

92. The Book of Revelation—20:3-5

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(9-7-22)

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Tonight, in our study of Revelation, we find ourselves in chapter 20 and what is commonly referred to as the **Millennial Kingdom**.

The word "*millennium*" comes from two Latin words—*mille* and *annum* which together literally means, "*a thousand years*"—which is repeated 6 times in this one chapter.

Revelation 20:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

How ignorant we often are to how much the devil controls the politics of the nations of the world through his deception and demonic influence (Rev.13)—he isn't called the "*god of this world*" for nothing. Satan 'controls' the political systems of this world because God allows him to due to the hardness and evil in the hearts of fallen mankind.

Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil—so God gives them the darkness they love; they reject the love of the truth that they might be saved—so God sends them strong delusion to believe lies. This delusion, deception and embracing of Satanic lies will reach a climax during the reign of the Antichrist.

God is allowing it because it is fulfilling His purposes which we have been studying in this book.

In Philippians 3:20, Paul tells us that our citizenship is in heaven—the word for "*citizenship*" is a Greek word we get our word '*politics*' from. Now that doesn't mean that Christians shouldn't get involved in earthly politics or not run for political office or not vote—like some religions and cults teach.

It simply means that we are, first and foremost, citizens of heaven waiting for our King to come and take over so that the kingdoms of this world will someday (and hopefully someday soon) become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ.

It's so easy to get wrapped up in the politics of this world and lose sight of the Kingdom of God and the only One who can bring peace and righteousness to this world—Jesus Christ!

Revelation 20:3 (NKJV)

³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.

The “**bottomless pit**” spoken of in Revelation 9:2 and 20:1, 3 is not the same as *hell*—although it could very well be a part of *hades*.

It is the place where the worst fallen angels are presently incarcerated (Jude verse 6)—a place so horrific that the demons spoken of in Matthew 8 begged Jesus to allow them to enter a herd of swine rather than be sent there!

The term ‘**bottomless pit**’ is translated from the Greek word is “*abussos*” and literally means ‘*without depth*’.

The only place in all the earth where there could be a ‘bottomless’ pit is in the center of the earth—because in the center of the earth every direction is up.

In Chapter 9 we already saw how that there is a ‘door’ somewhere on the surface of the earth that opens to a shaft that leads down to this bottomless pit. At one point, Revelation 9 tells us, that this door will be opened, and demonic ‘locust’ like creatures will climb up and out of this pit and sting unbelievers on the earth during one part of the Tribulation Period.

“But after these things he [Satan] must be released for a little while.” (verse 3b)

The question is—

- *“Why does God release Satan after the thousand years are over? Why doesn’t He just lock him up and throw away the key!?”*

For the same reason he was allowed to roam free in the first place—he is serving the purposes of God.

You can’t have free will if there’s only one choice, just like you can’t have free elections if there’s only one person on the ballot.

God has given us a free will but then by necessity He has to provide a choice—Satan is that choice.

- *“Not me, I’m an atheist—I don’t believe in God or the devil—I’m not for either one!”*

Well, as Jesus said, *“If you’re not for Me you’re against Me.”*

Satan is not cast into hell immediately, because God still has one more task for him to perform so He temporarily imprisons him in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years—and according to Isa.24:21-23 Satan’s demonic hordes will also be imprisoned with him at this time.

But what is that task?

Revelation 20:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations...

Hang onto that—we’ll look at what that means next time.

Revelation 20:4 (NKJV)

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them...

Who are the ones on these thrones?—Well, I think there are 3 groups:

1. Old Testament Saints

Daniel 7:18, 22, 27 (NKJV)

¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High [O.T. saints] shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever'...²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom...²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

So, this is telling us that when Jesus comes back and establishes His Kingdom on the earth—at that time the Old Testament saints will be ruling with Him.

2. Church Saints

Matthew 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ So Jesus said to them [His 12 apostles], "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (NKJV)

² Do you not know that the saints [all N.T. saints throughout the Church Age] will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

³ Do you not know that we shall judge angels [no doubt speaking of fallen angels]? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

Revelation 2:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations--²⁷ *'He shall rule them with a rod of iron...*

Revelation 3:21 (NKJV)

²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

3. Tribulation Saints

Revelation 20:4 (NKJV)

⁴ **And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them [i.e., Old Testament saints and Church saints]. Then I saw [this would be a third group] the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they [all 3 groups] lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

Even as the Lord Jesus taught in the parable of the ten minas—

Luke 19:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

- Who will they reign over? (Listen: For the population explosion that will occur during the Millennial Kingdom)

Revelation 20:5 (NKJV)

⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

The order of this statement has confused many over the years as to what John is saying—because it sounds like John is saying, the dead who did not live again until the thousand years were finished are those belonging to the **‘first resurrection.’**

Let me rearrange John’s statement so that what he is actually saying becomes clear:

Revelation 20:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ **[This is the first resurrection.] But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.**

The Jews believed in one great resurrection of the dead—as do many Christians. But if there is a **“first resurrection”**—there has to be at least one more after it.

Jesus taught in the Gospel of John 5:28-29 that there would be 2 great resurrections—*‘the resurrection of life’* (believers); and *‘the resurrection of condemnation’* (unbelievers)—and then in Revelation 20:5 we learn that they are separated by at least 1000 years.

Now, with regard to the physical, bodily resurrection of believers (which Jesus called the *‘resurrection of life’*)—Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that this resurrection (also called the *‘first resurrection’* in Revelation 20:5) is not a single event but a category that contains multiple resurrections of believers—

1 Corinthians 15:20-21, 23 (NKJV)

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead...²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ’s at His coming.

The word for *“order”* in verse 23, *“But each one (each group), will be resurrected) in his own order”* is the Greek word *‘tagma’* and it means *‘a series of succession.’*

The word originally referred to military rank—the order of command (i.e. the *‘order of importance’*).

Paul is telling us that the physical/bodily resurrection of believers doesn’t happen all at once but consists in a series of successive resurrections starting with:

1. The resurrection of Jesus, the Firstfruits

“But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (verse 20)

As the Lamb of God, Jesus died on Passover, He arose from the dead three days later on Sunday—which was the Feast of Firstfruits. (Leviticus 23:9-14)

By offering God the firstfruits of the harvest it was their way of honoring Him by putting Him first in their lives, and He then responded by accepting their firstfruits offering and giving them a great harvest later on!

Even so when Jesus was raised from the dead—it was God’s assurance to us that we shall also be raised one day as part of that future harvest—*“Because I live, you will live also.”* (John 14:19)

Referring to Jesus as the **“firstfruits”** of those who will be raised to eternal glory doesn’t mean that Christ was the first one ever to rise from the dead—we have examples of people who were raised from the dead *before* Jesus in both the Old and New Testaments.

But Jesus’ resurrection was different from all of those in that—they were raised and yet died again (physically), whereas Jesus rose never to die again (He rose with a glorified body)!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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