

# The Millennium

Revelation 20:1-3 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

In Revelation 9:1, John related his vision of a star falling from heaven with a key to the abyss: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit" (compare Luk 10:18). In Revelation a star can represent an angel. Revelation 1:20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." Angels are also messengers, which is the meaning of the Greek word ἀγγελοι, *han'-ge-li*, used here. It is the plural of ἀγγελος, *han'-ge-los*, or angel. This star falls from heaven, which could mean the sky, space, or the abode of God. In Rev 9:2, the Brit Chadashah or the Hebrew New Testament renders the words, כּוֹכַב נִפֵּל, *kokab nopyl*, star fall, or a fallen star, or in this context, a fallen angel. The context is that a star is falling and the star has a key to the abyss. A simple meteor, which we call a falling star, could not have a key to the abyss and open it. Thus this star, according to the context, must be Satan himself or, more likely, an angel and a fallen one, meaning a demon with the key. Here in Rev 20:1-2, we see the opposite—an angel of God binds Satan into the pit, while in chapter nine, we see a demon opening the pit and letting out myriads of demonic entities.

The angel had a great chain, or manacle, or some other type of bond that is used to bind the body or a part of the body like a neck, wrist, or ankle. Satan, being a cherub, which is an angelic being, could not be bound by a physical bond. This bond was the power of God to bind Satan in the abyss, just as the demonic entities were bound in the abyss in Revelation chapter nine. Not only was Satan himself bound, but his ability to cause the nations (or peoples) to sin was also bound. That must mean that his demonic hosts were also unable to deceive the nations. Though it is not stated, when Satan was bound in the abyss, so were his demonic hosts. When Satan was bound, there were no nations living on earth that he could deceive. They were all killed by the sword of Christ when he was sitting on the white horse in Rev 19:21. The name Satan itself means adversary, so the word could possibly include all his hosts. Satan was bound there by the power of God.

The abyss may well be Tartarus, the same place that Peter and Jude mention in 2 Pet. 2:4, and Jude 6. Bauer explained, "Tartarus, thought of by the Greeks as a subterranean place lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out, and so regarded in Israelite apocalyptic as well<sup>1</sup>." Tartarus was also

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<sup>1</sup> Bauer, W., 2000. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. In: F. W. Danker, ed. BDAG. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

thought of as the place where fallen angels were imprisoned. Enoch describes the place: "I saw a horrible thing: a great fire there which burnt and blazed, and the place was cleft as far as the abyss, being full of great descending columns of fire<sup>2</sup>."

Some say that the abyss is the earth after it was destroyed by the seven vials of God's wrath. They say this abyss is the same as the deep in Genesis 1:2, which is also called an abyss in Hebrew. In fact, the Septuagint renders the Hebrew word תְּהוֹמִים, *tehowm*, or abyss, as ἀβυσσος, *abussou*, or abyss. Since the earth is devoid of people and is "without form and void" (Jer 4:23) Satan is cast there and that is his millennial prison. That is certainly possible, but allowing the Revelation to interpret the Revelation when possible, this seems more like the abyss found in Rev 9:1, and found in 2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6, and the Book of Enoch.

Satan is locked into the abyss, which is literally a bottomless place, for a millennium or a thousand years. Then he will deceive the nations no more for those thousand years. The thousand years are also mentioned in 20:4 when the ones on the thrones as well as the martyrs and those that did not worship the beast or his image or receive the mark of the beast. They had obviously died or were alive when Christ returned to earth and gathered His people unto Him (AKA the rapture) and were to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. The thousand year period is mentioned again in 20:5 where the rest of the dead would not live until after the thousand years ended. The thousand years are mentioned one last time in 20:7, explaining the after the thousand year period, Satan would be released for a short time.

