

THROUGH THE BIBLE REVELATION 19-20

Revelation 19 describes the end of this current age. The revolt launched by Satan finally comes to an end.

Realize, we all can know the future. *History is no mystery.* The final chapter has already been written.

Tonight we learn how it will end - Revelation 19.

And it's interesting how this chapter opens... There's lots of saber-rattling on Earth. The Earth is preparing for *a war*, whereas Heaven is preparing for a *wedding*.

Heaven is in party-mode. It's hosting a celebration!

John begins chapter 19, "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!" Note this word, "Alleluia."

Its origins are Hebrew. It's a compound word: "Allel" means "praise," "Yah" is a contraction of God's name, "Yahweh." Put the two together and the word means "praise God..." "Alleluia..." *God is worthy of our praise!*

"For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." The Babylonian harlot represented a phony and false religious system.

The Antichrist claimed to be the Savior - but turned out a tyrant. In contrast to *phony and false*, Jesus is *“true and righteous.”* He’s *“true...”* Genuine not counterfeit. He’s *“righteous...”* Faithful and not a liar.

Verse 3, “Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” Chapters 17-18 discussed God’s overthrow of the two-headed Babylonian system.

Satan will seize control of worldwide commerce, and blackmail humanity to worship him. John saw in 18:18 that this evil system will burn to a crisp in one hour.

Here we read, *“Her smoke rises up forever and ever!”* It’s a testimony to God’s righteousness. The Earth mourns her loss, while Heaven shouts, *“Alleluia!”*

“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!” You might be interested to know the word *“Hallelujah”* appears 24 times in the Hebrew OT - mostly in the book of Psalms.

It’s a common exclamation of praise!

But the word appears only four times in the NT - *and all right here.* It’s as if God saves all the Hallelujahs for this moment. *As man’s rebellion reaches a breaking point on Earth, God’s praise crescendos in Heaven.*

For centuries the heavenly host has watched Satan steal, kill, and destroy. Now that he’s finally on the ropes, heaven erupts in praise - *a chorus of Alleluias!*

“Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!” And I heard, as it were, the voice of a

great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia!"

A voice calls on Heaven to praise God, and a mighty roar goes up - *loud like a waterfall or a thunderclap.*

"A great multitude" shouts out "Alleluia."

You know how to say this word in English, but do you know how to pronounce *"Alleluia"* in Spanish... or Arabic, or Berber, or Mandarin, or German, or Yoruba?

It's *"Alleluia."* It's the same pronunciation in every language. Even Heaven shouts *"Alleluias"* to God!

But that's just half of Heaven's shout. The triumphant chorus rings out *"For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"*

Earth's impending collapse reminds Heaven Who it is that ultimately reigns. The Lord is *"omnipotent"* or *all-powerful*. There is no problem God can't solve!

Wayne Valis worked in the White House as a special assistant to Presidents Nixon, and Ford, and Reagan.

When he called it quits, his resignation was full of despair. He wrote, *"I've come to believe... there is no ultimate solution to human problems... Hopefully you can trade more vexing problems for less vexing problems."* Here's the opinion of a man who spent his whole life in government... the best of humans have no real answers - all they can do is swap out problems.

The reason human government is so impotent is because it's depends on *fallible, frail, foolish* humans.

Here's Earth's only hope - *God omnipotent reigns!*

Today, God sits on the throne in Heaven, and is sovereign over human affairs! For the moment, He's allowing us to *run the show...* and *make a mess*. He's proving how incapable we are of governing ourselves.

But the day is coming when the Omnipotent will flex His muscle and establish His kingdom on Earth.

Verse 7, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." Notice, this about the greatness of God... He's both *omnipotent, yet intimate!*

He's High, yet He's nigh. He leads, and He loves.

Jesus is not only the King of the Jungle, but He's the Bridegroom who cherishes and nurtures His Bride.

And you are that bride! If you're a follower of Jesus you're betrothed. You're destined to marry the Lamb.

Hebrew marriage rites were in three stages...

First an **engagement**. Parents often arranged their children's marriage... The second stage was **betrothal**.

