

Chapter 20

Rejoicing over Babylon's Fall and Conquest of the King of Kings (19:1-21)

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20.1 Rejoicing Over the Fall of Babylon (19:1–10)

1. **Babylon's Fall and the Lamb's Marriage:** Revelation 19 features two connected themes. First, it looks back at the judgment of Babylon. Second, it looks forward to the marriage of the Lamb. The evil city must fall before the marriage can happen. Earlier in the book, people on earth cried over Babylon's destruction. Now, voices in heaven praise God for it. The rule of the evil harlot is finally over. Because of this, the pure bride can now enjoy the earth.
2. **The Four-Part Heavenly Celebration:** The first part of this heavenly celebration has four steps. First, a large crowd praises God for judging the harlot. Second, this same crowd cheers Babylon's defeat. Third, heavenly elders and living beings agree and offer their own praise. Fourth, a voice from the throne calls all of God's servants to praise Him. This is the most serious and formal song in the entire book of Revelation. It is deeply solemn because God is finally judging the ultimate enemy of His people.
3. Revelation 19:1–10 concludes the detailed description of Babylon's fall given in chapters 17 and 18. While chapter 18 shows humanity's deep sorrow over the fall of Babylon, this passage focuses on heaven's response. An angel invites heaven to celebrate as evident from the four **hallelujahs** in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6. This portion is considered as the most formal and solemn of all the heavenly songs in Revelation because it celebrates God's final judgment over the ultimate enemy of His people. The heavenly rejoicing unfolds in four stages:

4. **Outline:**

- (a) Multitude celebrating the judgment of harlot (1-2),
- (b) Same multitude celebrating the judgment of Babylon (3),
- (c) Twenty-four elders and four living beings praising (4),
- (d) A voice from the throne calls all of God's servants to join the worship (v5).

Revelation 19:1

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!"

1. **The Climax of Judgment:** The first song praises God for judging the evil harlot. John heard a loud voice from a massive crowd in heaven. They shouted [Hallelujah](#) to celebrate God's salvation, glory, and power. This moment is the grand finale of his earlier vision about the harlot's defeat.
2. **An Angelic Choir:** John heard a sound that resembled a huge, loud crowd. This group is most likely a massive choir of angels. In the book of Revelation, angels usually lead the songs of thanksgiving. They often sing back and forth to praise God.

3. **The Meaning of Hallelujah:** The word [Hallelujah](#) appears four times in the New Testament. All four times are in this specific chapter. It comes from a Hebrew phrase that means [praise the Lord](#). In the Old Testament Psalms, it is often used to praise God when He punishes the wicked.
4. **Echoing the Psalms:** The song begins with a direct call to praise God. Later parts of the song are sung in response. This closely matches how the book of Psalms is written. Both texts praise God for destroying evil. The Greek words used here mean the exact same thing as the Hebrew word [Hallelujah](#).
5. **Shared Holy Words:** [Hallelujah](#) is a Hebrew word kept by early Christians. They also kept other words like [amen](#), [hosanna](#), and [Abba](#). This shows a strong link between the two faiths. Early Christian worship grew directly from Jewish synagogue traditions.
6. **Salvation, Glory, and Power:** The song praises God for three specific things. First, it praises His salvation, which means His final victory over evil forces like Babylon. Second, it praises His glory. God's pure glory is so great that evil cannot survive near it. Third, it praises His power. God uses His power to protect good people and ensure that truth wins in the end.

For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.”

1. **True and Righteous Justice:** The song explains exactly why God deserves praise. His judgments are always fair and based on truth. He has finally judged the evil harlot and avenged His loyal servants. Earlier heavenly songs also praised God for these exact same qualities.
2. **A Point of No Return:** God’s judgments are completely fair because they match reality. The people on earth have fully chosen to follow evil over God. Their hearts are permanently hardened, and they will never repent. God is praised specifically for punishing a world that refuses to change.
3. **The Harlot’s Defeat:** The song gives a concrete example of God’s perfect justice. He has officially judged the great harlot. She was the primary enemy hurting God’s people. Her defeat fulfills past promises and answers the prayers of the martyred saints who cried out for justice.
4. **Corrupting the World:** The text highlights the specific reason for the harlot’s deep guilt. She completely ruined the earth with her immorality. Her actions destroyed the morals of society. This evil influence echoes older prophecies about the terrible destruction caused by Babylon.

5. **Avenging God's Servants:** God forcefully takes revenge on the harlot for murdering His followers. The martyrs have finally received the justice they begged for earlier in the book. This echoes Old Testament stories where God punishes wicked rulers like Jezebel. Ultimately, the harlot's severe punishment perfectly fits her terrible crimes.

Revelation 19:3

Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

1. **The Heavenly Encore:** The same heavenly choir sings a second song of praise. They shout [Hallelujah](#) once more. The wording makes it clear that the exact same group from the first song is still singing.
2. **A Stronger Shout of Praise:** This second shout is not just a simple repeat. It adds powerful emphasis to their worship of God. The song states that they are praising Him specifically because the smoke of the ruined city is rising into the air.
3. **Final and Complete Destruction:** The rising smoke proves that Babylon is destroyed forever. This total ruin is similar to the ancient destruction of cities like Sodom and Gomorrah. The endless smoke contrasts with the rising prayers of the saints and shows that God's judgment on the city is completely irreversible.

4. **Eternal Spiritual Ruin:** The physical fire will eventually stop burning when the old earth passes away. However, the spiritual destruction will last for all time. The phrase **forever and ever** describes the permanent, endless punishment of the wicked city and the people connected to it.

Revelation 19:4

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”

1. **The Final Appearance of the Heavenly Beings:** The third song features a different group: the twenty-four elders and the four living beings. They fall down to worship God, just as they did in earlier chapters. This marks their final appearance in the book of Revelation. They join the heavenly chorus to celebrate the end of God's judgment before the story shifts its focus to the city of God.
2. **God on the Throne:** These heavenly beings direct their worship specifically to God. They address Him as the one who sits upon the throne. This exact combination of words only appears one other time in the entire book. Normally, the phrase about sitting on the throne is used all by itself as a special title for God.
3. **A Short but Powerful Song:** The elders and living beings sing a very brief song consisting of just two words: **Amen, Hallelujah**. Even though it is short, it captures all the main themes of the book. By saying

Amen, they are showing deep, solemn agreement with the praises sung by the previous choir. This specific combination of words directly echoes the Old Testament book of Psalms.

Revelation 19:5

Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!”

1. **The Mystery of the Fourth Voice:** It is difficult to identify who sings the fourth song. A voice comes from the throne telling everyone to praise God. However, the speaker uses the phrase **our God**. Because of this, we know it cannot be God or the Lamb speaking.
2. **An Unknown Speaker:** The voice travels from the direction of the throne. However, the throne is not necessarily the exact source of the speaker. We cannot know for sure who is speaking. It might be one of the four living beings, but it remains a mystery just like other voices in Revelation.
3. **A Powerful Command to Praise:** Even though the speaker is unknown, their voice holds great authority. It gives a direct command for continuous praise to God. This command deeply echoes the Old Testament Psalms. It proves that the justice believers prayed for has finally arrived.

4. **Fearing and Obeying God:** The voice calls out to all of God's servants. These servants are defined as those who deeply respect, honor, and obey Him. This includes all the saints and prophets. In this moment of judgment, having faith in God means having a humble, respectful fear of Him.
5. **A Heavenly Audience:** The servants being called to worship are currently in heaven. We know this based on the direction of earlier commands in the text. If the voice were speaking to people still living on earth, it would have specifically said it was calling [out of heaven](#).
6. **Praise Without Divisions:** This call to worship includes every single believer. It does not matter how much money, status, or knowledge a person had on earth. The phrase [small and great](#) completely erases all human divisions. It unites every faithful person in the shared privilege of praising God.

Revelation 19:6

[And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"](#)

1. **The Divine Wedding Song:** The final song shifts its focus from the past to the future. It acts as a divine wedding song. The singers praise God for His upcoming rule and the marriage of the Lamb. The evil city's fall makes this glorious future possible.

2. **A Deafening Chorus:** John hears a massive, overwhelming sound. It sounds like a huge crowd, roaring waterfalls, and loud thunder. This dramatic noise perfectly matches the massive importance of its message. God is finally establishing His rule over the whole earth.
3. **The Mystery of the Singers:** Figuring out exactly who is singing is difficult. Some might think it is the saved believers. However, this is unlikely. The song is specifically about the bride, and the bride actually represents those saved believers.
4. **An Angelic Choir:** The singers are most likely a massive choir of angels. The descriptions of thunder and roaring water match earlier descriptions of angelic voices in the book. This also fits with other parts of the text where angels celebrate God's coming kingdom.
5. **God's Reign Begins:** This huge choir sings a fourth [Hallelujah](#). They explain that they are praising God because He has officially begun to rule. His perfect heavenly kingdom will now replace all corrupt earthly powers. This direct rule will begin on earth and last into eternity.
6. **A Courageous Title:** The singers call God [our Lord God Almighty](#). Using this specific title required great courage when the book was written. The Roman emperor Domitian demanded that people use a very similar title for him. Both angels and saved humans share the right to use this powerful name for God.

