

BOOK OF REVELATION, WEEK 9
CHAPTERS 19 AND 20

The battle between the Dragon, the Beasts and the Lamb takes a turn. Where before (chapters 12-16) the attention focused on the relationship between the agents of the Dragon and people of the earth, the perspective shifts in chapters 17-20, retelling the same conflict and victory of the Lamb with greater description on the Lord and the Church on earth. These chapters feature a thousand year reign, describing the authority of the Saints over the Dragon and clarify the final battle, when the second and total judgment takes place.

SALVATION HISTORY COMES TO AN END, TAKE TWO

When it comes to the action that is described in verses 17-20, we may sense several echoes and similarities to events that we have already seen and which have taken place. This provides us with a good example of the movement of Revelation and how it does not depict a sequence of chronological events, but retells a part of the story while offering different details, shifting the focus of attention and moving the story of salvation history forward a little.

Chapters 12-16	Chapters 17-20
13:1 Beast comes out of the sea with 7 heads and 10 horns	17:3 There is a woman riding a scarlet beast which has 7 heads and 10 horns
14:1-2 The victorious lamb stands on Mt. Zion	17:14 The beast will fight the lamb and the lamb shall overcome it.
14:8 The angel announces that Babylon the great has fallen.	18:2-7 The defeat of Babylon the harlot is announced and described in greater detail.
16:12-16 The beasts and their armies gather together at the place called Armageddon.	19:19 The beast and the kings of the earth gather to fight the Son of King of Kings, Lord of Lords and Unnamed One who sits on the White Horse
Their defeat is not described.	19:20 The two Beasts are thrown into the fiery lake of sulphur.
12:7 The Dragon is cast out of heaven by Michael and his angels.	20:1-3 An angel, holding the keys to the Abyss seizes the Dragon and locks him into the Abyss for 1,000 years
12:9 Describes the devil as the one who deceives/led astray.	20:3 So that the Dragon could no longer lead the nations astray.

CHAPTER 19

CELEBRATION IN VICTORY

Following the condemnation of Babylon, the multitude in heaven celebrate by shouting acclamations to God. But these are not empty acclamations. Rather, they address intentional aspects of God and what has just occurred with the destruction and judgment placed on Babylon.

✘ Salvation, Glory and Honor:

Belong to God and no other. The Beast's claims, and promises of the harlot were and are empty.

✘ His Judgments are true and just

✘ The Harlot corrupted the earth

✘ The blood of His servants has been avenged, through her.

To avenge indicates a reasonable and just response.

Recalling that the harlot represents worldly sin, the life of the martyrs are avenged through the defeat of sin and the worldly powers who took their lives.

✘ Smoke will rise forever and ever

The judgment is permanent and will not be overturned.

✘ Worship is given in response to God rescuing the world from corruption

WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB

All that has taken place has been in order to prepare the Bride for the wedding.

JUDGMENT COMES TO 3 GROUPS

The two beasts and their allies (19:11-21)

Follows another (they follow the Dragon) ---- Desires power and wealth

Satan (20:1-10)

Directly opposes God ---- Desires to be worshipped

the Dead and Death itself (20:11-15)

Are misled ---- Sees only immediacy

1,000 EXILE OF SATAN AND REIGN OF THE HOLY ONES

WHEN IS THE 1,000 REIGN?

Williamson points out that while some of the early Church Fathers anticipated a literal 1,000 year period, most and the most influential Fathers considered the defeat of Satan as having occurred through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The period also indicates a symbolic period of a 'time' before which there will be a final confrontation between God and Satan.

✘ Andrew of Caesarea: Satan was bound when Christ defeated him with the Cross

✘ Satan was confined to the hearts of unbelievers

✘ Indicates the triumph of God over sin and vice

✘ Some interpreted this as leaving the Gentile nations being subject to Satan:

Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 10:30; Eph. 2:1; Col. 1:13

✘ St. Augustine: The primary interpretation accepted by the Church

Represents an overall change in the Spiritual situation that began with the first coming of Christ and will end with his second coming.

✘ This represents a period of the Church, which will end with the final confrontation

Why would God let Satan loose after a period of time?

Does this provide an opportunity for conversion, that being imprisoned for a time and witnessing the work of salvation and freedom enjoyed by God's people without his influence, Satan will have a final option to concede his argument or remain obstinate? In the end, however, he will not concede and will be thrown into the lake of sulphur.

“The Catholic Church rejects millenarianism, interpretations like dispensationalism that expect a visible earthly reign of Christ before the final judgment. The Church also rejects the view that Christ's kingdom will come to pass through a human political program, through a ‘secular messianism’ (CCC 676), or even through the ‘progressive ascendancy’ of the Church (CCC 677). Rather, the Kingdom will come ‘only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil,’ and descent of the new Jerusalem from heaven (CCC 677).” (CCSS Revelation, p. 331, Peter S. Williamson)

1ST AND 2ND RESURRECTION

1ST RESURRECTION:

Describes the resurrection of the saints to heavenly life

Some experience life immediately

Blessed is the one who experiences the first resurrection

A TIME FOR THE REIGN OF THE SAINTS

✘ The Saints enjoy power during the age of the Church

✘ Over the last decades, devotion to the saints has decreased significantly. Many have also noted a decrease in the number of miracles, raising a question if the effectiveness and ability for the intercession of the saints has waned, or effectively bringing a period of the reign of the saints toward an end.

2ND RESURRECTION:

Describes the general resurrection when all will be judged

✘ Provides another indication of Purgatory

✘ Suggests there are those who die and are not immediately raised, but sleep until the time of the final judgment

✘ Indicates the need and importance of prayers for the dead (2 Mac. 12:40-46)

✘ Final and eternal

✘ The final Judgment is described in 20:11-15 and includes both those whose names are written in the scroll(book) of life and those thrown into the pool of fire.