**THE MILLENIUM**

**REV. 20: 1-15**

We are now entering into an arena of scripture that is the most talked about, preached on, the most controversial and divided, along with the most diverse opinions about it, and, if I do say so, the most erroneously interpreted and applied portion of the entire book of Revelation. The interpretations of Revelation 20 are legion, and they are just as imaginary and fantasy-driven as any portion of the entire Bible. Many books have been written, proposing solutions for its varied and astonishing vision, which was given to the apostle John in exile on the isle of Patmos. The majority of the books written on this 20th chapter are an endeavor to explain the meaning of the 1000 year period described as the “Millennium”, simply because it deals with a 1000 year period of time. We will begin our study of this 20th chapter of Revelation by briefly outlining the many points, events and directives set forth within the chapter. They will form the basis and objective and guide for our interpretation.

 V1. An angel came down from heaven ----- with a key to the bottomless pit ----- and a great chain in his hand.

 V2. The dragon (serpent, devil and Satan) was bound for 1000 years.

 V3. He was cast into the bottomless pit and it was sealed ----- so that he could deceive no more till the 1000 years were finished ----- then he would be loosed a little season.

 V4. I saw thrones --- they that sat on them were given judgment authority --- I saw souls with their heads cut off --- for their witness of Jesus and the word of God --- they had not worshipped the beast, nor his image --- neither did they have the mark of the beast --- and they lived and reigned with Christ for 1000 years.

 V5. But the rest of the dead --- lived not again until the end of the 1000 years --- this is the first resurrection.

 V6. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection --- the second death has no power over them --- they will reign with Christ for one thousand years.

 V7. When the 1000 years are finished --- Satan (dragon) shall be released from the pit.

 V8. The dragon will go out to deceive nations everywhere --- Gog and Magog --- and gather them together to battle.

 V9. These nations with the dragon went out on the earth --- and compassed the camp of the saints --- and fire came from God and devoured them.

 V10. And the devil (adversary) that deceived the nations and people --- was cast into the lake of fire --- where the beast and false prophet (already) are (19:20 --- and (the devil, dragon) shall be tormented day and night for ever.

 V11. Then I saw a great white throne --- and (I saw) him that sat on it --- from whose face the earth and heaven fled away --- and there was no place found for them (earth and heaven).

 V12. I saw --- the dead --- small and great ---stand before God --- and the book(s) were opened --- and another book was opened which is the book of life --- and the dead ---were judged --- according to their works --- out of those things which were written in the book(s).

 V13. And the sea --- gave up the dead that were in it (17:15) --- and death and hell (6:8) delivered up their dead --- and they were all judged according to their works (I know thy works).

 V14. And death and hell (6:8) --- were cast into the lake of fire --- this is the second death.

 V15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life --- was cast into the lake of fire (which is the second death).

With this brief outline of the chapter before us, I want to next turn to some of the many views that have been written about this chapter. I believe that it will help us to focus on the real truth of the chapter if we can see some of the very unrealistic doctrines and concepts that are believed by many theologians concerning the 1000 years and what it means.

I have had the occasion to read and review a large number of books in relationship to the prophecies of Revelation, especially the 20th chapter. Some of them along with their views are as follows.

 1. Dr. John MacArthur, on page 115 of his book “Revelation”, predicts a 1000 year, literal, earthly kingdom, ruled by Christ, including what he sees as Satan’s final rebellion and a great white throne judgment scene.

 2. Clarence Larkin: “The Book of Revelation”. He predicts a period of 1000 years when Christ shall reign, literally, on earth. He sees 2 resurrections: one of the righteous, and the other for the wicked, 1000 years later. He says there will be no influence or temptation by Satan on those living in the 1000 year period. He also says that during this time there will be universal peace until Jesus comes. (Keep in mind that he has said that Jesus is already on the earth, reigning during the 1000 years).

 3. Dr. Jack Van Impe: “Revelation Revealed”. He predicts the most beautiful, peaceful and rewarding age this world will ever know, the millennium, or 1000 year reign of Christ. He will sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem. The bottomless pit is a temporary prison where Satan is incarcerated for 10 centuries in order that peace, prosperity, happiness and holiness may exist on earth during this millennial reign of Christ. He arbitrarily changes the wording of verses 4 and 5 to make it fit his agenda.

 4. Charles C. Ryrie: “The Basis of the Pre-millennial Faith”. P145. The millennium is the period of 1000 years of the visible, earthly reign of Christ, who, after his return from heaven, will fulfill during that period the promises contained in the Abrahamic, Davidic and new covenants to Israel (and) will bring the whole world to the knowledge of God, and will lift the curse from the whole creation during that period of time.

 5. Dr. David Jeremiah: “Escape the Coming Night”. Since Dr. Jeremiah expresses the view of a vast majority of so-called “evangelical-Christians, I will quote from his book at length, beginning on page 211.

A pre-millennialist believes that Christ will bodily return to earth before the 1000 year reign begins. He will establish his kingdom and set up his throne in the rebuilt city of Jerusalem. When we pray the Lord’s prayer, we say, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”. His will cannot be done on earth until Christ’s enemies have been defeated and Satan has been bound. (So Dr. Jeremiah is not doing God’s will now?) Premillenialists believe that God’s promises to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be kept. He guaranteed that the Jews would return to their land and continue there until eternity.

