

The Millennial Reign of Christ, Satan's Rebellion & the Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:1-15

The judgment of the earth (Great Tribulation) is finished. The beast and the false prophet have been thrown alive into the lake of fire. (19:17-21). One final judgment remains – the dragon who's been behind all of the rebellion.

1. SATAN'S FORCEFUL RESTRAINT. *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven holding the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it so that he would no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were completed. After that, he must be released for a short time. (20:1-3)*

✓ Angel from heaven – key to the abyss (distinct from the lake of fire) and a great chain (symbol of restraint). The dragon = that ancient serpent (Garden of Eden), the devil (accuser) and Satan (adversary), bound and cast into the abyss, closed and sealed for 1000 years.

✓ 1000 years = millennium (Latin for *mille* – thousand and *annus* – year.) Three views (camps). Amillennialists – take seriously a reign of Christ, but believe the 1000 years allegorically or spiritually, and not literally. Postmillennialists – Christ's reign is through His church, now being extended in the world. Premillennialists – the second coming of Christ precedes and inaugurates a thousand-year reign of peace. This is my view.

2. BELIEVERS REIGN WITH CHRIST. *Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. (20:4-6)*

✓ The tribulation saints = *souls of those beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus.*

✓ Rest of the dead = those who will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment.

✓ First resurrection = believers who raised from the dead at Jesus' second coming.

"Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!" "Second death has no power over them." "Priests of God and of Christ" "Reign with him for a thousand years."

3. SATANIC REBELLION CRUSHED. *When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. Their number is like the sand of the sea. They came up across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the encampment of the saints, the beloved city. Then fire came down from heaven and consumed them. The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (20:7-10)*

- ✓ Satan released from his prison at the conclusion of the 1000 year reign of Christ.
- ✓ He will continue his perennial deception of the nations and gather Gog and Magog for battle. (Ezekiel 38-39 – prophecy of Gog and Magog). Combination of the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:17 – Sixth bowl judgment) and Gog and Magog define Satan’s last attempts to crush Jesus Christ and the church, but instead “*fire came down from heaven and consumed them.*”

- ✓ *The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* Jesus made is clear in Matthew 25:41 that hell was created originally for the Devil and his angels, not for humans. However, for those who reject Jesus by choice, no other alternative exists except to join the Devil and his angels in hell.

4. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT. *Then I saw a great white throne and one seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; each one was judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.* (20:11-15)

- ✓ *One seated on the throne* = the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God.
- ✓ *The dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne.* A resurrection of the ungodly and unbelievers has occurred. The great and the small – no delineation of status according to the world’s standards.

- ✓ Judgment according to books opened = *dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books...each one was judged according to their works.* Judgment based on deeds or works.

- ✓ Everyone is there – *sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them.*

- ✓ *The second death, the lake of fire.* For unbelievers, the first death is dreaded and avoided. The second death is more devastating = a constant state of dying.

- ✓ Judgment according to *whose name was not found written in the book of life.* Important theological principle: Everyone who appears before the Great White Throne Judgment is judged from the books. Only those who do not experience the first resurrection of the dead at the Rapture stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment. No believers are there.

Closing Thoughts:

1. Every person faces judgment. For Christians – Judgment Seat of Christ. For non Christians – Great White Throne Judgement.
2. Examine your life – do you know for sure that you are saved and that your name is written in the Book of Life?
3. Only two choices: Eternal life or Eternal death. Both are forever.