

# Revelation 20: 1-9

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 20 September 2020

[ 0 : 00 ] So we're in Revelation 20, starting in verse 1 and reading to verse 9. If you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask you if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God, and then we'll pray, and we'll jump right into it.

John, writing here, being moved of the Spirit, says, Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and the great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

And he threw him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him so that he would not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed. After these things, he must be released for a short time.

Then I saw thrones, and they set on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hand.

And they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. And the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the final resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection.

[ 1 : 08 ] 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. When a thousand years were completed, Satan will be released from his prison 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. Verse 9. 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.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you've given us this opportunity to gather this morning. And Lord, we pray as we have read your Word, Lord, we stand attentively to hear your Word, Lord, that you would speak to our hearts and minds.

We pray that the truth of it would resonate within us and Lord, that it would point us to you and to none other. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. I think I have mentioned this to you before and it may have been during one of the live streams, but it is worth re-mentioning if you have already heard it.

Martin Lloyd-Jones once made a commentary on preaching. Now, as far as pastors go, Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote a great book called Preaching and Pastors. And it just speaks much of preaching.

[ 2 : 22 ] And he was really one of the best commentators on the aspect of preaching. And it was he who said that preaching is a spiritual exercise. And I cannot agree with that more. It is when the man that God has chosen stands before the people of God, delivers the Word of God, and is moved by the Spirit of God.

It is a spiritual exercise. This is why it is always such a struggle not to preach to people in front of you. And it is not an academic exercise. Preaching is not a lecture because in lecturing, you would take a lot of notes, collect a lot of information, and lead, hopefully, being a little bit more intelligent. Preaching is not a motivational talk. I'm not trying to motivate you to do something because with a motivational talk, you may get goosebumps, and you may get great feelings, and you may feel like you can go out and conquer the world because you are motivated.

But rather, preaching is a deliverance of the Word of God. And it was he who said that true preaching always leads the listener to set down his pen and to never walk away going, Oh, what a great sermon or what a great man, but always leads the listener to say, What a great God he is.

Now, we've come to a great portion of the book of Revelation, one that has been spoken of many times and one that we would long to know more about, but my prayer is that as we study Revelation 20, that we will not seek to gain information because this is not a revelation of things to come, though it does contain that.

[ 3 : 47 ] It is not a revelation of future events. It is a revelation of what? Jesus Christ. The book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ. So my prayer is that when we're through today, you would say, What a great God he is.

And maybe you have to stop for just a moment taking notes. And maybe you have to put your pen down and you have to go back and listen to the sermon again so that you can try to catch some of that information.

And it would not be a collecting of truths, but rather it would be a moving and a motivating of your life. Today, we're going to look at the millennial reign of Christ. The millennial reign of Christ.

There's a lot of different interpretations on the millennium. Now, we're not speaking of millennials, the generation that was born roughly from 1980 to sometime around 2000. We're not looking at the millennials because we could do a lot of research on them.

We can do a lot of research on their thought process and it would probably scare us enough that we'd want to get away from it. But we're not looking at that. We're looking at the millennium. That is the reign of Christ, a thousand year reign of Christ.

[ 4 : 49 ] There are a lot of different interpretations according to scripture and I'll tell you where I stand. Listen, we can have different interpretations on this truth and still coexist, right? We can fellowship, even though we may not agree with this what's called eschatology, the study of end time completely with one another.

But I want you to know where I stand and why I stand there. One of them is called a pre-tribulation millennial reign of Christ that Christ sets up his thousand year reign through the church and he will actually reign for a thousand years or he is reigning right now through the church that the church will lead the world into this great age of perfection that the church will eventually lead the world in a worldwide missions effort to a place of peace and the world will become a peaceful place of existence and Christ will be reigning the world through the church while he is still resident in heaven.

And then after that, there would be this rapture or this tribulation period, this time that we see here and then there would be the establishment of the heaven and the earth, the new heavens and the new earth and all those things.

