

CHAPTER 20

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years

were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

6 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.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 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.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11. 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.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books 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 books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

CHAPTER 21

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare,

and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcidony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to

shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

CHAPTER 22

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of

the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6. And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be

unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright

and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

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

20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTS

Chapter 20 deals with the millennium. The word “millennium” means “thousand years” in Latin. There are some sincere Bible students who deny that there will be a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth. They prefer to “spiritualize” the Old Testament prophecies and apply them to the church today. But we believe there will be a literal 1,000 year Kingdom on earth.

Verses 1-5 give us a brief view of what is happening just before the Kingdom Age. We must remember that the Battle of Armageddon is now over, and the Beast and False Prophet have been cast into hell. Christ now lays hold of that old serpent, Satan, and casts him into the bottomless pit. Some of Satan’s followers are already chained (II Peter 2:4 and Jude 6), but now the old serpent himself is going to be taken.

The Beast came out of the bottomless pit (chapter 17:8) and was cast into hell, but Satan’s final judgment is not yet come. At this point, there are no saved people left in the realm of the dead; all have been raised to reign with Christ. This is known as the first resurrection. It extends from the Rapture of the church (I Thessalonians 4:13) to the resurrection of the saints given in Revelation 20:4. All who are raised in the first resurrection are saved people. They will not experience the second death, which is hell.

The millennial Kingdom will be a divine rule of heaven upon earth. Christ will rule with a rod of iron, permitting no injustice or sin. Jerusalem will be the center of the Kingdom (Isaiah 2:1-4), and the disciples will reign with Christ (Matthew 19:28). Israel will be back in her land, sharing the glory of Christ, her rightful King. There will be peace on earth among men and animal creation (Isaiah 11:7-9; 54:13,14). Each man will be suited to the best job, and there will be perfect efficiency and joy. Of course, since there will be human beings on earth (apart from the church and resurrected saints with glorified bodies), children will be born with sinful natures. There will be, at the close of the millennium, many people who will give outward obedience to Christ but who have never submitted to Him from their hearts. This is one of the main purposes of the millennium—to prove conclusively that mankind cannot be changed, even under a perfect rule in a perfect environment. For, at the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be able to gather together a huge army to rebel against Christ! If men are not changed by the grace of God, nothing else can change them! After the millennium, we have the final battle. Satan will be captured and eternally consigned to the lake of fire. Note that the Beast and the False

Prophet are still suffering in hell a thousand years after being taken. There is no way to get out of hell; it is a place of eternal torment!

In chapter 20:11-15, we see the final judgment. John sees a throne of judgment. It is great. All the sinners of history stand before it. It is white. It speaks of the unchanging holiness of God. He will not be a respecter of persons, and there will be no place for the lost to hide! The Judge on the throne is Jesus Christ (John 5:22). Today He is the Saviour of the world. In that day, He will be the righteous Judge.

My friend, there will be no opportunity for the sinner to argue his case at the Great White Throne Judgment when the books are opened and the facts are revealed. Sinners will stand speechless before Christ (Romans 3:19). God will not weigh the good and the bad—He will pronounce every lost sinner condemned. All those who share in the second resurrection must face the second death—eternal hell. Satan and sin have been judged. Human rebellion has been put down. Now God can usher in the new heaven and earth—eternal bliss for the people of God.

The theme of the final two chapters is stated in chapter 21:5, “Behold, I make all things new.” While it would be interesting to go into the many details of these chapters, it is, of course, impossible. The new heaven and the new earth are prepared for the redeemed of God. The present creation is not what God intends it to be. It is groaning and travailing under the bondage of sin. But one day God will usher in His new creation, and we who are born-again will enjoy perfect liberty and fulness of life for all eternity!

The final message of the Book of Revelation is, “I come quickly.” The word “quickly” does not mean “in John’s day.” The word suggests “swiftly” and means that, when the things we have been studying in this great book begin to occur, there will be no delay. We do not know when Christ will appear, and it behooves us all to be ready.

Thus ends the last book of the Bible, the book of last things. We can end these comments in no better way than to echo the prayer of our hearts today—“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

HYMN FOR THE DAY

THE LORD IS KING!

Freely adapted from Josiah Condor, 1789-1855

As we reflect on the joys, failures, and blessings of the past year, we can rejoice in the truth that we are personally related to the Lord Jehovah, who is king of heaven and earth and will reign forever. Some day

we shall see Him and begin to enjoy His eternal presence.