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

19:7. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

1. **Let us:** The song introduces a new theme which anticipated the final union between Christ and His people. The lyrics speak as if the marriage has already happened. However, several major events must occur before the wedding is fully completed. These include the defeat of Christ's enemies, the thousand-year kingdom, and the final judgment.

19:7. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

2. **Glad ...rejoice ...give Him glory:** The heavenly song invites everyone to rejoice and celebrate. They give glory to God because the marriage of the Lamb has finally arrived. The bride is ready for the wedding. God receives all the credit because He is the one who prepared her.

19:7. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

3. **Marriage:** The bridegroom metaphor is used here. In the Old Testament, God is seen as the bridegroom of Israel. In the New Testament, Christ is the bridegroom of the church. This marriage symbolizes a deep, unbreakable bond between believers and the Messiah. This moment of joy sets the stage for more details about the bride later in the book.

Jer. 31:32. ... though I was a husband to them [Israel], says the Lord

Hosea 2:16, 19. “And it shall be, in that day,” Says the Lord, “That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ And no longer call Me ‘My Master,’ ... 19 “I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me

4. **Time and Place of the Feast:** When and where this marriage feast happens? Some believe it takes place in heaven for eternity. Others think it happens on earth during the millennial kingdom. If the bride represents the church, the marriage likely begins in heaven after believers are caught up to be with Christ. Many understand that the feast peaks when Christ returns to earth. This means the celebration happens on earth during the Millennium. However, it will not be truly complete until all believers from all times are gathered

together. Therefore, the wedding feast spans both the thousand-year earthly kingdom and the eternal new earth.

5. **Wedding Versus Feast:** It is helpful to separate the wedding from the wedding feast. The actual marriage begins in heaven after believers are taken up. Then, they return to earth with Christ wearing their pure wedding clothes. The grand wedding feast is then celebrated on earth throughout the coming kingdom.

19:7. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

6. **Wife has made herself ready:** The bride is praised for preparing herself for the wedding. This highlights human responsibility and the need for purity. However, the ultimate preparation is a gift from God. This perfectly balances our duty to live faithfully with God's supreme grace.

2 Cor. 7:1. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God

1 John 3:3–4. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure

Jud 21. keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life

7. **Wife:** Refers to the third woman in this book. Revelation uses three distinct women as symbols. The mother in chapter 12 represents Israel, and the evil harlot represents Babylon. The **wife** represents God's people and the New Jerusalem. She is the pure and direct opposite of the corrupt harlot. There is debate on who exactly makes up this bride. Does she represent Israel, the church, or believers from all time? The Old Testament often calls Israel the wife of God. However, Israel was often pictured as unfaithful, which makes it difficult to see her as this perfect, virgin bride. In the New Testament, the church is clearly described as a pure virgin waiting for Christ. Believers are promised a place at the marriage supper. Furthermore, the heavenly armies returning to earth wear the same clothes as the bride. This strongly suggests that the bride specifically represents the raptured Christian church. A timeline issue makes it hard to include Old Testament saints in this specific moment. They are resurrected slightly later to enter the Millennium. However, the final heavenly city clearly includes both Israel and the church. Therefore, the bride is a growing group of people that will eventually include the redeemed from all ages. With all this in mind, the bride in this specific verse represents the Christian church. She is joined to Christ in heaven first. Afterward, she returns with Him to earth to enjoy the grand marriage supper during His thousand-year rule.

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

19:8. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

1. **It was granted:** This verse explains how the bride is prepared for the wedding. She is granted permission to wear bright, clean, fine linen. The specific word for **granted** always signals a gift given by God's grace. This beautifully explains that her ability to prepare herself actually comes from God.

19:8. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

2. **Clean and bright:** The bride's ability to dress herself is ultimately a provision of God's grace. She wears bright, clean, fine linen. This pure, dignified clothing is the exact opposite of the evil harlot's cheap and flashy outfits. The dazzling white fabric perfectly symbolizes the inward purity and divine glory of God's people.

19:8. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

3. **Righteous acts:** The song explains exactly what the fine linen means. It represents the righteous deeds of the saints. This highlights a perfect balance between God's free grace and human obedience. God freely gives the wedding garment as a gift, but the bride must actively respond by putting it on through faithful living. The righteous acts refers to actual moral actions and inner character. Because the Greek word is plural, it means more than just a general state of holiness. It points to the specific good works that follow believers into heaven. These faithful actions are the natural result of a life transformed by the Bridegroom.

Revelation 19:9

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

1. **Then he said to me, Write:** The angelic guide who has been with John since chapter 17 speaks again. He commands John to write down a special blessing.
2. **Blessed:** Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. This specific blessing is intended to deeply encourage and motivate faithful Christians.

19:9. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

3. **Those who are called:** The wording of the invitation shows that it is a permanent offer initiated by God Himself. Actually, who are these invited guests? Some think the guests and the bride are the exact same group of people described using two different metaphors. Others believe the bride and the guests are two distinct groups. Scripture often mixes metaphors, so it is possible that the church represents both the bride and the guests. For example, Christ is called both a Lamb and a shepherd. Furthermore, in many of Jesus’ parables about a wedding, there is no bride mentioned at all, only invited guests. While mixing metaphors is possible, it is more likely that the bride and the guests are separate groups. If the bride specifically represents the church, then the invited guests represent other believers, such as Old Testament saints or those saved during the Millennium. Both groups will be blessed at the feast. These guests are the people who actually showed up to the wedding wearing the right clothes. They are different from the people in Jesus’ parables who were too busy to attend. They accepted the invitation and proved their faithfulness.

Mat. 22:2-10. “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the

wedding.” ’ 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests

19:9. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper (deipnon) of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

4. **Marriage supper of the Lamb:** This specific blessing is a step up from an earlier promise of heavenly rest. Now, that the **supper** has become a massive, joyful festival. In ancient culture, a wedding feast lasted many days. In Revelation, this grand supper marks the glorious beginning of God’s earthly kingdom.

1 Cor. 11:20. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper (Deipnon)

19:9. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

5. **These are the true sayings of God:** This is a solemn verification. The angel speaks again to emphasize his next point. He tells John, [these words are the true sayings of God](#). This moment closely parallels a later scene in Revelation where John also falls down to worship an angel and is corrected. What exactly are these [sayings](#)? It could refer just to the short blessing about the wedding. It could refer to the entire recent song about Babylon’s fall and the Lamb’s marriage. Or, it could refer to the entire book of visions up to this point. The most likely answer is that [sayings](#) refers to everything the angel has shown John since chapter 17. The angel is formally declaring that all the prophecies about Babylon’s fall and the coming kingdom are absolutely true and real. They are guaranteed to happen exactly as described.

Revelation 19:10

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

19:10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

1. **Fell at his feet to worship him:** John is so overwhelmed by all the amazing things he just heard that he falls at the angel's feet to worship him. This reaction has happened to other people in the Bible, but John's clear intention here is actual worship. We are not sure if he mistook the angel for God, yielded to a known temptation, or was simply overcome with excitement.

19:10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

2. **But he said to me, “See that you do not do that:** The angel instantly stops John from worshipping him and corrected him. Using strong emotion, the angel gives a short, sharp command that basically means, 'stop right now'!. The early churches in Asia struggled with the temptation to worship angels. By including this embarrassing personal mistake, John is trying to help his readers resist that same temptation.

19:10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

3. **I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren:** The angel refuses worship because he is just a **fellow servant**. He puts himself on the exact same level as John and all other Christians. Both humans and angels are simply servants of the same Lord. This humble statement from the angel does not lower his own rank, but it highly honors John and his fellow believers.

19:10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

4. **The testimony of Jesus:** The angel further connects himself to John by saying they both have **the testimony of Jesus**. The angel, just like human prophets, exists only to share Jesus' message. While not all Christians

are prophets who receive direct revelation, they all share in this testimony because prophets like John pass the message on to them. The phrase [the testimony of Jesus](#) means the specific message that Jesus Himself shared. When Christian prophets speak, their words come directly from the Spirit of Christ. Therefore, their prophecies are actually the exact words of God and the personal testimony of Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate source of all prophetic revelation.

5. **Worship God!:** The angel urgently commands John to redirect his worship entirely to God. In his amazement, John temporarily forgot a basic truth of his faith. The angel politely but firmly reminds him that God is the only one who ever deserves to be worshipped.

19:10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

6. **The Spirit of Prophecy:** The angel explains his correction by saying, [the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy](#). This means that true prophetic inspiration always centers on Jesus’ message. Angels and human prophets are just messengers delivering Jesus’ words. Because they are only messengers, they do not deserve worship. All worship must go to God, the true source of the revelation.

20.2 The Coming of the King of Kings (19:11–16)

1. **Eight Final Scenes:** This passage introduces a new series of eight scenes. These events make up the final action of the seventh bowl. The sequence begins with the return of Christ. It then outlines major future events like the defeat of the beast, the binding of Satan, the Millennium, the final judgment, and the new heaven and earth.