Why do we need a millennium? The millennium is needed as a reward for the people of God. The millennium is needed to redeem creation. Another reason for the millennium is to reemphasize man’s depravity.

Life in the millennium will be peaceful. This will be the time when the prophecy of Micah about beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks will come true. (There will be) no more cults, no heresy, no astrological forecasts. Everyone will unite in one passion to know God. It will be a time of prosperity. No more unpaid bills, inflation, taxes, or overextended credit cards. It will also be a time of perpetual health. We will not have aches and pains or need for doctors. Most of all, it will be a time of great personal joy. It will be Christmas morning as a child, water on a parched tongue, music to a troubled soul, a warm fire on a cold day. Pure wonder and delight! Can anyone show me where these predictions are found in Revelation 20?

John also saw all the tribulation saints who had not received the mark of the beast, united with their bodies and reigning with Christ. So the dead in Christ and the believers who were caught up in the rapture, as well as the tribulation believers, will be rulers during this time. We are not told how they will rule or over whom they will rule, but perhaps the Lord has some plans for those who receive more crowns at the judgment seat of Christ.

I believe King David will be “vice-regent” to the Lord during the kingdom age. It is thrilling to know that he will have a place of such importance in the kingdom.

During the millennium, believers will continue to populate the earth. However, their offspring, living in an ideal environment with King Jesus as the loving, benevolent ruler, can still rebel against God, and some will. (Above he said EVERYONE would unite in one passion to know God; now he says some will rebel).

Whenever a believer dies, his soul and spirit go immediately to heaven to be with Jesus. It doesn’t make any difference where his body goes. At the rapture, when Jesus returns in the clouds for his own, the believer’s body will be reunited with his soul and spirit in a wonderful, strong, pain-free form. Seven years later, at the end of the tribulation, the martyred saints of the tribulation and the Old Testament saints will be raised from the dead. What about the other saints of the New Testament? This is the first resurrection. When Jesus comes back to set his feet upon the Mount of Olives to reign during the Millennium, there will not be one body of a believer, from the time of Adam, until that time, still in the grave.

The resurrection takes place one thousand and seven years after the first resurrection. This is when the unsaved dead from Adam until the end of the millennium are raised and their tormented souls are united with their bodies. The souls and spirits of the unbelievers have been having some agonizing times until now, but at this stage they will appear before the final judgment at the great white throne. All the unsaved dead will be standing there. I believe there are at least five books that will be opened on that fateful day. First, the book of conscience; second the book of words; third, the book of secret words; fourth, the book of public works, and finally, the last one is the book of life. This book is an amazing record. It will contain the name of every single person born into the world. If, by the time a person dies, he has not received God’s provision of sacrifice to remove his sin his name will be blotted out of the pages. The condemned will die a second time. From the second death, there will be no resurrection.

The thoughtful reader, seeking for truth at any cost, is bound to see what a hopeless mass of discombobulated, irreconcilable words this amounts to. There is not a chance to harmonize these beliefs with pure and absolute truths from all over the Bible. So far as the text of the 20th chapter is concerned, he does not even attempt to explain the various components therein.

 6. Brian L. Martin: “Behind The Veil of Moses”. I will not offer a quote from his book because I consider it completely incoherent, unworthy of consideration, consumption and incomprehensible. In fact, to borrow his own statement, he says: “He has no definite position on the subject”! This, notwithstanding many pages consumed in reaching that obvious conclusion.

All of the foregoing writers predict the 1000 years sometime in the future, with no beginning or ending offered by any of them and it is doubtful any two of them could agree on any specific time frame or on any of the events they project as a part of it. This “prediction process” puts them in the category of being prophets of future events, which is a doubtful possession.

There are many other writers who have offered their views on the 1000 years as follows:

 a. Don K. Preston says the 1000 years **ended** in 70 AD. This means, therefore, that it had to begin in 937 BC. What possible grounds is there to suggest such a time frame for a prophecy in the book of Revelation that was not even written until about 96 AD.

 b. Brian L Martin says the 1000 years begins in **30 AD and ends in 70 AD.** This must be called new math, since it surely will not conform to accepted math. It is a mere attempt to force the 1000 years into some theological agenda and it will not work. He is the same one that also said, in the same book, that he had no definite position on this subject. That much is true.

 c. James Russell in his book, “Parousia”, says that the 1000 years began in 70 AD, and at the time he wrote the book in the 19th century, he says it still had not ended, and will continue on without any termination point. Then he explains it by calling this a **“definite, indefinite period of time.** That is like saying a negative is a positive. There is no wonder that the church-going public is either completely turned off by this kind of theology, or else makes no effort whatever to become conversant with such teachings.

Beyond all of these, I have also researched the works of the following: Darrell Brock: “Three views on the Millennium and Beyond”; Millard Erickson: “Contemporary Options in Eschatology”; Clarke’s Commentary; Jameson-Fausset & Brown commentary; Halley’s Bible Handbook; Grant R. Jeffrey: “Apocalypse; International Bible Encyclopedia; Pictorial Bible Dictionary, and others.

