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The Fall of Satan ([Revelation 20](#))

The Beast from the sea (Roman Emperors), the beast from the earth (Concilia) and the enemies of the Christians have fallen. But there remains the grand instigator of the whole evil axis of power that persecuted the Christians so intensely. The pain and suffering that Satan caused is beyond belief. It is true the Romans were acting of their own free will in persecuting the Christians but Satan was the author of the diabolical plan that sought to exterminate Christianity from the face of the earth. The entire chapter of [Revelation 20](#) is a vision of the ultimate fall and destruction of Satan, the ringleader of the evil forces against Christianity.

It should be noted that [Revelation 20](#) is one of the most misunderstood and misused chapters in all of scripture. This is where we see a lot of the Premillennial doctrines coming from. So many people try and literalize the thousand year time span found in [Revelation 20](#). Briefly, if the thousand year binding of Satan is literal then we would have an angel, carrying a figurative key and a figurative chain that he will use to bind Satan and throw him into a figurative bottomless pit for a literal thousand years. When one obviously has a whole paragraph full of figurative objects, it is at best unwise to literalize any of the components found within the context if there is not supporting scripture for it elsewhere.

Those who advocate Premillennialism believe that Jesus will return to earth someday and rule from Jerusalem for a thousand years. There are a host of excellent reasons why Premillennialism cannot be true. Paul taught that Jesus would never be “known again” after the flesh. ([2 Corinthians 5:16](#)). In old testament times, God swore that no descendant of king Jeconiah would ever sit on the throne of David ruling in Judah again, ([Jeremiah 22:30](#)). Jesus was a direct descendant of Jeconiah through both Joseph and Mary.

Premillennialists believe there will be two resurrections from the dead, the first of the righteous only, the second of the wicked, many years later. But, biblically, there are not two future separate resurrections: there will be “a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust” ([Acts 24:15](#)), but the just will not come out of their graves 1000 years before the unjust. Instead, the just will come out of their graves on “the last day” ([John 6:39,40,44,54](#)). There can be no days after “the last day”, much less 1000 years. Not only did Jesus specify “the last day”, but even “the hour” in that “last day” in which, not the just only, but “all those in the graves will hear his voice, and will come out: those who have done good to a resurrection of life; but those who have done evil things to a resurrection of condemnation” ([John 5:28-29](#)).

Premillennialists teach the rapture “in the clouds” with the Lord “in the air” separates them from the wicked down on the earth. But Jesus taught that there is no separation between the “wheat” and the “tares”, between “the good” fish and “the bad” fish until “the end of the world” ([Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50](#)). Also, Jesus taught that the “sheep” and the “goats” will not be separated until they go into “life eternal” or “everlasting punishment” ([Matthew 25:31-46](#)).

Premillennialists teach that there will be a period of time for the earth to exist after the next coming of Christ, however scripture teaches that “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” ([2 Peter 3:10](#)). There is only one day of the Lord left to come and when He does, the earth will be burned up. There will be no time period for earth after He returns.

Premillennialism is in no way supported by the total body of scripture. The only way one can arrive at this contrived doctrine is to selectively pick various passages from scripture and manufacture it without regard to the teachings of the entire body of scripture pertaining to the topic of the resurrection. The Premillennialist view of [Revelation 20](#) results in numerous contradictions with other clear Biblical teachings. Premillennialists are taking apocalyptic symbolic language and literalizing it in contradiction with clear and concise scriptural teachings elsewhere. This type of Biblical interpretation creates confusion which God claims to not be the author of.

A more reasonable way of looking at Revelation chapter 20 is to look at it through the eyes of who it was written to. Let us consider the circumstances under which they lived at the time of the writing. Let us apply [Revelation 20](#) the way the first readers would have applied it to their situations.