- (a) Christ's return (11 ff)
- (b) An angel calling birds of prey to a coming battle (19:17–18)
- (c) The beast (Antichrist) being defeated (19:19–21)
- (d) Satan being bound (20:1–3)
- (e) The thousand-year reign (Millennium) and Satan's final defeat (20:4–10)
- (f) The Great White Throne being set up (20:11)
- (g) The final judgment of the unsaved (20:12–15)
- (h) The new heaven and new earth (21:1–8)

2. **The Timeline Debate:** Scholars debate whether these eight scenes happen in chronological order. Some argue they are simply a symbolic gallery of pictures showing God's final victory. They base this view on repeated language from the book of Ezekiel. However, this non-sequential view is weak. It ignores how biblical prophecy often compresses time.

3. **Chronological:**

The evidence that these events happen in chronological order is very strong. The events naturally flow from one to the next. These events therefore follow sequential order as understood from a straightforward reading. One must reject the idea that they're just symbolic snapshots without any order.

Revelation 19:11

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

1. **Now I saw:** Starting from this verse, John repeats the phrase **Now I saw** or **And I saw** eight times. Each time signals the start of a new scene. This part of Revelation follows right after the seventh bowl judgment. The wedding celebration announced in 19:1–8 (Christ, the Bridegroom, uniting with His people) will happen. But, first, Christ has to return and win the battle. This matches what the Old Testament prophets already predicted: God coming as a warrior in the last days to crush His enemies and set up His kingdom.

Isa. 13:4. . . . The Lord of hosts musters the army for battle.

Isa. 42:13. The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war
. . . He shall prevail against His enemies

2. **Heaven opened:** John sees heaven torn open, and a white horse appears with its rider. This echoes similar **heaven opened** moments elsewhere in Scripture (Ezekiel's vision in chapter 1, Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3). Revelation itself has shown heaven partly opening before, but this time it's much bigger — because this time, Christ Himself is being revealed, not as a gentle Lamb or Bridegroom, but as a King coming to fight.
3. **White horse:** A different rider on a white horse appeared earlier in Revelation (6:2). That was an angel. Here, the white horse means one thing: final, total victory. At His first coming, Jesus rode a humble donkey into Jerusalem. Now, at His return, He rides a warhorse.
4. **He who sat on him was called Faithful and True:** This title means Christ always keeps His word and is the genuine Messiah — not an imitation. The same description is used of God's words later in Revelation (21:5; 22:6).
5. **in righteousness He judges and makes war:** Christ's vengeance is not out of anger or randomly. He first reaches a righteous, just verdict against the beast (Antichrist), then acts on it by going to war. This is why

His victory will actually last, unlike Satan's offer of an **easy kingdom** to Jesus (Matthew 4), which would have failed because it wasn't built on justice. This war brings about the kingdom both Israel and the church have been waiting for — first defeating Israel's enemies, then leading to final judgment of everyone, living and dead.

6. **Note: Is this a literal or just a symbolic war?** Reasons why this is literal:

- (a) When Old Testament prophecies about Jesus' first coming were fulfilled (like riding a donkey into Jerusalem), they happened literally, in plain sight. So the same should be expected for prophecies of His second coming.
- (b) The passage is full of concrete, literal-sounding military details — armies on horses, a **great supper** for scavenger birds (19:17) — which reads far more like a real battle than pure symbolism.
- (c) The earlier **war in heaven** (Revelation 12) and this **war on earth** are part of the same kind of vivid, symbol-rich language the Bible uses to describe real events — meaning the symbols still point to something that truly happens in history, not just an abstract spiritual idea.
- (d) Conclusion: Christ's return here is a literal, visible, historical event, where He personally leads a real military-style defeat of evil — not merely a symbolic picture of an already-accomplished spiritual victory.

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

1. **Note 1:** The previous verse describe the character of the rider. This verse speaks of the external appearance of the rider.
2. **Note 2:** Several of these features (the white horse, His titles, His eyes, the unknown name, a sword, a rod of iron, a winepress, crowns) have all shown up earlier in Revelation in various places — describing either Christ Himself or, in some cases, His enemies (the dragon, the beast). Not every one of these earlier references applies directly to this passage, but they help build the full picture.
3. **His eyes were like a flame of fire:** This image already appeared earlier in Revelation (describing Christ in 1:14 and 2:18). It means nothing gets past this Judge — He can't be fooled, tricked, or deceived. His judgments are always based on the full truth, exactly as things really are.
4. **on His head were many crowns:** Note the distinction: a **diadem** or **crown** is a royal crown of authority. This is different from a **victor's wreath** (an award crown, like for winning a competition). Earlier in Revelation, the dragon (Satan) wore one diadem on each of his seven heads (12:3), and the beast (Antichrist) wore one

diadem on each of his ten horns (13:1). But Christ wears many diadems — not just one per head. This makes sense because He is **King of kings**. His rule isn't limited to a region or empire (like the evil angels limited to some location). He now rightfully rules the whole world. No earthly ruler, however powerful, compares to Him. His authority is total and cannot be challenged.

5. **He had a name written that no one knew except Himself:** Christ has a name written somewhere (perhaps on His forehead, since the surrounding verse focuses on His head). No one knows what it is except Christ Himself. John saw it is written, but he couldn't understand or read it. Many speculations include:

- (a) The sacred Hebrew name of God (**YHWH**)
- (b) **The name above every name** from Philippians 2:9–11
- (c) **Jesus**

It is not right for us to speculate on this. Taking clue from two OT passages where a person or being with greater authority is described as having the right to withhold their name from someone with lesser standing. In the same way, Christ — as the supreme authority — has the right to keep this name to Himself until the appointed time

Gen. 32:29. Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there

Judges 13:18. And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"

Revelation 19:13

He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

1. **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood:** This robe was likely either a rider's cloak or the kind of cloak worn by a Roman general. Whose blood is it? Three possible views:
 - (a) It's Christ's own blood from the cross.
 - (b) It's the blood of the saints (martyrs).
 - (c) It's the blood of Christ's enemies.

In this specific context, Christ is shown as Judge and Warrior, not Savior. So it makes more sense that the blood belongs to those He's about to defeat, not His own sacrificial blood

Isa. 63:2-3. Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? 3 “I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes

2. **His name is called The Word of God:** This is the only place in Revelation where Christ is called **the Word of God** using this exact full phrase, though the Gospel of John also calls Him **the Word** (John 1:1, 14). This kind of shared language is one reason scholars connect the authorship of Revelation to the Gospel of John.
3. Throughout Revelation, **the word (s) of God** generally refers to God's revealed plan and purpose of God (1:2; 17:17; 19:9). It's also the very message that gets believers persecuted (1:9; 6:9; 20:4). This word is always described as **faithful and true** which is the same description given to Christ Himself in verse 11. So Christ, as a person, is the complete and perfect expression of God's message. Just as God's spoken word originally created the universe (John 1:3), that same powerful word is now strong enough to defeat all satanic powers. In Hebrew thinking, a **word** was never just an empty sound. It was understood as a powerful, active force that makes things happen (as in Genesis 1, when God spoke the world into existence).

Revelation 19:14

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

1. **the armies in heaven:** Christ is not alone. As Christ rides out of heaven to fight, He's followed by armies from heaven, riding white horses and dressed in pure white linen. Interestingly, unlike Christ, this heavenly army carries no swords or spears, and wears no armor. That's because they're not actually doing the fighting. Christ fights the battle Himself, alone. They can't be hurt anyway since they're immortal, so armor isn't needed. Their role is simply to accompany and support Him, not to use any weapons.
2. Note that these are literal armies on literal horses — not just a poetic image. Where do the horses come from, since real horses can't exist in heaven the way we know it? It is possible that Christ (who is the **the Word of God** in the previous verse) could simply create them specially for this moment. The point is: just like the opening of heaven, Christ's descent, the coming battle, and the victory that follows are all meant to be understood as real, literal events — so are these horses.
3. **Question: Who exactly makes up this army? Angels, or people?**
 - (a) **The case for Angels:** The Bible elsewhere calls angels **the armies of heaven** (Psalms, Luke, Acts), and angels are frequently linked with Christ's second coming in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, 2 Thessalonians). However, one problem with this view: it seems odd that angels would be riding **white horses**, just like their Master.
 - (b) **The case for redeemed believers:** This is the most likely case. Two main reasons support this:

- i. Their clothing. These armies wear [white, clean, fine linen](#) — almost the exact same description used for the Bride of Christ (19:8).
- ii. We were already told that Christ's [called, chosen, and faithful](#) followers will be with Him at this final battle
[Rev. 17:14. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful"](#)
- iii. Further, Christ promised that believers who remain faithful will get to rule with [a rod of iron](#). This is the very same authority Christ Himself will use in this battle (19:15). That strongly suggests believers are meant to be part of this army
[Rev. 2:26-27. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'— as I also have received from My Father](#)
- iv. **Conclusion:** The armies here are best understood as [the redeemed](#) (believers, not angels). This doesn't necessarily mean angels are completely absent from the event; they're just not the focus of this particular verse. The point is that the saints (faithful believers) will have an active role in this final act of judgment alongside Christ.

4. **followed Him:** The Greek grammar used for [following](#) shows that Christ's heavenly armies riding behind Him on their white horses as they head into battle.

