

# Later or Now

Sunday, 11/6 at 8:00 & 10:45

All Saints Day (Observed) – 2011

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ, Revelation chapter 20 brings us to an *often-confused* part of Scripture. The phrase “**thousand years**,” is used 9 times in the whole Bible – 6 of those 9 are in Revelation 20. In this sermon God, *through His Word*, will help us rightly understand ♦Satan being bound, ♦the thousand years, ♦the first resurrection, ♦reigning with Christ, and ♦more. In each case, does the Bible teach that such things will happen LATER OR are they happening NOW? *May the Spirit through the Word give us the right answers!*

1. **Satan is Bound:** <sup>1</sup> ~~Then~~ [And] I saw an angel [our Lord Jesus Christ] coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand [In 1:18 Jesus said: “I have the keys of death and of Hades.” In Jude 6 evil angels are “kept in eternal chains...until the judgment of the great day...” (ESV)]. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years [In Genesis 3:15 the LORD God said to the serpent in regard to the Savior: “He will crush your head...” In 1 John 3:8: “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”]; <sup>3</sup> and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations [the unbelieving Gentiles] any longer, until the thousand years [the NT era] were completed; after these things he must [δεῖ] be released for a short time. // Let’s go back to some key points:

- a. Then versus And – In some translations verse 1 begins with “then” (ESV, NAU, RSV), in others it begins with “and” (KJV, NAS, NIV). Here are some ways to think about their significance: “Then” CAN indicate an actual, chronological order of events – as *if the killing recorded at the end of chapter 19 will be followed by the binding of Satan at the beginning of chapter 20*. Since that is NOT true, using “then” can be misleading; however, using “then” does fit with the fact that John saw the chapter 19 vision, *then* the chapter 20 vision. As stated before, Revelation is not written in chronological order – *chapter 6 describes the end of the world, while chapter 12 describes Jesus’ birth and ascension*. Therefore, the literal Greek translation of “and” is preferred.
- b. Satan’s binding – It happened when Jesus declared from the cross: “It is finished.” (John 19:30) Satan will continue to be bound “for a thousand years,” which symbolizes the NT era (10x10x10 is a very complete period of time). During that time, *as stated in chapter 13*, Satan is limited but still does his work of lying, deceiving, and murdering through beast 1 and beast 2. But how, *in a real sense*, is Satan bound? Let’s make a general comparison between the OT and the NT: ✦ In the OT Satan had more freedom while the gospel – *the good news of Jesus* – was limited; however, now, ✦ in the NT, the gospel has more freedom while Satan is limited. Dr. Becker made this comment about the NT era: “So long as the gospel is preached to the nations, the devil will be hindered in his attempt to deceive the nations. The more widely and the more purely the gospel is proclaimed, the shorter Satan’s chain becomes” (298).

c. Satan's release – It will happen either *near the end* OR *at the end* of the NT era. When he is released, HE WILL DECEIVE THE NATIONS! Regarding that time, Jesus said: “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.... false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Mt. 24:22, 24 NAU). So, *regarding the short season*, WHEN? Some believe we are living in it today; either way, there are MANY churches but there is LITTLE gospel truth! Now, *some good news!*

2. **Christians Reign with Christ:** <sup>4</sup> ~~Then~~ [And] I saw thrones, and they sat on them [*Who? See below...*], and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life [ESV, NAS, NIV, RSV] [lived] [KJV, NET] [*indicative aorist active*] and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead [*literally not lived*] did not come to life [*or did not live again*] until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who has [*literally having – continuing to have*] a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for ~~a~~ [the] thousand years [*from their death until Jesus returns*].

a. Dead Christian bodies equal living reigning souls – *Do you understand?* Notice in verse 4 who are seated on

thrones: Christians who were beheaded / martyred and others who did not worship the beast!

- b. Be careful – It's NOT that *they were dead AND came to life* – like many wrongly believe who envision a 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ (see [John 18:36](#)). Instead, *as soon as their bodies died in Christ*, their souls continued to live and – *even now* – they are reigning with Christ! Jesus said, *in reference to our spiritual lives*: “...[whoever lives and believes in me will never die](#)” ([Jn. 11:26 NIV](#)). *Is that what you believe?*
- c. Comfort – Try to imagine your loved one being arrested and killed *because of his or her testimony of Jesus*. That could bring great despair, but *knowing that your loved one is reigning with Christ* should bring great comfort. Read Dr. Becker's quote, page 308.
- d. The first death – We all began with physical life, *but also with spiritual death* ([Eph. 2:1](#)).
- e. The first resurrection – When God united us to Christ, *thus raising us from spiritual death* ([Eph. 2:4-6](#))! The first resurrection *continues* as we reign with Christ *between our physical death and His return!*
- f. The second resurrection – When Jesus returns and raises all bodies – *both believers and unbelievers* (see [John 5:28-29](#); [Acts 24:15](#))!
- g. The second death – *Eternal punishment*; it has no power over us; *we are God's forgiven children!*

**Conclusion**: Now, ♦trusting in Jesus as Savior and ♦understanding more about time and eternity, *may God fill us with His perfect peace!* And all God's people said: *Amen!*