This vibrant hymn stirs us to praise and gratefulness for all of God's leading in the past year. We will never "murmur at His wise decrees" if we remember His promises and reflect on how good and great He is. We are also reminded by this triumphant text that we must submit ourselves in humility to God's will in our lives, trusting "His tender care" for us. Then we are to sing and shout His praise throughout each day! What a victorious life this suggests for us as believers as we approach another new year.

The text of this fine hymn is an adaptation of one written earlier by Josiah Condor, a respected non-conformist lay preacher in the Congregational church of England. The music for this text was arranged from a tune found in *The Sacred Harp*, a collection of early American sacred music.

*The Lord is King!
Lift up, lift up thy voice—
sing His praise, sing His praise!
All heav'n and earth before Him now rejoice—
sing His praise, sing His praise!
From world to world the joy shall ring,
for He alone is God and King;
from sky to sky His banner fling—
sing His praise, sing His praise!*

*The Lord is King!
Let all His worth declare—
great is He, great is He!
Bow to His will and trust His tender care—
great is He, great is He!
Nor murmur at His wise decrees,
nor doubt His steadfast promises;
in humble faith fall on thy knees—
great is He!*

*The Lord is King!
And bow to Him ye must—
God is great, God is good!
The judge of all to all is ever just—
God is great, God is good!
Holy and true are all His ways:
Let ev'ry creature shout His praise;
the Lord of Hosts, Ancient of Days—
God is great, God is good!*

*The Lord is King!
Throughout His vast domain
He is all, all in all!*

*The Lord Jehovah evermore shall reign—
He is all, all in all!
Through earth and heav'n one song shall ring,
from grateful hearts this anthem spring:
Arise, ye saints, salute thy King—
all thy days, sing His praise!*

BIRTHDAY TODAY

GERALDINE FRAZIER

ON THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1738

THE BIRTHDAY OF LORD CORNWALLIS.

1880

THE BIRTHDAY OF GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL.

1949

JACK HYLES WENT TO A TAVERN TO FIND HIS FATHER.

He found him and took him to a little country church where he pastored. He attended the watchnight service and the services on the Lord's Day, January 1, 1950. These were the only two sermons Jack Hyles ever preached to his father.

1944

JACK HYLES WAS CALLED TO PREACH.

He was called to preach on December 31, 1944. He was at a watchnight service at the Hillcrest Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. He was sitting beside his girl friend (who is now Mrs. Hyles). He felt the call of God as he had not felt it before. He surrendered his life to preach the Gospel. He was not a very gifted young man, and not very talented, but he gave what he had to Him. Praise His name, He has used it.

ATTEND A WATCHNIGHT SERVICE TONIGHT.

Why not attend the watchnight service tonight. What a good way to see the old year out and the new year in.

ON THIS DATE IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

1953

Hulan Jack sworn in as Manhattan Borough president.

Spingarn Medal presented to Paul R. Williams for his achievements as an architect.

Hymn of the Week

“WHEN I COME TO THE EDGE OF ETERNITY”

by Charles Weigle

From the pen of Charles Weigle has flowed hundreds of wonderful songs—some very well known, such as “No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus” and “I Have Found a Hiding Place.” Some are known in a more limited way. One such song is the subject of this story.

Dr. Weigle, during earlier, more active years, was traveling through the West on his way to conduct or participate in some Christian services. He stopped by the famous Grand Canyon to spend some time seeing the magnificent sights of that natural wonder. As he walked to the very edge of the great wall he thought of how it must feel to come to the very edge of eternity. He eased back, about ten feet, and sat down. He began to write verses, the first of which started: “When I come to the edge of eternity..” This has proven to be a favorite song among many people who love the songs of Charles Weigle.

The writer predicts that this song will increase in popularity until it becomes an even greater favorite across America.

This is just another example of how many songs are born out of an everyday experience or happening. This has been the case for hundreds of years and will, doubtless, continue until Christ comes again.

*When I come to the edge of eternity,
Near to the land of light,
What joy it will be, there my Saviour to see,
As Heaven unfolds to my sight.*

Chorus:

*There'll be no shadows, for morning will come,
Sunrise awaits there for me;
There'll be no shadows when I leave for home,
Where Jesus my Saviour I'll see.*