The couple met at the bride's home to exchange vows. Then the groom left to prepare a place for them to live. Often he built a room onto his father's house.

From this point on, the couple was legally bound, but the marriage wasn't consummated until the [wedding feast](#), the third stage. The groom would return for his bride - sweep her up, and take her home. They celebrated with family and friends - a feast - then they entered the bridal chamber to begin their married life.

And this is a beautiful overview of Jesus' dealings with His Church. Scripture calls us "[the Bride of Christ.](#)"

Our marriage with Jesus was [prearranged](#). We were chosen by Him before we were born... Then when we put our faith in Him we took a vow. We're [betrothed](#) to Jesus and no one else. Now Jesus has returned to Heaven. In His Father's house are many mansions - *or rooms*. He's preparing a place. And when its finished Jesus has promised to return and take us to live with Him forever. Here we read about [a marriage supper...](#)

Verse 8 tells us what the Bride will wear, "And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright..." The Bride of Christ will be dressed to the hilt. "For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

This past July, Lydia Tayler, got married. But rather than shell out big bucks, she knitted her own wedding gown. It took her four months and 100,000 stitches.

And here we're told that we too are making our own wedding dress. When you meet Jesus you'll be clothed in your own "[righteous acts.](#)" *Do you know what that means? Some of you are going to be married to Jesus Christ for all eternity in your [sweatpants and a hoodie.](#)*

If you have any fashion sense at all - you can't let that happen! You can't be caught dead in a tattered T-shirt on your wedding day! You should begin right now serving God with your time, effort, money, passion.

All that you do for Him *with love in your heart* is weaving for you a beautiful wedding gown for that day.

Verse 9, "Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed (or *happy*) are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" Here's the big question for you...

Have you saved the date? I know you haven't been given an actual date. Jesus said, "**No one knows the day or the hour.**" *But are you planning to be there?*

Are you excited about leaving this world and moving in with Jesus? This is the next big event on God's calendar - **the rapture of the Church**. When God pours out His judgments on Earth, His Church is in Heaven's banquet hall celebrating our marriage to His Son.

On the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus ate Passover with His disciples, and talked of this marriage supper. In essence, He toasted His bride! Then He told His disciples that He wouldn't drink of the cup again until He drank it with them, His Bride, in His Kingdom.

Now in Revelation 19 the marriage is consummated.

The party has begun. Jesus and His Bride have started to celebrate a love that will last for all eternity!

He continues, "He said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." And I fell at his feet to worship him."

The "*him*" here is the mighty angel that John saw in Chapter 18:21. He made an impact on John. For one, he had quite an arm. He threw a huge millstone into the oceans announcing the fall of Satan's evil systems.

In fact, John was so impressed by this angel, and so overwhelmed by his revelation, that he falls at his feet to worship him. *Yet notice how the angel responds...*

"But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!" This angel is appalled at John's worshipped. He's a servant - God's errand-boy, like John. *God alone is worthy of worship!*

Angels are awesome, magnificent creatures. See an angel and you'd be tempted to worship him - *but don't!*

There's only one angel who craves and relishes worship, and that's Lucifer or Satan - *the fallen angel.*

This angel tells John, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The spirit behind Scripture - the Bible's underlying theme - the burrow to which every rabbit trail leads is Jesus! The Holy Spirit always intends for the *written Word* to point to the *living Word*.

Verse 11 shifts from *a bridal suite* in Heaven to *a battle scene* on Earth. “Now I saw heaven opened...”

Earlier in Revelation 4:1 Heaven opened to let the Church enter. Now Heaven opens to let the Lion out...

John is “*on location*” in Israel to cover the final battle. He’s on a hill overlooking the Valley of Megiddo...

The armies of a worldwide coalition of nations under the Antichrist, will gather in this Valley. They’re sites are set on Jerusalem. Megiddo is just the staging ground. This is the warm-up for **the Battle of Jerusalem.**

According to Joel 3:2 God will draw the nations to the holy city. “**I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat...**” (or the Kidron Valley next to Temple Mount, east of Jerusalem)

“**And I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; *they have divided up My land.***” Notice God’s beef with the nations. “***They have divided My land.***” They have no right to do so.

