

**“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet” (Rev 1:10)**

**✠ Lecture IV: Revelation 20:1-6 Interpreted ✠**

In examining the Holy Book of Revelation as a complete work, it is apparent that the whole Holy Book is not entirely prophetic, as commonly thought. In fact, there are three unmistakable purposes in God’s message. The first is the pronouncement of those things that have already taken place. The second is those current things that were taking place at the time in which St. John was writing to the Churches. The last is an announcement of those things, which would take place in the future.

For instance, the birth of the Savior is recounted, “Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne.” **(Rev 12:1-6)**

It is important to note the use of symbolic language in the above passage, which soundly compares to the symbolic language used in Chapter 20. In Chapter 2 and 3, a record of the messages received by the Churches is revealed. Chapter 21, through more symbolic language, refers to the Heavenly Jerusalem, which will be revealed in the future. Thus, although much of the Holy Book of Revelation is prophecy, some of it is referring to events and circumstances of the past and the present.

**✠ (Revelation 20:1-6) ✠**

*“And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand” (v.1)*

→ The bottomless pit is referred to in **(Lk 16:19-26)** in the story of Lazarus and the rich man. It was the place where all the souls, righteous and unrighteous, remained until the death of Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Our Lord descended to this pit and loosed the righteous souls so that they enter paradise.

- “He [Lord Jesus Christ] went and preached to the spirits in prison” **(1 Pet 3:19)**
- “As for you also, because the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.” **(Zech 9:11)**
- “Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’ Now this ‘He ascended’ – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?” **(Eph 4:9)**

*“He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years” (v.2)*

→ These 1,000 years are the present time. Lord Jesus Christ bound Satan during this time so he could not have the same freedom he had when he deceived the whole world except our father Noah and His family **(Gen 6:6)** or when no one worshiped God in the entire world except Moses and Joshua the Prophets when they were on Mount Sinai and the Israelites were worshiping the golden calf below **(Gen 32:4)** in deed it was written, “There is none who does good, No, not one.” **(Ps 14:3)**

- “**Now** the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth will draw people to Myself.” **(Jn 12:31,32)** – “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” **(Jam 4:7)**
- “Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [the cross]” **(Col 2:14,15)**
- “Behold I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you” **(Lk 10:19)**

*“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.” (v. 3)*

→ This “little while” during which Satan will be released is the Great Tribulation about which our Lord said, “unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved” (**Mt 24:22**) – During this period the Antichrist will appear and the falling away will occur.

- “That [Last] Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition ... the coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception ...” (**2 Thess 2:3-10**)

*“And 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.” (v. 4)*

→ In this verse St. John describes the members of the kingdom of God who have been loyal in their worship for they “had not received the mark [of Satan] on their foreheads [thoughts] or on their hands [deeds]” – Notice also that St. John speaks of “souls” and not bodies, which indicates that this 1,000 year reign is a spiritual one for it extends beyond our earthly life.

*“But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.” (v. 5)*

→ The rest of the dead are those who are physically alive but spiritually dead. Unlike the souls mentioned in verse 4, these people chose not to accept Lord Jesus Christ’s words. Thus the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection from the spiritual death of sin and those who experience this first resurrection are added to the reign of Lord Jesus Christ.

- “Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ ... and raised us up together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (**Eph 2:4,5**)
- “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, **and now is**, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.” (**Jn 5:25**)

*“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.” (v. 6)*

→ St. John said, “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and **has made us kings and priests** to His God and Father, to Him be glory...” (**Rev 1:5,6**) – These words indicate that the 1,000-year reign of the Lord has already started when He washed us from our sins and has made us priests and kings (spiritually). Thus the second death that is eternal death has no power over those who believe and join the spiritual kingdom of Lord Jesus Christ, “... the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (**Rev 21:8**)

✚ Those who believe in a literal 1,000-year reign also misinterpret some of the Old Testament passages to support their false teaching. In what follows, we shall, by the grace of God, provide these verses and their counterparts in the New Testament, which will prove that we are living in the spiritual millennial reign now:

- 1) “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb” (**Is 11:6**) → “I send you out as lambs among wolves” (**Lk 10:3**)
- 2) “... a little child shall lead them” (**Is 11:6**) → “be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (**Mt 10:16**)
- 3) “The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den” (**Is 11:8**) → “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes.” (**Lk 10:21**) – “I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (**Lk 10:19**)
- 4) “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days ... for the child shall die one hundred years old” (**Is 65:20**) → “Whoever believes in Me shall never die.” (**Jn 11:26**)
- 5) “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (**Is 12:3**) → “come to Me and drink” (**Jn 7:37**)

### ✠ The Danger of a Literal Millennial Reign:

It is extremely dangerous for people to expect an earthly kingdom for Lord Jesus Christ because this idea is preparing them to accept and believe the Antichrist. They will be expecting Lord Jesus Christ to physically come and perform wonders and miracles but the lawless one will deceive them.

- “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, **showing himself that he is God** ... The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, **with all power, signs, and lying wonders**, and **with all unrighteous deception** among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Thess 2:3-10)
- “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ **do not believe it**. For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ **do not go out**; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ **do not believe it.**” (Mt 24:23-26)

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\* This lecture is adapted from ‘*The Clarity of the Heavenly Vision*’ by late Fr. Abdel-Messih T. El-Nekhely.