

## Revelation 19. 17 to 20. 15. Spanish Wells. 26 May 2009.

This evening we follow on from where we left off last Tuesday, and we shall be focussing on the solemn subject of the final judgements of God – judgements which are to fall both on men and on the devil. And the record of these judgements extends from Revelation chapter 19 verse 17 through to the end of chapter 20. But, for the sake of connection, we will read the whole section from chapter 19 verse 11 through to the opening of chapter 21 – to the close of verse 2.<sup>1</sup>

### [Revelation 19. 11- 21. 2]

It goes without saying that we shall not be able to consider every expression this evening. Nor, I confess, do I find many of the details of our passage at all easy to understand. For, as you will have noticed, our section, as indeed the whole of the Book of Revelation, abounds in word pictures, images and symbols. And I would be the first to acknowledge that many godly and scholarly Bible teachers have differed – and still do differ –over how they understand much of what I have read.

And the first question we need to answer is whether *the events* which lie behind the imagery of our section themselves run consecutively. Clearly, *the visions* which John saw through our passage followed one after the other. That is not the question. The question is whether *the events* depicted in these visions are to follow in the same order.

There can be no doubt that that there are times in the Book of Revelation when John doubles back on himself and covers the same period for a second time – either from an entirely different standpoint or to fill in further details.

For example, it seems clear to me that the closing section of chapter 11 – from verse 15 to verse 18 – marks the end of one main section of the book, when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet and loud voices are heard in heaven, declaring that, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever’ ... when the twenty-four elders, ‘fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign’. As I understand it, the following main section of the book – including what we have read this evening – focuses on the leading actors in the drama – ranging from the dragon, the Beast, the False Prophet and Great Babylon, to the person of our Lord Jesus Himself.

And even *within* this latter section, John, having referred to the fall of Babylon briefly in verse 8 of chapter 14 (‘another angel ... followed, saying, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great’) John returned later (in the long section from the beginning of chapter 17 to the opening verses of chapter 19) to fill in the details of Babylon’s destruction, together with – as we saw last week – the responses of both earth and heaven to her fall.

And the big question is whether or not John does something of that kind again *in our section* for this evening – and in particular whether he concludes one series of events at the end of chapter 19, and then, at the opening of chapter 20, throws the reader back to much earlier events – even as far back perhaps as the life and death of Jesus. For that is what I suspect some at least on this very island believe.

For what it is worth, I am of the view that the events portrayed in our section *do* in fact follow one another in the order of those visions.

And there are several factors which lead me to this conclusion. Not least that, if we distance in time and sequence the events pictured in the opening verses of chapter 20 from those recorded at the end of chapter 19, we will have, in chapter 19, both the Beast and the False Prophet<sup>2</sup> apprehended and removed from the earth, but we will *not, at that time*, have the Dragon removed also. And, speaking personally, I find it difficult to believe that we have read of a coming time, when – if I can put it this way – two-thirds of this Unholy Trinity (or, perhaps better, of this Satanic trio) which was introduced to us at length in chapters 12 and 13 ... that we have read of a coming time when two-thirds of that trio – namely the dragon’s two principal representatives – the Beast and the False Prophet – should be dealt with in summary judgement ... without being informed what happened *then* to the great instigator of all their evil and deception – and, indeed, of the great uprising against our Lord Jesus recorded in the closing section of chapter 19.

For we have learnt from chapter 16 that the ‘war’ of verse 19 of our chapter is to be orchestrated by this evil trio jointly; in the symbolic language of verses 13 and 14 of that chapter, ‘three unclean spirits ... came *out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet* ... they are spirits of demons ... which go out to the kings of the whole earth to gather them together to the war of the great day of God Almighty’.

Is it reasonable, I ask myself, that, immediately following the brief account of that ‘great day’, we are told about the fate, not only of the men who comprise the armies, but of two of the characters chiefly responsible for the war and

its ensuing slaughter, *without* being told of the fate which then awaited the one who was, in reality, the chief instigator of the war? For my part, having read the end of chapter 19, I would be *expecting* to read something such as we find at the opening of chapter 20 – and I would expect the events described there to follow immediately on from the events pictured at the close of chapter 19.

Again, I feel that the very *structure* of our section for tonight points very much in the same direction. And I note, in particular, the recurring clause, 'And I saw'.