The only common thread that links all of these references I have listed is that, none of them offers a verifiable, coherent, complete and scripturally accurate exposition of the entire 20th chapter of Revelation, with its many requirements and events. Is there any wonder, therefore, that their application of the 1000 years is so utterly and completely without foundation and purpose. The idea, which all of them project, that the 1000 years is a time of wonder, marvel, great peace and a time when it will be easier for those living during that time to be saved, is a preposterous absurdity which is not one time mentioned in the entire chapter. Today is the day of salvation, and there is no better or easier time. Further, it will require the same commitment, sacrifice, surrender, endurance, testing, trials, fleshly temptations and dealing with an unsanctified, depraved, corrupt human nature during the 1000 years as at any other time in all history. To teach otherwise impugns a fair, impartial God who has done everything possible for the salvation of all mankind alike. There is no better or easier way of salvation than Christ provided at calvary , nor any better time for Jew or Gentile to be saved nor any easier or preferential season for one above another.

Having spoken about the many writers that preach 1000 years of peace, when there will be no temptation to hinder people from obtaining salvation, and having already indicated that this is not the manner of interpretation we expect to follow, I would like to give credit to one other work in my possession that I feel deserves far more recognition than has ever been given to it.

I have in my possession an old, two-volume work, written by Dr. William E. Brown, at the turn of the 19th century, providing a chapter by chapter, verse by verse treatise on the entire book of Revelation. I consider it the most coherent, provable and reliable work I have ever read on Revelation. Dr. Brown was a medical doctor turned preacher, who consumed 26 years in researching and writing his two books. While there might be some limited areas where we may not completely agree with him, they are areas that do not negatively affect the outcome of the interpretation of the book. His work is scholarly written; researched beyond any other book of its kind; supported by references and history in abundance; follows a single pursuit of interpretation throughout the entire book without rambling from agenda to agenda; and finally, embraces the entire vision being dealt with as well as harmonizes it with the rest of the Bible. Taken on balance, there is no other work on the book of Revelation that even remotely compares to his, in my view. I have learned much from his work, for which I am grateful, and I do not hesitate to commend the work to anyone desiring to more fully understand the book of Revelation. Unfortunately the book is not in print now and I know of no place where copies can be found.

**RECOGNIZING SYMBOLISM.**

In the process of interpreting this chapter, it is imperative to first ascertain: (1) Is it symbolic or literal; (2) If it is literal, how do you reconcile the unexplainable? (3) If it is symbolic, what do the symbols represent? Our position is that it is symbolic and therefore we must identify the symbols, their meaning and why it cannot be literal.

Throughout the book of Revelation, we have constantly followed the principal of symbolism, with historical accounting for the events they represented. We shall follow that same rule for chapter 20, with the certain conviction that it is impossible to interpret the whole chapter literally without total confusion resulting.

With this in mind, we begin our application of this chapter with the opening statement, **V1, “And I saw an angel come down from heaven”.** We have found similar expressions throughout the book. For example: chapter 19, “I heard a great voice of much people in heaven”; chapter 18, “I saw another angel come down from heaven”; chapter 17, “There came one of the 7 angels and talked with me”; chapter 16, “I heard a great voice out of the temple”; chapter 14, “and I heard a voice from heaven”; chapter 12, “There appeared a great wonder in heaven”; chapter 10, “I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven”, and more.

It cannot be said that all of these references are of the atmospheric heavens. Neither will it work to apply all of them to some eternal, celestial city, which we have imagined as having streets of gold, mansions and endless life with total peace and happiness, because that simply will not fit the requirements of the texts. To do so would encounter enormous and insurmountable objects that put the whole vision in disarray. We believe these expressions, like all other elements of the many visions of the several chapters we have covered, are symbolic. Otherwise you have monstrous beasts, wars, irreconcilable time frames and other requirements that simply have no explanation outside of a symbolic one.

We have found so far that the **“heaven”** where these many events are taking place, refers either to the “ecclesiastical” or else the “political” heavens, as each respective text may require. This does absolutely no violence to the scriptures or the vision as not interpreting them in a symbolic manner would.

This angel has **“the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand”.** This term, “the bottomless pit” is mentioned 7 times in the Bible, with all of them in the book of Revelation. This immediately signifies its symbolic use. In fact, it is impossible to have a literal bottomless pit, without having a hole all the way through the earth, which idea offers no interpretive value. This leaves only one alternative explanation for a “bottomless pit”. It has to symbolize a system or institution, governmental or ecclesiastical or both, which has no bottom or foundation in the mind of God. We have discussed just such a system in our study of the 17th chapter and otherwise. We found that the teachings and practices of the Roman Orthodox Church of the dark-ages, were without scriptural foundation; in a word, bottomless. Of all the books written about the “millennium”, there is never any explanation as to what this “bottomless pit” actually represents. To attempt to do so would cause the writers so much confusion that they would not be able to proceed with the usual literal application of the 1000 years. Conversely, if they were to apply the bottomless pit symbolically, then they are forced to use that same principal with the rest of the chapter.

We covered (in ch. 17) many very basic religious practices and foundations of the Roman Church, none of which were, we believe, based upon a fair, thorough analysis of scripture. They are, therefore, bottomless, and we believe that this constitutes the “bottomless pit” of chapter 20. The “angel” then, is the “agency” of this system in charge of the bottomless pit of Roman creeds, to wit, the Holy See of the Roman Church. The key and chain to the pit symbolizes the authority, power and control of a system of doctrines and teachings that are without scriptural foundation.

