

## Revelation Study Notes

### Lesson #9

#### Revelation 20–22: The Millennium, Final Judgment, and the Eternal State

##### *The Millennium Changes Things*

- For those going through the tribulation, that experience, however extreme, is the continuation and culmination of the world's history.
- However, once the 1000-year rule is set in place, history as humans have understood or experienced it changes dramatically.
- From that moment forward, there is a new reality, life is experienced differently (increased longevity, diminished sinfulness, under the direct rule of Christ). But how is this new paradigm to be understood?
- Most interpreters, regardless of their affiliation to one of the four schools sense this momentous change and have differing perspectives concerning the timing and nature of the millennium.

##### *Three Approaches to Interpreting the Millennium*

- Revelation 4–19 focus on the timing of the tribulation period, but Rev 20 focuses on the establishment of Christ's millennial kingdom rule. The two are viewed as separate eras where different divine prerogatives play out.
- Three Millennial Approaches:
  - **Premillennial:** for this view, the millennium is literal and follows immediately upon the second coming of Christ. Some believe the physical promises made to Israel (e.g. Gen 15; Exod 21) are kept during this time.
  - **Postmillennial:** For this view, the millennium is not a literal, but symbolic of the time it takes for the church to convert the world to the gospel. Postmillennialists believe that the 1000 years is figurative for the time it takes for the church to effectively Christianize the world. Only after the world is converted to Jesus does Christ return, thus "postmillennial."
  - **Amillennial:** This view rejects the possibility of an actual millennium all together. Thus, Rev 20 is interpreted symbolically. For amillennialists, martyred saints are already in the millennium reigning in heaven throughout the church age. The binding of Satan happened at the cross, and final judgment happens immediately at Christ's future second coming.

##### *Revelation 20:1-3: Binding the Dragon, Establishing the Millennium*

And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, <sup>3</sup> and threw him into the abyss, and shut *it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things, he must be released for a short time.*

### **Premillennial**

- *Then* suggests a chronological sequence after Christ's literal return (Rev 19).
- A mighty angel, Michael, binds Satan casting him into the bottomless pit, not Hell.
- Satan restrained from deceiving, no longer "ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Eph 2:2; ).

### **Amillennial**

- Rejects a chronological approach, pointing to Christ's victory at the cross (Col 2:14-15).
- All the details (e.g. chain, seal, pit, dragon, serpent, 1,000 years, etc.), are symbolic.
- Christ's cross has brought about a conclusive victory over Satan, binding him, leaving him impotent to prevent the success of God's kingdom from advancing.

### **Postmillennial**

- *Then* suggests these events happen immediately after the successful proclamation of the gospel by the church across history.
- The preaching of the gospel will convert most sinners limiting, "binding" Satanic power.
- The millennium unfurls as nations are converted through the preaching of the gospel.

### **Revelation 20:4-6: The Thousand Year Reign**

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw *the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.* <sup>5</sup> *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.* <sup>6</sup> *Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

### **Premillennial**

- *I saw thrones, and they sat upon them*, no consensus on who these might be (God, Christ, angels, 24 elders, OT & NT saints, etc.),
- These participate with Christ in his judicial role during the millennium.
- *And they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years*, points to the first resurrection (1 Thess 4) of saints to reign on earth for 1000 years (vv. 5-6)

### **Amillennial**

- Augustine saw this as a spiritual "reign" of believers during the present age, thus fulfilling Romans 8:37, *we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
- Others see this as a description of departed saints in heaven during the church age up and until Christ's second coming.
- The number "1,000" is figurative throughout the Bible (e.g. Deut 7:9; Psalm 50:10; 91:7).
- *And they came to life*, refers to their entrance into heaven at the point of their death.
- The *first resurrection*, is spiritual for only one resurrection (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15)

### **Postmillennial**

- *The first resurrection*, a revival of the martyrs' "spirit" causing an actual revival on earth.
- *To rule with Christ*, anticipates an eventual "Christian republic," with the church instructing the nations on how to apply God's law in all cases (civil, criminal).