So there's pre-tribulation rapture that the pre-tribulation millennial reign of Christ that there was really no tribulation period that comes before that, okay? Because the church ushers in this age of peace.

There's a thing called all millennialism, which really means there is no literal thousand year reign of Christ. It just means that for a long time, there's the age of peace. That could be a hundred years, that could be a hundred days, but there will be a time of peace on earth before Christ comes.

[ 6 : 22 ] I believe in the post-tribulation millennial reign of Christ. And that is that Christ raptures the church, pre-tribulation rapture of the church. He calls the church to himself.

And then the judgment of Christ upon the world for their sin is the seven-year tribulation. And after the seven years of tribulation, which culminates in the battle of Armageddon, then Christ will immediately himself physically come back and he will stand up on the earth and reign for a thousand years, the millennial reign of Christ.

And then at the end of that thousand years, there will be one final war, which we've seen referenced here. We'll get to all this in just a moment. I'm just kind of getting the details out of the way. And then there will be the judgment seats of Christ.

I believe that because I think it coincides best with scripture. I believe that John was not writing kind of in generalities, but he was writing very specifically. And he says, and after these things, there seems to be a great chronological event in the book of Revelation.

And it seems to coincide with the rest of the Old Testament. You say, why does this really matter, pastor? Well, it really, we can fellowship if you don't agree with that. But I want you to know where I stand before I began to preach it because it makes a difference.

[ 7 : 32 ] We're looking at the millennial reign of Christ. I want you to see just three great truths that hope us to stand in awe of our Savior and in awe of the things that come that happened during this millennial reign of Christ.

Number one, we see the removal of Satan. We see the removal of Satan. It says, Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. In my other Bible, I have two Bibles I study from. One I preach on Wednesday night out of. The other one, this one, I leave it to Sunday morning. Short answer is, is because I'm hard on the Bibles I preach on.

Okay, Wednesday nights, I tend to be a little bit more still and I don't move around as much. On Sunday mornings, I move around much and I break the binding on my scripture. Okay, so I don't, I'm a little hard on the way I hold them and fold them, so I don't do it.

But both of them, I have an asterisk and an underline here. And the reason I do, because if you go back to Revelation 19, it says in verse 10, Then I fell at his feet to worship him. Who is this?

[ 8 : 29 ] This is an angel that appears to John, right? There's an angel who appears to John. He says, Then I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus.

Worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. I'm highlighting this for you because the angel tells John, I'm a fellow servant of yours. And then this angel shows up holding a key.

And the key is the abyss, right? I don't know if this is the same angel, but it's the same realm, right? The angel from heaven who says that he is a fellow servant of ours, those who hold the testimony of Jesus, is also those who are empowered here with the key of the abyss.

And I'm showing you this because look at this. He comes down with a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. Now the accusation against Satan is stated in his name.

There's a fourfold name of Satan. He is the dragon. He is the serpent of old. He is the devil. That is a deceiver. And he is Satan. That is the enemy of the saints. And he is bound for a thousand years.

[ 9 : 29 ] The reason I tell you this is those, namely the angels, who are our fellow servant are also those who are entrusted with the power to grab a hold of our greatest enemy.

Do not tell me you do not have the power to resist Satan. Do not tell me we don't have the power to tell Satan to flee from us. We do not have that within ourselves, but greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.

And what we see is our servants, our fellow servants, who are the angels, also are those entrusted with the power to lay a hold of the great arch enemy of all mankind and to bind him.

Now, the reason this is so important is because immediately preceding this, there is the battle of Armageddon. And if you remember in Revelation 19, during the battle of Armageddon, all those who oppose God, all those who have neglected his mercy, the seven-year tribulation really is God being merciful, right?

Why are there seven seals and seven trumpets and seven bowls? Why does God delay his judgment so much? It's because when man sees things falling apart, he's hoping to catch man's attention.