The first course of study will be whether the Scriptures really meant a true thousand year period. It is for us to ascertain if there is a misinterpretation or some other anomaly. The Hebrew word for one thousand is *aleph*, or *eleph* (אֶלֶף), with the included diacritics. It is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. When using letters as numerals, the single letter *aleph*, א, is equal to one. The Hebrew numeral for 1000 is the letter *aleph* followed by a *geresh*, א'. But in prose, the full word *eleph*, אֶלֶף, translates to 1000. We see in the Old Testament that the word thousand appears 453 times in the singular in the Old Testament. In each occurrence the word *eleph* is used. This is used for a thousand hills, thousands of men, coins, weight, and others. We may safely say that the Hebrew word does indeed signify one thousand. The Septuagint scholars translated the word, *eleph*, to the Greek uninflected word, χίλιοι, *khilioi*. The inflection of that word used here in our Scripture in Revelation is χιλια, *khilia*. This is the accusative plural neuter noun form (object of a preposition or verb) of the word χίλιοι, *khilioi*. Thus we may safely and confidently say that the Greek word used in our Scriptures here does signify the real number, one thousand.

Now for the word rendered years in our Scripture. In the Hebrew Old Testament, the word rendered year, years, yearly, years', and year's in its uninflected form is שָׁנָה, *shanah* or *shaneh*. It occurs over 800 times. The Septuagint Scholars again used the Greek word for a year in most of those cases (in some cases the word year is implied but not written). The word used by the LXX translators in its uninflected form is, ενιαυτος, *he'niaftos*, which is the long form of the Greek uninflected ετος, *hetos*, meaning a year

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<sup>2</sup> Charles, R. H., 1895. In: S. Weiser, ed. Book of Enoch. 2003 ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

or, depending on the context, an indefinite period of time. Here, the accusative plural neuter noun form of the word *ετη*, *hetay*, is used. Obviously a thousand indefinite periods of time is not acceptable, thus we must safely and confidently say that the thousand years is the correct rendering of the phrase, *χίλια ετη*, *khilia etay* (pronounced together there is no "h" sound before the vowel epsilon, ε).

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

This occurs after the wrath of God comes upon the earth when there is a great earthquake, the sun is darkened, and the stars of heaven fall. This is a picture of the end of the age as we have seen in other Scriptures as well. (See Revelation 6:12-14; Isaiah 34:4; Joel 2:19, 30-31; 2 Peter 3:10). After Christ has gathered His people to Him, all humans are killed; there are no survivors: "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Rev 19:21). God's people will still be alive and will reign with Christ, for they are resurrected or raptured before the remaining people are slain (Rev 14:14-16).

Here is what we know about the Millennium.

- Satan is bound, shut up, and sealed in the abyss for 1000 years. He will not be able to get out and deceive the peoples any more.
- Satan will be freed for a short period that is not specified.
- There are thrones and those sitting on them are given authority to judge. They are not identified.
- John saw the souls of people there (not the bodies, but the souls):
  - The souls of those who were there who had been beheaded due to the witness of Jesus
  - The souls of those who were there because they kept the Word of God
  - The souls of those who were there that had not worshipped the beast or his image
  - The souls of those who were there that had not received the mark of the beast
- They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. According to AT Robertson, the verb rendered "lived" actually means "lived again" or "came to life." In other words they were resurrected.
- That this assemblage was the first resurrection (verse 5).
- Those not included in the first resurrection would not live again until after the Millennium, which is the implied second resurrection (verse 5).
- The second death awaits those in the implied second resurrection.
- John does not state anywhere that there will be peace on earth during the Millennium and it does not state that Jesus Christ will rule during the 1000 years from the present city of Jerusalem. Many teach those ideas as fact, but they are not written in the Bible.

John also saw the souls of the martyrs, those that did not worship the beast or receive his mark and those that kept the Word of God. The first thing we notice is that he saw the souls. The following questions arise:

- John does not mention any bodies, only the souls. Does that mean disembodied spirits?
- Who were these souls?
- Were they only the souls of the people killed during the tribulation and the remainder of Christians would not be resurrected until after the Millennium?
- The Scripture states that these souls lived and reigned with Christ for the duration of the Millennium. Who, if any, will they reign over?