What we call the Holy Land belongs to God, and He can give it to whomever He pleases. It’s *His* land!

Yet today, the world community pressures Israel to divide up the land God gave them, and give parcels to the Palestinians. Even when their Arab neighbors have more than enough territory for Palestinians to settle.

Even Jerusalem is a divided city - east and west.

And this angers the Almighty! Hostile troops will one day march into the Holy Land to fight for Jerusalem, but while camped near the mountain of Megiddo, or “*Armageddon*” - a strange, unexpected development occurs. Heaven opens, *and a new General appears...*

Verse 11 tells us, “And behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True...”

The first time Jesus marched into the city of Jerusalem He was on the back of a burro. But He takes no donkey ride this time. He’s on a white stallion.

And don’t mistake this horse for a ceremonial steed.

This is a war horse that’s ready to charge! He’s bred for battle. He’s shaking his mane, and stomping his hooves. Hot breath is billowing out of his nostrils...

We’re told of His Rider, “In righteousness He judges and makes war.” At his first entry into Jerusalem Jesus rode a donkey, a beast of burden. And it was fitting, for Jesus came in humility - to serve - to bear our yoke.

But not now! This time He comes to “*judge and make war.*” Jesus came the first time to *save* - but the second time to *slaughter...* Throughout the Tribulation man has been called to repent, but their rebellion has continued to swell and seethe. Now it’s time to end the madness.

Isaiah 9:6 labels Jesus the “*Prince of Peace,*” but He gets that title only after He kills off all His enemies.

When Jesus returns to this Earth He'll be coming to *bust chops, take names, and start breaking kneecaps.*

Moses made a stunning statement in Exodus 15:3, “The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is His name.”

Isaiah 42:13, “The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies.” The *Prince of Peace* is no *pacifist!*

In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 Paul speaks of the rapture.

Jesus will come in the clouds for His Church. In verse 18 Paul adds, “Comfort one another with these words.” *The great snatching* is a comforting concept.

But not the second coming... it should scare you straight. You want Jesus to be *your Savior, not your Judge.* Love the Lamb! Don't make war with the Lion!

On the day Jesus returns, the Antichrist and his allies will muster a formidable force. His armies will stretch across the floor of the theater. Their strategy is to oppose the true Christ. That's when heaven opens...

God's gladiator appears... Verse 12, “His eyes were like a flame of fire...” They're burning with passion.

“On His head were many crowns.” At His first coming the only crown Jesus wore was a crown of thorns. Now He wears royal diadems. His head holds kingly crowns!

And “He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.” Maybe Jesus has His own combat name. “Red Baron” or “Top Gun” - something like that.

Verse 13 tells us, “He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”

There’s a passage, Isaiah 63:1-4. The prophet sees a man with blood-soaked garments. He’s coming from Bozrah. Apparently, the Battle for Jerusalem spills over into all Israel - as far south as Bozrah, the Dead Sea.

I love what this man says to Isaiah, “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” This is none other than Jesus! Who else can claim He is “*mighty to save?*”

Then Isaiah asks Him about his red garments.

He answers, “I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.” Isaiah *and* John both see the Savior with robes soaked in the blood of His enemies.

At His first visit Roman soldiers gambled for Jesus’ bloody robe. When He returns His robe will be stained with the blood of soldiers fighting for a revived Rome.

Verse 14, “And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.” *Who makes up this army?* Probably four battalions...

First, is *the angelic guard...* Second, *the OT believers...* Third, the *Tribulation saints...* And the fourth battalion of the Lord’s army. *It’ll blow your mind...* It’s you and me! *The Church* rides with Jesus.

Jude 14 proclaims, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all...”

Colossians 3:4 tells us, “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

Realize this will be the mother of all battles. Jesus and Heaven’s army faces off with Satan and His allies.

Modern armies of all the nations will be stretched out across Israel... *when a door will open in Heaven...*

And out gallops Jesus on His war mount. Behind Him, you and I, and ten-thousand of His saints, come hooping and hollering! *I plan to ride right behind Jesus!*

You say, “*Yea, but I don’t even know how to ride a horse!*” “*You better learn!*” Or maybe you’ll just know.