Revelation 19:15

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

1. **Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword:** Christ's weapons include a sword and a rod. A sharp sword comes out of Christ's mouth to strike down the nations. He will rule them with [a rod of iron](#)

[Isa. 11:4.](#) But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked
2. **He should strike the nations:** The strike is a real, physical judgment — not just symbolic. The plain reading here is that Christ's war against His enemies involves actual physical destruction and death.
3. **Note:** Christ conquers by the power of His spoken word. That doesn't rule out real bloodshed. His words carry actual death-dealing power over His enemies, similar to how Moses' actions are described in Jewish

tradition, and similar to language used in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 about the Antichrist being destroyed by [the breath of \[Christ's\] mouth](#).

4. **He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron:** This phrase is emphasized in the Greek to stress that Christ personally, single-handedly, carries out this destruction — no one else does this work for Him.
5. **Rule them with a rod of iron:** Ruling with a rod of iron means destruction, not just strict governing. This same phrase ([rule/destroy with a rod of iron](#)) appeared twice earlier in Revelation:
 - (a) In 2:27, believers who remain faithful are promised this same authority.
 - (b) In 12:5, it's specifically Christ's own authority.
6. **Note:** [ruling with a rod of iron](#) here doesn't just mean governing firmly or strictly — it means **destroying**. This echoes Psalm 2:9, an Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah smashing His enemies like pottery. The ones being destroyed are [the nations](#) — meaning the rebellious peoples/armies gathered against Christ.
7. **Treading the winepress of God's wrath:** The last part of verse 15 shifts to another image already used earlier in Revelation (14:8,10,19–20; 16:19; 19:13): Christ personally [treads the winepress of the wine of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty](#). This picture comes from Isaiah 63:1–3, where the Messiah is shown

crushing His enemies like grapes in a winepress, and the resulting **wine** represents God's fierce anger being poured out.

8. **He Himself:** The repeated phrase **He Himself** (used again here, right after the previous clause) adds solemn emphasis — driving home, one more time, that Christ personally and directly carries out this act of judgment. And this image confirms what was already hinted at in verse 13, where His robe was described as already stained with blood — now the reader knows explicitly **why**: He is the one treading out God's wrath upon His enemies.

Revelation 19:16

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

1. **One His thigh a name written:** One more name for Christ. The passage now reveals a fourth title written on Christ: on His robe, specifically on the part covering His thigh, is written **King of kings and Lord of lords**.
2. **On His thigh:** Where exactly is it written? It is better understood as being written on one specific spot: the part of His robe that covers His thigh. This makes practical sense too, since as He sits on His horse, that part of the cloak would be the most visible part to everyone watching.

3. Four names, one grand finale. This is actually the fourth title given to Christ in this passage (Revelation 19:11–16):
- (a) [Faithful and True](#) (11)
 - (b) [The unknown, secret name](#) (12)
 - (c) [The Word of God](#) (13)
 - (d) [King of kings and Lord of lords](#) (16)
4. **Note:** The last title is placed deliberately at the very end of the description — giving it the most emphasis, like a grand finale. This exact same title (just in reverse word order) was already used for Christ (as [the Lamb](#)) back in Revelation 17:14. The Apostle Paul uses almost identical language for God the Father in 1 Timothy 6:15, and similar royal titles appear throughout the Old Testament (Deuteronomy, Psalms, Daniel).
5. **Note:** Why doubling the title matters? Ancient Persian and Parthian kings used to double up titles like this ([king of kings](#)) to emphasize that they were the supreme ruler over other, lesser kings. Note that John, who was exiled by the Roman Empire, whose emperors also claimed grand, godlike titles for themselves. John deliberately uses this same kind of royal language for Christ instead. In other words, John is making a clear statement: no earthly emperor, no matter how powerful or self-glorifying his titles, can rightfully claim this title. Only the Messiah, Jesus Christ, truly deserves to be called [King of kings and Lord of lords](#).

20.3 The Great Supper of God (19:17–21)

Revelation 19:17

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

1. **Eight Final Scenes:** This passage introduces a new series of eight scenes. These events make up the final action of the seventh bowl. The sequence begins with the return of Christ. It then outlines major future events like the defeat of the beast, the binding of Satan, the Millennium, the final judgment, and the new heaven and earth.
 - (a) Christ’s return (11 ff)
 - (b) An angel calling birds of prey to a coming battle (19:17–18)
 - (c) The beast (Antichrist) being defeated (19:19–21)
 - (d) Satan being bound (20:1–3)
 - (e) The thousand-year reign (Millennium) and Satan’s final defeat (20:4–10)
 - (f) The Great White Throne being set up (20:11)

(g) The final judgment of the unsaved (20:12–15)

(h) The new heaven and new earth (21:1–8)

2. **Then I saw an angel standing in the sun:** An angel stands in the sun, shouting loudly to every bird flying overhead, inviting them to **come and gather for the great supper of God**. This is the second of eight scenes that make up the final events of the seventh bowl judgment. With Christ and His armies now ready for battle, this scene builds tension right before the actual fighting begins in the next scene (19:19–21).
3. **Why the angel stands in the sun?** Standing in the sun makes the angel visible to every birds. So all of them can see and respond to his call. Soon the battlefield will be covered with the bodies of the King's defeated enemies.
4. **All the birds that fly in the midst of heaven:** The general word used here for **birds** also appears earlier in Revelation describing Babylon's destruction (18:2). Jesus Himself, when predicting this same event, used the word **vultures** specifically (Matthew 24:28; Luke 17:37). Vultures are known for how quickly they show up wherever there's a dead body. This detail hints that the coming destruction is close at hand.
5. **Come and gather together:** The angel's command echoes similar language used elsewhere in Scripture for gathering armies or birds of prey (1 Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah). The specific imagery of birds gathering for a feast on the battlefield comes directly from OT

Eze 39:17. "And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, 'Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field: "Assemble yourselves and come . . . A great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel, That you may eat flesh and drink blood.

6. **The supper of the great God:** This phrase is intentionally shocking. It describes the coming battlefield as covered with dead bodies as a lavish feast God is providing for scavenger birds. Even a single dead body attracts vultures quickly. Here, there will be so many bodies that it becomes a massive banquet. This gruesome image emphasizes just how total and overwhelming Christ's victory will be. It's also a deliberate, direct contrast to the earlier [wedding supper of the Lamb](#) (19:9). This supper celebrates union with Christ, the supper in 19:17 shows the judgment on His enemies. Those who respond to God are welcomed graciously to the first supper. But, those who reject Him face severe judgment. This is the battle of Armageddon, already predicted earlier in Revelation 16:16.

Question: Is this the same battle as Revelation 20:8–9? Some argue this Harmagedon battle (19:17–18) and a later battle described in 20:8–9 are actually the same event, since both use similar language borrowed from Ezekiel 39. However, several clear differences show they are two separate battles:

Detail	Revelation 19	Revelation 20:8–9
Location	Harmagedon	Jerusalem
Leader	The beast (Antichrist) and false prophet	Satan himself
Enemies	Kings of the earth and their armies	Nations from the four corners of the earth
Victory	The sword from Christ's mouth	Fire from heaven
Outcome	Beast and false prophet thrown into the lake of fire	Satan himself thrown into the lake of fire

Because these two battles happen in a clear, sequential order as part of the eight scenes following the seventh bowl judgment, they should be understood as two distinct events, not the same one described twice. Ezekiel's prophecy was broad enough to point forward to both battles. But Harmagedon carries greater weight, since it delivers the decisive blow against evil's forces. Harmagedon happens before the thousand-year reign (the Millennium); the second battle in chapter 20 happens after it.

Revelation 19:18

that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”

1. **Who gets eaten (19:18)** The purpose of the birds gathering is now stated plainly: they will eat the flesh of kings, military commanders, powerful men, horses and their riders, and everyone else — free and slave, small and great. This list covers every class of person and every level of society. Interestingly, in Ezekiel's original prophecy (which this passage draws from), the birds only feed on important, high-ranking men. Here, though, it's **everyone** — not just leaders, but ordinary people too. God's judgment in this battle plays no favorites; no one's status protects them. This grim detail — bodies left unburied and devoured — mirrors the treatment given earlier to God's two witnesses in Revelation 11:9–10, except this time it happens on a massive scale.
2. **Kings ... captains ... mighty men ... horses ... thos who sit on the them ... all ... free ... slave ... small ... great:** Similarly, **all classes of society** lists appear elsewhere in Revelation (6:15; 13:16; 11:18; 19:5; 20:12), though this is the only place that specifically adds **horses and their riders** to the list. This sweeping description refers to everyone who has taken the mark of the beast and pledged loyalty to the Antichrist. There's no need to assume some of earth's population is left out here to explain where the surviving **nations** at the start of the Millennium come from — that's answered elsewhere: the only survivors of this battle are the faithful, protected group of Israelites described earlier in Revelation 12:13–17, who will enter Christ's kingdom alive and go on to repopulate the earth.