We will reveal the answers to those questions shortly.

Here is where we get into some speculation. John saw thrones with some sitting on them. We are not told how many thrones there were or who is sitting on them. We have seen thrones before in Daniel 7:9-13, where thrones were put in place and God the Father, the Ancient of Days was seated there. In verse 10 we see the Court of Judgment seated there. In verse 13, we See One like the Son of Man, who is Jesus the Christ, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was given dominion of all creation. He was perhaps a part of the court and sat on a throne. This prophecy of thrones and the Court of Judgment is more like the Great White Throne and does not seem to fit with John's vision in this passage, so we must move on to another look at thrones that better fit this picture John has painted.

It is also possible that these are the 24 elders sitting on the 24 thrones in Rev 4:4, "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

Another alternative is found in Mat 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In this verse we see twelve thrones upon which the twelve Apostles will sit and judge the tribes of Israel, meaning all of God's people.

There is also the possibility that all the saints, who live again and reign with Christ, will sit on those thrones. See Psa 49:14, Psa 149:5-9; Dan 7:18, Dan 7:22; Zec 14:5; Mat 19:28; Luk 22:30; 1 Cor 6:2; 1Thes 3:13; Jud 1:14-15; Rev 2:26-27, Rev 3:21.

Regardless of the speculation of the last few paragraphs, the only thing we know for sure is that John saw thrones and judges were seated upon them.

Who were these souls and were they disembodied spirits? This vision John records here is a recapitulation of that vision of the great multitude seen in Revelation 7. I believe that the souls John saw in our Scripture were the same as those we saw in Revelation 7:9, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." We must also note that there are only two resurrections, one for the saints and one for the unsaved (Dan 12:2; Joh 5:28-29; Act 24:15). Thus the saved must be included in the first resurrection. They are saved from throughout history.

Let us take a look at the Greek word rendered beheaded. The Greek word is *πεπελεκισμενων* *pepelekismenōn*, the genitive of the articular perfect passive participle of *πελεκίζω*, *pelekizō*. It is a combination of two words, one is *πλησσω*, *plesso*, to smite and *πελεκυς*, *pelekus*, an old Greek word for an axe; to smite or kill with an axe. While it certainly can mean to behead, it can also mean executed or just plain killed. Since there are many forms of killing, it would be plausible say that all those killed, which includes those beheaded, in the name of Christ during the tribulation are included in the souls John saw. We should make note that the Muslim's execution of choice, beheading, is going on at this very minute by Muslims killing Christians all over the world simply because they will not convert to Islam.

These are the souls of all the saved throughout history until the Day of the Lord when all the unsaved are wiped out. They were not disembodied spirits. They were clothed in a body given to them at their death. In 1 Corinthians 15:40, the Apostle Paul tells us of the two types of bodies, which are the heavenly and the earthly (of celestial and terrestrial) bodies. In his next epistle, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, he clarifies that further.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Paul is saying that our earthly body, which he refers to our earthly house, or tent, or tabernacle, is changed to a "house which is from heaven," or a heavenly body. He says in our earthly or fleshly bodies we will groan and sigh, for this life has its ups and downs. He makes certain that we know that we will not go into heaven unclothed, that we will not be found naked or without a body when we die and enter into God's presence. God has guaranteed this to us by giving us the Holy Spirit (as our earnest). Therefore, these souls are not unclothed; they have an incorruptible heavenly body. We also see that these same souls were given white robes in Revelation 6:11; 7:9; 7:13-14.