V2. **“And laid hold of the dragon, the serpent, which is the devil and Satan”…..** Since most commentators interpret this “dragon”, etc. as the (literal) “devil” off somewhere in a burning hell, it will cause agony to their soul for me to interpret it in a symbolic fashion. In spite of this contention and agony, I proceed undaunted, knowing that no other method will satisfy the text involved. We would never be able to give a sensible application for this dragon’s arena of activity without charging God with utter foolishness and being completely incapable of answering the astonishing scenes of the dragon’s persona. So I think it would be helpful for us to take a look at the use of the “dragon” in other places.

The use of the term “dragon” in the New Testament is only in the book of Revelation. It is not in the plural there. We believe that a careful analysis will reveal that there is only one dragon that appears in many instances throughout the book. Following are uses of the term dragon in the book of Revelation.

Chapter 12:3. A wonder in heaven, a great red dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns. (If there is but one dragon, this is a description of it that must be answered).

V4. His tail drew 1/3 of the stars from heaven and cast them to the earth.

V7. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (in heaven?) and the dragon fought and his angels. (Does anyone really believe that there was a literal war among literal angels in that place called “heaven”?)

V9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan: and he (the dragon) was cast out into the earth.

V13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman who had brought forth the man child.

V15. And the “serpent” (dragon) cast out of his mouth water as a **flood** after the woman.

V 16. The earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

V17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.

Chapter 13:2. And the dragon gave him (the beast) his power, and his seat, and great authority.

V4. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast.

V11. Another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

Chapter 16:13. And I saw the unclean spirits like **frogs** come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Chapter 20:2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. (How do you take a literal chain and bind a spirit being, if this dragon refers to a literal devil from the “pits of hell”, as we are told.

Now we will proceed with our (symbolic) interpretation of this dragon, and the rest of the vision. I am definitely not alone in the symbolic application of the dragon, the serpent, the devil and Satan of this chapter. No less of an authority than Dr Adam Clarke, in his commentary on the dragon, offers the following application.

*(This quote is from his commentary on chapter 12:9. His commentary of chapter 20:2, refers the reader back to this). “And the great dragon was cast out. By the terms devil and Satan mentioned in this verse, Pareus, Faber, and many other commentators, understand literally the great spiritual enemy of mankind. But this view of the passage cannot be correct, from the circumstance that it is the dragon which is thus called. Now, if by the dragon be meant the devil, then we are necessarily led to the conclusion, that the great apostate spirit is a monster, having seven heads and ten horns; and also that he has a tail, with which he drags after him the third part of the stars of heaven. The appellations, old serpent, devil, and Satan, must therefore, be understood figuratively. The heathen power is called that old serpent which deceiveth the whole world, from its subtlety against the Christians, and it’s causing the whole Roman world, as far as it was in its power, to embrace the absurdities of paganism. It is called the devil, from the beginning; and it is also called Satan, which is a Hebrew word signifying an adversary, from its frequent persecutions of the Christian Church. The dragon and his angels are said to be cast out, which is more than was said in the preceding verse. There mention is made of his being found no longer in heaven, or on the throne of the Roman empire, here he is entirely cast out from all offices of trust in the empire; his religion is first only tolerated, and then totally abolished, by imperial power. This great event was not the work of a reign; it took up many years for it had to contend with the deep-rooted prejudices of the heathen, who to the very last endeavored to uphold their declining superstition. Paganism received several mortal strokes in the time of Constantine and forward through succeeding emperors and years. In 395,the dragon may be considered to have been cast into the earth, that is, in a state of utter subjection to the ruling dynasty of Christian emperors”.*

Next a quote from W. E. Brown, on the use of the dragon as the emblem or standard of the Romans. *”In the eighth chapter of the prophet Daniel, God represented the kingdom of the Greeks by a he-goat, for no other apparent reason that this, that it was the national military standard of the Grecian monarchy: We may therefore expect the pagan Roman empire is called a dragon on a similar account. In confirmation of this point it is very remarkable that the dragon was the principal standard of the Romans, next to the eagle, in the second, third, fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. Of this we have abundant evidence in the writings of both heathens and Christians. Arrian is the earliest writer who has mentioned that dragons were used as military standards among the Romans.*

*Another writer, Vegetius, on the Roman military standards, says: The first standard of the whole legion is the eagle, which the aquilifer carries. Dragons are also borne to battle by the draconarii. As a legion of consists ten cohorts, there were, therefore, ten draconarii to one aquilifer: hence from the greater number of draconarii in an army, the word signarii or signiferi, standard-bearers, came at last to mean the carriers of the dragon-standards only, the others retaining the name of aquiliferi. The heathen Roman empire is called a red dragon, and, accordingly, we find from the testimony of ancient writers, that the dragon-standards of the Romans were painted red.*

If we now add to the above quotes, some additional thoughts on a few verses wherein “dragon” is found, along with observations of his activity, etc. the thoughtful student will be convinced of the symbolic use of this term dragon.

12:3. A wonder in “heaven”, a great red dragon, with 7 heads and 10 horns. Is this what we can expect to see in “heaven”, or is it a symbol of an elevated power?

12:4. The dragon’s tail drew one third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. Has the “literalist” considered this enormous sight: a dragon with a tail long enough and strong enough to dislodge one third of all the literal stars and cast them to the ground? Have they considered what God might do in response to such a disruption of the lumination of the universe, if they are literal stars?

12:7 “And there was war in heaven”. And Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. Is this what we can expect in “heaven”, a continual quarrel and fighting among the “angels” there? Is that the kind of a place it is?