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

1. **Eight Final Scenes:** This passage introduces a new series of eight scenes. These events make up the final action of the seventh bowl. The sequence begins with the return of Christ. It then outlines major future events like the defeat of the beast, the binding of Satan, the Millennium, the final judgment, and the new heaven and earth.
 - (a) Christ's return (11 ff)
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 - (f) The Great White Throne being set up (20:11)
 - (g) The final judgment of the unsaved (20:12–15)

(h) The new heaven and new earth (21:1–8)

2. **And I saw:** The third scene: the beast prepares for battle (19:19): Immediately after the birds are summoned, the beast (Antichrist), the kings of the earth, and their combined armies are shown gathering to fight against Christ (the rider on the white horse) and His army. This is the actual military engagement — a brief but pivotal moment in world history, described here in strikingly few words considering its importance.
3. **The beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies:** The beast leads the war. By this point, the beast has become the dominant world ruler, so it makes sense he takes center stage. [The kings of the earth](#) refers to the ten allied kings mentioned earlier (17:12–14) who support him. [Their armies](#) represents essentially the entire population of earth's rebellious inhabitants or their representatives.
4. **Gathered together to make war:** This is not a new event — it's the same massing of armies already described earlier under the sixth bowl judgment (16:13–16). The beast and his forces come prepared for full-scale war, hoping to secure the beast's grip on global power once and for all.
5. **to make war against Him who sat on the horse:** Their enemy is the rider on the white horse — Christ Himself, elsewhere called [the Lamb](#) (17:14). The exact circumstances triggering this specific confrontation aren't spelled out, but it's suggested that Christ may have returned to a spiritually renewed Jerusalem, which alarms the beast enough to rapidly mobilize his forces there to try to crush this new threat to his power.

Regardless of the exact triggering event, it's clear the beast fully expects to fight the returning warrior-King face-to-face.

note: An earlier prophecy described Christ returning with His angels to fight for Israel's defense. Here, Christ instead returns accompanied by His own people (the saints) to fight against His enemies. These aren't contradictory pictures — they're two complementary perspectives on the same great event.

Zec 14:5. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

Revelation 19:20

Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

1. **No real fight happens:** The outcome of this battle is never in question. There's no description of an actual struggle or any real resistance from the beast's side. John simply reports that the beast and the false prophet are captured, and both are thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur.

2. **Comparing this to 2 Thessalonians 2:8:** Some see a conflict between this account and Paul's description of the **man of lawlessness** being **destroyed** in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. But there's no real contradiction: the word Paul uses for **destroy** doesn't necessarily mean instant physical death — it can also mean being permanently removed from the scene, which fits perfectly with being cast into the lake of fire. Who exactly throws them in isn't stated directly, but it's clearly implied to be Christ, the one they came to fight.
3. **Why the false prophet shares the beast's fate:** The false prophet is specifically identified again here as the one who performed miraculous signs to deceive people into worshiping the beast and accepting his mark. Because his miracles were used to promote worship of the beast, he shares the same judgment as the beast himself. He could only deceive those who **chose** to accept the beast's mark and worship his image — but that was enough to guarantee his doom right alongside the beast's.
4. **Thrown in alive:** Both the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire **while still alive** — not after dying first. This is a significant detail: it shows they are captured alive on the battlefield and sent to their eternal punishment in full, conscious awareness. It also confirms these two are more than ordinary humans, since everyone else who is condemned won't be sent to the lake of fire until the later judgment at the Great White Throne (20:12–15).

Remember, the beast had earlier experienced a counterfeit **resurrection** from a fatal wound (13:3, 12; 17:8, 11). It is a Satanic imitation of Christ's own resurrection confirming his superhuman, demonically empowered

nature. Since the lake of fire is a place for punishing individual persons (not abstract things like empires or nations), this confirms both the beast and false prophet are real, individual beings — not merely symbols for kingdoms or systems.

5. **What is the lake of fire?:** This is the first time this specific phrase, [the lake of fire](#), appears anywhere in the Bible, though the concept builds on earlier biblical teaching about final judgment (e.g., Isaiah 66:24). This lake is the same eternal destination referred to elsewhere as [Gehenna](#) or [eternal fire](#) (Matthew 5:22; 10:28; 25:41). It is **not** the same as:
 - (a) **Abyss:** (a temporary holding place for demons, mentioned in Revelation 9:1; 20:1)
 - (b) **Hades:** (the temporary place of the dead before resurrection and final judgment)
6. **Note:** The lake of fire is the final, permanent place of punishment [after](#) judgment and being sent there doesn't mean ceasing to exist. We know this because 1,000 years later, when Satan is finally thrown into the same lake (20:10), the beast and false prophet are described as still there.
7. **Is this a literal place?:** Some argue the lake of fire must be symbolic, since Revelation uses lots of figurative imagery elsewhere (like its pictures of heaven). But the position taken here is that Revelation's events (even when described using vivid imagery) represent real, literal realities. The [lake of fire](#) corresponds to a real, previously known place: the valley of Hinnom (called [Gehenna](#)), a literal location outside Jerusalem

associated with fire and judgment throughout the Old Testament. Symbolic language can still describe something completely real — in fact, human language and imagery will always fall **short** of the true horror of eternal punishment, not exaggerate it. The image of burning **brimstone** (sulfur) — a real substance found naturally in volcanic regions — reinforces the picture of unimaginable, unending torment.

Revelation 19:21

And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh

1. **Everyone else dies:** While the beast and false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire, **the rest** — meaning the beast's remaining human forces — are killed by the sword that comes from Christ's mouth.
2. **The rest:** refers to real human beings, not demons — men who had every chance to repent but chose not to. More broadly, this term covers everyone on earth who refused to follow Christ and instead pledged loyalty to the beast, matching the sweeping list of **every class of person** already given back in verse 18.
3. **Were killed:** A real death, not a symbolic. The word used for **were killed** clearly describes actual death. These people don't go straight to the lake of fire (as the beast and false prophet did) — instead, their spirits go to Hades until the future resurrection and final judgment described in Revelation 20:12, after which they

too will be sent to the lake of fire. Some interpreters try to soften this into something less literal — arguing it's really just a picture of Satan and his followers being **stripped of power**, or a symbolic reference back to Christ's victory on the cross, not an actual military slaughter. This reinterpretation is rejected: the Greek word used for **kill** simply means to kill — it doesn't mean **strip of power**. Revelation certainly emphasizes Christ's death on the cross elsewhere, but that's not what this particular passage is describing. Others try to reframe this as a picture of **conversion** — people turning to Christ instead of dying. This is also rejected, since the passage is clearly describing a judgment scene involving real bloodshed and death, not people repenting and being saved.

4. **With the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him:** A genuine military defeat. This must be understood as an actual military confrontation. Just as the beast's persecution of believers earlier in Revelation resulted in real deaths (11:7; 13:7, 15), Christ's war against the beast's forces results in real deaths too. This victory isn't gradual — it's a decisive, historic event that permanently ends the reign of the Antichrist and his followers. The fact that Christ's **weapon** is the sword from His mouth (representing His spoken word) doesn't make the outcome any less real or deadly. His enemies likely fight with ordinary weapons, but His power to destroy operates differently — through His spoken word, which carries genuine, lethal force. Exactly how this destruction happens isn't spelled out in detail, but that it happens — decisively and completely — is certain. Scripture records other times God brought about death through unconventional, non-military means (like at Jericho, or with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5), so this fits a consistent biblical

pattern: God's spoken word has power both to heal and to strike down.

5. **And all the birds were filled with their flesh:** The feast is fulfilled. The passage closes by fulfilling the invitation given earlier to the birds: they now feast on the flesh of the fallen enemy forces — completing the gruesome image of [the great supper of God](#) introduced back in verse 17.

Eight Final Scenes: This passage introduces a new series of eight scenes. These events make up the final action of the seventh bowl. The sequence begins with the return of Christ. It then outlines major future events like the defeat of the beast, the binding of Satan, the Millennium, the final judgment, and the new heaven and earth.

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4. Satan being bound (20:1–3)
5. The thousand-year reign (Millennium) and Satan's final defeat (20:4–10)
6. The Great White Throne being set up (20:11)

7. The final judgment of the unsaved (20:12–15)

8. The new heaven and new earth (21:1–8)

Chapter 21

The Millennium and the White-Throne Judgment (20:1-20:15)

Chapter 20 is best known for the Millennium: Christ's thousand-year kingdom. But the first ten verses focus on the final doom of Satan. Part 1: Satan is bound (20:1–3) where he is forcibly restrained and locked away for a set period. Part 2: Satan's final defeat (20:4–10) where he makes one last attempt to regain power. He fails and is then permanently thrown into the lake of fire. The rest of the chapter (20:11–15) deals with final judgment.

Unsaved people are judged. They too are sent to the lake of fire.

21.1 The Binding of Satan (20:1–3)

Revelation 20:1

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

1. **I saw an angel:** A new scene begins. The beast, false prophet, and their armies are gone. Now attention turns to Satan. He was behind it all. John sees an angel come down from heaven. The angel holds a key to the abyss. He also holds a great chain.

Note: This is a new event, not a repeat: The eight scenes of the seventh bowl happen in order. This scene is not a repeat of Satan being thrown to earth earlier [Rev. 12:9; 13:14]. That earlier event let Satan deceive and persecute. This event stops him completely. He is removed from earth. He can no longer act at all. Satan has never yet been bound like this. The New Testament is clear on this. He is active during the whole time between Christ's first and second comings. If this scene were just a picture of today, one problem

remains. No one can explain what would later be [released](#) at the end of the Millennium. There is no good answer to that question.

