

Revelation 19:11 – 20:15

Three separate visions belonging together, dealing with the three enemies:

1. How the beast and his armies are defeated (19:17-21)
2. How Satan, the Dragon, is defeated (20:1-10)
3. How Death and Hades are being destroyed (20:11-15).

What is described in Revelation 19 and 20 is not chronological. It fits in the structure of the book of Revelation. First in Chapter 6, the opening of the seals, Death is introduced as the great enemy. Then in 12, the Dragon is the second enemy. And in 13 the Beast and his prophet.

Now in 19 we see them being dealt with in reverse order. This is a style figure which we call chiasm. First the Beast and his prophet are being dealt with, then the Great Dragon, and then in 19:11-15 finally death is being destroyed.

In this Bible Study we will look at the first two visions. 19:7-20:10.

Christ on a White Horse

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. 12 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. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 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. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Heaven opened: see 4:1. There a door was opened, now wide open: climax. It's coming close to the end.

White Horse and Rider: description full of symbolism, and repeats what we have seen earlier in Revelation:

- Colour white: heaven, holiness, righteousness
- White horse: Rev. 6. However: here the only horse.
- Name: Faithful and true, see 3:14 : Laodicea
- Eyes a flame of fire: see 1:14 and 2:18 (Thyatira)
- Sharp sword out of His mouth: 1:16

Also many connections with other parts of the Bible:

- In righteousness He judges and makes war. See Isaiah 11:3-5.
- Robe dipped in blood: Isaiah 63:1-3
- Iron rod: Psalm 2
- Treading the winepress: Isaiah 63

Names in these verses: not personal names but titles, functions:

- His Name: Faithful and True. See 3:14 : Laodicea. The fulfiller of God's Word.
- Also: A Name written that no one knew except Himself: just as His followers get a new name, so also He Himself. But no one can understand that name yet. It will only be revealed when the end has come. Nobody understands the full extend of God's work yet. Only Christ.
- Name: the Word of God. He is God's judgment: both saving for the righteous and condemning for the evil. Word as key of the kingdom (LD 31): opens and closes. As Judge He speaks God's Word, God's judgment. *'According to this testimony of the gospel, God will judge both in this life and in the life to come.'* LD 31
- His NAME; King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Many crowns: Royal authority: over all the earth, all kingdoms. Not just limited number of crowns, like the Dragon and the Beasts.

Armies in heaven: clothed in white, fine linen, clean. Angels, and possible those Christians who are in heaven. Shows the holiness, the righteousness.

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

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, 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."

19 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. 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. 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.

19:6-10 : Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

19:17 : Supper of God's wrath.

Invitation goes out already before the battle. The outcome of the battle is certain.

19:18 : Repay to them what they did to the saints (see 18:6). Psalm 79: *The dead bodies of Your servants They have given as food for the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth.*

Vs. 19: the enemy: the Beast: Rev. 13. Man's power. Number: 666, is only the number of man. Captured even before the battle began!

Lake of fire burning with brimstone: sign of God's eternal wrath.

The rest were killed with the sword: the Word of God.

Satan Bound 1,000 Years

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; **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.

The Saints Reign with Christ 1,000 Years

4 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. **5** But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. **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.

Satanic Rebellion Crushed

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison **8** 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. **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. **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.

The serpent of old: perspective shifts to the beginning.

Bottomless pit: pit was often used as prison.

Vs. 3: The angel captured him: four actions! Abundance of safety!

Thousand years: very long time. Contrast with the time of the beast: time, times and half a time. Evil gets limited time, but God's righteousness is forever (thousand years).

The saints will reign with Christ.

The first Adam is replaced by the second Adam, He as our Head will reign and we will reign with Him.

Disagreement about the thousand years: pre-/post-/a-millennialists.

But: Thousand years can be explained either as the entire time from beginning to end, or as the time beginning with the Ascension of Christ.

I believe it's the latter: from the ascension to His return.

- Christ obtained the victory over the Dragon, Satan, through His death on the cross.
- Luke 10:18: Christ saw Satan falling down from heaven.

- Rev. 12 Satan is hurled down from heaven. That is the moment that he was defeated by Christ and bound.

The Dragon himself cannot deceive the nations. He uses the Beast and his prophet to do so. But Their power is less than Satan's. They cannot unite all nations against Christ and His people.

At the end of the thousand years: that is the time when Christ returns.

God is preparing the stage for Christ's return.

Romans 9:17 : *For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*

That was a foreshadowing of the final defeat of the Dragon, Satan.

Psalms 2 : the peoples of the earth and their kings come together in counsel and plot against the LORD and His anointed. But God, Who sits in the heavens, laughs. He holds them in derision.

Sand of the sea: defeat of this strong enemy makes Christ's glory even greater.

Before the battle even started, they are destroyed by fire from heaven. Just as happened with the Beast in 19:20.

And also the Dragon is thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, together with the Beast and his prophet.

Questions:

1. Many translations have a heading in chapter 20 which is something like 'The Thousand Years' or 'The Saints Reign with Christ 1,000 Years'. (These headings do not belong to the Bible but are added by translators or editors.) This may cause confusion. Many people believe that the 1,000 years is a separate period which still has to come. Would it not be better to use a Bible translation without any of these additions?
2. 20:4-6: It speaks here about the first resurrection and the second death. What is the first resurrection? And what is the second death? (keeping in mind here that only the believers have part in the first resurrection and only they will not die the second death). See also Romans 6:5-11.
3. 20:4 : the souls of those who had been beheaded ... : this stands for all believers. As Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:12 : *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.* We, the believers, are called to reign with Christ. We will judge this earth. Does this give us confidence in our dealings with unbelievers, or are we still too much focused on the threats which we see coming our way from this world?