12:9. The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan: and he was cast out into the earth. I have actually read behind theologians who interpret this to be that (mythical) devil, cast out of heaven by God into hell, because he revolted against the Lord’s rule in heaven. And this, they say, is where the devil originated from. He was once a white-robed angel in heaven, which became “carnal”, “jealous” and angry, and started a fight and got booted out. Is there anyone who really believes such nonsense? I hope not.

12:15-16. And the “serpent” cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the “dragon” cast out of his mouth. Here we have a dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns and a tail that can reach to the ends of the universe (assuming it is literal), and in addition to that it can spit a flood of water out of his mouth. Then to add to this improbability, the earth opens up its mouth, and swallows up the flood. Does anyone know where this mouth of the earth is and is there a flood of water in it now?

20:2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. If God is literally binding this dragon so that there can be a thousand years of “peace” on the earth, so that those living then will have a better chance to be saved since there will be no temptation from a literal devil (dragon), can anyone explain why God did not bind him in the Garden of Eden? That would have prevented all of the ensuing sin, chaos, sorrow, wars, etc., and all people would have lived for the Lord. The very idea is ludicrous. Maybe my proposition that this vision of chapter20, like the rest of the book, is given in symbols and must be interpreted accordingly in order to maintain harmony, is not too far off after all.

I have emphasized several thoughts relative to the activities of the dragon that should convince us that, in every chapter, the dragon is symbolic. If you try to project it into some future event of one thousand years, the problems with the rest of the text are insurmountable. We have also provided information that describes this dragon as being symbolic of “Pagan Rome”. The question this raises then, is, will Pagan Rome fit the text of all the verses which make references to the dragon? Let us make an application to see.

 12:4. Stars of the political Roman world fell to the “earth”.

 12:7. A battle raged between Paganism and the church.

 12:9. Paganism was cast out of its ruling position.

 12:15. Pagan, barbaric invaders tried to uphold ancient Romanism.

 12:16. These invaders (Pagans) were absorbed into the church.

 13:2. Paganism yielded its power and authority to the “Holy Roman Empire”.

 20:2. Paganism was chained and bound in the bottomless pit of Roman Orthodox Christianity for one thousand years, after which it came out of this binding to be its old, Pagan, infidel, godless self again.

V3. **And cast him into the bottomless pit and set a seal upon him.** That is, Paganism was cast into (forced into) the bottomless pit of Orthodox Roman religious teachings, which were without scriptural foundation. (See lesson on ch. 17).

This concept of the dragon (the one and only dragon of the entire book of Revelation) being cast into the bottomless pit, symbolizes the imprisonment of the pagan, dragonic spirit of Rome, being forced into the now-ascendant Roman Orthodox church. Roman paganism was the dragon and the Roman church-state system was the bottomless pit into which it was bound and held for one thousand years. Throughout the book of Revelation, we have seen many visions and symbols, portraying the fall of Pagan Rome, with the pagan population then “converted” (forced to embrace Roman Catholic Orthodox religion), and remaining subjected throughout the dark ages.

**Verse 3 continued says: “That he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled”.** And so it was, that the “daily sacrifice”, spoken of by Daniel, concerning Pagan Roman religion ended, and the abomination that maketh desolate (Roman Orthodox Christianity) was set up. As Edward Gibbon declared, the entire elimination of the centuries-old pagan religion, is of such phenomenal consequence that it is one of the significant moments in world history. Not because Paganism was a thing of such great value, but because its elimination was such an extraordinary occurrence in the history of mankind. In about 380 AD, emperor Theodosious systematically set out to remove paganism from the Roman world. Following him, in 529 AD, emperor Justinian established laws against all religion except the Roman-church-state religion, or the Orthodox Roman Catholic Christianity. Thus began the 1260 year period, referred to in Daniel chapters 7 and 12, and Revelation chapters 11, 12, and 13; the time of the beast with 7 heads and 10 horns and the time of “Mystery, Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth”.

Following Justinian’s laws enthroning Roman Catholicism above all other religions, there was a period of approximately 260 years during where the imperial authority succeeded his dominion. That is to say, since Justinian actually reigned from Constantinople and not Rome, the “westernization” of the empire was not complete. It was during this time that the power of the papacy continued to increase in its claims, dominion and control. Justinian had recognized and vested in the “Holy See” of Rome, an elevation of “religious” authority over “civil” authority. This ascendency and usurpation of power was frequently verbalized by various popes, who claimed that god intended for the “spiritual” authority to transcend “civil” authority. In fact, the papacy came to see its jurisdiction as being not only above civil authority, but also as taking the place of God on earth. As some Roman Catholic officials declared, that what the pope ordered, God could not change.

It was through this ascendency of papal power and the near universal subjection, even suppression, of people under it, that ultimately the “western Roman” imperial crown came to be revived. However, it was a crown that, for all intents and purposes, was subject to papal approval. It was in the year 800, when Charlemagne was the reigning potentate, that he sought the approval of the pope which he felt would lend more credence and authority to his crown. While Charlemagne visited the papal church on Christmas day, in 800 AD, the pope came up behind him and --------------, let the historian Gibbon describe the scene for us.