Earlier, we asked the question, "Were they only the souls of the people killed during the tribulation and the remainder of Christians would not be resurrected until after the Millennium?" We have already shown that those saints in the Millennium are all the saved from throughout history. Since this is a recapitulation, from another perspective, of the sixth seal vision, John focuses on those that came out of the great tribulation and gave up their lives for Christ during that time. The reason for this is John had just given an account of the terrible things that the saints suffered who lived during the tribulation, and he wants us to know that they did not suffer in vain. They will also be in that gathering of the numberless multitudes (Rev 7:9) of the saved.

The last question we pondered was, "Who will these saints reign over?" Scripture tells us that we Christians will judge the world and angels (Dan 7:22; 1 Cor 6:2-3; Jude 1:14-15; Rev 2:26-27). Perhaps that is what John meant.

There is also a simple grammatical way to understand this part of the passage. First, the word lived is ἐζησαν, *hezesan*, the first aorist active indicative of ζαω, *zao*, to live. *Hezesan* can be translated "they lived," as well as they "lived again." So these souls were resurrected and lived with Christ. As for reigning with Christ, Thayer wrote, "Paul transfers the word [reigned] to denote the supreme moral dignity, liberty, blessedness, which will be enjoyed by Christ's redeemed ones<sup>3</sup>." Romans 5:17 says, "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." According to Friberg it can figuratively mean the dominant quality of something<sup>4</sup>, like our life. Thus we could also say that the dominant quality of our resurrection is to live with Christ in supreme moral dignity, liberty, blessedness, enjoying eternal life with Him. The point is we do not necessarily need to be ruling over anyone to reign with Christ. Christ Himself is even now reigning over the earth and will continue to reign over all things in the Millennium. God has given Christ all authority over all things:

Ephesians 1:19-22 (NLT), I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now He is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church.

We are not told either when or where this vision took place. The scripture does not state that this took place on earth; in fact, it totally leaves the location out. Thus the location may be in earth, or it may be in heaven, or some other place. We do know that it does not take place until Satan is no longer able to influence people to sin, and it will occur after the resurrection of the saints. That is all we need to know about the timing. We do not know when the resurrection will take place, only the Father in heaven knows that.

The location is in heaven if this is indeed the same vision John saw in 4:4. That took place in heaven: Revelation 4:1, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." Following the Scripture and allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture, we may understand that this takes place in Heaven. We will discuss what occurs on earth in the next few verses.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

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<sup>3</sup> Thayer, J. H. D., 1889. In: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Boston: s.n.

<sup>4</sup> Friberg, T. a. B., 1981. Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament. In: Victoria, BC, Canada: Baker Book House.

We have established that the souls living and reigning with Christ are all the saved from the beginning of time. Those that do not live again until after the Millennium must be those that are not saved. They are those condemned to hell.

The first resurrection is the resurrection of the saints at the seventh trumpet, that is, the rapture. It is described in Matthew 24:31, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." This is echoed by Mark in 13:27 "And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." And of course, Paul describes it as well; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

There are two resurrections mentioned here. Christ Himself told us there are two resurrections, one for the saved and another for the unsaved: Joh 5:28-29, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Paul also wrote about these two resurrections: Act 24:15 "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." The prophet Daniel spoke about this as well: Dan 12:2 "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." That is three Bible witnesses.

This is the First Resurrection. It is the resurrection of the saved. Disregarding common perception, thanks to a few popular and sensational false teachers, there is no second or third resurrection of the saved; there is only the one mentioned in Scripture. Those in that First Resurrection will live forever with Christ; this includes all Christians from all time with the exception of Enoch and Elijah who were taken up into heaven without death. John does not mention a second resurrection, but he does say that the dead lived again after the Millennium, which is a resurrection. He does mention a second death, which is death of the soul after death of the body. This is the Gospel in action—the Gospel saves, but it also condemns those not saved to the second death. The souls of those whose bodies die without Christ will die in the second death. That is eternal separation from God. That second death will occur after the dead who take part in the second resurrection stand before the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11).