[ 10 : 36 ] There's the angel flying in mid-heaven saying, holy, holy, holy. There's the call for man to repent. There's 144,000 witnesses. There's the two witnesses. There are all these calls for man to repent, but the scripture tells us in Revelation, but man loved their sin rather than loved light, right?

Man loved darkness rather than loved light. And it tells us in Revelation that man, in spite of all this, would not forsake his sin and kept blaspheming God. So the battle of Armageddon are all those who had forsaken the mercy of God being led by the forces of Satan, namely the false prophet and the dragon and the beast.

And they go to the battle of Armageddon and there's really not much of a battle because it says that they are destroyed immediately by the sword of the Lord, which comes out of his mouth, that is the word of God. All Jesus had to do was say the word and every one of his enemies, though who opposed him, died.

Now in that battle, those who died were flesh and blood. They were mankind because it says at the end of Revelation 19 that the beast and the dragon, not the dragon because the dragon is Satan, but the beast and the false prophet were seized and thrown into the lake of fire alive.

Why? Because it is appointed once unto man to die. These are angels, right? The false prophet and the false Messiah, they don't need to die. So all of those who oppose him die.

[ 11 : 54 ] And now here in Revelation 20, the very last enemy, that man has, is bound by this angel and he's taking down to the abyss.

The angel unlocks the gate, throws him in and it says here, and he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan and bound him a thousand years and he threw him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him.

He locked the door. Who holds the key to the abyss? The angel at this point, why? Because it's been entrusted to him from heaven. So he locks the door and he seals it, right?

So that he would not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were completed and these things, and after these things, he must be released for a short time. What I'm showing you, listen, friend, in the millennial reign of Christ, there is no longer any temptation, there is no longer any deception, there is no longer any enemy.

Every enemy of man has been bound and shut up, cast out. For a thousand years, this world lives with no presence of Satan.

[13:02] This is important. Why? Because the question is this. Could you believe in Jesus Christ? Could you believe in Jesus Christ if the devil didn't make you do things or if you were never tempted?

If you lived in a perfect environment? Because we say, well, the first Adam fell and he lived in a perfect environment. Well, the argument is, yeah, but Satan deceived him, right? The serpent of old came and deceived Eve while he was sitting there.

So even there, you have the presence of the serpent. You have the presence of Satan. Man said, well, if everything was good, if the world was perfect, then I could believe in God. But because of all this wickedness, because of all this hatred and murder and all these bad things, and if God is good, then why do all these bad things happen?

And if God is good, why do people die? And if God is good, why is there all this evil in the world? So now God's going to answer the question is, can man believe in him when the world is perfect?

The thousand-year reign of Christ starts like this. The enemy of man is bound and shut up and sealed and no longer allowed to tempt anyone. And those who inhabit the realm of the millennial reign of Christ are all saved.

[14:08] Every one of them. Those at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ are all redeemed individuals. We know that because those who oppose God have either died a natural death or they have been killed at the battle of Armageddon.

So Christ comes back to establish his reign and that leads us to the second thing that is the reign of the saints. So we see the removal of Satan. So now it is literally, earth is a utopian environment. It is perfect. I mean, think what this world would be like without the presence of evil. Think what this world would be like with the keys being stripped out of the hand of Satan and there were no longer any spiritual forces of the air or powers and principalities of darkness.

That there was no wickedness, no death, no anything. What if it was perfect, right? Because he says in verse 4, Then I saw thrones and they sat on them and judgment was given to them. The great question is who is they and who are them?

Who are they sitting on or who is they who is sitting on the thrones and who are the them that judgment was given to? We see the reign of the saints. To get a full understanding of those that I believe are sitting on the thrones, we need to read all of scripture.

[15:14] The Old Testament says in the book of Daniel that judgment was given to the Old Testament saints. God has promised the Old Testament saints to give them positions of judgment. It also says in the New Testament when we make our way into the gospels that Jesus tells the apostles or his disciples that he will put them on 12 thrones of judgment, right?

