

REVELATION SURVEY – Chapters 20-22

INTRODUCTION

Many of you have may have heard at a funeral,
“Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust”

That is a true statement. But that’s not the end of the story is it?

Last words should be lasting words, shouldn’t they?

19:20 – “the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet ... these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone”

Application – We are not looking for the Antichrist. We are looking for Christ. This has been a problem of many Christians caught up in the sensationalism of end times.

19:21a – “And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse (see below)”

→ There are **75 Days** in between Tribulation and Millennium

Dan 12:11-12 – “And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there will be 1,290 days.* ¹²How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!”

From the Abomination of Desolation, 1290 days, including 1260 which make up the last 3½ years of the final 7 years, then 30 days more, then another 45 days to the 1335 days → 75-day period in between the Tribulation and the Millennium.

Very likely what happens during this time:

→ Sheep/Goat Judgment – **Matt 24:37-41; 25:31-46**

→ False Prophet, Antichrist, Satan Bound – **Rev 19:20-20:3**

→ Resurrection of Tribulation Saints – **Rev 20:4-6**

Chapter 20 takes us into the **Millennium, Great White Throne, Hell**

- takes from end of Tribulation to Eternal State
- the details of the Millennium are not found in Revelation
- the details are in the Old Testament: Ezekiel, David, minor prophets
- the detail in Revelation is the time – 1000 years

MacArthur – *“Can you imagine a world where justice always prevails? Where righteousness is the rule? Where goodness dominates? Where everything is fair and equitable? Can you imagine a world where there is peace, total and lasting peace? Can you imagine a world where there is joy and happiness? Can you imagine a world where health is so widespread that if someone dies at a hundred years of age, they will be said to die as a child? Can you imagine a world where children can play in snake pits and find the snakes friendly and the snakes will find the children friendly? Can you imagine a world where lions and lambs will walk together with bears and cows? And the whole menagerie be led by a little child?”*

Can you imagine a world where food is profusely plentiful, even though the globe is experiencing the greatest population explosion ever? Can you imagine a world that is ruled by one person, the whole world? One perfect mind, one perfect will, one who enacts perfect judgment, perfect wisdom, perfect justice, a loving perfect ruler? Can you imagine a world where all of the rulers and leaders and politicians who are in charge are saints? Can you imagine a world that is basically without rebels because they’re judged instantaneously with a rod of iron?”

You don't have to imagine it because that is the world described in the Scripture as the kingdom to come. That is the new world promised by God in the Bible and it is coming. From the remotest point of antiquity, men have longed for and talked about a golden age, a utopia, an age of peace and justice and righteousness, a time when oppression and war will cease. Poets have written about it. Folk singers still sing about it. Politicians promise it. Prophets predict it. Most people cry for it. And no one brings it."

20:1 – “And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.”

- “**and I saw**” indicates chronological sequence
- ἄβυσσος translated as ‘abyss’ → **9:1b** – translated as “bottomless pit” **Luke 8:31** – “they were entreating Him not to command them into the abyss.”

20:2 – “And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years”

- amillennialists and postmillennialists teach that Satan is bound now
- → Wrong. 1 John 5:19, chronological sequence, and look at v. 3!!

Question – Is the **Angel** in v. 1 literal? How about **Heaven**? The **Abyss**? **Satan**? Is the **Resurrection** literal? But the **thousand years** is symbolic?

The **thousand years** is repeated – 6 times in **20:2-7** – vv. 2,3,4,5,6,7

20:3 – “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. (v. 7)”

20:4 – “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.”

- Resurrection of the Tribulation saints
- Reign of all the glorified believers: Old Testament saints, New Testament saints (church), and Tribulation saints

20:5-6 – “The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed 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.” –

You are either born twice and die once.
Or you are born once and die twice.

In the New Testament, you have both the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the unrighteous.

Luk 14:14 – “the resurrection of the righteous”

John 5:29 – “a resurrection of life”

Heb 11:35 – “a better resurrection”

Rev 20:5, 6 – “the first resurrection”

John 5:29 – “a resurrection of judgment.”

Act 24:15 – “a resurrection of ... the wicked.”

20:7-8 – “And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, (v. 3) 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.”