It was written to the early Christians and has been all about them from the beginning. All of the earthly foes of the Christians in the Revelation have now been overthrown. Only one remains. It only stands to reason that the last enemy of the Christians be dealt with permanently. Even after all the earthly enemies have been destroyed, there still remains the one who masterminded their suffering in the first place. The story would be incomplete and offer no real hope to the oppressed Christians if the greatest enemy of all were left unscathed and in power. Christians reading the Revelation hundreds of years later and making applications of the teachings to their lives need to know that Satan will be ultimately destroyed. We all need to know this. Without this information, their sufferings and the sufferings of all the Christians who lived afterward would never be completely avenged. The wrongs which originated with Satan and trickled down through his evil agents would never be completely settled.

All of the bloodshed and needless slaughter, pain and suffering which have existed on earth since the creation is the fault of Satan. When God created the earth, it was all good. Everything bad throughout history had its origination in Satan. The Revelation was written directly to the first Christians but it has within the fall of Satan elements that speak to every Christian that will ever live. We can all read [Revelation 20](#) and relate the overthrow and destruction of Satan with the final judgment of all the earth, however, the immediate context is of the plight of the first Christians and it is to that time period it must primarily speak and it is up to us to make the right application beyond that. Satan is overthrown and sent to an everlasting punishment in [Revelation 20](#). It is obvious that we who read it today can look ahead to the final judgment of all the earth and apply that destruction finally to the greatest enemy mankind has ever known. We see in [Revelation 20](#) the destiny of the originator of all the pain and suffering of all mankind, of all ages since Adam and Eve tended the garden of Eden.

It is vitally important to keep in mind that the events pictured in Revelation do not always follow a linear chronological timeline. The visions of John have painted a story of victory over persecution since the beginning. These visions have been laid out in a non-chronological fashion all along. The opening of the seven seals and the bowls of wrath were not in chronological order. Many of the natural disasters and events God used were overlapping and running contemporary with one another. It should not come as any surprise to anyone at this time that the events in [Revelation 20](#) are not laid out in Chronological fashion. By now the reader should be well aware of this fact and should recognize immediately that there is a grand overall picture being illustrated in this vision. Any attempt to interpret [Revelation 20](#) in a systematic sequential fashion is immediately frustrating and should be dismissed outright. The reader should step back and take a broad view of the vision and consider it in light of the whole story of Satan, his fall and ultimate total destruction in eternal punishment. Focusing on the elements which we know and can identify and then harmonizing the rest into one grand vision. [Revelation 20](#) is a big picture of the ultimate falling of Satan and the forces of evil which draw on events from before the coming of Christ all the way to the end of the Christian age and to the final judgment.

[Revelation 20:1-2](#)

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years”

And we now jump backwards in time to an event that took place before the coming of Jesus Christ on earth. This is a figurative picture of Satan being bound after what He did in the garden of Eden. Satan had restrictions placed upon his activities since that transgression. He had to get divine permission from God in order to afflict Job and Satan followed the directives given him by God to the letter. Satan operated only within the parameters God gave him concerning Job. Satan was not nor has ever been unbound on the earth to do as he would without restriction. As soon as Satan demonstrated his rebellious nature, he had restrictions placed upon him. This is the binding we see in John’s vision here.

Here we see the first usage of the thousand-year time period. Satan was obviously bound for a much longer period of time than a thousand years so what then does this time period represent? The number 10 symbolized completeness. The number 3 symbolized the perfect divine. Multiples of numbers represented in the minds of the early Christians the same things on a larger scale. Completeness multiplied by itself 3 times which symbolized the perfect divine would therefore mean a complete period of time sufficient to accomplish God's purpose. The thousand years that Satan's activities were restricted is therefore a figurative symbol for a period of time from the initial binding of Satan until the period of time where he was loosed for a short period.

[Revelation 20:3](#)

“and cast him into the abyss, and shut (it), and sealed (it) over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.”

Peter taught in [2 Peter 2:4](#) that “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” Satan was an angel that sinned. The fact that he was the first angel that sinned and that he led all the others to sin does not in any way make him less of an angel that sinned. Satan, along with all the other angels who sinned were bound in chains of darkness and reserved for the final judgment. We understand this place of torment to be an area in the Hadean realm that Peter referred to as Tartarus in verse 4. This word is typically translated as “hell”.