### **Revelation 20:7-10: The Loosing and Condemnation of Satan**

*And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, <sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. <sup>9</sup> And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

#### **Premillennial**

- After the 1000 years Satan is allowed to foment revolt, but only for a brief time.
- The revolt serves to “prove” the character of those who lived during the millennium.
- *Gog and Magog*, thus revealing that old hatreds die hard, thus rebelling again.
- This battle results in a final judgment, consigning Satan and the wicked to eternal hell.

#### **Amillennial**

- Satan will be allowed a brief moment, after the Christian era to test the church.
- *Gog, Magog, Ezekiel 38-39*, refers to a final battle at end of the church age.
- The whole thing culminates in Satan’s final defeat and being cast into hell.

#### **Postmillennial**

- Satan allowed to deceive the nations after a long period of Christian dominance.
- *Gog, Magog*, means the “prince and his people” and applies to Satan and his forces waging spiritual war against the church. Satan’s judgment will be swift and final.

### **Revelation 20:11-15: The Great White Throne Judgment**

*And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. <sup>14</sup> And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

#### **Premillennial**

- *The great white throne judgment*, where the Father and Christ sit (Rev 3:21; 21:5-8).
- The dead, who had not experienced the first resurrection, and not found in the book of life (Rev 3:5; Heb 12:23) are judged, found guilty and cast into the lake of fire, Hell.
- Death and Hades—the grave—are personified and judged (1 Cor 15:26).

#### **Amillennial**

- *The great white throne judgment*, is not a judgment specific to the unredeemed, but a general judgment of believers and unbelievers alike (Matt 25:31; Rom 2:5-10).
- This judgment makes the universe evaporate, making way for a new “heaven and earth”.

## Postmillennial

- This judgment corresponds to Christ's sheep and goat judgment (Matt 25).
- At his second coming the present earth will be reduced to cinders (2 Peter 3:10-12).
- The Book of Life, confirms that the righteous are also judged at this time.

### *New Testament Passages on the Eternal State*

#### ***Colossians 1:15-20: Christ's Cosmic Redemption***

He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup> **For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup> and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.** (See also Ephesians 1:9–10)

#### ***Romans 8:18-23: Paul on Creation's Longing for Redemption***

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> **For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.** <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

#### ***1 Corinthians 15:42–49: Paul on the Glorified Human Body***

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is **raised an imperishable body**; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, **it is raised in glory**; it is sown in weakness, **it is raised in power**; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, **it is raised a spiritual body**. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. <sup>45</sup> So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam *became a life-giving spirit*. <sup>46</sup> However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> **Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.**

#### ***2 Peter 3:10-13: Peter on the New Heavens and New Earth***

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people

ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! <sup>13</sup> **But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.**

### **Revelation 21:1-8, and 21:9–22:19: A Summary and Expansion of the Eternal State**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Rev 21:1-8</b>	<b>Rev 21:9-22:19</b>
• New Jerusalem	v.2	21:9-21
• God dwelling among men	v.3	21:22-27
• Renewal of the world	v. 5a	22:1-5
• “These words are true, faithful”	v.5b	22:6-10
• Work completed, “alpha, Omega”	v.6a	22:11-15
• Final blessing, Water of Life	vv.6b-7	22:16-17
• Final curse for the Rebellious	v.8	22:18-19

#### **Revelation 21:1-8: The New Creation Revealed**

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, <sup>4</sup> **and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.**" <sup>5</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." <sup>6</sup> And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. <sup>7</sup> "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. <sup>8</sup> **"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."**

#### **Revelation 21:9-21: The New Jerusalem Expanded**

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> **And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,** <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. <sup>12</sup> It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. <sup>13</sup> **There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.** <sup>14</sup> **And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.** <sup>15</sup> **And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.** <sup>16</sup> **And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the**

width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. <sup>17</sup> And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. <sup>18</sup> And the material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; <sup>20</sup> the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. <sup>21</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

- The Holy City is the “bride”, and the bride is the church in all her glory (Rom 2:7; Col 1:27; Heb 2:10; 1 Pet 5:1).
- The Holy City is also the temple, the temple is the Holy of Hollies, the church, God’s dwelling place.
- *Three gates on each side*, signaling universal access to the church through Christ.
- Foundation, names of the twelve apostles, shows the city to be the church (Eph 2:20).
- The measurements of the city, probably symbolic of the church’s ultimate glory.
- The city, a cube, interpreted as God’s dwelling place (1 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 2:5).
- The street of the city is “the way of life” for those who comprise the New Jerusalem.
- Made of Gold, transparent glass, symbolic of godly character and behavior.