 “It was after the Nicene Synod, and under the reign of the pious Irene, that the popes consummated the separation of Rome and Italy, by the translation of the empire to the less orthodox Charlemagne. They were compelled to choose between the rival nations. The difference of language and manners had perpetuated the enmity of the two capitals (Rome and Constantinople); and they were alienated from each other by the hostile opposition of seventy years. In that schism the Romans had tasted of freedom, and the popes of sovereignty. The name of Charlemagne was stained by the polemic acrimony of his scribes; but the Conqueror himself conformed, with the temper of a statesman, to the various practices of France and Italy. In his four pilgrimages or visits to the Vatican, he embraced the popes in the communion of friendship and piety; knelt before the tomb, and consequently before the image of the Apostle and joined without scruple, in all the prayers and processions of the Roman liturgy. Would prudence or gratitude allow the pontiffs to renounce their benefactor? Had they a right to alienate his gift of the Exarchate? Had they power to abolish his government at Rome? The title of patrician was below the merit and greatness of Charlemagne; and it was only by **reviving the Western Empire that they could pay their obligations or secure their establishment.** By this decisive measure they would finally eradicate the claims of the Greeks; from the debasement of a provincial town, the majesty of Rome would be restored: the Latin Metropolis, and the conquerors of the west would receive their crown from the successors of St. Peter. The Roman church would acquire a zealous and respectable advocate; and, under the shadow of the Carlovingian power, the bishop might exercise with honor and safety the government of the city. In his fourth and last pilgrimage, Charlemagne was received at Rome with the due honors of king and patrician: Leo was permitted to purge himself by oath of the crimes imputed to his charge: his enemies were silenced, and the sacrilegious attempt against his life was punished by the mild and insufficient penalty of exile. On the festival of Christmas, the last year of the eighth century, Charlemagne appeared in the church of St. Peter; and to gratify the vanity of Rome, he had exchanged the simple dress of his country for the habit of a patrician. After the celebration of the holy (?) mysteries, Leo suddenly placed a precious crown on his head, and the dome resounded with the acclamations of the people, “long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God (?), the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans”! The head and body of Charlemagne were consecrated by the royal unction; after the example of the Caesars, he was saluted or adored by the pontiff; his coronation oath represents a promise to maintain the faith and privileges of the church; and the first-fruits were paid in his rich offerings to the shrine of the apostle. He had acknowledged that the imperial title was the object of his ambitions, and a Roman synod had pronounced, that it was the only adequate reward of his merit and services”.

By the crowning of Charlemagne as emperor of the Holy Roman empire, and by his previous conquests of various pagan territories and forcing them to accept Roman Catholicism, the “dragon” was “bound” and cast into the bottomless pit. The Holy Roman Empire lasted until the time of Napoleon, a period of 1000 years.

It was at the end of 1000 years, that the dragon (serpent, devil, Satan) would be loosed out of his prison for a little season. This would mean that the dragon that was cast into the pit, must be released from it 1000 years later. We have described paganism as the beast that was cast into the pit, consequently it must be this same beast (of paganism) that escapes from it.

In chapter eleven, we learned of God’s two witnesses, the word of God, the Old Testament and the New Testament, which testified in sackcloth for 1260 years. Chapter 11:7, tells us that when they shall have finished their testimony, **“the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war with them”.** This beast in chapter eleven, we learned, was the spirit of godless infidelity that erupted from the clutches of Romanism and outlawed everything pertaining to Christianity, including God the Bible and also the Roman Catholic Church. In their place this (pagan) spirit enthroned the “goddess of reason”. The Constituent Assembly of France enacted this in 1791; one thousand years before (791) Charlemagne had conquered and forced into Catholic baptism all of the unbelievers under his domain. There was only one dragon in all of Revelation and only one was cast into the bottomless pit, so only one (the same one) could ascend out of that pit, as required by Revelation 20:3 and 7.

The popular theology on this binding of the dragon for 1000 years, predicts a period of time when mankind will not be tempted by the “devil”, and therefore will be a time of great peace. Dr. Jack Van Impe projects it as the most marvelous time ever known to man. Further it is proposed that, since the devil is bound, that it will be so much easier for men to believe on Christ and be saved. Thus, God will extend to some lucky mortals, who per-chance live in this era, a time when they are not tempted by the devil to sin, which also means they will turn to Christ in wholesale numbers. Never mind that the rest of the human family who happened to live in another era, fraught with every conceivable temptation, snare, influence and obstacle, seeking at every moment to keep them away from Christ and his kingdom, and that they must mortify and crucify the deeds of their flesh, who also must endure those temptations and struggles in a warfare not known to be in the 1000 years of “peace”. Just consider those poor souls who lived through the dark ages and had no choice but to endure trials, tests, temptations, oppositions, not to mention inhumane persecution and death, and compare that to this so-called 1000 years of peace, where none of this sorrow is present. I suppose modern prophecy gurus would tell us that they just happened to live in the wrong era of time. Just a little further down the road of time, God, they declare, is going to take a literal chain, and bind up a literal devil; throw him into a literal pit with no bottom in it; stop all of the temptations for 1000 years, just so a select group whose birthday just happens to occur during this time, can have a better and easier chance to be saved. And if you are born in the year 990 of the 1000, you had better hurry and accept Christ, because just as soon as the 1000 years are finished, God, who in his omnipotence could keep this so-called literal devil bound for the duration of time, just arbitrarily and capriciously ends this gravy train for salvation, and zaps the unfortunate ones born after the 1000 years with all manner of horrible temptations again. And if these words appear to you that I am making light of, even mocking such an inconceivable, unjust notion as 1000 years of peace, when it will be an easier time to be saved because the devil is chained, then your perception is exactly right.