That the apostles would be in a place of judgment. But then Paul writes to the church at Corinth and he tells the church at Corinth, that's church, that's us, right? He's writing to the church. We're the church, by the way.

He tells the church, he says, do you not know that you would judge the angels? So now we have the Old Testament saints who are in a position of judgment. We have the apostles who are in a position of judgment. And now we have the church itself that is in a position of judgment.

And then when we go to the book of Revelation, we find in the letters to the seven churches that Jesus himself says that he who overcomes and perseveres to the end will sit with him on a throne of judgment.

Preach it to me, man. It's good. We'll go with that. We'll go back and forth. Nobody else is amening me, so I'm going to let Parker amen me, right? We're good. I'll take that. But what we see here is Old Testament saints, the apostles, and the church are all promised a place of judgment.

[ 16 : 25 ] So here's the really good answer to that. Who is sitting on the throne? And the answer is the saints. The saints. We are called to judge. And why is this important?

Because we need to understand that the reward that God promises us is an extended responsibility. He who has been faithful in a little will be entrusted with much.

Right? He who has done good with the little that he's been entrusted with now will be entrusted with much in the time to come. God does not promise us a reward of idleness and a reward of cessation. Sure, we need to take time and be still and know that he is God. There's always this time where we need to stand back and rest. The Sabbath was given unto man, not man unto the Sabbath. Right? The Sabbath was given so that man could rest.

We all have a tendency at times to work ourselves too much and we need to be still and we need to draw away. Someone once pointed out to me that even Jesus withdrew with his disciples for a time.

[ 17 : 21 ] Right? You need to stop and be still and you need to be renewed in the flesh. So we understand that. But the reward that God promises us is not sitting around on clouds with cherubim singing, playing harps and all this great ease.

The reward that God promises us is a responsibility of rulership in the coming kingdom. Think about that just for a moment. That what he is offering us is a place of responsibility because he is Lord of our life.

So if we come to Christ right now and we say, Lord, I just want to believe in you but I don't necessarily want to do anything for you, then we've missed the point. Because if eternity and if the thousand year reign of Christ on this earth is partnered with us having responsibility of rulership, then it would be very becoming of us now to assume some of that responsibility that he has put us in right now.

He is building the Lord's army, right? He is calling us to battle. He is calling us to serve. He is calling us as laborers in the kingdom. He doesn't need any resters or any sleepers.

And he said, wait a minute now, Pastor, you just said I need to rest. I'm not telling you to go work yourself crazy and I'm not telling you to burn yourself out but I'm just saying we need to find what God is calling us to and maybe his calling is just for us to be prayer warriors.

[ 18 : 40 ] What a labor that is. Maybe his calling is for us to be servants who write letters of encouragement. What a reward that is. Maybe he's calling us to be those who minister by way of reaching out with a phone call or maybe he's calling us to be those who labor in other aspects but he is calling us to be people who serve him and in that thousand year reign of Christ we will reign with him in places of service.

Now let me paint the picture for you because we need to see this before we get to the final point. We're looking at the earth where Satan has been bound. All of the enemies and those who oppose God have been cast off.

It is filled with the redeemed, those who came on the horses wearing the righteous white robes of the saints, right? The battle of Armageddon, Jesus comes to this earth, he fights the battle of the sword of the Lord, immediately sets up his reign and rule.

And the saints who followed him are now going to reign with him. I mean think about this just for a moment, see if you can picture it, it's almost like a world of dream but you're looking at an earth, this isn't the new earth yet, this is this earth, this earth in its redeemed state, it is now serving under one world ruler who is the king of kings and lord of lords.

He is a perfect ruler in a perfect world. We have to get a full picture of what happens in the millennial reign of Christ, we have to read so much of scripture we wouldn't have time. But we find in the Old Testament it says that those who live to be a hundred are considered young.

