

“DEFEAT OF SATAN AND THE GREAT JUDGMENT.”

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Scripture Texts: Revelation 20:7-15

Introduction.

In the great drama called history there has been a great cosmic conflict. In the old age Satan ruled, in the new age Christ rules. The new age began with the coming of Christ and with the announcement that “the kingdom of God is at hand and now is.”

This new age is also called the last days which will end at the second coming of Jesus. From the first coming to the second coming is the Gospel age, the church age, the time of Christ’s rule on earth through His church. This age is given the symbolic number of a thousand years.

The old age of Satan ended at the beginning of new age of Christ. Proof is seen in Christ’s repeated casting out of evil spirits and demons. Satan is bound from deceiving the nations while the Gospel spreads to all nations and there is a great growth in the church. The Gentile world may persecute the church all through this time, but the gates of hell will not finally prevail and God will preserve to the end His own and gather us all into His perfect paradise.

So there is an overlapping of ages at the end of which there will be a great intensification of the cosmic conflict. Our text brings us to that moment.

Satan unbound, vs. 7-10.

Last week we saw Satan bound, now we seem him unbound and then bound again.

Notice verse 7. How did Satan get out of his prison? Did he escape? Did he walk out on his own? No, he was released, he was allowed out by the will and design of someone else.

At the end of the gospel age, at the end of these end times Satan will be unfettered for one last terrible deception. During this time he will be allowed to do what he has not been fully able to do during the gospel age, he will deceive the nations.

During this time the gospel will be severely silenced.

Why will God allow this? The answer lies in the hidden mysteries of the incomprehensible sovereign purposes of God. He has His reasons, and His thoughts are above our thoughts. Whatever the answer, one thing is certain, it will serve to glorify God and exalt His attributes.

Gog and Magog.

In the OT (Ezekiel 38-39) Gog, the prince of Magog, which is Syria, was the last great oppressor of the people of God. The armies were huge, the actual persecution last only a brief time and the armies of Syria experienced a surprising and unexpected defeat.

So Gog and Magog become good symbols of a final great worldwide opposition to God and His people in Revelation. The end will end with some sort of cataclysmic war.

This season is depicted as short, mercifully brief, and only as long as God allows. Satan will gather the nations of the earth in a great act of final resistance and defiance, in a great battle against God that is called Armageddon. We have seen this battle three times in Revelation.

This is the Armageddon of the sixth bowl in Revelation 16:14ff.

Revelation 16:14, 16 For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ...
16 And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

This is the war between the seven-headed, ten-horned beast and the Lamb in Revelation 17:

Revelation 17:14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.

This is the same war described in Revelation 19 between the beast and the kings of the nations and their armies against the rider of the white horse.

Revelation 19:19-21 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

These visions all describe in different ways the last great battle of history. These have to be three visions of the same event, not three different chronologically sequential events. In each of these visions the defeat is depicted as complete and final.

Gog and Magog aren't just the next earthly super power, or even some great alliance of superpowers. They are called from the four corners and are as many as the sand of the sea, this is all the nations, all who follow Satan.

Satan's final hurrah will be great, brief, and suddenly defeated with him finally cast forever into the eternal lake of fire. His final deceiving will lead to a final defeat.

His defeat will come at the hands of God Himself, the supreme most high God. God is a consuming fire and His fire will fall directly from heaven. God will do it.

Satan's punishment fits his crime. He committed an infinitely heinous crime against an infinitely holy God and so his punishment will be infinite. Satan's downfall will include a punishment that will last forever and ever. Satan will die forever. Christ will live forever.

The Great White Throne Judgment, vs. 11-15.

Thrones symbolize power and authority, the ability to exercise judgment. This is the great white throne which has no equal and against which there are no challengers.

The majesty and glory of the one on the throne will be like nothing ever seen before. Even the heavens and the earth will melt away before the revealed glory of God and of Jesus Christ revealed in the fullness of His resurrection glory. You have often heard me refer to God's glory as outshining ten thousand suns. The sun won't even be a candle before God.

Where this puts the throne no one knows, on earth as some think, or in heaven, we aren't told.

This is the end of the created order, the end of the earth as we know it. Is it because of the moral purity and grandeur of God? Does that which is infected with sin and corrupted and polluted flee from His holy presence? Is this the replacing of what is shakable with what is unshakable?

Hebrews 12:26-29 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

After the defeat of Satan, the great and final judgment will take place. There will only be one great and final day of judgment before the throne of God. This vision mirrors a vision in Daniel.

