



PLANET EARTH



THE LAST CHAPTER



OUTLINE ... (Revelation 20:1-15 ESV)

1. THE DRAGON'S FORCES HAVE BEEN DEFEATED AT ARMAGEDDON (19:17-21) AND HE IS SEIZED BY AN ANGEL AND THROWN INTO THE ABYSS, 20:1-3.

- (Revelation 20:1-3 ESV) Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 **And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.** 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the **thousand years** were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

- A. An angel descends from heaven with the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand.
- B. The angel seizes the dragon, binds him for a thousand years and throws him into the abyss.
- C. He then shuts the abyss and seals it over the dragon so he will not be allowed to deceive the nations.

Can you imagine the shock, dismay and horror that the dragon will experience at this time ... when the reality of the great distance ... the infinite, unbridgeable divide ... between what is created and the Creator ... begins to settle into his consciousness?

God is God and there is none like him. Worried that the devil has gathered the kings of the earth with their armies to make war against him? God laughs. He merely speaks the word and this pretender to his throne is thrown into and imprisoned in the abyss.

- (Psalm 2:1-5 NLT) Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans? 2 The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the LORD and against his anointed one. 3 "Let us break their chains," they cry, "and free ourselves from slavery to God." 4 **But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.** 5 **Then in anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury.**

- D. At the end of the thousand years the dragon is released for a short period of time.

Can you imagine the devil's rage as he

seethes for a thousand years plotting his revenge? The great darkness blinds him even further, twisting his depraved mind, spiraling him deeper and deeper into the depths of deceit and disillusionment as he pictures the day he will be freed and will finally have his chance to dethrone God.

2. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM IS INTRODUCED AND INAUGURATED, 20:4-6.

- (Revelation 20:4-6 ESV) **Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.** Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded **for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God**, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a **thousand years**. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the **thousand years** were ended. **This is the first resurrection.** 6 **Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!** Over such the **second death has no power**, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a **thousand years**.

- A. Jesus Christ will literally reign as King on earth for a thousand years. (A "**thousand years**" is referred to *six times* in Revelation twenty.)
- B. Those who will reign with Christ for the thousand years are identified as the ones who share in the first resurrection—the saints of all ages.
- C. The rest of the dead stay dead until they are summoned to stand in judgment before God on his great white throne.
- D. Those who will reign with Christ for the thousand years are also identified as the ones who held to "*the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God.*"
- E. Those seated on the thrones have had the authority to judge committed to them.
 - (Daniel 7:27 ESV) **And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;** his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all

dominions shall serve and obey him.

- (Matthew 19:28 ESV) Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, **you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
- (Revelation 5:9b–10 ESV) **And by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.**
- See also Revelation 3:21, 2:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3.

F. The saints of God will serve as just and righteous civil servants in the King’s government.

- (Isaiah 9:6–7 ESV) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 **Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.** The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

G. The saints of God will serve as priests to the people of the kingdom, 20:6.

3. SATAN IS RELEASED FROM HIS PRISON AND LEADS A VAST ARMY OF THE DECEIVED INTO THE VERY FINAL BATTLE ON EARTH, 20:7-10.

- (Revelation 20:7–10 ESV) And when the **thousand years** are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; **their number is like the sand of the sea.** 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

A. Satan will be released when the thousand years are ended.

B. He will successfully deceive the nations and gather a vast multitude of people to do battle against God and the saints of God.

The devil’s last gasp ... He will try once again to be god and defeat the one true God. Could there be any greater example of the darkness and depravity of God’s created beings than the deceit that shrouds this once magnificent creation of God? And as unbelievable as it may seem, there will be a multitude of people on the planet who are “*buying what he is selling.*”

C. How can it be that there is such a large number of people joining in this rebellion?

There will be a huge increase in the population of earth over the thousand years, so even though “*their number is like the sand of the sea*” it will be just a fraction of the population.

Historical demographers estimate that around the year 1800 the world population was only around 1 billion people. [<https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-growth>]

So if we use the figure for the current (as of noon on September 17, 2021) world population as 7,893,765,246, then we can estimate that in less than ideal conditions over the last two hundred twenty years that the population of Earth has grown by close to seven billion people.

It seems very reasonable then that a conservative estimate of **the population of earth at the end of the thousand years could easily be in excess of thirty-five billion people given the ideal conditions of the kingdom.**

- (Isaiah 65:20 NLT) No longer will babies die when only a few days old. No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. **No longer will people be considered old at one hundred!** Only the cursed will die that young!
 - (Genesis 1:28a ESV) And God blessed them. And God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.**”
 - (Genesis 9:1 ESV) And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.**”
- D. Why would people join the devil’s rebellion when conditions on earth are so ideal?

Our text tells us ... *“and the devil who had deceived them”* ... just as he has been deceiving people from the very beginning. We have no idea of the depth of darkness and deceit and sin in the human heart.

- (Jeremiah 17:9 NLT) The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. **Who really knows how bad it is?**

This is one reason (of many) why we must never question God’s judgments on those who refuse to bow before him and receive his offer of life. Just remember ... it took only one single act of sin ... one seemingly innocuous act of eating fruit from a tree ... that brought sin—and all its accompanying anguish—and death to every human who would ever be born on the planet.

- (Romans 5:12 ESV) **Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.**

E. As with the battle of Armageddon, this battle too almost appears to be anticlimactic as God shows himself to be God and fire comes down from heaven and consumes the rebels.

- (Revelation 20:9 ESV) And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, **but fire came down from heaven and consumed them.**

F. The devil is thrown into the lake of fire.

- (Revelation 20:10 ESV) **And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

4. THE DEAD OF EVERY AGE OF EARTH HISTORY STAND BEFORE THE GREAT WHITE THRONE OF GOD AND ARE JUDGED, 20:11-15.

- (Revelation 20:11–15 ESV) Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. **From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.** 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 **And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

A. Next John saw God seated on his great white throne of judgment with nothing else in sight as the earth and sky have fled away.

B. All the unsaved over the entire history of earth are here ... standing naked and exposed.

Absolutely everything familiar to them is now gone. There are no trees to hide behind as they stand waiting for God’s judgment.

- (Genesis 3:8–10 ESV) And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, **and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.** 9 But the Lord God ~~called~~ to the man and said to him, **“WHERE ARE YOU?”** 10 And he said, **“I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”**

- (Hebrews 4:13 ESV) And no creature is hidden from his sight, **but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**

- (Matthew 12:36–37 ESV) I tell you, **on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,** 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

C. Books are opened and the dead are judged according to what was written in the books.

D. The book of life was opened ...

- (Revelation 20:15 ESV) **And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**