

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #66
1/23/2008

Following Armageddon Comes The Millennium: Part 2
19:21-20:10

As John transitions from Chapter nineteen to Chapter twenty, he continues recording the spectacular events, each of which is unique and singular in nature, never having happened before and never to happen again. Each of them is connected with the particle **and** to show their interdependence and causative relationship to each other.

Having completed his description of **the King of Kings'** victory and destruction of His enemies, John then begins to describe the specific events God produces that are integral to His justice, peace and righteousness, which then result in peace and joy for His adopted children. As each event unfolds before us we should remind ourselves that we are about to read descriptions of events which are so unique and so far beyond anything we have ever known that it is most unlikely that we can fully comprehend the significance of what we are told. Though we find ourselves unable to comprehend each of these marvelous things, we should not doubt or question God's abilities to do what is beyond both our understanding and our capacities. We should never limit God by our limitations nor judge God by the standard of our own insufficiencies. Not only is He utterly beyond us in Who He is, but He is also completely beyond us in His activities.

We should recognize this, accept it, and realize that if what God tells us seems not to be compatible with our understanding, it is not because God tells us a fanciful or untrue thing, but rather that our own limitations make it absolutely impossible for us to comprehend the incomprehensible actions of our Holy and Omnipotent God. To the skeptic is offered a word of common sense. Cease to ridicule God for telling us about things we cannot comprehend. Remove yourself from the category of those who think God is weak, foolish and unbelievable. Do not define God by your inabilities.

The twentieth Chapter of Revelation has, over the years, been a type of battleground for students of the Scriptures. It serves to separate those who interpret the very Words of the Holy Word as being accurate, factual statements from our Holy God Who cannot lie from those who seem to take upon themselves the authority to critique and evaluate those same words, sorting those they say are true from those they say cannot be accepted as true. As the Bible student reads and considers God's account of these events, let him remember that he is not God's judge and is not assigned the role of verifying God's credibility. Rather, the opposite is true. Each reader is judged by these words of God — he does not judge these words!

The first of these interconnected and sequential events which follow Christ's victory at His second coming is recorded in Chapter twenty, verse one. Each of these sequential events builds upon the one it follows, as naturally as light issues forth with the rising of the sun and bridges the gap between **the Tribulation Period** and **the new heavens and new earth.**

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

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Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

The first event is the appearance of an unidentified angel, simply a servant of God, who comes down from heaven with two things in his hand: **the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.** Because the mind of natural man has no real ability to comprehend things outside the material realm, he immediately conjures up images of various known things when he reads certain words such as **key** and **chain**. Even though the natural man knows that the devil is a spirit being and scoffs in derision when he reads of **“a key”** and **“a chain”** for he immediately relates those two objects to material objects which are made out of material matter. He knows that **“a key”** made out of metal and **“a chain”** also composed out of matter could never free or bind a spirit being such as the devil.

In his illogical manner of thinking the skeptic has failed to recognize a basic fact. In order for God to communicate truth about spiritual and eternal matters to man, who is so limited in his abilities to comprehend anything beyond his own material universe, God must resort to words which have some meaning to men. Even when man reads those very words he often fails to grasp their meaning, limiting his own understanding to things of his own acquaintance. Such will be the pattern faced by some as they read of the events recorded in this chapter.

The items mentioned in this first verse are illustrative of the above. When some read the words **“key,”** and **“chain”** they immediately limit their meanings to a likeness of something they have held in their hands. However, while both words are to be taken literally, both words communicate truths beyond those commonly held views.

The word for **“key,”** **kleis** (2807), denotes the power or authority to open or shut something and was used often in Scripture in reference to non-material things (Luke 4:25; 11:52; Mat. 23:13). In Revelation 1:18 Christ told John that He has **“the keys of hell (hades) and of death,”** meaning that He has authority over those things. In Revelation 3:7 He identifies Himself as **“He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth”** when He referred to His authority over access unto God the Father (John 10:9,28; 14:6).

The **“key”** which the angel has in his hand is not a metallic object to unlock metallic locks, but God’s authority over all things which, in this case and for this purpose, is delegated to him. It is literal in the truest sense of the word, i.e., it is power and authority to open something that God had shut.