Note: Why the order matters? Some see these scenes as symbolic, not sequential. But even they admit their view isn't based on the text itself. It rests on a broader theological assumption. The natural reading is sequential. The Old Testament also requires a future earthly kingdom to fulfill God's promises. So this future thousand-year kingdom must be real and future. This event is part of the seventh and final bowl judgment. No one argues the final plague pictures the present church age. So Satan's binding and the Millennium must follow Christ's second coming.

2. **An angel:** Who is the angel? Some have guessed this angel is Christ, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, a pope, or Constantine. None of these views hold up. It is simply a specific angel given this task.
3. **Having the key . . . the chain:** The angel comes [down from heaven](#), just like angels in Rev. 10:1 and 18:1. He must come down because Satan is now on earth, not in heaven [12:9, 12].
4. **Keys to the bottomless pit:** He holds the key of the abyss. This is likely the same key from [Rev. 9:1]. The abyss is different from the lake of fire of 19:20 and 20:10. The abyss is like a locked dungeon. The lake of fire is a place of final, permanent punishment. Both are real places, not just symbols.

5. **Great chain:** The angel also carries a great chain. This isn't a physical chain like the ones that bound Paul [2 Tim. 1:16] or Peter [Acts 12:6–7]. Satan is a spirit. So this chain must be a spiritual one, made to bind a spiritual being.

Revelation 20:2

He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

1. **Dragon:** Satan is seized and bound. The angel grabs the dragon. He binds him for a thousand years. The dragon has several names here. **The dragon** is Satan's most common title in Revelation [Rev. 12:3–17; 13:2–11; 16:13]. He is also called **the serpent of old**, **the devil**, and **Satan** [2:9–13; 3:9; 12:9–12].
2. **Bound:** What **binding** means? Binding a spirit is hard for us to picture. We only know a physical world. But this binding is like the binding of angels in [Rev. 9:14]. It stops all movement and activity.
3. **A thousand years:** The text says **a thousand years**. This number repeats six times [20:2–7]. That repetition shows its importance. Is it a literal thousand years, or symbolic?

Some avoid the question. They say God's timing isn't like ours. They point to [2 Pet. 3:8]. But that verse actually proves the opposite. It says a thousand years with man is like one day with God. It does not

deny that it is still a literal thousand years. God is simply not limited by time. He still knows exactly what [a thousand years](#) means. Also, John elsewhere uses vague phrases like a little time [20:3] when he means something is not exact. Here, he gives an exact number instead.

Another view: it's just symbolic of a long era. Some say [a thousand years](#) just symbolizes a long, indefinite age. Many link it to the whole time between Christ's first and second comings. They link Satan's binding to the spread of the gospel. This view is rejected. It rests on theology, not on the text itself.

4. **Note: Numbers in Revelation are usually literal:** If John wanted a big symbolic number, he had other options. He could have used 144,000 [7:1–8], 200,000,000 [9:16], or thousands of thousands [5:11]. He didn't. In fact, no number in Revelation can be proven symbolic. Numbers are usually literal:
 - (a) The seven churches, seals, trumpets, and bowls are literally seven.
 - (b) The three unclean spirits [16:13] are literally three.
 - (c) The 1,260 days equal three and a half literal years.
 - (d) The twelve apostles and twelve tribes are literally twelve [21:12–14].
5. **Conclusion: the thousand years is literal:** There are strong reasons to take [a thousand years](#) literally. The text states it plainly, six separate times. No symbolic number in Revelation repeats that often. Other

parts of Revelation use symbols. But that doesn't make this number symbolic too. John also describes this period through direct statements, not just symbols [20:4–6].

Some object that this doesn't match Old Testament promises of an eternal kingdom. But this isn't a real problem. The future kingdom will have two phases: first a limited, thousand-year phase, then an eternal phase after it. The ideal conditions promised in the Old Testament will still happen — John just doesn't mention them here. The soundest conclusion: the thousand years should be understood literally.

Revelation 20:3

and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

1. **Satan is locked away:** The angel throws the dragon into the abyss. He shuts it. He seals it. This is the same bottomless pit or abyss used before. It once held the demons from the fifth trumpet [Rev. 9:1]. It also once held the beast [11:7; 17:8], before the dragon gave him power [13:4–7].
2. **Three layers of security:** The angel does three things: he chains him, imprisons him, and seals him in. This matches how Daniel's lion's den was sealed [Dan. 6:17]. It also matches how Christ's tomb was sealed

[Matt. 27:66]. Sealing normally prevents escape. These three actions together guarantee one thing. Satan is completely helpless. He cannot deceive anyone during this time.

3. **He should deceive the nations no more:** Why he's confined? The purpose is clear: [that he might not deceive the nations any longer](#). He had been deceiving nations before this [13:14; 16:13–14]. He will deceive them again after his release [20:8]. During the thousand years, the nations will live peacefully under Christ's rule. Once Satan is freed, he will lead them into rebellion again.
4. **Nations:** Where do these [nations](#) come from? This is a real question. The earlier battle [19:19–21] seems to destroy everyone loyal to the beast. So where do new [nations](#) come from to be deceived later? Some wrong answers are considered and rejected:
 - (a) Only the beast's demonic army died in the battle — rejected, since that army was human, not demonic.
 - (b) Only some people joined the beast, and the rest survived untouched — rejected, since the beast's kingdom was worldwide [13:3–8].
 - (c) Only soldiers died in the battle — rejected, since 19:18 describes everyone dying, not just fighters.
5. **The right option:** Only the faithful remnant survives the battle [11:13; 12:13–17]. These survivors are saved, but not yet glorified. They enter the Millennium. They will have children. During the Millennium,

death is rare [Isa. 65:20]. So population grows very fast. New nations form quickly. They remain safe from deception — but only until the thousand years end.

6. **Why is Satan released again?:** Verse 3 says it is **necessary** for Satan to be released later. The exact reason is not fully explained. It remains part of God's hidden purposes [Isa. 55:8]. One possible reason: this release proves something. Even after a thousand years of peace and Christ's perfect rule, Satan is still wicked. And human hearts are still capable of rebellion.
7. **Little while:** Two different **little while** in the book. The phrase **little while** here [20:3] is different from an earlier **little time** mentioned for Satan [12:12]. Before the Millennium, Satan deceives through the beast and false prophet. After the Millennium, he will deceive people directly, himself.

21.2 The Thousand-year Kingdom (20:4–10)

The scene in 20:4-10 dealing with the thousand-year kingdom is in two parts:

1. details about the faithful during that kingdom (4–6) and
2. attention to Satan's final rebellion and defeat (7–10).

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

1. **And I saw:** A new scene begins. This is the fifth scene in the series. It follows right after Satan's binding (20:1–3). John sees thrones. People sit on them. They receive authority to judge.
2. **Thrones:** What do the thrones mean? The thrones have two functions. First, they are judgment seats (Dan. 7:9–10, 22). Second, they are ruling thrones. So these people both judge and rule (Mat. 19:28). Who sits on the thrones? Possible options include:
 - (a) **The twenty-four elders:** This seems possible, since they appear on thrones elsewhere (4:4; 5:10; 11:16). But they are never mentioned here. And the text doesn't say there are twenty-four thrones. So this view is weak.
 - (b) **The martyrs:** This view has strong support. Verse 4 focuses heavily on martyrs. John cares deeply about martyrs elsewhere too. But there's a problem. The martyrs are raised to life [later](#) in this same

verse. If they already sat on thrones earlier in the verse, that would be repetitive and confusing. Also, Scripture promises **all** faithful believers a share in Christ's reign — not just martyrs (2:26–28; 3:12, 21; 5:10).

- (c) **The apostles, or Christ Himself:** This doesn't fit either. Christ can't be included, since He's the one **giving** authority to judge, not receiving it. The apostles aren't mentioned in this context at all.
 - (d) **Christ's whole army: (Best option)** Earlier, Revelation described the armies that return with Christ (19:14). It makes sense that the people who help win the war are the ones who now rule. These are the redeemed who already rose from the dead earlier, before the Millennium began. This also fulfills earlier promises to believers (2:26–28; 3:12, 21). This is the most natural, supported answer.
3. **Judgment was given to them:** This authority comes from God. It means they are now given charge over the defeated beast's former kingdom. It is not about deciding anyone's eternal fate — that judgment is separate.
4. **the souls of those beheaded:** The martyrs appear too. John also sees **the souls of those beheaded**. These are martyrs who died for their testimony of Jesus. They refused to worship the beast. They refused his mark. John sees their **souls**, not resurrected bodies yet. This means they haven't been raised yet — but they are about to be. These martyrs died for two reasons: their testimony of Jesus, and God's word. This matches

earlier mentions of martyrs (6:9; 12:17; 18:24; 19:2). These are specifically the believers martyred **before** the Millennium, during the final time of persecution.

