

Revelation 20:7-15

"The End"

We left off thinking through the millennial kingdom of Christ upon the earth. There are over 400 Vs in more than 20 different passages in both the Old & NT that speak to the literal reign of the Messiah over this planet. **The bible describes in vivid detail what that time will be like & Rev Ch 20 is when (in the prophetic scheme of things) it takes place. John tells us 6 times in 7 Vs that there will be a literal 1,000 yr period of time at the return of J.C. whereby Satan will be bound & Jesus will rule on earth.**

The OT saints will be apart of this time, the church will have part in this time, the tribulation saints will be included in this time. Vs 5 tells us that "This is the 1st resurrection"; & Vs 6 continues on "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the 1st resurrection. Over such the 2nd death has no power..."

I want to take a couple of minutes here and develop our understanding of the resurrection. I think it's something that many believers have questions over & can become easily confused about. "Does this mean that our souls 'sleep' until we're raised?" "Do we receive our resurrection bodies the moment we die?" "What will our resurrection bodies be like?" These are common questions that people present when it comes to the resurrection.

First of all let's understand that to die is to be "dis-embodied" not "re-embodied". Paul said very clearly, **"...while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."**¹ Btw that should answer the question regarding "soul sleep", being absent from the body we are *present* w/the Lord. When you die, if you are in Christ you go immediately into the presence of the Lord.

Something else we want to realize is that your resurrection will be the body you currently inhabit, but it will be transformed. We mentioned last week that Jesus is what the bible calls the "firstfruits" of the resurrection. **Meaning that He is the very 1st Person to receive His resurrection body. When the women visited His tomb & the disciples followed on resurrection morning, was His body there? No, He rose again in the same body (albeit transformed) that had died.** Even so the bible says, **"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."**²

¹ The New King James Version, 1982 (2 Co 5:6-8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version, 1982 (Php 3:20-21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Remember when John said, *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*³ So even as the body of Christ was transformed at His resurrection, even so our bodies will be transformed at *our* resurrection.

This is what Paul spent all that time speaking about in the book of 1st Cor 15. Of course he took it one step farther back establishing the fact of the resurrection in the 1st place. There were those who denied the fact that there would be a resurrection at all. Paul said, "If there's no resurrection than Christ is not risen, & if Christ is not risen than your faith is futile & you're still in your sins." Because everything we live & breath & die for is based around the reality of the resurrection of J.C. *Now if He didn't rise than we're to be pitied above all others & we're fools. But He did rise & has become the 1st fruits of the resurrection & even as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

When? When do we receive our resurrection bodies? At the 2nd coming of Christ. Leave the book of Rev & turn back to **1st Cor 15** (Look at Vs 21-26).

You guys this is a reference to the millennial reign, Christ will reign & ultimately (as we'll see momentarily) He will destroy death itself, then of course the new heaven & the new earth, we will inherit all things & He will be our God & we will His sons & daughters, amen? Now look down at Vs 35 (Vs 35-49).

So your resurrection body will be incorruptible (never age, never die), glorious, powerful, spiritual (not a spirit, but spiritual *body*) & we will bear the image or likeness of Christ. Walking through walls will not be an issue (Jesus did that). *Flying will not be an issue (Jesus did that at the ascension). Being in one place in one moment & another place in the next won't be an issue (Jesus did that). It seems as though precognition will be a reality. Jesus knew the thoughts of people & would speak to them of conversations they were having when He wasn't present w/them.*

So when you die, you will not receive your resurrection body (that's why graves are full today). Remember your resurrection body will be your present body (only transformed). Rom 8:11 tells us, *"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."*⁴

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (1 Jn 3:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ro 8:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

When Christ comes again, then will be the glorious resurrection, transformation & reunion w/your body. Jesus said, *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."*⁵ Things like decomposition, bodies that have been incinerated or cremated, none of these things present a problem for the God who formed us out of dust. He is well able to bring us together from the atomic/molecular level w/out an issue.