Is Satan literally loosed out of his prison and set to do as he pleased with the earth with no restrictions? Certainly not. If this were the case the earth would be immediately destroyed. Consider the plight of Job on a worldwide scale. Satan had to get permission from God in order to afflict Job in the manner he did. Were Satan to be unleashed without restriction upon the earth at any time, the results would be immediate world-wide devastation, destruction and Chaos the likes of which we could not even imagine.

After this perfect period of time, Satan is allowed to operate in a more direct fashion on the earth than previously. Not without restriction by any means. During the temptation of Jesus by Satan, he made a statement to Jesus which has direct bearing on this. “And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it” ([Luke 4:6](#)). Satan was able to come face to face and tempt Jesus Christ directly. Satan does not do that now. And there is no record of him ever tempting anyone face to face beyond the garden of Eden. Satan had to get special permission from God to afflict Job in the way he did and there is no indication that Job ever met Satan face to face. In fact, it is evident from Job’s complaints that neither he nor his companions knew that Satan was directly involved in the matter. There is no indication that Job ever knew of the meeting between God and Satan concerning him.

Evil spirits were also allowed to possess people during this period of time. The scriptures contain many examples of evil spirits being cast from people. This is not something that we see throughout Biblical times. There was a period of time Biblically where the forces of evil were allowed to operate directly on mankind. The restrictions on Satan and his allies were relaxed to a degree but only within strict parameters. It’s significant to note that when Jesus confronted the evil spirits, they implicitly obeyed him and when the disciples were given the power to cast them out of possessed people in the name of Jesus Christ, these spirits had to submit to this ability.

Satan does not normally walk around on the earth and manifest himself directly to mankind. In order for Satan to manifest himself directly to Jesus, face to face, there had to be some kind of arrangement made to permit him to do so. It is during this time that Satan was loosed from his prison to the extent that he could go forth and deceive the nations of the earth. This and the presence of the evil spirits was a temporary arrangement and happened in the years directly before and after Christ’s life on earth. The loosing of Satan has been done. This event is in our past and has been fulfilled and today the degree of freedom that Satan and his evil followers enjoyed for a period of time is over. Satan and the forces of evil are still in operation on earth today but not in the way they were during the time of Christ on earth. In [Zechariah 13:1-2](#) we read of a prophecy that explicitly states that the evil spirits, among other things will pass from the land in the days of Christ’s sacrifice on earth. This prophecy has been fulfilled. Satan and the evil spirits have been returned to their former state of bondage in chains of darkness awaiting the final judgment.

[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 had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Now we see some of the direct results of Satan being loosed for a “little time”. Satan wasted no time in trying to exterminate Christ’s church from the earth by force. Many Christians died for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Mention is made of those who received not the mark of the beast. This is a picture of those who overcame Satan while his restrictions were loosed for a little time. These are the martyrs spoken of under the alter in [Revelation 6:9](#) & then pictured again in [Revelation 19](#), rejoicing that God’s judgment had at last come.

Who is this that sat upon the thrones and given judgment? Paul answers this question in his letter to the Christians in Corinth, “Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life?” ([1 Corinthians 6:2-3](#)).

[Revelation 20:5](#)

“The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection.”

The first resurrection is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Several people were raised from the dead during the Biblical times but Jesus Christ is the first one resurrected who would live forever, never again to die. There are only two resurrections mentioned in scripture which will do this. The first one has already come to pass. The second one is yet to come ([John 5:28-29](#)).

Notice that the first resurrection is tied directly with those who were before dead until the thousand years should be finished. Again, one cannot look at this series of visions in a systematic chronological order. The thousand years is nothing more than a period of time sufficient for God to accomplish a purpose.

Satan was cast into a bottomless pit and then loosed for a little while after a period of time represented figuratively as a thousand years. [Revelation 20:5](#) pinpoints this time of the loosing with the first resurrection. Satan was loosed at the time of the first resurrection. Verse 6 gives us further insight into this first resurrection which helps us to positively identify what it is.