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Believers in Christ need not fear the second death for they will not participate in it. John 3:16 promises eternal life to those that believe in Christ. Christians are already a priesthood of believers: 1 Peter 2:5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual

sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." In the resurrection, we will continue to be priests and reign with Christ. We have already discussed what it means to reign with Christ in our discussion of Revelation 20:4.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

In Revelation, there is only scant information about what happens during the thousand years. Some believe that Chapters 37-48 of Ezekiel outline the events that occur during the Millennium because both John and Ezekiel mention Gog and Magog. However, in Revelation we are not given those details outlined in Ezekiel and it seems unlikely that the details in Ezekiel are in play here. Consequently, let us use what the Revelation does tell us about the Millennium and learn what we can simply from those details provided by the Apostle in this book.

When Satan is released from his imprisonment the second resurrection also takes place. It is apparent from the context that these two things happen simultaneously. We must look to other passages to better understand the Millennium. Before the Millennium, when God pours out His wrath upon the earth, no one survives. There are no "tribulation saints" (the idea of a seven year tribulation is not a biblical concept—it is a construct of men based on eisegesis and faulty exegesis); there are no survivors of God's wrath; no one will be left alive; all humans "left behind" on earth are killed. As soon as Christ sends his angels to gather his elect from the four winds (Mat 24:31) to be taken home with Him (AKA the rapture), the seven angels of Revelation Chapter Sixteen begin to pour out the bowls or vials of God's wrath. We see the harvest of the earth (the rapture) in Chapter Fourteen and then the angels are given the vials of God's wrath in Chapter Fifteen and they begin to pour out God's wrath upon the nations in Chapter Sixteen. The context shows these to be consecutive events.

When the sixth bowl is poured out upon the earth, the frog-like demon spirits gather the armies of the world to Armageddon (Rev 16:16). At that moment the seventh angel poured out his vial on the earth. Of course the vials symbolize the application of God's wrath against the unsaved that remain after the rapture occurs. We must make the point here that the gathering of the saints to Christ has already taken place in Revelation Chapter Fourteen, and all the people left on earth are the unsaved. In the vision, when the seventh angel pours his vial upon the earth, there is the greatest earthquake ever seen by men. Then all the cities over all the earth fall, all the mountains are leveled, all islands disappear, and seventy-five pound hailstones fall onto the people who cursed God. Then the vision ends and John is given a different vision in Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen.

However, what happened after the earthquake and hailstorm? We find that out in Revelation Chapter Nineteen. But we need to review some other scriptures telling what happens to the people left behind. In Mat 24:37 and Luke 17:26 Jesus told his disciples, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Mat 24:37-39)." What was it like then? People were eating, drinking, marrying, and carrying on with their lives as though nothing was wrong. When the flood came the Ark was sealed and Noah and his family were aboard. The



remainder of the people on earth at that time, all of them, perished in the flood. Jesus also told His disciples, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all."

The upshot is, in Noah's day, God placed Noah in the ark and protected him and his family when God, in His wrath, flooded the world and destroyed all the other people on the earth. It was the same with Lot. As soon as the angels got Lot and his family out of Sodom, God totally destroyed all the cities on the plain and all the people in them perished. That is exactly how it will be when Christ returns. Everyone will be going on with their lives and daily routines and no one will be expecting it when Christ returns. He will gather his people unto Himself and there remainder of those "left behind" will perish; all of them. There will be no "tribulation saints."

Paul and Peter also echoed this in their writings:

1Th 5:1-4 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief (*emphasis added*).

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (*emphasis added*).

2Pe 2:4-9 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (*emphasis added*):

We find references to this in the Old Testament as well:

Isa 34:2-4 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. 3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree (*emphasis added*).

Jer 4:23-26 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. 24 I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. 25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. 26 I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger (*emphasis added*).

Jer 25:33 And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

John tells us the fate of the armies gathered at Armageddon:

Rev 19:19-21 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh (*emphasis added*).

We can see from all of these references that after God brings His people to safety, and then pours out His wrath on the world, there will be no survivors. Everyone will perish. The earth will be left empty and devoid of any living human being.