Imagine, when the call comes to “*mount up!*” We’ll pull ourselves from praise, and saddle up. The door will open, and we’ll see a hostile battlefield. Missiles will launch. Surface-to-air zingers sail past your head.

Explosions, sizzling sounds... Then suddenly, you’ll look down and see a red dot of laser light on your shirt.

You’re a target. A rocket has locked on... *You’re cooked!* That’s when something amazing happens...

Verse 15, “Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.”

2 Thessalonians 2:8 predicts the defeat of the Antichrist, “whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His

coming.” The dreaded Beast and his armies are torched with the Lord’s *breath* and His *brightness!*

Talk about a case of halitosis. Jesus has breath that kills. God’s Word is like a sword that strikes the Beast.

The Antichrist is also destroyed “*with the brightness of (Jesus’) coming.*” The intensity of Jesus’ glory melts the enemy’s army! It’s a deadly case of *Son burn!*

Then “He Himself will rule them with a rod of **iron.**” Here’s an echo of Psalm 2. He’ll forcibly stop sinners.

For God to be merciful to the storekeeper, He has to restrain the thief. This means if sinners don’t get saved and *stop sinning*, then *the sinner has to be stopped.*

Jesus will rule with a rod of iron. And as a result, Earth will be a safer, happier - more peaceful place.

For “He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” Notice how Jesus takes this all so personally. “**He Himself**” treads the winepress. God sees all sin is a fist in His face...

Verse 16, “He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written...” Ancient warriors decorated their faces and limbs with body paint. It provided a menacing look.

Here Jesus has a title scripted down his thigh. You can see it when He rides across the battlefield.

It reads, “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Revelation 19 depicts Jesus not as *Baby Jesus, or Gentle Jesus, or Jesus blessing children, or breaking bread...* This is Jesus breaking the stiff necks of evildoers who won't stop sinning against God and man.

If He's King He has to take action! We can't walk into the eternal state with people hellbent on robbing, raping, cheating, swindling. That's not Heaven, it's Hell.

I'm sure you've seen the bumper sticker, "[Visualize World Peace.](#)" Well, to really do so, visualize this...

Jesus annihilates Satan and all who join his rebellion... He retakes the reigns of a run-away planet... He conquers His enemies, establishes His kingdom, and enforces obedience to His sovereign will. Then and only then, will we **realize world peace.**

Verse 17, "Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." Here's an invite to another supper.

The Church feasts at *the marriage supper*, while birds and vultures feast *on the flesh of the fallen.*

Verse 19, "And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army." At the rapture Jesus comes as a thief in the night. He surprises this evil world. No one expects Him.

But at His second coming the armies of the earth rally against Him. The nations are resisting His arrival.

Imagine, this is Earth squaring off with Heaven - mankind squaring off with God...
Pity the puny man!

“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

The demonic duo are thrown into hellfire... And this isn't Hades - the temporary torment - it's Gehenna, an eternal lake of fire. Jesus said God created this lake for the devil and his angels. Here are its first inhabitants.

Chapter 19 closes, “And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.” The war is finally over! Jesus has evicted the squatters and retaken possession of the planet.

But He's torn up the place in the process. Now the reclamation begins! Here's the wonder of redemption - [everything that sin has damaged, Jesus will restore.](#)

Chapter 19 closes with the universe [under new management.](#) And in chapter 20 now that the King of the Jungle controls the jungle, He turns into a paradise.

This Earth is due for *an extreme makeover.*

God begins by ridding us of our arch-nemesis...

Chapter 20 begins, “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 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 Beast and false prophet were thrown into the eternal lake of fire.

But Satan is jailed where unbelievers are today, in the bottomless pit. Verse 3 explains why, “But after these things he must be released for a little while.”

Apparently, God isn't through with Satan. He still has a use for him. Verse 8 will explain his final purpose.

But this brings up an interesting sidebar... Satan's existence - even his mischief - has always been at God's discretion. Not that God approves of the Devil's specific acts. He doesn't. His evil grieves God's heart.