[Revelation 20:6](#)

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Over these the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ. Those who participate in the resurrection of Jesus Christ are priests of God and of Christ. How do we participate in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? “having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead” ([Colossians 2:12](#)). When we are baptized we are buried in a symbolic way with Jesus Christ when He was buried. In [Romans 6:4](#) Paul wrote that we are buried with Him through baptism into His death and then he goes on to say, “that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with (him) in the likeness of his death, we shall be also (in the likeness) of his resurrection” ([Romans 6:4-5](#)).

Christians have a participatory part in the resurrection of Jesus Christ at baptism. And upon these, the second death hath no power. What is the second death? “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” ([Hebrews 9:27](#)). The second death is the judgment of the unrighteous who will die the spiritual death which is eternal separation from God in everlasting punishment. This death has no power over faithful Christians who have participated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Peter wrote of Christians being priests in [1 Peter 2:5](#), “ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” and then again in verse 9, “But ye are a elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for (God’s) own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”

John writes by inspiration that these Christians will reign with Jesus Christ for a thousand years. Well, if this were a literal time period then how do we explain that it has been about 2000 years since this letter was written? Earth is still here. There are still Christians on earth and there have been considerably more than a thousand years pass since the first resurrection. So then what does this time period represented as a 1000 years really mean? The number 10 symbolized completeness. The number three symbolized the perfect divine. Multiples of numbers represented in the minds of the early Christians the same things on a larger scale. Completeness multiplied by itself 3 times which symbolized the perfect divine would therefore mean a complete period of time sufficient to accomplish God’s purpose.

[Revelation 20:7](#)

“And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison”

It cannot be stated enough that to try and interpret John’s visions in Revelation in a linear step by step chronological fashion will result in some pretty confusing results. This is by no means the only time in the apocalypse that John’s visions revert back to an earlier period of time. There are two periods of time represented as a thousand years. There is the time period that Satan was bound before he is loosed and there is another time period that the priests of God who participated in the first resurrection reign with Christ. These two are not the same time period yet both are represented as a thousand years.

We have two time periods here to deal with. So, the question now is, which one is it? Verse 8 helps us answer this question.

[Revelation 20:8](#)

“and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.”

Of great significance in understanding this is in the words, “the war”. What war? This the age old war between good and evil that the Christians of the time were engaged in. To them this war was an ongoing struggle that built up to the battle that was introduced in chapter 16, and that was fought in chapter 19. Revelation was written to the first century Christians and applies directly to their plight and we must never lose sight of that fact if we are to make sense of it in any way. But we also must recognize that it was written to them with an application for all Christians. The war that the Christians were engaged in at the time is still going on today. The Roman Empire has fallen and the immediate persecutors of the Christians to whom the Revelation was written have long since joined the demons in chains of darkness awaiting the final judgment. The plight of the condemned rich man as told by Jesus and recorded by inspiration in [Luke 16:24](#) makes it clear this incarceration is by no means a pleasant one.

The immediate context of verse 8 speaks to Satan’s deception of the nations of the first century and soon thereafter and the rising of them all in opposition to Christianity. All of this came to head in the battle of Armageddon which saw the destruction of their earthly enemies. But Satan has not been completely destroyed. He and his evil forces lost that battle and Christianity prevailed, but they are still fighting the war. The broader application is that we must recognize that while Satan’s plans to exterminate the church in the early years of its existence failed, he is still at work today.

The battle in Revelation for the first century has been fought. The Roman Empire fell. The war which all Christians are engaged in with the forces of evil still rages today and will continue for as long as earth remains. John’s vision here has a dual purpose. It provides comfort for the afflicted Christians who first read it and lived during the described events and it also provides a prophetic picture of the ultimate downfall and destruction of Satan yet to come and will happen at the end of the second time period represented in this context as a thousand years.