5. **They lived and reigned with Christ:** This phrase means the martyrs came back to life. This is physical resurrection — not a symbol, not a spiritual metaphor. Some try to avoid this plain meaning. Why? Because accepting it means accepting a literal, future, earthly Millennium. Several alternate views are considered and rejected:

- (a) It's a spiritual resurrection. But martyrs are already spiritually alive in heaven. This makes no sense.
- (b) It's just comforting imagery, not a real event. But this treats Scripture's wording too loosely.
- (c) It just pictures salvation in general. But this ignores the clear future, earthly kingdom described here.
- (d) It refers to martyrs' influence continuing in the world. Again, this isn't a real resurrection.
- (e) It refers to the **new birth** (spiritual regeneration). But the same Greek word, used just one verse later (20:5), clearly refers to physical resurrection for everyone else. It would be inconsistent to read it two different ways in two straight verses.
- (f) **Conclusion: physical resurrection:** The only consistent reading is: this is real, bodily resurrection. Everywhere else in the New Testament, this kind of language refers to physical resurrection, not a

spiritual one (John 11:25; Acts 1:3; 9:41). John even calls it [the first resurrection](#) one verse later (20:5), using a Greek word almost always meaning literal bodily resurrection.

6. **Reigning with Christ:** These same martyrs will reign with Christ for a thousand years. This continues the promise made earlier to all overcomers. It doesn't deny that **all** believers will eventually reign with Christ — it simply means martyrs are specifically highlighted here.
7. **Where does this reign happen?** Some argue thrones in Revelation are usually in heaven. But several facts prove this reign happens on earth:
 - (a) Rev. 5:10 promises believers will reign [on the earth](#).
 - (b) This is where Satan deceived the nations (20:3, 8).
 - (c) This is where Satan himself was cast (12:9; 20:1).
 - (d) This whole scene is part of the seventh bowl judgment, which plays out on earth.
8. **Christ:** The title [Christ](#) alone (without [Jesus](#) attached) is rare in Revelation. It's used only here and in (11:15; 12:10; 20:6). Each time, it echoes (Ps. 2:2), which speaks of God's chosen King. This reinforces a clear link: the Millennium fulfills the Old Testament's promised kingdom for Israel.

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

1. **The rest of the dead:** Who is left out of the resurrection? This verse tells us about people **not** raised with the martyrs. *The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.* Who are *the rest of the dead*? Several views are considered.

View 1: They are unbelievers from the Old Testament era. This has no real support in the text.

View 2: They are the *spiritually dead*. This depends on reading the earlier word *lived* (4) as spiritual, not physical. But that view was already rejected. So this view fails too.

View 3: They are everyone physically dead except the martyrs — both saved and unsaved. This has a problem. Verse 6 says those left out of the first resurrection suffer the *second death*. That can't apply to righteous believers. So this view also fails.

(The better view): *The rest of the dead* means the **unsaved** dead. Other righteous believers (besides the martyrs) were already raised earlier, before the Millennium began. They already joined Christ's reign. So *the first resurrection* isn't limited to just the martyrs — it includes multiple earlier groups too.

2. **Live again:** This means bodily resurrection. The word **live** here must mean real bodily resurrection, just like in verse 4. It cannot mean **spiritual life**, since unbelievers never had spiritual life to begin with. It would be strange to use this word for a resurrection that leads to shame, not blessing (Dan. 12:2). So: unbelievers stay dead until the thousand years are over. They have no part in the first resurrection.
3. **First resurrection:** What is **the first resurrection**? It directly refers to the martyrs' resurrection in verse 4. But it's not limited only to them. Other biblical resurrections fit under this same **first resurrection** umbrella:
- (a) **The resurrection** described in (1 Thess. 4:16)
 - (b) **The resurrection of the just** (Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15)
 - (c) **The resurrection of life** (John 5:29)
 - (d) **The resurrection to everlasting life** (Dan. 12:2)

The first resurrection best refers to the resurrection of **all** the righteous. This includes:

- (a) Church-age believers, raised according to (1 Cor. 15:23) and (1 Thess. 4:16)
- (b) Old Testament believers, raised at Christ's return (Dan. 12:2)
- (c) The martyrs, raised here in Revelation 20:4

So [the first resurrection](#) happens in multiple phases — with the martyrs' resurrection being its final phase, right before the Millennium begins.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

1. **Blessed and holy:** A special blessing. This verse is the fifth of seven beatitudes in Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 22:7, 14). It declares a special blessing for those raised in the first resurrection. [Blessed and holy](#) are both used together here. This shows that true happiness comes through holiness.
2. **Safe from the second death:** Those who share in the first resurrection are safe. [The second death has no power over them](#). The second death is spiritual death. It comes [after](#) physical death (2:11; 20:14; 21:8). The first death ends the body's life on earth. So the second death must also affect the body, not just the soul (Mat. 10:28). It means final, eternal punishment in the lake of fire. Being exempt from the second death is a huge privilege. It means these believers will never face that fate.
3. **Priests and rulers:** These believers also get two special roles: priests and rulers. As [priests](#), they get close, direct access to God. As [rulers](#), they reign together with Christ. Their priestly role isn't mainly about teaching

others during this time. It's about close fellowship with God Himself. This relationship continues even after Satan is finally thrown into the lake of fire (20:10). So it's not limited to serving others — it's a direct, personal privilege. We aren't told exactly **how** they will rule or serve during this time. But both roles — priest and king — are clearly promised.

4. **A reign for a thousand years:** The phrase **a thousand years** at the end of this verse tells us one thing. This particular stage of reigning is temporary. But this doesn't mean the reign ends completely. Scripture promises it continues later too, in an eternal form (22:3, 5). So the Millennium is simply the **first phase** — not the final end — of their reign with Christ.

Revelation 20:7

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

1. **Satan is released (20:7)** The thousand years ends. Satan is released from his prison. The text doesn't explain **how** he's released. It only says it will happen. His prison is called **the abyss** earlier (20:1, 3). Here it's called **prison**, echoing (1 Pet. 3:19).

and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

1. **Go out to deceive the nations:** Satan deceives again (20:8). As soon as he's free, Satan goes right back to deceiving. He gathers nations from [the four corners of the earth](#) for one final battle. This is not the same gathering as before Armageddon (16:13–14). That battle happened **before** the Millennium. This one happens **after** it. They are two separate events. These [nations](#) are also different from the ones destroyed earlier (19:11–21). By now, the Millennium's population has grown large and spread across the whole earth. Sadly, many later generations will not truly believe. These unbelievers become easy targets for Satan's deception.
2. **Gog and Magog:** These names come from (Ezek. 38:2). They don't point to one specific nation or region here. Instead, they represent **all** end-time enemies of Christ, gathered from across the whole earth. This use is broader than Ezekiel's original prophecy — it's not describing the exact same event. Their numbers are described as [like the sand of the sea](#). This is a common biblical way of expressing a huge, uncountable number (compare Gen. 22:17; Josh. 11:4; Judg. 7:12).

Revelation 20:9

They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

1. **The attack and its sudden end (20:9)** Satan's armies march across the land. They surround **the camp of the saints** — **the beloved city**.
2. **The beloved city** means literal Jerusalem, not a symbol for the church. Jerusalem is called **beloved** elsewhere too (Ps. 78:68; 87:2). Scripture says Christ's throne will be there during His earthly kingdom (Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 43:7; Zech. 14:9–11). Ezekiel even calls it **the center of the world** (Ezek. 38:12) — a natural target for enemies to attack.
3. **Fire came down from God ...and devoured them:** Fire comes down from heaven. It instantly destroys this entire army. Fire from heaven is a familiar form of God's judgment elsewhere too (Gen. 19:24; 2 Kings 1:10). This ends the rebellion immediately.

Revelation 20:10

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

1. **Satan's final judgment (20:10):** Satan is finally thrown into the lake of fire. He joins the beast and false prophet there — who have already been there for a thousand years (19:20). This fulfills the very first promise in Scripture: Satan's head will be crushed (Gen. 3:15). Jesus Himself predicted this long ago (Matt. 25:41).
2. **Eternal, conscious torment:** All three — Satan, the beast, and the false prophet — **will be tormented day and night forever and ever**. The beast and false prophet have already been suffering in this lake for a thousand years when Satan joins them. This proves one key thing: this punishment does not mean they stop existing. Their suffering is endless, not a one-time destruction. The phrase **day and night** pictures nonstop, unbroken suffering. The phrase **forever and ever** confirms the punishment never ends. This marks Satan's complete and final defeat — first cast from heaven (12:9), then bound for a thousand years (20:2–3), and now sentenced to eternal, conscious torment.

21.3 The White-throne Judgment (20:11–15)

1. Christ's return (11 ff)
2. An angel calling birds of prey to a coming battle (19:17–18)
3. The beast (Antichrist) being defeated (19:19–21)

4. Satan being bound (20:1–3)
5. The thousand-year reign (Millennium) and Satan's final defeat (20:4–10)
6. **The Great White Throne being set up (20:11)**
7. **The final judgment of the unsaved (20:12–15)**
8. The new heaven and new earth (21:1–8)

Revelation 20:11

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

1. **The Great White Throne (20:11):** Other ancient writings describe the judgment of the wicked in gruesome detail. John's account is simple and restrained. John sees **a great white throne**. He also sees the One who sits on it. The scene is the last picture connected with the present order of things. Why the words **great** and **white**? The throne is great because it is God's own throne. It is also the seat of the last of the judgments. It is compared here with the thrones of Rev. 20:4. The throne is white because of purity. It shows the holiness and righteousness of every verdict that comes from it

Psa. 97:2. Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne

Dan. 7:9. "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;

2. **Is this the only final judgment?:** Some teach that the Bible speaks of only one final judgment. They point to Matt. 25:31–46; John 5:24–29; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10 etc. A closer look shows these passages describe different phases of judgment. The judgment comes in several phases. The Great White Throne is the last one. Several facts prove this:

- (a) Two resurrections are separated by a thousand years (20:4–5). So there must be at least two phases of judgment.
- (b) The martyrs were judged before this throne appears (20:4–5).
- (c) Those who sit on the thrones in 20:4 were judged even earlier.
- (d) The judgment of Matt. 25:31–46 comes before the Millennium. The Great White Throne (**megas leukos thronos**) comes after it.

