

Insights In Prophecy

Unlock The Ancient Mysteries Of Daniel & Revelation

BIBLE DISCOVERY SERIES

LESSON 29

Lesson 29

THE MILLENNIAL DELAY OF JUDGMENT

Read Revelation 20

- Consider The Activities Of The Millennial (1,000 Year) Period
- Examine The Location Of The Lake Of Fire

The Hebrew prophets often wrote about the conquering Messiah, the Day of the LORD, and the Kingdom of God as one single climactic event. However, John the Revelator introduced a new period not written of prior to the Apocalypse—a one-thousand-year period. Twice in the Scriptures the writers spoke about the concept of God's delay in reference to a "thousand years": Psalm 90:4, 13 says, "For a *thousand years* in



Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night... Relent, LORD! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants." Then, Peter repeated God's perspective on time: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the LORD a day is like a *thousand years*, and a *thousand years* are like a day. The LORD is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:8-9.

John's disclosure of time—what looks to be a postponement of the Great White Throne Judgment, the restoration of the new earth, and arrival of the New Jerusalem—can clarify an otherwise baffling series of ancient Bible predictions. The apostles anticipated the conquering Mashiach in their day, and were surprised by the delay. Why? Because the Scriptures spoke repeatedly of Messiah's victory, while the evidence for the suffering and sacrificed Christ lay in obscure passages, as a veiled mystery of God.

Once Yeshua's victory was gained at the cross, and with His resurrection and ascension, He might have immediately returned in power to defeat Satan and take His rightful kingdom. However, God's plan included a two-thousand-year postponement that many more individuals might be saved, based on the reality of His great sacrifice at Calvary. Should we then be surprised that a further suspension will push back the final sentences of reward or punishment?

Much like the other visions of Revelation, chapter 20 is not entirely chronological. For example, in Revelation 21:2 John sees the New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven; then, at verse 10, he repeats the movement of the City of God to earth, but with added details. Therefore, we must reconstruction the events of chapter 20 that brings the one thousand years to an end, the descent of the New Jerusalem, the Great White Throne Judgment, the final battle and fiery demise of sinners and the old earth, the recreation of Planet Earth, and eternal peace.

1. What is symbolized in the key, great chain and Abyss (Revelation 20:1-3)? _____

Satan is bound for one thousand years. The Devil is judged as unfit to reign any longer by the Heavenly tribunal (Daniel 7:9-10, 26), and he will be stripped of his status as prince and power of the air (Ephesians

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6:12), but will be bound alive and alone that he might ponder his wickedness and where his decisions have brought him.

John learns that Satan is the "dragon" and "ancient serpent". The *cunning wisdom* of the serpent is an attribute that distinguishes the serpent from other creatures (Genesis 3:1). Jesus recommended to His disciples to be as wise as serpents (Matthew 10:16). A snake bites with poisonous venom through his mouth and fangs, and his heart is under the throat and very near his head. Maybe for this reason God told the Serpent in the Garden of Eden, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will *crush your head*, and you will strike His heel," Genesis 3:15. The low and lonely dust would be the hated serpent's trail, and the dark desolate Abyss will be the Serpent's cursed abode.

Revelation 12:9 calls the Devil a Serpent, both because he cloaked himself in the body of a charming serpent when he seduced the first woman, and because he will hide his intentions once again through the mouth of an enchanting world ruler during the counting periods of the appointed time (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). He has a serpentine disposition, being a subtle, crafty and dangerous enemy to mankind, and he will mix truth with error as he did in the Garden; and, thereby march multitudes of souls head-long into eternal judgment.

The Dragon signifies very "old serpents grown with age to a prodigious size" with wings, says the Cruden's Concordance, which are often found in uninhabited places, in the ruins of cities and in rubbish (Isaiah 13:22; 34:13; Jeremiah 9:11). In Revelation 12:9 Satan is not only called the Dragon for his great strength and bloody cruelty against believers, but also to signify the Serpent grown to full strength of evil. He is so enormous that he can give others authority to rule (Revelation 13:2-4), and push the entire world's governments in the direction he chooses; his tail overthrows a third of the righteous angels in battle and flings them to their demise (Revelation 12:3-4; 7-9); and yet, he cannot fully overcome Messiah, whose heel he can only bruise. Satan is seized and bound for one thousand years. His release will be only short-lived, for the Dragon's head will eventually be crushed (Isaiah 27:1; Isaiah 51:9), and his fiery demise is foretold—"a horrible end and [he] will be no more," Ezekiel 28:17-19.

2. Although sketchy in details, what did John connect to the one thousand years as the primary reason for the lengthy delay (Revelation 20:4)? _____

A group will be given authority to judge, just as the twenty-four elders described earlier (Revelation 4:4).

Paul spoke of how saints would eventually judge; that is, make decisions in behalf of both mankind and angels (1 Corinthians 6:2-3), and thereby render important verdicts. Yeshua also promised His disciples "twelve thrones" from which they would be "judging the twelve tribes of Israel," (Matthew 19:28).