Nevertheless, God allows Satan some latitude.

God uses trials and temptation to strengthen our faith, and neither has any teeth without a Tempter. At the end of the age, Satan “*must be released for a little while...*” for the same reason he wreaks havoc today.

Notice too, the duration of Satan's incarceration - “*a thousand years.*” In Latin, it's the term, “**Millennium.**”

You'll hear terms like “**The Millennial Reign of Christ,**” or “**The Millennial Kingdom,**” or just “**The Millennium.**”

The first word in verse 1, **“Then,”** implies that these last days events are chronological... In Revelation 19 Jesus returns to destroy the armies who oppose Him. Then in 20:1 Satan is chained and Jesus sets up His kingdom on Earth. Both are sustained for 1000 years.

And Jesus won't just rule by Himself... John writes in verse 4, **“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.”** The army that rode with Jesus from Heaven now helps Him rule on Earth.

That includes you and me - the Church - but not just the Church... **“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.”** Believers martyred in the Tribulation will also now serve in Jesus' administration.

They were mocked and martyred for Jesus' sake. Now they'll sit on thrones and help Him rule the world.

Verse 4, **“And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”** At His first coming Jesus established His Kingdom spiritually - in the hearts of His followers.

But in His model prayer, He told us to pray, **“Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven.”** Now this prayer is finally and fully answered.

On the cross Jesus redeemed or purchased planet Earth. When He returns He'll take possession. One day soon our world will be **under new management.**

Revelation 20 gives us only the duration of Jesus' Kingdom - "*a thousand years.*" But there are a host of OT prophecies that provide us many other details...

The Earth's waters are rejuvenated. Its vegetation replenished. The curse will be lifted. No more thorns and thistles. No more birth defects. Reduction in crime.

No more animosity between man and animals. Isaiah 11:6 tells us, "*The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb...*"

No more ice storms, hurricanes, tornados... Nature will no longer be a destructive force. *And no more war!*

And there'll be a strange mix of people occupying the planet in the Millennial Kingdom. *Mortal men* will live alongside *resurrected believers* - that is, you and me!

There will be humans who survive the Tribulation. They'll marry and reproduce. With improved conditions they'll live longer. It'll spawn a population explosion.

And they'll be born sinners, and need to be saved. They'll be saved, as we are - *by grace through faith.*

Along with this population of mortals, the Church, you and I - with the OT and Tribulation saints - will also live on planet Earth. After we descend with Jesus at His second coming - we'll hang out and help Him rule.

2 Timothy 2:12 promised us "*If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.*" Remember Jesus words in Luke 19, "*Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.*"

Authority and government in His kingdom is one of the rewards we'll receive for our current faithfulness.

I'm serving the Lord the best I can now, hoping I'll get assigned a few tropical islands to rule over then.

In the Millennial Kingdom we'll live among the mortals on Earth, but according to 1 Corinthians 15 we'll have put on an immortal, incorruptible body.

At the rapture we'll receive resurrected bodies.

Our bodies will have the same capacities Jesus had after His resurrection... Recall how He'd pop in and out on His disciples. His body wasn't confined materially or spatially. The disciples thought He was a ghost until they touched Him, and felt the scars of His crucifixion.

And you and I will have the same type of resurrected body. I like to say, we'll travel at *the speed of desire*... Want to go to Hawaii for the day... *presto you're there!*

John writes in verse 5, “**But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.**” In John 5:29 Jesus spoke of two resurrections, “**the resurrection of life**” and “**the resurrection of condemnation.**” Believers are raised to receive life. Unbelievers are resurrected to be judged.

Both resurrections are found in Revelation 20:5...

What the Lord didn't mention in John 5 is that a thousand years separates these two resurrections...

The first resurrection begins with Jesus. The NT calls Him “**the first fruits of the resurrection.**” Jesus is *the first of the first* to overcome death never to die again.

Then the Church joins the resurrection at the rapture.

Followed by those who were martyred by the Beast - they get resurrected at the end of the Tribulation.

The first resurrection comes in three waves...