(e) The judgment of 2 Cor. 5:10 takes place in the present heaven. The Great White Throne appears only after the present heaven is gone.

2 Cor. 5:10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat (bēma) of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad

3. **Him who sat on it:** Who sits on the throne? God the Father is the One seated here. He is the One on the throne throughout the book (4:2–3; 5:1; 7:10; 19:4; 21:5). The scene also draws on Dan. 7:9–10. The Son also shares this throne (3:21; 22:1, 3). He works with the Father in judgment (John 5:19–21; Acts 17:31). This passage does not mention the Son directly. But elsewhere John shows His part in judgment (Rev. 22:12). The two teachings fit together because the Father and the Son are one (John 10:30). What One does, the Other does.
4. **Earth and heaven fled away:** The throne stands in limitless space. It is outside human history. Earth and heaven fled from His face, and no place was found for them. The verbs describe the end of the old creation. They are prophetic, speaking of a future event as if already done. The flight is sudden and violent. It is another view of the event described in 2 Pet. 3:7, 10–12, where fire consumes heaven and earth. Fleeing from God's face leaves nowhere to go. God is everywhere (Ps. 139:7). The words also echo (Ps. 114:3, 7). Two views exist on how the old creation departs, however, this will be discussed further at (21:1).

(a) It may be a change in outward form, not in material (Rom. 8:19–23; 2 Cor. 5:17).

(b) It may be a complete dissolving into nothing, followed by a brand-new creation.

5. **And there was found no place for them:** The old creation is temporary. This agrees with the rest of Scripture. Matter is not permanent. The Old Testament says so (Ps. 102:25–26; Isa. 51:6). The New Testament says so too (Matt. 24:35; Heb. 1:10–12; 2 Pet. 3:10). **No place was found** means the old earth and heaven are gone for ever. They give way to the new heaven and the new earth.

Revelation 20:12

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

1. **And I saw the dead:** The dead stand before the throne (20:12). This is the seventh scene of the seventh bowl. It begins with another **and I saw**. John sees **the dead, the great and the small**. They stand before the throne. Standing means they have been raised. This is the second resurrection (20:5). They come from every class of people. Rich and poor, powerful and weak, are all here.

2. **The Dead:** Who are **the dead**? Only the dead take part in this judgment. No living mortals stand here. The group includes:

(a) Those who died in Satan's final rebellion after the Millennium (20:8–9).

(b) **The rest of the dead** who had no part in the first resurrection (20:5).

These are the unrighteous dead of all ages. Their resurrection is part of Jewish and Christian belief (Dan. 12:2). Some say the redeemed are in verse 12 and the rebellious in verses 13–14. That view has no basis. Others say **the dead** means the whole human race. That is also wrong. The righteous were raised earlier. The martyrs were raised and judged before the Millennium (20:4). The phrase **the rest of the dead** (20:5) is limited to those who face the second death. So no righteous person can be among them. The Book of Life appears only to show that these names are missing from it. What about the living righteous?: The passage does not say. Most likely, God protects them during Satan's last rebellion. They pass safely into the new heaven and new earth. God gives them new bodies suited for life that never ends.

3. **The books are opened:** Written records of each person's deeds are the basis of this judgment (Dan. 7:10). The judgment is not random. Scripture often speaks of such records (Deut. 32:34; Ps. 56:8; Mal. 3:16; Matt. 12:37). The records may hold both good and bad deeds (Dan. 7:10; Mal. 3:16). Or they may hold only evil deeds (Isa. 65:6).

4. **The Book of Life:** The main focus is on [the book of life](#). It seems to decide the final outcome (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 21:27). It is the register of every true believer (Isa. 4:3; Ps. 69:28; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20). It first held the names of all for whom Christ died. At the Great White Throne, many names will be missing. They are removed because those people never believed in Christ.
5. **Judged by works:** They [were judged according to their works](#). This does not contradict salvation by grace. A person's works show where his loyalty lies. The books serve as proof that backs up what the Book of Life shows. Salvation is by grace. But character is the test of the fruit on the tree (Matt. 7:16, 20; 25:31–46; John 15:6; Rom. 2:9–10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 2:23; 22:12). Judgment by works is stated plainly here. It is stressed again at the end of verse 13.

Revelation 20:13

[The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.](#)

1. **The sea gave up the dead:** This verse gives more detail about the resurrection hinted at in verse 12. In order of events, it belongs in the middle of verse 12, before the books are opened and the judgment begins. The sea gave up its dead. Death and Hades gave up their dead. This is another way of describing bodily resurrection. The dead rise to receive their sentence. This is a resurrection to death. It matches the earlier

resurrection to life (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Acts 24:15). It fulfills what the first resurrection pointed toward (20:4).

2. **The dead who were in it:** Only the unsaved are raised here. The **dead** in this verse are the unsaved dead only. No sentence of life is given at this throne. Some teach one general resurrection and one judgment for all people. That view goes against Rev. 20:5 which say that **the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were completed**. Everyone judged here falls under the second death (20:6).
3. **The sea:** The sea is named as a source of dead bodies. People drowned or were buried at sea. Greeks and Romans greatly feared such a death. They valued burial in the earth and an untouched tomb. So the sea is singled out here (1 Enoch 61:5). There is no conflict with the old earth passing away in (20:11). The sea may give up its dead at the same time.
4. **Death and Hades:** In Rev. 6:8, death and Hades are pictured as persons. Here they are better understood as places or conditions, like **the sea**. Death is more the state of being dead. Hades is more the place of the dead (compare 1:18). **Hades** is the unseen world where all the dead go. It includes both Paradise (Luke 23:43) and the place of torment (Luke 16:22–28; 12:5). Here only the place of torment is in view. The righteous dead have already been raised.

5. **Each one according to his works:** The word [each](#) makes the judgment personal. Verse 12 spoke of the group as a whole. Verse 13 says every individual is judged. Each person is responsible for himself (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 2:23).
6. **Judged . . . according to his works:** God's judgment is always based on works. [According to their works](#) is stated again here. The point is not that people earn salvation by works. The point is that people are condemned by works. A person is never saved by works. But he is never saved without works either.

Revelation 20:14

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

1. **Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire:** This judgment ends death itself. Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire. Here they are pictured as two hungry monsters. They swallowed every past generation. Now they share the fate of those they gave up. [The last enemy falls](#). Death is the last enemy, and it is now defeated (1 Cor. 15:26, 54–55; Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14). It will never again threaten mankind. It will not disturb the peace of the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:4). It joins its victims in the lake of fire.
2. **This the second death:** The second death is the lake of fire. The same truth is stated at the end of (21:8). The righteous receive a second and higher life. The wicked receive a second and deeper death (2:11;

20:6). In the new order, the lake of fire is the closest match to death in the present creation. **Is the lake of fire real?:** The words **lake of fire** are a figure of speech. They help limited human minds grasp eternal punishment. But the figure points to a real thing. The rich man in Hades suffered unbearable torment in flames (Luke 16:23–24). Those in the lake of fire will suffer punishment of the same kind. There is no great difference between the physical and the spiritual reality behind this picture. The torment never ends. That is why **the second death** is a fitting name for it.

Revelation 20:15

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

1. **And anyone not found written in the Book of Life:** This is the final verdict. It states the doom of everyone outside of Christ. **If anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. Who is cast in?** Anyone whose name is missing from the Book of Life is thrown into the lake of fire. They follow the Devil, the beast, and the false prophet there (19:20; 20:10). **What this rules out:** This language leaves no room for several false teachings:

- (a) Universalism, the idea that all will be saved.
- (b) Soul sleep.

- (c) An intermediate state.
 - (d) A second chance after death.
 - (e) Annihilation of the wicked.
2. **Cast into the lake of fire:** The verse is simple. It does not describe the saints inflicting this punishment. It does not describe them watching it either. **What the lake of fire means?** First, it is the loss of the eternal life the lost could have received. But it is more than that. It is a tormenting existence among evil, set against life in the company of God. It is also the direct infliction of misery, both physical and mental. This is the eternal fire Jesus spoke of (Matt. 25:41, 46). Because the lost are there, **the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever**. They have no rest **day and night** (14:11).
- 1. Christ's return (11 ff)
 - 2. An angel calling birds of prey to a coming battle (19:17–18)
 - 3. The beast (Antichrist) being defeated (19:19–21)
 - 4. Satan being bound (20:1–3)
 - 5. The thousand-year reign (Millennium) and Satan's final defeat (20:4–10)

6. [The Great White Throne being set up \(20:11\)](#)
7. [The final judgment of the unsaved \(20:12–15\)](#)
8. **[The new heaven and new earth \(21:1–8\)](#)**

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