isn't a separation from God. Perhaps shockingly, God will be in hell and the One inflicting the wrath. God will be in hell because he is omnipresent (Psalm 139, etc.). There's no square inch where God is not and hell

is created by his hand. Also, those in hell won't be inflicting punishment, nor will the devil. The One who can administer the wrath of God will be doing it directly in hell (Rev. 14:12).

5. Hell is a fiery furnace. This speaks of severe, intense heat of those being baked alive (Matt. 13:42). Frankly, it is graphic: Those in hell are roasted alive but never able to die. The resurrected body will be perfectly suited for their new environment in hell. Likewise, those in heaven, who have repented and believed the biblical Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-18), will never grow tired, serve Christ, and worship him forever. Damned souls will be encased in fire and there will never be any relief outside of the fire (Dan 12:2; Mk. 9:44-49, etc.).

6. Hell is a lake of fire. Everything about hell is fire (Rev. 19:20). There's no unconscious state or "soul sleep" in hell. All there are fully awake, alert, and in conscious existence. People are, literally, immersed in fire and engulfed in fire and unable to swim out of the lake of fire. In other words, they're drowning in fire. This isn't symbolic—it is literal. The picture never fully represents the reality of what it portrays (Matt. 25:41).

7. Hell is unquenchable fire. This fire is never to be put out or turned down (Matt. 3:12). This eternal God will maintain the eternal fire by his eternal wrath forever and ever (Mk. 9:43).

8. Hell is eternal fire. This is similar to the previous point. However, there is no end to it in the ages to come—it will go on forever (Matt. 25:41; Jude 7). Hell will be as long as heaven exists. Some teach "annihilationism" that posits a God of love will only keep those in hell for a brief moment and will eventually "snuff" them out. The problem with that is that same Greek words used to describe the length of heaven is used to describe hell.

9. Hell is day and night. Revelation 14:11 states that there is "no rest day and night." Revelation 20:10 says those in hell will be "tormented day and night." There's no vacation day or an easy button.

10. Hell is unmitigated. That is, it is never moderated, for it is always severe and intense. Matthew 13:42 and 50 tell us that hell is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." All the weeping in the history of the world (wars, families, deaths, etc.) doesn't begin to compare to those who are in hell. People in hell aren't repenting for their sin. Rather, they're angrier at God than when they were alive on earth. They are to the breaking point...but never breaking (Lk. 16:28; Rev. 14:10-11). Everyone is screaming and crying out. This is God's Word.

11. Hell is outer darkness. The panic of being blind and not being able to see is one thing. Those in hell will live in existence of outer darkness. They will never again be able to see anything with their eyes (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). R.C. Sproul noted: "You can't think about hell for long without almost going insane."

12. Hell is conscious awareness. One's mind will never be more active, alert, and sharp than when he/she is in hell. Forever in their minds, those in hell will be replaying the torment of their memory of rejecting the Gospel (Lk. 16:25). God will able give them the ability, it seems, to retrace their steps of how he brought people to share the gospel. Such opportunities will haunt them for ages to come (Rev. 20:19-20).

13. Hell is an inescapable pit (Rev. 9:2). Hell is so deep one can't crawl out or find the bottom flames of it. There are many roads that lead to hell but none that lead out. Doors are locked in hell and the key is thrown away. There's no parole, no time off, and no weekend leave. Again, one is there forever.

14. Hell is easily accessed. You have to strive to go through the narrow gate to heaven (Lk. 13:24). Yet, it is easy to go to hell. What do you do? Nothing. Just remain where you are. If you are an unbeliever, you are already headed that way when you refuse to believe Jesus alone is Lord, Savior, Judge, and Redeemer.

15. Hell must be avoided (Matt. 5:22, 28-29). Such truths about hell call for dealing with sin in a dramatic way. It is better to lose a part of your body now than your whole body in hell. Once you're in, you can't come out.

As we consider this biblical doctrine, what are some faith lessons for our life and ministry?

1. If you did not wake up in hell this morning, or in a thousand miseries that befell the world last night, there is great reason for thanks. Reflecting on the loss Christians often sustain in this world, Richard Sibbes said, "It is better to limp to heaven than dance to hell."

2. If there's no sin, wrath, and hell in what you teach, there's no gospel in what you preach. If you always talk about grace but never talk about law, sin, or hell, you're actually never really talking about grace. When the church caters to a godless culture to keep it within the fold, the gospel is lost, God isn't honored, and the culture goes to hell.

3. God's glory would not be diminished and creation would suffer no loss if he let us run our course into hell without the slightest intervention. If we don't know we deserve hell, we don't know Christ. If you want to know how much God hates sin, look only at the cross of Christ and the reality of hell.

4. I want to be more concerned about my neighbor's eternal condemnation in hell than I am about my own embarrassment in telling him about it. Charles Spurgeon has famously said: "If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies."

5. The ethnic diversity of hell is a crucial doctrine. No ethnic group can boast of exclusion. All deserve condemnation.

6. Every sin, every crime will be punished—either in hell or on the cross. No one anywhere at any time gets away with anything. Trust in the Lord's justice as you walk on this unjust earth.

From the heights of heaven to the depths of hell, Jesus of Nazareth is Lord! Adore Him. Worship Him. Follow Him. Imitate Him. Trust Him. Love Him. Obey Him. Serve Him. Proclaim Him. Glorify Him. All until kingdom come.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Certainly! Revelation 20 is a chapter rich with symbolism and theological implications. Here are some discussion questions to consider:

1. The Millennium: Revelation 20 speaks of a thousand-year reign of Christ. What are the various interpretations of this period within Christian theology? How do these interpretations impact our understanding of eschatology (end times)?

2. The Binding of Satan: Revelation 20 describes Satan being bound for a thousand years. What does this binding signify? How does it relate to the concept of spiritual warfare and the triumph of Christ?

3. The First Resurrection: Revelation 20 mentions a "first resurrection" for those who are blessed and holy. What is the nature of this resurrection? How does it differ from other resurrections mentioned in the Bible?

4. Judgment and Justice: The chapter discusses the judgment of the dead based on their deeds. How does this concept of judgment align with various theological views on salvation, grace, and works?

5. The Great White Throne Judgment: Revelation 20 describes a scene where the dead are judged according to their works. What are the theological implications of this judgment? How does it relate to concepts of mercy, justice, and divine sovereignty?

6. The Lake of Fire: The chapter mentions the "lake of fire" as the final destination for the devil, death, and Hades. What is the significance of this imagery? How does it relate to concepts of eternal punishment and the nature of God's justice?

7. The Victory of Christ: Throughout Revelation 20, there is a recurring theme of Christ's victory over evil. How does this victory impact our understanding of suffering, redemption, and the ultimate purpose of creation?

8. The Role of Believers: Revelation 20 implies that believers will reign with Christ during the millennium. What responsibilities or roles might believers have during this period, and how do they contribute to God's kingdom?

9. Theological Interpretation: How do different theological traditions interpret Revelation 20, particularly in terms of its symbolism and its place within the broader biblical narrative?

10. Personal Application: How does the message of Revelation 20 impact our daily lives as Christians? How should we live in light of the truths presented in this chapter regarding judgment, redemption, and the ultimate victory of Christ?

--From Nelson: Why is this scripture of Rev. 20 in the Bible? What do you learn about God? How can you use it to change you?