Rev 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Remember that the word rendered nations represents all people who do not belong to God and that they are resurrected at the end on the Millennium (20:5). To a Jew, anyone who is not a Jew is a Gentile. The Greek word rendered nations (ἔθνος, *hethnos*, the plural here being ἔθνη, *ethnē*) is also rendered Gentiles in English. The nations here are all those people that have not believed on Jesus as Savior. Thayer defines the word as the entire human family. We now know who these nations are. They are the ones that died at the end of the age—see the notes on Rev 20:7. They are the billions of the unsaved resurrected at the end of the Millennium for the second death.

Apparently these nations are scattered all over the globe. Then Satan gathers them once again to battle Christ. We must conjecture that Satan really believes he can defeat Christ and apparently convinces those resurrected nations that he can defeat Christ. No other reason for them to gather to battle Christ presents itself.

Rev 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Please note that in Revelation, the beloved city, Jerusalem, often symbolizes the church (see Rev 3:12 Rev 21:2, Rev 21:10) just as it often symbolized the congregation of Israel in the Old Testament (i.e. Isa 1:8, Lam 2:13, Zec 2:10), That seems to be the case here

Let us identify the terms. The word rendered 'breadth' is only used in four places. Most translations use the word 'breadth' and it means the entire globe. Wycliffe used the word 'broadness,' Moffat used 'broad,' the NASB used 'plain of the earth,' etc. The breadth of a thing encompasses the whole of the thing.

The Greek word for earth, like its Hebrew counterpart, can mean the entire globe, inside the borders of a country, a parcel of land, the ground, arable land, or land as opposed to the sea. Context determines the meaning. However, the context here is not entirely cut and dried. Since John frequently used the Old Testament Scriptures to portray what he saw in these visions, there is a place in the Old Testament that mentions the breadth of the land: "And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel"(Isa 8:8, See also Hab 1:6).

The context of the passage is the Assyrians overrunning the land of Judah. The Septuagint translated the word breadth as *πλατος*, *platos*, which is the same word John uses here. There it is the object of a verb; here it is the object of a preposition. There the Assyrian armies fill the breadth of the land; here they go up on (or over according to Young) the breadth of the land. The picture is the same in both passages—a picture of armies covering all the ground as far as the eye can see.

This might apply to the entire globe, but taking Isaiah 8:8 (and it [the Assyrian army] will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel) as our guide, Satan gathers all these nations to the portion of land where the camp of the saints stands. The only thing we are told about the nations is that they were spread over the breadth of the earth or land. How they got there is not expressed. A possibility is that when "the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29) occurs that those involved were resurrected *in situ* all over the earth or land. However that is only speculation because the Scriptures are silent on that event. We do not know how they were spread over the breadth of the earth, we just know that Satan went out and gathered them from the breadth of the earth or land.

The Greek word rendered 'camp' here is rendered castle, camp, and armies in the KJV. Other translations use encampment, citadel, leaguer, and fortress, but the majority of translations use camp. Gill wrote, "*the allusion is to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness, about the tabernacle, which was in the midst of them, afterwards the city of Jerusalem itself was called a camp.*"<sup>5</sup> Hebrews tells us that Christ was crucified outside the camp (Heb 13:11-13) meaning outside of the gates of Jerusalem; thus, Jerusalem was referred to as a camp. In the Old Testament, Jerusalem is referred to as a castle, a fortress, a stronghold, citadel, dunehold, tower, etc. (see 1Ch 11:7; 2 Sam 5:9, 6:10, 6:12 in several translations). So, we may state here that the camp of the saints, God's people, and the beloved city, Jerusalem, are apparently synonymous in this passage.