3. A specific group is described as being resurrected back to life who "reigned with Christ a thousand years," (Revelation 20:4). Who are they? _____

This are the victorious overcomers of the last days; more specifically, the martyrs of the appointed time identified as having been "beheaded" for having endured against Antichrist's worship, image and mark to follow the "testimony of Jesus" (recorded in the book of Revelation—Revelation 1:1-3; Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 3:12-15).

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4. The prophet Daniel writes of a resurrection at the onset of the "time of distress," the Great Tribulation (12:2-3). Who are included? _____

Daniel speaks of "many"—both saints and sinners—coming to life from the dusty earth, which also represents a limited group.

Revelation 1:7 says that "every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him." Evidently, Messiah's most cruel adversaries will be raised to life temporarily to see His triumphant return. Revelation 7:9-14 also identifies an enormous group of all nationalities—a "great multitude"—as coming out of the Great Tribulation, taken up to stand triumphant in the heavenly Temple. These victorious martyrs are found in Heaven before the seven plagues are poured out (Revelation 12:10-11; 15:1-8).

5. The "rest of the dead" remain in death's sleep—those not included in the "first resurrection." How long? (Revelation 20:5)? _____

Outside of the last-day martyrs, no other believers are identified as being included in the first resurrection in Revelation 20. Messiah will call whom He chooses for the first resurrection. The evidence shows that all remaining saints and sinners who have been laid to rest in the course of human history will not come to life until the one thousand years are finished.

6. What is the blessing for those who are raised in the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6)? _____

The second death has no power over them; their destiny has already been sealed.

This "great multitude" of victors cannot be condemned or judged unworthy of God's kingdom at the Great White Throne Judgment, for they have already proven themselves by faithful witness as "holy" and worthy to become "priests of God and of Christ" in His holy Temple above. This group of leaders has a position of priestly honor in God's Sanctuary: "they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple," Revelation 7:14-15. "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father—to Him be glory and power for ever and ever!" Revelation 1:5-6. Yeshua confirms there will be diverse positions from the least to the greatest among the redeemed in the Kingdom, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 5:19.



7. Hebrews 9:27 depicts the progression of life, death and judgment. How? _____

When life ends there is death's sleep, then resurrection to judgment for either eternal punishment or eternal reward. God knows how to reserve the fallen angels and wicked men for the long-foretold day of judgment to be punished (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; 2 Peters 2:9). We all must appear before the judgment seat of God to give an accounting of our actions and decisions (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

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Death Is Called Sleep In The Hebrew Scriptures

~ Daniel 12:2, "Multitudes who *sleep* in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

~ John 11:11-14, "After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen *asleep*; but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "LORD, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been *speaking of his death*, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."

~ 1 Corinthians 15:51, "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all *sleep*, but we will all be changed."

~ 1 Thessalonians 4:13, "Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who *sleep in death*, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope."

~ Ephesians 5:14, "This is why it is said: "*Wake up, sleeper*, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

The Millennium Debate

Although a popular view, Revelation 20 is silent about a reign of Jesus over Planet Earth during the one-thousand-year millennium. Almighty God will release His trumpet and vial plagues that will crush earth's ecological system. Global wide earthquakes will level cities, and islands will disappear. The sea and fresh water will be polluted. The whole planet will be brought to devastation and ruin, to be finished off one-thousand years later by a worldwide fire, which will need a total makeover.

A few probing questions need to be asked: 1) if the one-thousand-year Messianic reign occurs on earth, the Scriptures would speak about a global restoration at the beginning of the millennium. 2) Imagine how beautiful the planet would be by the end of one thousand years of Messiah's rule. Why would God then destroy His great handiwork by fire at the end of the millennium? 3) If Jesus promised that He would go and prepare a place for His followers—the New Jerusalem, and He would come again (at His return) and *receive us to Himself*, that where He is (in Heaven) there we would also be (John 14:2), why would He relegate the saints to a war-torn, dusty planet *without* the New Jerusalem for one thousand years?

The New Jerusalem is the hope of believers (Hebrews 11:10, 16; 13:14). So real is this hope that according to God's Word the faithful are called "aliens and strangers on earth," Hebrews 11:13, and they long for a "better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city [New Jerusalem] for them," Hebrews 11:16. "An inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept [reserved] in Heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time," 1 Peter 1:4-5.

At the Second Coming of Christ the world will be bombarded by fire and brimstone. Jeremiah saw the vast devastation that would be left behind (4:23-29), and he wrote, "I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens, and their light was gone... I looked and there was no people; every bird in the sky had flown away... all the towns lay in ruins before the LORD, before His fierce anger."

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The General Resurrection

Once the one thousand years have expired, Messiah, the New Jerusalem and her inhabitants will slip through the portal and come down from Heaven to this dark, desolate planet; then, lit with God's glory the universal resurrection will occur. At the voice of God the sea—great bodies of water—will expel all the dead found in them, and hell (Greek: "hades", meaning the "graves") will release their lifeless victims—all the dead of all ages who had not come forth in the first resurrection will rise up from their dispersed abodes by the life-giving power of Messiah's loud voice (Revelation 20:13).