In the Old Testament, Gog was the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal ([Ezekiel 38:2; 39:1-16](#)). His territory was known as the land of Magog, and he was the chief of those northern hordes who were to make a final onslaught upon Israel. According to Ezekiel's account Gog's army included in its numbers Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer or the Cimmerians, and Togarmah, from the extreme North. They are represented as a vast mixed horde from the far-off parts of the North, the limits of the horizon, completely armed and equipped for war. They were to come upon the mountains of Israel and cover the land like a cloud. Their purpose is plunder, for the people of Israel are rich and dwell in towns and villages without walls. Gog's coming, which had been prophesied by the prophets of Israel, shall be accompanied by a manifestation of the person of God and great convulsions in Nature. A panic shall seize the hosts of Gog, rain, hailstones, pestilence, fire and brimstone shall consume them. Their bodies shall be food for the birds ([Ezekiel 39:4](#)), their weapons shall serve as firewood for seven years ([Ezekiel 39:9](#)), and their bones shall be buried East of the sea in a place called Hamon-Gog and thus not defile the holy land with their corpses ([Ezekiel 39:11-12](#)).

The fulfillment of this prophecy can be seen in the language of the Revelation concerning the downfall of the enemies of the Christians. Israel in the prophecy of Ezekiel can be correlated with the church which is spiritual Israel after Christ's resurrection. The war that Gog was said to be amassing against Israel is very similar in nature to the war against the Christians perpetuated by Satan and carried out by the enemies of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

In [Revelation 20:7](#) Satan is loosed in some fashion and goes to the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to muster his hosts for the final struggle against God and the Christians. In Ezekiel the invasion of Gog occurs during the Messianic age which fits perfectly with the account in Revelation. In Ezekiel, Gog and Magog are gathered under the direction of God for their destruction while in Revelation they are gathered by Satan whose abilities and actions are governed by God. In both cases the number is vast, the destruction is by divine direction, and is complete and final. I see the prophecy of Gog and Magog as realizing its fulfillment in the destruction of the enemies of Christianity in Revelation. If not, there are certainly enough similarities that the Christians living under the persecution of the Roman Empire would recognize in the language the prophecy of Ezekiel and make the application to themselves.

Another thing of great significance here is that the prophecy surrounding Gog and Magog finding its fulfillment in Revelation tie the loosing of Satan inseparably with the Messianic age. Of this there can be no question. The advocates of Premillennial doctrine are here dealt a death blow to their beliefs.

Revelation 20:9-10

“And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

The beast and the false prophet are directly mentioned here. This vision is primarily focused on the Christians living during the great persecution of Rome. But notice that the beast and false prophet were already in torment and Satan was cast into the lake with them. That is where Satan and the beast and the false prophet are to this day. And they are being tormented day and night and this torment is never going to end. It will go on for ever and ever.

Satan and his earthly allies covered the breadth of the earth and had the saints, and the beloved city completely surrounded. It looked like there was no hope for them when God intervened. Divine fire did not literally come down from heaven and devour Satan and his allies. The vision here is one of a swift and terrible overthrow of the enemies of righteousness. The enemies of the Christians were directly overthrown by other conquering nations as they destroyed and plundered the Roman Empire, but God makes it plain here that this was all done under His supervision and by His intervention under His authority.

The camp of the saints and the beloved city mentioned in the vision is Christ's people who collectively make up His church. There are many congregations of the Lord's church as evidenced in His address to seven of them in the beginning of the Revelation. But collectively there is only one camp, one city.

This vision speaks to the unity of God's people in Christ. There are many groups of Christians but only one body; one camp; one city. Today, we call this one body, this one camp, this one city the church of Christ. It may bear other similar names on the surface but this does not change the fact that it is the body which belongs to Christ; the church of Christ and there is only one, ([Ephesians 4:4](#)).

[Revelation 20:11](#)

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”

They can run but they cannot hide. When God's judgment comes, nobody who rejected Him in life will be able to flee. There will be no place left for them to hide. The earth and all that is in it will be destroyed.