Gen 10:2 – “The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.”

Gomer – identified with the Cimmerians north of Black Sea
Magog – northern barbarians, **Tubal, Meshech** – uttermost parts of the North (**Ezek 38:2** – “Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” → “Russia” comes from “Rosh”

Often in the Old Testament, future events and prophecies are blended together. These include the 1st and 2nd coming of Christ (e.g., Isa 61:1-2 that Christ quotes in Luke 4 in Nazareth and then stops reading mid-verse 2) and other elements of end times as well – Tribulation and Millennium, etc.

Ezek 36:26-27 is the New Covenant promise/prophecy which had its inauguration at Pentecost (Acts 2), aligned with Jer 31:27f, Joel 2, etc. So, both Jews and Gentiles are beneficiaries of the inauguration of the New Covenant promise right now in the Church.

Ezek 37-38 is a prophecy of the future national restoration of Israel in the end times. Remember: “Already; Not Yet.”

The spiritual restoration of Israel is the foundation for the national restoration of Israel.

Ezek 36:22-38 set the stage and the reason for **Ezek 37-38**.

20:9 – “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.” –

16:20 – “every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.”

Zech 14:10 – “All the land will be changed into a plain”

20:10 – “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.”

Isa 66:24 – “their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched;”

Mark 9:43 – “hell ... the unquenchable fire”

2 Thess 1:9 – “the penalty of eternal destruction”

Isa 33:14 – “the consuming fire ... everlasting burning”

Satan is not in hell. In fact, Satan has never been to hell. And when he does go there, he's not going to rule anything. Rather, he will be the one suffering the most severely in hell. Hell is where he will be incarcerated and incinerated forever.

20:11 – “**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.**”

- final judgment of all unbelievers of all time

2 Pet 3:7-10 – “the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men ...¹⁰But 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.”

20:12-14 – “**And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne ... and the dead were judged ... according to their deeds ...**¹³*every one of them* **according to their deeds.**¹⁴**And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.**” –

20:15 – “**And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**”

Transition - I often use this in my sermon notes to indicate that I am bringing a transition in the Scriptures to you. This week, at this point, I paused and thought of the magnitude ... this is a transition like no other. This takes us into the glories of Heaven.

There are 1189 chapters in the Bible, 1185 chapters with sin in the cosmos, 4 without ... casting out of Garden of Eden, man multiplies, the Flood, Tower of Babel, God calls Abram ...

The Glories of Heaven ☺☺☺...

21:1 – “**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.**”

- recreation (renovation at end of Tribulation)

Rom 8:21 – “the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

→ The cosmos will be set free from the Curse. The 2nd Law of Thermodynamics will be no more. Now, we do not want to limit this merely to the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, but it certainly encompasses this ... and so much more.

Did you catch the phrase in **Rom 8:21**?? “into the freedom of the glory of the children of God”

- For His eternal Glory, God provides a recreated cosmos “**a new heaven and a new earth**”
- and for your eternal glory!

21:2 – “**And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.**” –

“**city**” – 11 times in chapter 21, once in chapter 22

Beloved, the Bible begins in a garden. The Bible ends with paradise restored! BUT ... the Bible does not end back in a garden. It ends in a city, the heavenly city, the City of God.

It is a vision of unspeakable beauty and ineffable glory.
The **City** has good things, good times, and good people

“new Jerusalem”.

When I meet believers in the highways and byways of life, maybe in another country, and I think there is little chance I will see them again in this life, I often say goodbye, “See you in the New Jerusalem.” 😊

21:3 – “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”

Ezek 48:35 – “*The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.*”

- summary statement of Heaven

21:4-5 – “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. ⁵And 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.’”

- the Throne of God on one side and the Oath of God on the other

21:6 – “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.’”

- first and last letters of the Greek alphabet
→ See 1:7-8 → 21:5-6 → 22:12-13

21:7 – “He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”

There is no power to **overcome** the world outside the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and rule of Jesus Christ.

21:8 – “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.”

21:10 – “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,” –

21:12 – “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.”

- All new but some continuity with the past
- Ezek 48:31-34

21:16 – “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.”