The second resurrection, or here *“the rest of the dead”* aren't resurrected until the thousand years ends.

We'll see in verse 11, at the Great White Throne of Judgment, the bottomless pit empties, and *“the rest of the dead”* appear before their Maker to receive their permanent, final, fatal sentence. Here's the take-away... **Be part of the first resurrection, not the second.**

We're told, *“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”*

In verse 7 the plot thickens, *“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison...”* *And as if you couldn't guess what he does...*

Remember Satan has been chained ten centuries. He's had time to take a personal inventory. He's thought it all through - considered his mistakes. If ever he wanted to turn over a new leaf this is it... *but NO!*

He's right back to his lies and rebellion. Like a hardcore criminal who refuses rehabilitation. As soon as he hits the streets again, he's out for revenge.

Satan goes “to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog (combatants in an earlier war in Ezekiel). He’ll “gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.”

Martin Luther once described Satan as “God’s ape.”

Like the organ grinder’s monkey, he exists for the Master’s purposes. Even Satan’s rebellion plays into God’s hands. He’s God’s puppet. He’s on a string.

Think of the cross. I’m sure Satan relished the pain inflicted on Jesus - *the beating, the nails, the rejection.*

Yet its by His stripes we’re healed. He was bruised for our iniquities - wounded for our transgressions. At the cross Satan played into God’s hands. *And here’s another example of him unwittingly serving God’s will.*

For several decades now the big debate in psychology has been between *nature or nurture?* Which is the greater determiner of human behavior?

Are our dysfunctions the result of *a genetic defect* or can they be traced to *a deficient environment?* If my problem is me I have nobody to blame but myself. If it’s my environment I can blame everyone and everybody.

This is why most people choose *nurture*. I’m a sinner because *I had poor parents, or grew up on the wrong side of the tracks, or didn’t have an education, or had evil friends, or couldn’t find a job - excuses, excuses.*

But at the end of the thousand years, God steps into this debate. He ensures that no one walks off into an eternity in hell thinking they have a legitimate excuse.

For a thousand years mankind has existed in the perfect environment. Jesus is on the throne. The world new. Peace and prosperity reign in all corners of the globe. People have been treated fairly and flawlessly.

Yet the folks who populate the planet are still sinners at heart. Like men today, they're born with a sin nature.

With Jesus on the throne they've lived by His rules. *They're the better for it*, but they've only conformed to an external standard. They haven't been transformed by the Holy Spirit. These people need to be born again!

And no one realizes it until Satan is let loose for a season. All of sudden, these people are given a choice.

The Devil tempts them. *"Who needs God? You can be your own god?"* We've heard this all before. But the people in the Kingdom Age will hear it for the first time.

And it'll strike a chord in their hearts. It'll enflame the rebellious nature that's been simmering inside. Even after a thousand years in a perfect world the human race will still rebel because it's in their nature to do so.

Here God proves for all time, that humans have sin in their heart. The old adage is true, *"Sinning doesn't make you a sinner. You sin because you are a sinner."*

Selfishness and rebellion are imbedded in man's nature. What happens at the end of the Millennium proves – *that at the heart of man's problem is the problem in man's heart!* Mankind is a rebel by nature!

Verse 9, “They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city.” This flimsy coup d’etat dares to lay siege to Jesus’ capitol city. This is **the final insurrection**. *How dare anyone attack Jesus after He’s been so good?*

The revolt gets put down in short order. “Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.”

And now the instigator finally gets his due! Verse 10, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever...” Jesus said “*the lake of fire*” wasn’t made for man. It was created for Satan and his angels.

Here Satan is sent to his ultimate destination.

Verse 11, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it...” What an ominous sight this is... “*White*” is the color of holiness and purity. A “*throne*” speaks of authority. And “*great*” has the sound of permanence.

I believe it’s Jesus Christ who sits on this throne.

We’ll learn in verse 12 this is a throne of Judgment.

And a long list of people judged Jesus... *Caiaphas the Priest, King Herod, the Jewish Sanhedrin, Pontus Pilate, the Jewish mob who screamed crucify Him...*

Now imagine each of them appearing at this throne to be judged by Jesus. The roles are now reversed.