We find this expression thirty-three times in all in the book, twenty-three of which come between the beginning of chapter 5 and the end of chapter 16 – spanning the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. The expression then occurs just twice at the opening of chapter 17 (verses 3 and 6). And we do not meet it again until the series of nine occasions which we read earlier – stretching, without any obvious break as I see it, from chapter 19 verse 11 to the beginning of chapter 21 :

- (a) The first mention covers Scene 1 (the Warrior-King riding out of heaven); 'And I saw the heaven opened', Rev. 19. 11.
- (b) The second and third cover Scene 2 (the 'war' between the Lamb and His foes); 'And I saw an angel standing in the sun', Rev. 19. 17, together with 'And I saw the beast', Rev. 19. 19.
- (c) The fourth and fifth cover Scene 3 (the capture and imprisonment of the dragon, and the Messianic reign), 'And I saw an angel coming down from heaven', Rev. 20. 1, together with 'And I saw thrones', Rev. 20. 4.
- (d) The six and seventh cover Scene 4 (the Supreme Court of Divine Justice): 'And I saw a great white throne', Rev. 20. 11, together with 'And I saw the dead', Rev. 20. 12.
- (e) And, finally, the eighth and ninth occasions cover Scene 5 (the New Heavens and Earth); 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth', Rev. 21. 1, together with, 'And I saw the holy city', Rev. 21. 2.

Further, I think that the very *content* of our section – taken together with the sections either side – also implies that the events portrayed in the visions are to follow one another in the order of those visions.

For I suggest that the content of this wider section can be outlined as follows :

- (i) In *the immediate context before*, Rev. 19. 6-9, we read of 'the wife of the Lamb', and how she is dressed. And in *the immediate context after*, Rev. 21. 2, we again read of 'the wife of the Lamb', and how she is dressed.
- (ii) In our *first section*, Rev. 19. 11-16, we read of a white horse, and the One who sat on it, and, in our *last section*, Rev. 20. 11-15, we read of a white throne, and the One who sat on it.
- (iii) In our *second section*, Rev. 19. 17-21, we read of large-scale military forces 'gathered together' for 'war', which forces are destroyed by the Warrior-King from heaven – followed by the Beast and the False Prophet being cast into the lake of fire and sulphur – and, in our *penultimate section*, Rev. 20. 7-10, we also read of large-scale military forces 'gathered together' for 'war', which forces are destroyed by fire from heaven – followed by the devil being cast into the lake of fire and sulphur – there to join his two henchmen<sup>3</sup> in their eternal torment.

This leaves us, of course, with our central section, Rev. 20. 1-6, where we read of 'the thousand years'.

Let us now look briefly at each of our sections. And we begin by picking up the threads from last Tuesday, when we left off by considering a series of contrasts between the full-length portrait which John paints here of our Lord Jesus as the awesome Warrior King and that which he paints in his gospel of our Lord Jesus paying the costly dowry by which He secured His glorious Bride/Wife for Himself.

It is generally accepted that John wrote the Revelation about 95 AD, towards the end of the reign of Emperor Domitian. And I was interested to read in the 'Life of Domitian', written by the Roman historian Suetonius less than 25 years after Domitian's death, that, while taking part in the triumphal march of his father Vespasian and his brother Titus following their defeat of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, Domitian appeared 'riding on a white horse' – marking him out as the son of the then Roman Emperor.<sup>4</sup> But John portrays for his readers – and for us – One unspeakably greater than Domitian!

Suetonius also claimed that some at least of Domitian's campaigns were 'without provocation' and 'uncalled for'.<sup>5</sup> If this historian's assessment was correct, Domitian's military conquests stand in marked contrast to those of this Warrior-King, who, the apostle assures us, 'judges and makes war' only 'in righteousness' v. 11.

And in our first proper section for this evening, Rev. 19. 17-21, we see Him indeed 'making war' in righteousness. 'The Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies', we read, 'gathered together *to make war against Him who sits upon the horse* and against His army', v. 19 – but they do not do so in righteousness! John had spoken back in chapter 17 of those kings who would 'give their power and authority to the beast', and 'these', John added 'will

make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings', Rev. 17. 14 – which title is in effect the 'coat of arms' of the mighty Warrior-King of *our* chapter, where we read that 'on His garment and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords', Rev. 19. 16.

But, if at the close of chapter 19, He 'makes war' in righteousness, we could say that, in chapter 20, He 'judges' in righteousness.

And this will be true *both* of His manifested kingdom – referred to, if I have it right, in verses 1-6 – *and* of His appearing as Judge – seated on His pure and shadowless throne, in verses 11-15.

For 'righteousness' will certainly be *one* of the distinguishing characteristics – if not *the* distinguishing characteristic – of the coming Messianic reign.

The writer to the Hebrews, for example, quotes the words of Psalm 45 verse 6 as addressed by God Himself to our Lord Jesus, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of *righteousness* is the sceptre of your kingdom', Heb. 1 .8.