8. Who are included in this general resurrection (John 5:28-29)? _____

Those who have done good and those who have done evil will rise. Jesus taught there would be a future judgment for separating the righteous and unrighteous in the parables of the tares and the net (Matthew 13:37-43; 47-50).

9. How does Paul support the idea of a general resurrection of both good and evil persons (Acts 24:15)?

The Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:11-12 takes us to the point of Judgment at the end of one thousand years. The dead of all ages and of all nationalities will be raised to life to stand before the Judge of the Universe to receive those things done during their lifetimes. We do not have the details as to how this is all accomplished, whether those who are righteous are raised first followed by the wicked; we do not know; nor, do we know the length of time involved for this process. We do not know how God will judge those who lived before the person of Jesus Christ was revealed, as opposed to those who came after the life, death and resurrection of the Son of God. Only God knows the heart of each man, woman and child.



10. What types of books are opened for the evidence to be presented (Daniel 7:10; 12:1; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 21:27; 22:19; Exodus 32:32; Psalm 69:28; Psalm 139:16; Malachi 3:16)? _____

Both the Lamb's Book of Life—with the names of the redeemed, and the Books of Remembrance, focused on the thoughts, decisions and actions done in this lifetime. For the repentant, the sins of each individual have been blotted out (Acts 3:19); but, for the unrepentant, and because of their unbelief, their sins will remain in the books, which will condemn them.

11. The two groups will be separated (Matthew 25:32-41). How? _____

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Then He will also say to those on the left

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hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,'" Matthew 25:31-34, 41. As we have learned in previous lessons, the ashes are eternal, but not the fire.

12. What additional obligation does Christ expect of those who know Him personally, that will be considered when it comes time for the judgment (Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8)? _____

13. What happens to the individuals whose names are not found in the Book of Life, along with death itself and all graves (Revelation 20:14-15)? _____

All sinners will be destroyed, and death will be eliminated forever, never to enter paradise, our homes or families again in God's eternal kingdom.

Graves will never be excavated again. There will be no torturing fire in the universe, as many believe, where anguishing fires burn and blister unsaved loved ones for billions and billions, upon billions of years, where Satan and demons rule. How do we know? "Surely the Day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that Day that is coming will set them on fire, says the LORD Almighty. Not a root or a branch will be left to them... then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things, says the LORD Almighty," Malachi 4:1-3.

The Angry Mob & Satan's Doom

The Great White Throne Judgment brings all men and women to their knees. "Every knee will bow before Me, says the LORD, every tongue will confess to God... each... will give an account of himself to God," Romans 14:11-12. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father," Philippians 2:10-11. The righteous will inherit the City of God, while the wicked will be left out. This vast multitude of all ages, spread out around the globe as the sand of the sea, know they have been condemned. They see the redeemed in the city, the gates are closed, and they are outside. They scream in sorrow for all they have lost forever, and cry with weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Satan sees his opportunity to prepare for one last massive battle for supremacy, and will deceive the nations to help (Revelation 20:7-10).



He will marshal all the armies of rebellion under his banner, and through them endeavor to execute his plan. By rejecting faith in the Creator and His salvation they arbitrarily

accepted the side of the rebel. They are ready to receive his suggestions and to do his bidding. His words and wonders inspire to raise a vast army who follow him to the City of the saints, the New Jerusalem. The innumerable mob, including kings, generals and valiant armies who once conquered nations, believe that they might be able to overthrow the City and save their souls.

The armies surround the Holy City, ready for the onset of war, then the command is given, and they surge forward. They march across the breath of the earth, but fire will come down from heaven and devoured them (Revelation 20:9). "Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire... The LORD is angry with all nations; His wrath is upon all

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their armies. He will totally destroy them, He will give them over to slaughter," Isaiah 9:5; 34:2. "On the wicked He will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur," Psalm 11:6.

The earth itself will be vast lake of fire. "But the Day of the LORD will come... The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare... that Day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness," 2 Peter 3:10-13. "The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men," says 2 Peter 3:7.

It's possible that many are destroyed in a moment, while others suffer for a longer period. Everyone is punished according to their works. Satan's punishment will no doubt be more severe than those he has deceived. He, along with Antichrist and the False Prophet, in poetic terms, "will be tormented day and night for ever and ever," Revelation 20:10. No escape from the power of the flame will be possible; their doom is certain.

The prophet Ezekiel speaks directly to Satan about his demise: "Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So *I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more,*" (28:17-19).

"For the LORD your God is a consuming fire," Deuteronomy 4:14; Hebrews 12:29. The full penalty of the God's Law will be visited, and the demands of justice will be met. "What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an *utter end of it*. Affliction will not rise up a second time," Nahum 1:9 (NKJV).

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CONSUMING FIRE

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