- The Holy of Holies is the other edifice in Scripture that is a perfect cube, as high as it is long as it is wide.

21:22 – “And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple.” –

7:15 – “He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them” – Total security, total satisfaction

There is no temple in this huge vast city because there is no need. God fills every part of it with Himself. There is no distinction between the sacred and the secular in this place. Everywhere you look you see the glory of God. Everywhere you turn you see the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

21:23 – “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.”

- There is no need of sun and moon there because Jesus illuminates it all and drives all darkness away.

21:24-26 – “And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.²⁵ And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed;²⁶ and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;”

21:27 – “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.”

- Encouragement passage for believers
- And there is nothing impure there, nor anyone shameful or deceitful. Nothing to destroy our peace and fellowship with one another, ever again.

22:1 – “And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,”

22:2 – “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.”

22:3 – “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;”

- remember from **Ezek 48:35** – “*The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, “The LORD is there.”*”

22:4 – “and they shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.”

22:6 – “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.”

- this is how the book began - **1:1; 1:19**

- there is a chronology

22:7 – “**And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”**

- repeated 3 times → vv. 7, 12, 20

We don't embrace the fatalistic black hole of atheism.
Nor do we embrace the nihilistic gray mist of agnosticism.
→ We KNOW that He is coming again!

Jesus says this one wonderful message three times, in verse, 7, 12 and 20, “I am coming soon!”

22:8 – “**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.**”

22:9 – “**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.’”**

- **brethren in 12:10** → the church in heaven , not angels
19:10

22:10 – “**And he said to me, ‘Do not seal up the words (contrast Dan 12:4, 8-9) of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.’ (→ Imminency!)”**

22:11 – “**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.**”

- 2 Cor 2:15-16; Luke 2:34

This is the same kind of language we see in:

Ezek 3:27 – “Thus says the Lord God. He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse;”

Dan 12:10 – “Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.”

22:13 – “**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.**”

22:14 – “**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.**” – v. 2

2:7 – “To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.”

22:2 – “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.

Gen 3:22-23 – “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ --- ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.”

Freedom is not something Adam and Eve gained.
Freedom is something Adam and Eve lost.

“and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ ---” → in the NASB this --- is called an **ellipsis**

The idea is that God deliberately did not finish that sentence because the thought of sin corrupted man taking and eating from the Tree of Life while in a state of sinful corruption is unthinkable – his sin-defaced, sin-torn body

God protects Adam and Eve from two dangers:

- 1) Living forever in a perpetual state of sinful corruption
- 2) Living forever in the presence of God in unworthy fashion

That, all the way back in the first book, which was sinfully sought and angelically guarded → is now freely offered!

22:15 – “Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.”

22:16 – “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.”

22:17 – “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.”

- it is a free gift from God

22:18-19 – “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; ¹⁹and 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 ¹from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

The Bible is complete.

The **Bible is sufficient**.

5 clear indicators that prophecy closed with the Book of Revelation:

- 1) Revelation is the last book of the Bible (canonically and chronologically)
- 2) John was the last Apostle. He was the last person who satisfied the requirements to be an Apostle. The death of John was the end of the Apostolic era.
- 3) When you look at the New Testament, miraculous sign gifts that accompanied New Revelation had ceased (2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3-4, 1 Cor 13:8-10)

- 4) **22:18** – “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;”
- 5) John appeals to his credentials as a Prophet rather than his credentials as an Apostle!
- The Apostles were greater than the Prophets. All Apostles were Prophets, but not all Prophets were Apostles.
 - John is an Apostle and a Prophet. He never appeals to his apostolic credentials! (**1:3; 10:11; 22:7, 10, 18, 19**)
 - Why doesn't he appeal to his status as an Apostle to add weight to this letter like Paul and Peter do?
 - John appeals to his credential as Prophet rather than Apostle because God is closing the office of Apostle and the office and function of Prophecy. After this, there is no more prophecy, nor is there a need for more.

22:20-21 – “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”

CONCLUSION

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust” is only part of the story. It's only chapter 1. And there is a second chapter. The whole story, as RC Sproul captures it very well in his book of the same title, is:

→ Dust to Glory!

Application – Beloved, as the days grow darker, your hope should glow brighter!