[Revelation 20:12](#)

“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is (the book) of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

And now John's vision takes yet another leap in the timeline to great day of the Lord and the end of all things and the final judgment. The doors of Hades, also known as the realm of the dead shall be opened up and all the dead shall come forth to the final judgment. Everyone who dies, like the rich man and Lazarus are judged in some fashion at that time. There is a separation in the Hadean realm between the saved and the lost. Those who are in the Hadean realm know what their eternal destiny is going to be. The great day of the Lord where the final judgment will take place is to be a time of universal recognition of the glory and majesty of God by all who lived at one time. The saved will be separated from the lost and the lost will receive their final sentence while the saved will be take their place at the right hand of Jesus on High and will be glorified in the sight of all along with God in His throne. The lost will then be cast into the eternal punishment of Hell and the redeemed shall go to their reward in Heaven with God the Father.

[Revelation 20:13](#)

“And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”

Everyone who has died and are in Hades will be at the judgment. The first resurrection was mentioned earlier and represented the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the second and final resurrection of all the rest, both the just and the unjust mentioned in [Acts 24:15](#). And everyone of them shall be judged according to their works. This is reminiscent of Jesus’ words in [John 5:28-29](#) where he taught, “Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs 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 judgment.”

[Revelation 20:14](#)

“And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, (even) the lake of fire.”

Earlier, those who were said to have a part in the first resurrection would not suffer from the second death. Here the second death is identified for the readers. It is the death which results in the total and eternal separation from God into torment and punishment which will never end. The second death is the permanent one for which there will be no relief, no resurrection and no end. Those who would inherit eternal life must be a participant in the first resurrection in order to be protected from the horrors of the second death.

The lake of fire here is representative of Hell, the final and eternal destination of all the unjust.

[Revelation 20:15](#)

“And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.”

The book of life mentioned here was mentioned previously in verse 12. This is a book of great significance in the coming judgment. Those who are not written in this book of life will suffer the lake of fire. This book directly mentioned eight times in the King James Version of the New Testament with seven of them being in Revelation alone. In the Old Testament God said to Moses that whosoever sinned against Him would be blotted out of His book ([Exodus 32:32](#)). Paul mentioned the book of life directly in his letter to the Philippians when he said that his “fellow-laborers” were written therein, ([Philippians 4:3](#)).

We should not look at this as a literal book that God keeps in His possession. Let us recall that God lives in a spiritual realm where nothing of the physical as we perceive it exists. The figure of this book is merely a way for us to realize that there is a means of record keeping in place of which we are all a part of. Either we are found within the register of life or we are not. There are no in-betweens or degrees of inclusion or exclusion from this spiritual register. One is either included or they are not. Those who are included will have life, those who are not will be cast into the lake of fire.

Christians can have our names blotted out of this book, ([Exodus 32:32](#), [Revelation 3:5](#)), and God told Moses who would be blotted out in [Exodus 32:33](#), “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.” and Jesus in [Revelation 3:5](#) is quoted as saying that those who overcome the persecution of the Roman Empire will not be blotted out of the book of Life. The inference here is that those Christians who do not overcome will be blotted from this book. And [Revelation 20:15](#) gives us the fate of those who find their names blotted from this spiritual register represented as a “book”.

In the closing statements of the book of Revelation we see the final image of the book of life in scripture:

[Revelation 22:19](#)

“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

KJV

The warnings here are grim and the consequences of failure are severe. We must keep in mind that not only is Revelation a book of comfort for the oppressed Christians of the time with application for all Christians of all times, it is also a reminder of the consequences of sin and of failing to overcome whatever temptation may be set before us in life. It has been said in a summary of the New Testament that the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John reveal Jesus Christ. The book of Acts teaches us how to get “into Christ” and the general epistles teach us how to live “in Christ”. Revelation is a book of instruction on how to overcome and die “in Christ”. Revelation chapter 20 closes with a pretty sobering picture of those who fail to overcome. This is necessary in order for the complete picture to be painted. We must know the whole council of God and one of the primary purposes of the book of Revelation was to teach Christians how to overcome and not have their names blotted out of God’s book of life. Revelation was not written to lost people. It was written to Christians living under the Roman persecution and we must realize that if any Christians ever had to overcome and remain faithful, then all Christians do for all the remaining time left on earth. God is no respect of persons.