[ 20 : 03 ] That the lion and the lamb will lay down with one another. That the serpent will no longer bite. It will still be on its belly because that's where it was cursed in the garden of Eden but it will no longer bite. That the kid will reach his hand into the serpent's hole and grab a hold of him and nothing will happen.

There is no sickness, there is no diseases, it is a world of perfection. And it is being ruled by one king of kings who is perfect and it is being co-ruled and it is being overseen in its various parts by the saints, those who are judging with truth and sincerity.

It is really a great environment. Now, to kind of really get into this, we need to understand what happens there. Those who come back with Christ and reign with Christ, those who had been, it says, beheaded for the name of Jesus, those who have already died, those who were raptured as

the church.

They will live throughout the whole thousand year reign of Christ. So if I die today or if he raptures the church today, when we come back, so let's just say the church is raptured today.

Let's just put it in pretty simple forms, right? So it's 2020. So then all of a sudden we got the seven years of tribulation, so that leads us to 2027. And in 2027, the battle of Armageddon, there's a thousand year reign of Christ, so that would lead us to 3027, right?

[ 21 : 17 ] I will live the entire time during 3027. I will not die because I'm coming back as a redeemed saint. Those who have already preceded us in death, they will not die.

They will live. Now those who were alive when Christ came during that tribulation period, those will have to go through what is called death because it is appointed once unto man to die, right? There's this place of separation.

But I'm just trying to paint the picture. For a thousand years in a perfect environment, a perfect world with no sin, with no, I don't want to say no sin, with no temptation, with no evil, with a great ruler who is Jesus, with great co-rulers who are the saints, everything being done in harmony and peace, and the world flourishes.

Because now all of creation is what it should be. The world is operating as it should. The lion and the lamb lay down together. There's no longer bitterness between mankind. There's no hatred. And everything is great.

The population booms because if Jesus can come back and turn just a few loaves to feed 5,000, think what he can do when he's reigning in the world, right? Think of what crops can produce.

[ 22 : 22 ] He can turn water into wine in a moment. Think of what he can do when he's reigning upon this world. So all of a sudden the population booms, everything is going great. There's this great birth of children and all these things, families are growing, and the world is perfect.

And then we come to the last thing, and that is the revolt of sinners. We see the removal of Satan. We see the reign of the saints, and now we see the revolt of sinners. And this answers the question for us because I don't know if you caught it or not, but Revelation 20 verse 3 says, after these things he, that is Satan, must be released for a short time.

After these things, that is the thousand years, he must be released. The question is, if God is good, then why does evil exist?

And, you know, one of the questions we always ask, is if God is so good, why did he create Satan? Why does he allow Satan to have power and authority?

Why doesn't he just stop him? Well, for a thousand years, he does. And for a thousand years, man is given the privilege to live in a perfect world without any outside influence, without any outside temptation, without any outside interference.

[ 23 : 40 ] for a thousand years, men and women and boys and girls live in a place of perfection. And then Satan is let go because he must be released.

Why must he be released? Verse 7 says, when a thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth. Gog and Magog being symbolic of those who revolt against God.

To gather them together for the war. And the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. This is what we see and this is the sad reality of it all. Could you believe in Jesus Christ with all of your heart if the world was perfect?

The answer is no. You know why? Because the problem is not the devil. The problem is not your temptation. The problem is not Satan. The problem is not the world you live in.

The problem is not the environment you were born in. The problem is not all the bad things that are going on. The problem is that we have a heart that is sin nature. And we see this.

[ 24 : 37 ] Because what happens are those who are born in a perfect environment with a perfect ruler in a perfect place with no temptation their heart still is a heart of sin.

Why? Because man hasn't been fully redeemed here yet. We haven't seen that, right? Those born in the tribulation, I mean those born in the millennial reign of Christ, those who are born to parents of righteousness because those who fill the world at that time are all redeemed people, right?

They are redeemed. And those born during that time are living in a perfect utopian environment. But all it takes is an opportune time for them to revolt against God.