Now here in the book of Rev we're given a little more insight. We're told that the resurrection of life & the resurrection of condemnation are separated by 1,000 yrs, during which Jesus will rule as the rightful heir of the nations & we will reign w/Him on the earth.

Vs 7-8

Time flies when you're having fun doesn't it? We've spoken before of "prophetic telescoping" whereby centuries or more can pass at the drop of a comma or a period. Well, in Vs 6 the millennial kingdom is preparing to launch. In Vs 7 it's already over. Between Vs 6-7 1,000 yrs of the righteous reign of J.C. transpires & Satan is released from his prison.

Remember Vs 3? Satan was chained up, shut up, sealed up & done away with (in the abyss) for 1,000 yrs so that he should deceive the nations no more. But we read that after the 1,000 yrs he "must be" released for a little while. To which we say, "Why?"

Here we find the rationale. It's so that the faithfulness of the nations can be sifted one final time. God is the one who searches the heart, He discerns the wheat from the tares & He will do so at the end of the millennial kingdom.

Last week we discussed who all will enter the millennial kingdom of Christ upon the earth after the Great Tribulation. In short it will be all who never took the mark of the beast nor worship him/his image. Even in that I'm not sure that indicates they're all "believers" I suppose some "doomsday preppers" may be around. There might be those who simply refuse to bow to *any* government & live off the land & out of their bunkers for a few years. But even so the vast majority (if not all) will be believers. And w/the effects of sin removed from the planet, disease will be gone; the population explosion will be unparalleled. But here's the deal, just because people will be born into the reign of Christ, that doesn't in any way indicate that their heart will belong to Christ.

Outwardly it may seem so because evil &/or wrong-doing (rebellion) won't be tolerated. Jesus will basically be a world dictator.

⁵ The New King James Version, 1982 (Jn 5:28-29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

You will either conform to righteousness or your skull will be dashed like a clay pot w/a rod of iron. Justice will be immediate in that day. So though everyone will *conform outwardly*, that doesn't indicate that everyone will be *transformed inwardly*. Salvation has not, nor will it ever be based on one's ability to conform *outwardly* to a set of standards (Pharisees) but rather it has always been & will always be about the transformation *inwardly* of the heart.

People wonder why anyone would rebel after having lived in a perfect environment for 1,000 yrs. Why did Adam & Eve rebel after dwelling in a perfect environment for who knows how long? If Adam could (& would) choose to rebel prior to having a sin nature, how much more will those born w/a sin nature be persuaded to doubt the Lord & rebel *against* the Lord? **It could be that some people will be tired of the dictatorship, they'll want to see things go *their way*, they haven't had the opportunity (nor the temptation) to come against Christ so far, but now that the opportunity arises & the thoughts are planted they readily embrace the chance to overthrow Christ & take this planet to themselves.**

Here's the thing, love demands a choice. God gave man a choice in the garden, but during the millennial kingdom there will be no choice. There will be billions of people who've never had a choice but to follow the dictates of J.C. Now, w/the release of Satan their hearts will be sifted & their choice will be made known.

Today, you have a choice. Joshua pointed that out when he addressing the nation of Israel. He said, **"... if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."** Jos 24:15 We all make that choice. Even so those in the millennial kingdom will be given the opportunity to make that choice.

As we mentioned last week this puts a stop to the argument of people being a product of their environment. "I was born to drug abusing parents, was abused as a child, grew up under conditions of murder, rape, gang violence" or whatever, "I never had a chance, the problem was all around me." The bible says, "No, the problem is not *around* me, it's w/in me;" It's not our environment that dictates who we are, who we are dictates our environment. In other words, murder, gang violence, drug abuse, these things don't happen because of environment, they become the environment because of who we are.

The millennial kingdom will be a time of peace & prosperity unparalleled.