It is very obvious from the entire Bible and the preponderance of all scripture that there is absolutely no better, easier or special day of salvation for 1000 years, while others like Job have to tough it out the best they can. Jesus has provided for the salvation for “whosoever will” by the way of the cross. He that climbs up any other way is the same as a thief and a robber. Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. He that endureth (trials and tests) unto the end shall be saved. To every church age in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, success was always granted to “he that overcometh”. Never, ever, does the Bible teach an easy-street salvation. Think of it like this: When the Lord comes and you receive eternal life, and you sit down with Job, Jeremiah, Paul and all the Christians martyred for their faith and they tell you their courageous life story, and you, because you happened to live in that 1000 year period, have to tell them that you “had a ball” with not one single temptation. Theologians will no doubt respond that it was “because of the wonderful grace of God” that you had it so easy. Perish the thought! All the grace of God was poured out at calvary and it is a religious disgrace to impute such a travesty upon the plan of salvation that was bought, not only by the suffering of Christ, but the courageous, faithful sacrifice of millions of others, both Old and New Testament. I am amazed, even appalled, that learned theologians would embrace such a patently unscriptural interpretation without even any apparent attempt to reconcile all of the requirements of the 20th chapter, and harmonize them with the context of the chapter itself as well as the obvious teachings of the rest of the Bible.

We will now address the outline of the text to find the answer that fits with the purview of the rest of the chapter. We will use a brief explanation, since the binding and imprisonment of the dragon has been established and will be the guide for the rest of the chapter.

V4. **“I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God”.** This refers to the martyred saints within the time frame of the 1000 years. This would put it within the dark ages of the church and the time of Roman church persecution of all who did not conform to her teachings. That surely does not sound like a time of “peace” as is believed by many. These **had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands.** In other words, they had not bowed their knees to “Baal” They did not have in the belief of their minds nor the works of their hands the religion of the Roman church.

**“And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”.** “They”, the ones beheaded as witnesses for Christ, reigned with him during the 1000 years. This is the same sense of reigning with Christ that is applicable to every Christian, who, as participants in his kingdom, reign with him in righteousness. It does not convey some idea of a restored kingdom someday, where Christians will be ruling over dominions appointed them. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and the concept that there will be a literal kingdom to reign over is not a part of the divine plan, ever. Besides that, these were beheaded, or martyred for Christ.

V5. **But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.** Most commentators of this chapter claim that there will be two resurrections: some say they will be close together, while others say they will be 1000 years apart. They generally use this verse to establish that. Why not just read what the verse really says; THE REST OF THE DEAD LIVED NOT AGAIN UNTIL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE **FINISHED. THIS (AFTER THE 1000 YEARS ARE FINISHED), IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION.** If we accept this scriptural statement, we have no choice but to interpret that the “first resurrection” was after the 1000 years are finished. That does not leave room for a resurrection “before” the 1000 years. And this puts modern theology in chaos. There is no such teaching in the scripture as a first and second resurrection, that is, two resurrections; especially with one designated for the righteous and one for the unrighteous. Even if you think of the resurrection of Christ and then the later resurrection of the Christians at his return, it does not make “two resurrections”. Both Christ and they that belong to Christ, are the product of one resurrection: Christ the first fruits and afterwards they that belong to Christ at his coming. Some contend that if you speak of a “first resurrection” that it necessitates a “second” resurrection, implying that the expression “first” embraces the idea of a second. If that were true, then a “second” would embrace a “third” and there would be no end after that.

It is, however, correct to refer to a “first resurrection”, if that statement refers to being “quickened together with Christ” in the sense of a spiritual conversion and awakening, then to live and reign with him. And this is precisely what God brought to mankind in the founding of the gospel of salvation: as Paul said to the Ephesians, 2:1, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Likewise, it is, we believe, exactly what Revelation 20:5, is referring to.

This same reference is further emphasized in V6: **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.** We have previously shown that the second death refers to the “**death of that system of death”**; namely the overthrow of the Roman church-state system, which was described in chapter 6:8, as “death”, which finally met its death or overthrow in the time of the French Revolution. Thus, this second death has no power over those who lived and reigned (and suffered and were martyred) with Christ during the thousand years.

V7. **And when the thousand years are expired, Satan (dragon) shall be loosed out of his prison.** At the ending of the thousand years, the end of the Holy Roman Empire, through the power unleashed by the French Constituent Assembly, which completely dissolved the power of the Roman yoke and replaced it with what came to be known as “infidel France”. The dragon or infidel, pagan, godless power was let loose on the world, or more particularly the church.

V8. **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.** There are many records of history following the release of the infidel, godless spirit out of the pit where it had been bound for a thousand years, which documents beyond any question that this spirit of infidelity went out on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about. It has not decreased in our time either. It first spread across Europe, then into universities and from there it covers the earth. I will not consume time to verify the presence of an atheistic, infidel spirit in the world. The sincere student already knows this only too well. As to “Gog and Magog”, they are symbols borrowed from Old Testament writings and used here to emphasize the battle that rages between “truth and heathenism”.

V9. **And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.** This is the same fire or judgments that we witnessed in chapters 17-19, where we learned that the “sword came out of the mouthof him that sat upon a white horse. After the overthrow of the Roman system at the end of the 18th century, we saw the word of God spread to all the world, which, on the one hand brought chaos and ruin to “Babylon the Great”, but on the other hand spread throughout the world in mighty revival everywhere.