Trust me, there’ll be a lot of squirming going on.

In fact, everyone who comes before the Great White Throne will be squirming... The reason people appear at this judgment is because they've rejected Jesus.

They judged Jesus as unfit to follow. Now it's His turn to see how they stack up to God's righteousness.

Verse 11, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them." After 1000 years of renovations - God decides to ditch the Earth and Heavens and start brand new.

And why would God do that? I don't pretend to know all His reasons. But perhaps He wants us to know that this world, and all that's in it, has simply been a stage.

The stuff we valued are but decorations and props. What truly matters are the things that last forever.

2 Peter 3:10 tells us of this day in Revelation, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."

Physics teaches that "like charges" repel. Yet at the center of every atom is a cluster of bonded protons.

Scientists explain the mystery with terms like "atomic glue." They talk of "a God particle." Their explanations are vague at best. The Bible on the other hand is quite clear. Colossians 1:17 tells us that in Christ "all things consist." It's Jesus Who's holds together the universe.

And one day He'll *let go*, "*and the elements will melt with fervent heat.*" Every nucleus of every atom will explode in a fission meltdown. The material universe will be no more. All that'll be left is man and his Maker.

Then suddenly, everyone in the bottomless pit - all unbelievers - every rebel who rejected God's salvation will stand before Jesus and answer for their decision.

Verse 12 tells us, "**And I saw the dead, small and great...**" Famous people - and not so famous folks - are all judged by the same criteria... *How did they measure up to the righteousness of a holy, sinless, perfect God?*

They're all "**standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.**" These books contain every deed ever done.

Everything is exposed. Nothing is hidden. Everyone who rejected Jesus' work on their behalf, is now judged by the deeds they did and the merit they mustered.

Put it all together and you'll find four judgments in Scripture... **First, the cross**, where our sin was judged.

Second, the judgment seat of Christ is for believers. Their soul is saved, but here their service is judged.

Third, is a **judgment of the nations**. Matthew 25 tells us nations are judged by how they treated the Jews.

And **fourth**, is this **Great White Throne**. It's not the colorful throne around which believers are gathered in chapter 4. This throne is stark white - it represents Gods unapproachable holiness. *Unbelievers beware!*

Remember, if you're in Christ your sin was judged at the cross. But according to verse 12, the people under scrutiny here are **"judged according to their works."**

The last thing I want to ever have happen is to stand before God on the merit of my own works. Who, but Jesus, lived a life good enough for a holy, sinless God?

Isaiah 64:6 tells us that in the sight of God all our righteousness is as filthy rags. If judged according to my efforts I'm in big trouble! I'm resting - not in my works, but in the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross!

God doesn't grade on *the curve*, but on *the cross*.

Verse 13, **"The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works."** **"Hades"** opens its hatches and unbelievers are tried before God. *And nobody stands a chance...*

Even the best of the bunch will fail the test.

Romans 3:23 gives a preview of the outcome. **"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God..."**

Remember **"Hades"** is like the county jail. It's a temporary holding. It's where the spirits of unbelievers are today. *It's punishment for sure, but not permanent.*

“Gehenna” or “*the lake of fire*” is the super-max prison - the final assignment. When you’re judged lacking at the Great White Throne you’re sent to THE LAKE. And despite popular lore, there’re no keg parties, or wild orgies, or beer buddies at THE LAKE...

There’s only fire and brimstone and scorching regret.

Thus, verse 14 reads, “*Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*”

Physical death is the first death. But the lake - eternal damnation - is the second. There’s an old saying, “*Born once die twice. Born twice die once.*”

Come to Jesus and be born again, and you’ll face only physical death... The first death is not the one you have to fear. “*The second death*” is “*the lake of fire.*”

Chapter 20 closes, “*And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*”

Here’s the most important question you’ll ever be asked, “*Is your name written in the Book of Life?*”

Are you trusting in Jesus or trying to stand on your own? The stakes are high... *It’s the river of life or the lake of fire...* **Where will you and I spend eternity?**