### **Revelation 21:22 – 27: The Temple and Light in God’s New Creation**

And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. <sup>25</sup> And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; <sup>26</sup> and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; <sup>27</sup> and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

### **Revelation 21:22 – 27, Isaiah 60:19-21 Compared**

- **Isa. 60:19:** No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, your God for your glory.
- **Rev 21:23:** The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
- **Isa 60:3:** And nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.
- **Rev 21:24:** nations shall walk by its light, kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.
- **Isa 60:11:** Gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession.
- **Rev 22:13:** In the daytime (there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed.
- **Isa 60:21:** Then all your people will be righteous; ...
- **Rev 22:25:** Nothing unclean, who practices abomination, lying, shall ever come into it.

### **Revelation 22:1-5: New Heavens and New Earth Further Described**

*And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,<sup>2</sup> in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.<sup>3</sup> And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him;<sup>4</sup> and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.<sup>5</sup> And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.*

- A continuation of the literal description of the new heavens and new earth.
- *And they shall see His face*, thus fulfilling Matthew 5:8, the pure in heart shall see God.
- *A river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and the Lamb*, symbolic of Jesus as the source of “living water”, and/or the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39).
- *Tree of life*, symbolizes a kind of tree that bears fruit to sustain the “nations”, suggesting ethnicity albeit redeemed continues.
- *The leaves of the tree*, (or trees) will provide “healing” refuge for the nations.

### **Revelation 22:6-10: The Affirmation and Urgency of God's Word**

*And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place.<sup>7</sup> "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."<sup>8</sup> And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.<sup>9</sup> And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God."<sup>10</sup> And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.*

- This passage begins the epilogue, bringing the revelation to a close.
- “*These words are faithful and true*”, affirm the authenticity of the visions.
- Affirming the continuity between OT prophecy and John’s Apocalypse.
- Concerning *things which must shortly take place*, understood differently by Preterists, historicists, futurists, and spiritualist schools.
- The command *not to seal the prophecy of this book*, stands in contrast to Daniel told not to seal his prophecy (Dan 12:4).

### **Revelation 22:11-15: The Reality of Sin and the Possibility of Salvation**

*Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."<sup>12</sup> "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.<sup>13</sup> "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.<sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*

- This passage acknowledges the state of people from a divine perspective as either unrepentant sinners or saved.
- V.11 suggests the time is so near, the reader should sense urgency to repent before judgment falls; thus “repent while there is still time!”
- Jesus will judge all people according to their works (Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 1 Pet 1:17)
- Entrance to the church and participation in eternal life is contingent on obedience to God’s commandments (Luke 6:46; 1 John 2:3-4).

### **Revelation 22:16-17: Final Blessings**

*"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." <sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.*

- Concerning *the root and offspring of David*, Jesus affirms that He sprang from the root, David, thus his messianic credentials are unimpeachable.
- Concerning Jesus as *the bright and morning star*, thus, the source of moral light, clarity for the redeemed.
- *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"*, affirming the church’s role empowered by the Holy Spirit, preaching the gospel extending the invitation of salvation to all who thirst.
- Concerning *him who hears*, may refer to those who sense the Spirit’s call, or perhaps simply those who hear the reading of John’s Apocalypse.
- Concerning, *and let the one who hears say, "Come,"* refers to Christ, who hears the plea and the Spirit, and who invites the thirsty to “come”.

### **Revelation 22:18-19: An Ominous Warning and Curse**

*I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.*

- A warning not to alter “the prophecy of this book” by adding to it, or detracting from it.
- Historically, the church took this curse to mean that the NT came to an effective close with the Apocalypse. Warned not to add, or remove books deemed canonical, inspired.
- Amazingly, some religious groups (cults) have gone so far as to invoke this curse upon anyone who does not agree with their interpretation of John’s Apocalypse.

### **Revelation 22:20-21: Christ’s Return Reiterated and Anticipated**

*He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

**AMEN!**