Yet at the 1st opportunity many (how many), as many as the sands of the seashore will gather against Christ in another attempt to dethrone Him, the only thing left untouched during the millennial kingdom is the human heart. & It will testify to the reality of the word of God which declares definitively, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*⁶

Now as for the term "Gog & Magog", don't think that this has anything to do w/Ezek 38-39, it does not. The term "Gog & Magog" seems more to simply describe (or speak of) those nations who will rebel & seek to war against God. Which in this case will represent armies from all over the earth (the 4 corners of the earth representing the 4 points of a compass, N,S,E,W).

This is why I said that the A.C. & the false prophet will be in the lake of fire for *at least* 1,000 yrs prior to anyone else. Because even after the millennial kingdom there will be a season in which Satan is at work deceiving the nations and building an innumerable army. *How long will it take Satan to deceive people to this point after 1,000 yrs of perfect peace & righteousness? I don't know, but I would suspect at least awhile... Notice Vs 9. Vs 9-10*

This will date me a little bit but it seems to me that these so called "battles" between God & man (&/or Satan) are a lot like Mike Tyson fights when he was at his peak... The hype leading up to it is way more dramatic than the actual event. *Here's all this build up, innumerable hosts, coming up from the breadth of the earth (the entire extent) surrounding the city of Jerusalem. There's all this suspense, but before you can even blink it's over. God just delivers a single, solitary blow & it's time to go home. Fire comes down from God out of heaven, devours them all & that's it...*

Now whether the "saints" that are surrounded are the believers in the millennial age, or it includes you & me (perhaps the Lord calling us in from our civil/social duties to witness this last stand) we won't know till we're there. But here's the point, it's over before it begins.

Those who rebel are immediately destroyed & Satan is cast once & for all into the lake of fire (notice) where the beast & false prophet are. Here's the point, these 2 were cast into the lake of fire over 1,000 yrs earlier & they are still being tormented there when Satan is cast in as well. Listen to me, nowhere does the bible argue for annihilationism.

⁶ *The New King James Version*, 1982 [Je 17:9], Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Even as the resurrection bodies of the righteous are fit for heaven, the resurrection bodies of the unrighteous will be fit to w/stand the torments of hell and not be annihilated. John could not have constructed a stronger, more emphatic phrase in the Greek to speak of eternity than what he did right here. "They will be tormented day & night *from the ages into the ages*" "Forever & ever". I would love to explain away for you the reality of eternal torment but I can't. The bible is clear.

This is why God has gone to such extremes, even dying for you so that you wouldn't have to go there. God didn't create hell for man, it was created for Satan & the fallen angels (Matt 25:41), but for all who reject J.C. this is the only alternative. **If you don't want the light of J.C. what's left other than outer darkness, if you don't want the comfort of Christ, what's left other than eternal torment, if you don't want the life of Christ, what's left other than death/separation from God? Even as there is a 2nd & higher life, there is a 2nd & deeper death.**

Vs 11

We learn in 2nd Peter 3 that the earth is being preserved & reserved until the day of judgment. But on that day they will melt w/a fervent heat & the earth & everything in it will be burned up. The heavens & the earth will "flee" away. No one will escape nor be able to hide from God on that day but all will stand & be judged. "Suspended in space?" Evidently...

But here we see this Great (in power & status) throne, white (in purity & holiness), the throne itself speaking of sovereignty & Christ Himself sits upon it (Jn 5:22) if not the fullness of the Triune God. There will be no trial, no jury, simply a sentencing, notice.

Vs 12-13

At this point let me say that you as a child of God will not be standing before God in this company. Remember Vs 6? "Blessed & holy is he who has part in the 1st resurrection. Over such the 2nd death has no power." What we're reading of here is the resurrection of condemnation that Jesus spoke of in John 5.