Daniel 7:9-10 "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.
10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

We have been anticipating this day since Revelation 4 and 5 when we saw visions of God and the Lamb on the throne in all power, authority, majesty and strength.

The sequence of events on that last, great and final day are described like this in Scripture.

Jesus will descend from heaven with trumpet fanfare and the angels and the souls of all the saints who have died.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

The bodies of dead believers will be raised from their graves and be transformed into the likeness of Jesus in glorified bodies.

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

The souls of dead unbelievers will be summoned from hell and the bodies of unbelievers will be resurrected from their graves and reunited with their souls. The final judgment will take place and at the end believers and unbelievers will enter into their final eternal home.

The Great Day of Judgment.

It is an inescapable day, inevitable, unavoidable, inexorable. There is one throne, one judgment and all must come. We all have an appointment already written down to come before the throne.

II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Two things will happen on this day.

First, books will be opened.

One book is the book of human accountability and human responsibility, books of all our deeds, our words, our thoughts. In them is written everything we have done.

What a terrifying thing to stand before the judge who have perfect knowledge of everything, who can read our minds and see the depths of our hearts.

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the

thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

God has soul piercing knowledge of every idolatry, every lie, every deception, every hypocrisy, every excuse, every neglect.

For centuries, millennia even, people have thought God was blind or inattentive to the injustice and the suffering. It turns out He has seen and heard every single one and has written every one of them down, none are forgotten.

Romans 14:10-12 For we will *all* stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” 12 So then *each* of us will give an account of himself to God.

One writer summed it up this way (William Hendriksen): “Every deed which a man has ever performed, every word he has ever spoken, every thought he has ever conceived, every ambition he has ever cherished, and every motive that has ever prompted him to action or to inaction, will be laid bare, for himself and for all to see.”

All will be judged according to what we have done. No one will be saved because of their works. If a person has not believed in Jesus Christ and has not trusted in the blood of the Lamb, then what is in the books will condemn him.

If a person has believed in Jesus Christ and has trust in the blood of the Lamb, then what is in the books will confirm that he is saved. They are the fruit, the proof that the tree was good, made good by Christ and His imputed righteousness.

Deeds reveal the heart. You can judge a tree by its fruit and you can judge a heart by its deeds. The heart that is saved by grace through faith will be full of deeds of faith. God will judge and God will show His judgment to be just based on the deeds.

God knows us intimately and personally, He will take full notice of us and reward us for every good deed, for every act of faithfulness. Everyone’s reward will be revealed, the degrees of rewards and the degrees of suffering.

Everyone will see the glory of God as the perfect judge who is perfectly just and righteous.

Second, it will be a day of separation, of making judgments, of separating the sheep and the goats.

This will be done with the *Lamb’s Book of Life*. This is the book in which Jesus has written all the names of those who are His. The names were actually known by Jesus and written down a long time ago, before the foundations of the earth.

Revelation 17:8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been *written in the book of life from the foundation of the world* will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

There are no mistakes in this book, no names crossed off, no erasures or white out, no names added in. Jesus knows His own sheep and He never loses any of them.

John 10:3 The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

John 10:27-29 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

John 6:39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

Two announcements will be made:

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

For the righteous that day will be a day of peace, waiting only to hear their reward. Their Judge is none other than their Savior and Lord.

We are just as guilty and have committed all the same sins as the unrighteous, the only difference is we didn't trust in ourselves for our salvation, but trusted in the blood of the Lamb. His obedience covers our sins, His power makes us holy, His righteousness clothes our nakedness and our unrighteousness.

For us the fire of God's all-consuming wrath fell on Jesus at the cross. Jesus was the one who cried out on our behalf, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus descended into hell so we wouldn't.

Implications and Applications.

This day is cause for trembling and terror for God's enemies and cause for assurance and worship for God's friends.

Matthew 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Those who don't have the righteousness of Christ imputed and imparted to them, will only have their own righteousness to offer on judgment day, and their own righteousness is as filthy rags, it is completely inadequate to exempt them from the second death.

The first death has power over everyone on earth, sinners and saints, but the second death has power only over those who have not claimed as their own and trusted in the righteousness of Christ.

John Piper sums it up this way, "The love of God provides escape from the wrath of God by sacrificing the Son of God to vindicate the glory of God in forgiving sinners. That's the Gospel of Jesus Christ - the essence of Christianity."

That's the good news, the whole truth concerning the eternal and infinite holy, righteous God and creator of all that is.

Romans 11:33, 36 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.