

Notes on Revelation 20

Intro: We have seen the wrath of God announced in the 7 seals, begun in the 7 trumpets (those trumpet judgments may have been on Israel as a warning to all other nations), finished in the 7 bowls. Among the trumpets and bowls are interludes to guide our understanding. In chapter 12-13 we are introduced to a series of characters in the conflict (God, Satan, etc.). Now we have seen in chapters 17-20 the overthrow of those powers hostile to God and His people (the harlot in 17, the beast and false prophet in 19). Those who worshipped the beast have been killed. Now only Satan remains.

Verses 1-3—Satan bound.

The symbol: Satan is caught, chained and thrown into an abyss and sealed there so that he cannot escape.

Meaning: The context suggests that this binding of Satan occurs at the fall of the beast and false prophet. It indicates that he has lost his control over the powers of the world. They are under the King of Kings.

Verses 4-6—The saints reign with Christ for a thousand years.

The symbol: Thrones are set up and someone sits on them. Even those who have died (beheaded) are also allowed to enjoy the reign of the Messiah by resurrection from the dead. Note the symbolism: Those who lived and reigned with the beast were killed by Jesus. Those who were killed by the beast now live and reign with the Lord.

Meaning: The people of God reign through their King Jesus Christ. Cf. Dan. 7 where “judgment” is given to the saints. Their kingdom exists and is not left for another.

Verses 7-10—Satan is released and destroyed.

The symbol: Satan is released from his abyss. The wicked are raised to join with him in the attempt to destroy the kingdom of God. He gathers the nations against the people of God.

Meaning: God will one last time allow Satan freedom to destroy his people; but he will intervene and destroy him. Satan’s punishment does not change his character in opposing God. He is worthy of destruction.

Verses 11-15—All the living are judged.

The symbol: The world is destroyed. The great white throne of God is all that remains. The dead are raised and judged. The wicked are cast into the lake of fire. Those written in the book of life are able to enter the new Jerusalem.

Meaning: All God’s judgments in time lead to the end of all things and the separation of righteous and wicked in eternity. Only those who love the Lord will enjoy life with God.