As a believer you have another seat that you will stand before, that is the judgment (bema) seat of Christ. Where your works will be tried as by fire, not for the sake of salvation, but to bring forth your eternal *accommodations* regarding your rewards. Paul told the Corinthians, **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."**⁷

⁷ The New King James Version, 1982 (2 Co 5:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

In the 3rd Ch of 1st Cor he spoke of how that's all gonna work. Those things done motivated out of the love of God, for the glory of God will be gold, silver, precious gems, those things that may've been good, but motivated out of a self serving capacity will be like wood, hay & stubble, they'll go up in smoke.

But *that* judgment is not *this* judgment. We won't be here, *not* because we are able to escape this judgment, but because we have satisfied this judgment through faith in Christ. Jesus bore this judgment on our behalf. Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."*⁸

But the books will be opened. "What books?" I'm not certain. It seems word of God will be there. Jesus said, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."*⁹ Evidently the book of every word & every work that every person has ever uttered, done, or thought will be there. Jesus said that man will give account of every idle word, & here we read that they're judged according to their works, so the record must be there. We all know the things, the thoughts, the words & deeds that we've sought to bury & wouldn't bring up for all wealth in the world, yet God has record of every one of them.

That's just one of the many reasons it's such a blessing to be saved, your sins won't be recounted to you when you stand before Christ, they've been washed away by the blood of J.C. (Praise God!) *But to the unbeliever, every single solitary one has been recorded. You can either be judged according to your works, or the finished work of the cross. I know where my works would take me, I'll trust in Jesus...*

Then there's the Book of Life, the record of all who've trusted in J.C. for the forgiveness of sins & everlasting life through faith in Him. Believe you me friend that's the Book you want to be in. "Well, what do I need to do to get my name inserted in that book?" Jesus said, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*¹⁰

In Vs 13 we see that the sea, Death & Hades all give up their dead. If you bible says, "Death & hell" that's not an accurate translation. Hell (as we spoke last week) is what Jesus referred to as "Gehenna" or the unquenchable, never ending fire (the lake of fire). Hades is the temporary abode of the unbelieving who've died. Why there is the distinction here of the "sea" is a bit of a mystery.

⁸ The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 5:24). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹ The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 12:48). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰ The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 6:29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

More than likely it's simply saying, regardless of where the person may've died, land or sea, the grave will disgorge it's dead & they will rise to stand before God. Location &/or physical disintegration will not deter God from raising up the dead to reunite w/their body to be judged accordingly.

Why are they judged according to their works? Because this is what will determine the degree of punishment; Jesus made it clear that there are degrees of punishment (Matt 11:20-24) & this is where they will receive their sentencing according to their works.

Vs 14-15

The final fingerprints of sin are finally eliminated. Death (which is the result of sin) & Hades (which is the result of death) are now gone. The End...

You guys, many have sought to find some scriptural way to avoid the reality of eternal torment. Yet as far as biblical revelation is concerned there are only 2 destinies for the souls of man. To be forever w/the Lord, or to be separated forever *from* the Lord in the lake of fire, but here's the deal: God has made the way of escape.

Vs 15 draws to our attention the "Critical Issue" doesn't it? The critical issue is found in this, "Is your name found written in the Book of Life"? You never need be apart of the 2nd resurrection or experience the terrors of the 2nd death. Believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."*¹¹

Prayer Points:

Father we're so thankful that You have made a way where there was no way. We thank You that Your heart is to see us saved & not separated from You. May you impart a boldness to us & place an urgency in us to share the hope that we have in the Person of Your Son. Jesus You are the King of kings & the Lord of lords, & we give You praise.

It's true that judgment is coming, but right now grace is available. If you're anything like me you need all the grace you can get. Where sin abounds grace abounds still more. If you haven't received J.C. let me encourage you to do so now. Don't put it off another day, Christ has come, He has bled, He has died, He has risen from the dead so that you might have life in Him. Believe in Him & you will never perish, you'll have everlasting, age abiding life.

¹¹ The New King James Version. 1982 [Jn 3:16-17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.