Like the **“key”** discussed above, skeptics have focused on this word **“chain”** to deride God’s Word. Many of the same observations which

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were made about the “key” also apply to the “chain.” “Chain” is a translation of the Greek word haloosis (254) and refers to something used to bind or restrain prisoners. Like the word “key,” the “chain” used by the angel is not a metallic thing nor does it bind a physical person, but Satan who is a spirit being. Of course, God does not intend for us to understand that the angel has in his hand a metallic “chain,” but, in having to overcome the limitations of man’s inability to comprehend non-material matters, God uses a word picture of something that man can visualize. Though this “chain” is not material nor used to bind a “material” being, its use is necessary to communicate to man that the angel has been given the authority to seize and bind Satan. The binding of Satan, restraining him in this “bottomless pit” is the assignment God gives to the angel and empowers him to carry out his orders. The binding is accomplished and Satan is removed from any contact with or influence on the affairs on this earth for “one thousand years.” This, of course, is necessary for God to establish His Kingdom of righteousness and peace on this earth.

We have seen the “bottomless pit,” abusso (12), before. In 9:1-3 “*a star (angel) fallen from heaven*” was seen. That “star” was Lucifer and to him “*was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit and there arose smoke out of the pit And there came out of the smoke locusts (other fallen angels or demons).*” It is translated “deep” in Luke 8:31 and many commentators also see a reference to “the bottomless pit” in the word “hell,” tartaroo (5020), in 2 Pet. 2:4. Without question is an awful place, a place of containment where God has detained some of the most vile creatures among those fallen angels which have reviled against Him. One of those vile and powerful demons was allowed to ascend out of that “*bottomless pit to inhabit and empower the beast (Anti-Christ)*” in Revelation 17:8.

In Revelation 20:1-2, we are told that God sends an angel from among His own faithful servants, whom He empowers with authority over the devil, to seize “**that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bind him for a thousand years.**” However, whereas previously there had been occasions when some of the vile evil spirit beings were released from that “**bottomless pit,**” God’s servant has “**a chain**” with which he binds Satan so that he cannot be freed until God is ready to release him in “**one thousand years.**”

The skeptics are correct in one sense. The use of the phrase “**one thousand years**” appears only here in Revelation twenty, but God does use it here six times in this brief span of Scripture. Though God does not use the phrase elsewhere, His repetitive use of “**one thousand years,**” often translated Millennium, surely is sufficient to emphasize the reality of His

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Millennial Kingdom. Those who would choose to spiritualize away the literal meaning, so abundantly clear from God's own emphatic use of His chosen phrase, are simply being unrealistic and inconsistent in their handling of God's Holy Word. God says what He means and means what He says. He could not possibly make it any clearer.

The Devil is **"seized and bound for one thousand years, a millennium,"** while God performs the actions which follow, actions which He succinctly and forcibly describes. Each of the following actions, all connected with the particle **"and,"** to show their interdependence, are built upon the truth that God has captured and confined Satan for **"one thousand years"** in a prison from which he cannot escape. The **"dragon," "that old serpent"** who has tempted and tormented every man from Adam forward, who sought so passionately to persecute and destroy Israel, is now removed from the world and will not be allowed to pursue his rebellion against God until God is ready to release him.

At that time, **"one thousand years"** after he is confined, God will once again assert His authority over Satan and release him for a very brief time to accomplish a specific purpose. When Satan has served God's purpose, God will then dispose of him forever, **"casting him into the lake of fire burning with brimstone,"** a place **"prepared for the devil from before the foundation of the world,"** never again to allow the rebel the freedom to spread his poisonous, wicked ways, infecting others with his evil nature.

This **"one thousand years,"** often referred to as the Millennium, is that time of justice, righteousness and peace for which the Jews have longed with such passion over the years. The Old Testament is full of descriptions of this time, so full that, when Christ came to this earth the first time, even the disciples of Jesus anticipated that this time was to then be fulfilled. The question asked by His disciples at the time of His departure and ascension back into glory reveals their mind-set: **"... Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"** (Acts 1:6).

It so occupied the thinking of the Old Testament Jew that he was unable to see his Messiah coming two times to this earth. He could not correlate the picture of his Messiah in Isaiah 53, suffering and being killed, with the other pictures Isaiah presented of their Messiah such as is found in Isaiah 40:1-11. In addition, as the Jew read the other prophets, it was apparent to him that God had planned a glorious future for Israel, a future of peace and prosperity. With Satan bound that time now comes and is glorious indeed!