And that opportune time is found when Satan says, come on, I'll get you together. What we find here in the reading of this passage is that evidently a multitude of people, as a matter of fact, it says

that there are more than the number of the sand shore who are living in this environment for a thousand years.

They're born and raised in a world of perfection and they are giving obedience outwardly, but in their heart they must not believe who Jesus Christ is. They are living in obedience because that's the rule of the land.

[ 25 : 41 ] They are living in obedience because that's what they are supposed to do. But their heart definitely does not love the Lord. Their heart is definitely not inclined towards God because their heart has this sin nature in it. And their heart has never been changed.

What does this show us? That simple church attendance is not that which changes the heart, right? Being an outward show of obedience and doing what is expected and doing what everybody thinks you should and looking good on the outside does not always show us what is going on on the inside because those living in this time look good on the outside because who would revolt against Jesus as he sits on the throne?

The saints are ruling on these other thrones and we see all this going on. But their heart has a sin nature. Their heart has an inclination of revolt. And the moment Satan is released, he has no problem in raising up a multitude of people who want to go depose the king.

This shows us, friend, listen to me. Why does Satan exist? Because all Satan does is show us what's wrong with us on the inside. All the temptations and all the struggles we have are nothing other than a revelation of what's already in us.

And that, therefore, shows us our need for a savior. It shows us that we need someone greater than us. It shows us that we need someone mightier than us to redeem us and to set us free.

[ 27 : 02 ] What we find here is these who have no heart for the king, though they may offer lip service to the king, are led, it says, to that broad plain because if you remember earlier in the book of Revelation, it says that everywhere around Jerusalem was laid flat, right?

That the mountains were flattened. So they come to this broad plain which is around the city of God and they're going to oppose him. And it says in verse 9 that on their way, fire came out of heaven and consumed them.

Why? Because even during the thousand year reign of Christ, people are born and raised who have no love for the savior. Because man, by nature, has a sinful heart.

That's bad news. And they could not go. The reason Satan had to be released is so that that sin nature could be revealed. They couldn't believe Jesus when everything was perfect.

They couldn't trust in him with all their heart and their life when everything was perfect. They still needed someone greater than that. But it is appointed once unto man to die. And after this, the judgment.

[ 28 : 05 ] What comes in the very next few verses? The judgment. Because the reality is this, my friend. Listen, and I'll close with this. It doesn't matter how good we look on the outside.

It doesn't matter how good we're keeping the rules and following in obedience. It doesn't matter. What really matters is what's going on in the heart. And the temptations of Satan and the schemes of the enemy are really just a revelation of what's already on the inside of us.

And our desperate need is for a savior who to redeem us from the inside out. During the millennial reign of Christ, the world is perfect and man still cannot fall in love with Jesus. Because external circumstances do not change in internal reality.

We are sinners by nature. And therefore, we need someone to change us from the inside out. And praise be to God, we still live in a church age where Jesus Christ can do that. He changes us from the inside out, not the outside in.

Now, when he redeems the inside, the outside begins to catch up. It may take a little while, but it catches up, right? I know my own life, right? I'm still in the flesh. But it's catching up.

[ 29 : 19 ] It's catching up. Why? Because his work is on the inside. And he'll lead us to catch up on the outside. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day you've given us. And Lord, we just rejoice in who you are.

Lord, you are not a savior of outwardly obedience. Lord, you are a savior of inward renewal. Lord, we pray that right now each of us would examine our own hearts and see where we stand with you, Lord.

Lord, to understand that very temptations that we face, the things that come against us really are just a revelation of struggles that we have and we possess. It's a nature that we need to be

redeemed from. So, Lord, we trust you and we call out to you and ask you to move mildly. Lord, I pray that you would have your way now as we sing and we lift your voice on high. Lord, we pray that you would draw us closer to you and it would be for your glory and honor. We ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 30 : 45 ] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 35 : 15 ] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.