[Revelation 20](#) is a vision of the ultimate fall of Satan. Now all of the enemies of the Christians have been dealt with and we are given a vision of the end where Satan who’s still at work influencing and deceiving will be finally put down forever and will receive the just punishment for his massive crimes against God and against humanity. Those who do not wish to share in his fate are given a word of warning in the closing elements of the vision. We do not want to spend our eternity in the lake of fire with Satan and sharing in his punishment. While the readers are given this grim picture, it is not for long because chapter 21 is a picture of the rewards for those who do overcome. It is a vision of hope for those whose names are written in the book of life and have not been blotted out.

In closing, I would like to state that interpretations of this chapter are diverse among the able scholars. In my efforts to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of this chapter, I disagreed with some of the views of the scholars I have depended the most on for the duration of this study. It is not my intention to take away from their scholarship in any way. I fully realize that this vision of Revelation is difficult and that I in no way can assume that my understanding of this vision can be the only right one.

My approach has been to look at this through the eyes of the first readers and to identify those elements of the vision which have direct correlation with things taught elsewhere in scripture and how they would relate to and apply to their circumstances.

As for the order of the scenes, I have taken a non-chronological view of this vision, choosing to look at it as if John were describing a whole picture, like a painting, to his readers without regard to the order in which the various elements of this painting were placed in the picture by the artist. One does not describe a painting to an individual in the order that everything within it was painted. I have taken those elements of the picture which I feel are positively identified and molded the rest of the picture around those events to complete the overall vision.

I would like to call attention to the fact that I am not a Bible scholar, rather I am but an humble servant of Christ who desires to understand his will and obey it however I am able. Readers of this study are encouraged to review all of the works of the recognized scholars and arrive at their own conclusions in regards to Revelation. My understanding of this book and in particular [Revelation 20](#) is my best guess based on a study of history and the works of other scholars and my template for this is to look at it through the eyes of the first readers, applying it to their lives and circumstances, and to let scripture be it's own best commentary in every instance where it can be applied.

[Revelation 20](#) Paraphrase

And I saw an angel come down from heaven and his hands was a key to the abyss and he had a great chain in his hand. And he captured the dragon, that old serpent, who is the Devil, who is also called Satan and bound him for a period of time according to God's purpose. And then he threw Satan alive into the abyss and shut him in and put a seal on him so that he could not deceive the nations until God's purpose for man required it and then Satan was loosed for a short period of time.

And looking back, I saw thrones, and the ones who sat upon them, and I saw that judgment was given unto them. And I also saw the souls of them that were slain for their witnessing of Jesus Christ, and for their proclaiming of the word of God. These are they who had not worshipped the beast, neither his graven images and had not received his mark upon their foreheads, or held it in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Jesus Christ for all of time.

Those who lived on the earth but were unsaved were condemned already and had no hope for life without the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Blessed and holy are they who have participated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ for the condemnation of the lost has no power over them. They are the priests of God and rule with Christ according to God's eternal purpose.

But according to God's purpose, Satan was permitted a measure of freedom for a period of time. And he went out to deceive all the nations of the earth and gather his innumerable host of allies together in opposition of the righteous. And Satan and his allies went the breadth of the earth and surrounded the saints of God and the church to destroy them but God overthrew and defeated them. And Satan who deceived the whole earth was taken and thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are and he will be punished continually for ever and ever.

And then I saw in my vision a great white throne and He who sat upon it. And all who the unrighteous in league with Satan on earth and in heaven were unable to escape could find no place of refuge. And then I saw all of the dead who ever lived standing before God and his books were opened and revealed. And with them was the book of life and all were judged out of the things recorded in those books according to their righteous deeds. Everybody who had ever lived and died from the sea and to the four corners of the earth were resurrected from Hades and they were judged according to their deeds. Those who were found dead outside Christ were cast into the lake of fire which is the second and final death. Whosoever was not written in God's book of life were cast into the lake of fire forever.