V10. **And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are.** We have addressed this lake of fire in a separate lesson to which you are referred here.

V11. **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.** This is a classic example of commentators reading only part of a verse, that part that suits their agenda. So much emphasis is placed on this “great white throne”, while no mention is ever made of the astounding statements about the “earth and heaven fleeing and there being no place found for them”. It is an obvious impossibility for this fleeing of the earth and heavens to be interpreted in a literal manner. If that is true, then it is also impossible to interpret the “great white throne” as some literal future gathering for a judgment bar. A look back to verse 4 will reveal these same thrones with a different connotation to them that will help us realize that they refer to the “judgment of the great whore” (ch. 17).

V12. **And the book(s) 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 book(s) according to their works.** Dr. David Jeremiah says that he believed that there were at least 5 books to be opened at that so-called future judgment day. Again, it might help to simply read the text at hand. It says that books (plural) were opened; and then another book was opened. Then it says that the dead were judged according to those things which were written in the books (plural); not by those things in the book. The book of Revelation is made up of “books” of several visions, churches, beasts, kingdoms, etc. In chapters 2 and 3, which covered all 7 of the churches of Asia, symbolizing the 7 historical ages of the entire church age, and providing many things by which those who live under that age would either be blessed or judged, we have the guidelines by which every life would be judged by their works. The other book that was opened was the book of life; the word of God. It is always there to control all actions of any kind in any age by any person. These scriptures are not talking about a book where someone has written down all the names of every person who ever lived on earth, to read from in some future judgment gathering. When you die, your life has been lived, and thereby judged according to the works thereof.

V14-15. These verses bring to us again, that which we have covered already in a separate lesson, to which you are hereby referred for further review.

This brings to an end this controversial chapter, which has been the object of much speculation and fantasy applications. I hope that we have at least raised your awareness to the symbolic nature of the lesson of this chapter, and the total impossibility of making a literal application of it. If we have done that, we will consider it successful. In closing I repeat something we pointed out at the beginning of our study of the book of Revelation and have repeated many times since then, which is: EVERY EVENT OF EVERY CHAPTER OF THE ENTIRE BOOK OF REVELATION IS RESTRICTED TO THE CONFINES OF THE 7 CHURCHES OF CHAPTERS 2 AND 3. If we follow this rule, it will keep us from straying into an unknown future, and making improbable applications of something in a literal fashion, which was meant to be symbolic.

**SERMON NOTES ON THE MILLENNIUM**

**REV. 20:1-15**

**1. THE MILLENNIUM --- 1000 YEARS -- OF WHAT?**

**2. USE THE PRINTED LESSON TO IDENTIFY ALL VERSES IN THE CHAPTER.**

**3. REVIEW POPULAR THEOLOGY ON THIS CHAPTER.**

 **A. BRIEFLY 1-4; READ ALL OF DR. JEREMIAH’S; NOTE OTHER REFERENCES.**

 **B. DR. W. E. BROWN.**

**4. “AND I SAW AN ANGEL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN”.**

**5. “THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT”**

**6. “THE DRAGON, SERPENT, DEVIL, SATAN.**

 **A. REVIEW USES OF THE DRAGON.**

 **B. READ FROM CLARKE AND BROWN ON THE DRAGON.**

 **C. REVIEW SOME INCONSISTENCIES OF A LITERAL DRAGON.**

**7. THE DRAGON IS PAGAN ROME.**

 **A. WHICH WAS BOUND UNDER PAPAL ROME FOR 1000 YEARS.**

**8. THE DRAGON WAS BOUND FOR 1000 YEARS; READ GIBBON’S HISTORY OF THIS PERIOD.**

**9. AFTER 1000 YEARS THE DRAGON IS RELEASED FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT.**

**10. DISCUSS THE NATURE AND EVENTS OF THE 1000 YEARS.**

 **A. ?? A TIME OF PEACE; A BETTER TIME TO GET SAVED; A TIME OF PROSPERITY & HEALTH.**

**11. I SAW THE SOULS THAT WERE BEHEADED --- DURING THE 1000 YEARS!**

**12. THEY (BEHEADED SOULS) LIVED AND REIGNED WITH CHRIST FOR 1000 YEARS.**

**13. THE FIRST RESURRECTION?**

 **A. THEY THAT HAVE PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION.**

 **B. THE SECOND DEATH CANNOT BOTHER THEM.**

 **C. DESCRIBE THE SECOND DEATH.**

**14. THE “LOOSING” OF”SATAN” (DRAGON) AFTER 1000 YEARS.**

**15. V8. AND SHALL GO OUT TO DECEIVE THE WORLD (AGAIN?).**

**16. V9. AND FIRE FROM “HEAVEN” DEVOURED THEM.**

**17. V10. THE DEVIL (DRAGON) WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE.**

**18. V11. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE. DR. JEREMIAH SAYS 5 BOOKS WILL BE OPENED.**

**19. EXPLAIN THE BOOK(S); AND THE BOOK.**

**20. THE DRAGON, BEAST AND FALSE PROPOHET ARE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE.**

**21. REMEMBER: EVERY EVENT IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION OCCURS WITHIN THE TIME FRAME OF THE 7 CHURCHES OF CHAPTERS 2-3.**