There is a possibility of confusion here. The verse tells us that after the multitudes of the nations that surround God's people and the beloved city, that fire comes down from heaven and consumes them. The question arises, how could they be consumed with fire from heaven and then later be cast into the lake of

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<sup>5</sup>Gill, J., John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, London 1746.

fire? They cannot. Both are the same event. This is an example of recapitulation where John gives a brief explanation and later explains the occurrence in greater detail. This is the brief explanation. John follows beginning in verse eleven with the greater detailed explanation.

We can also glean that concerning the camp of the saints, John is giving a brief look and what will be explained as the New Jerusalem on the new earth in Revelation Chapter 21, which is the camp of the saints. Additionally, this is a brief look at nations gathered around the city that will be judged there at the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11) and be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:15).

Rev 20:10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

John now tells us about the lake of fire. This is also a brief look at the lake of fire. John will write of the lake of fire in greater detail in the final five verses of Chapter 20.

Some commentators teach that the lake of fire will burn up all unbelievers and annihilate them. That will be their end. They will no longer exist and will be forgotten forever. The torment that occurs to the *αιωνας των αιωνων*, *haionas ton aionon*, age of ages, or in modern Greek, century of centuries, the natural understanding being eternity, is only a figure of speech according to those commentators. Others claim that only the devil, the beast, and the false prophet are tormented for eternity.

The general understanding of the verse is that the devil, the beast, the false prophet and all unbelievers will be tormented forever. Let us leave it at that. That is a subject that could fill volumes if studied thoroughly. There is not time or space here to delve further into the subject of the eternal torment versus annihilation of unbelievers.

Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

The Great White Throne is where the unbelievers will be judged. If the verses in this chapter were chronological, then there would be no unbelievers to stand before the judgment throne. They would have been burned up by the fire that John saw in verse 9. This is another case for recapitulation; a brief overview of an event is given and the event is later given in greater detail. One could also say that this is a literary chiasm—a repetition of similar ideas in reverse sequence. In verse 9 John shows the end of the unbelievers. Here he shows the whole event.

The old heavens and earth have been cast aside and have disappeared (2 Pet 3:10), and the new heavens and earth have appeared (Rev 21:1) and the New Jerusalem is upon the new earth (Rev 21:2).

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The dead are those in verse nine that have encompassed the camp of the saints, which is the New Jerusalem. The already resurrected saints (verse 4) will not stand before the Great White Throne for judgment. Remember that Paul wrote "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom 8:1). Jesus paid the price of our sins in full at Calvary. Our names were written in the Book of Life and our judgment was against Christ at His crucifixion. Thus there is no judgment for us at the Great White Throne.

The unsaved dead will be judge for every work they did. Even if humans think their works were good, God does not. Without Christ, all of our works, whether or not we humans think they are good, are unacceptable to God:

Isa 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Here is the same passage in the New Living Translation (see also Psa 14:1-3, Psa 53:1-3, Rom 3:9-31):

Isa 64:6 We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds [or good works], they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.

The works we do after our salvation will be judged out of the Book of Life at the (Bema) Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom 14:10). Paul explains:

1Co 3:11-15 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Here is the same passage in the New Living Translation:

1Co 3:11-15 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

Thus, even after we are saved those Christians who have never done any good works will still enter Heaven—they will just squeak by.

Rev 20:13-15 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

In other words all humans throughout time and anywhere in creation, who are not saved by the blood of Christ are included in the Great White Throne Judgment. You may ask, "what about those who have never heard of Christ, will they still be judged at the Great White Throne?" In this study, there is not time or space to address that subject. The short answer is that if a person has been saved by Christ he or she will avoid this judgment and those without Christ as Savior will be included in this judgment. The whole scripture, in context, teaches that anyone who truly seeks God, even though they really do not know who God is, He will find them and save them.

This is the second death because it follows the death of the human body. All humans born on this earth will eventually die the death of all mortals. The only exception is those who are living when Christ returns. Those Christians that are resurrected will never die again; they will have eternal life. The others will be resurrected and will stand before the Great White Throne and then be cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the second death.