Addressing God concerning this coming King, Solomon predicted in Psalm 72, 'He will judge your people *with righteousness*', 'and your poor *with justice*' when 'He shall have dominion ... from sea to sea ... and all kings shall fall down before Him' and 'all nations shall serve Him', Psa. 72. 2, 8, 11. And the prophet Isaiah contributes, 'There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse ... He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but *with righteousness* He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth ... *righteousness* shall be the belt of His loins', Isa. 11. 1-5.

And then, at the close of chapter 20, John stresses that the Last Great Assize will be conducted with scrupulous justice. For, biblically, though *salvation* may be by grace, *divine judgement* is *always* according to men's works – and the Great White Throne will be no exception.

'Books were opened' we read, '... and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their works', Rev. 20. 12. The sentence passed on each person by the awe-inspiring Judge, whose name is not given, nor His form described, will certainly not be arbitrary. It will rest on evidence – on indisputable evidence. And the 'books' will demonstrate that perfect justice will be meted out to all.

And the solemn fact is that not one unforgiven sinner will be able to absent himself or herself – for all, 'great and small' – as it should read – the reverse order to that normally given by John<sup>6</sup>, will stand before that throne, Rev. 20. 12.

For, just as nobody is too seemingly insignificant and unimportant to be summoned, so nobody is so great as to fall outside the jurisdiction of this court. Small wonder Governor Felix trembled when the apostle Paul reasoned with him of 'the judgement to come', Acts 24. 25.<sup>7</sup>

And, as you will gather, I believe that the One who sits upon the white *throne* is one and the same as the One who sits upon the white *horse*; namely, our Lord Jesus. And I note that it is the same writer, John, who records for us the words of our Saviour in John 5 – 'the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father ... the Father ... has given Him authority to execute judgment ... because He is the Son of Man', John 5. 22-26.

What a day that will be – when 'the earth and heaven' are said to 'flee' from His face – from the face of Him whose 'visage was' once 'marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men', Isa. 52. 14. For back then, John tells us in his gospel, Pilate 'sat down in the judgment seat' to pass sentence on *Jesus*, John 19. 13 – but now Pilate stands arrayed before *Him* who sits upon the white throne – and we all know what Pilate's own troops – 'the soldiers of the Governor', Matt. 27. 27, did to His face – yes, they spat in it, Matt. 27. 30! But they are not spitting now! No-one is spitting now!

Back then to the latter part of chapter 19, where, having just had described for us 'the Conqueror' Himself, the apostle turns our attention briefly to His conquests.

And I note first that the angel who is said, symbolically, to 'stand in the sun' – presumably that all the great birds of prey which fly in the heights can see him ... that this angel issues his invitation for the birds to come to the 'great supper' prepared for them by God – that they might enjoy a gruesome feast of human 'flesh' ... I note, I say, that this angel does this, not *after*, but *before* ever the battle is joined – indeed, seemingly, before the forces who fight under the banner of the Beast have even gathered themselves together in readiness for the conflict. The Holy Spirit wants us to know that the outcome of this 'war' is *never in any doubt* – that the Warrior-King's victory is a foregone conclusion – that, in the language of chapter 17 verse 14, 'the Lamb shall overcome them'!

I am reminded of the words of this King Himself in Matthew 24; 'Then shall there be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be ... as the lightning goes forth from the east and shines to the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For wherever the carcass is, there will be gathered the eagles ...they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory', Matt. 24. 21-30.

I said just now that 'the forces who fight under the banner of the Beast ... gathered themselves together in readiness for the conflict' – and that is true – for that is how verse 19 states it; 'I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against Him who sits upon the horse and against His army'. And yet we know of 'unseen' powers operating behind the scenes – for chapter 16 verse 14 speaks clearly of the 'spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty'. But, if unclean spirits assemble the kings and armies of earth to the great battle, it is a holy angel who issues the summons to the birds of heaven to devour their corpses.

How different are the 'wedding invitations' referred to back in verse 9 – 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' Better by far *to feast* than *to be feasted on!*

And what a stark contrast lies between the 'great supper' of God (as verse 17 should be read) which pictures God's intervention in judgement, and the 'great supper' of which our Lord Jesus spoke in Luke 14, which pictures the gospel feast of salvation made 'ready' for needy sinners.

At ordinary banquets men feed on the flesh of birds, but here the birds are summoned to feed on the flesh of men.

And all those slain shall lie together – not only kings, captains and mighty men – but the rank and file – for the Beast will have drawn his recruits from every class. And I suppose that, in some way, the indignity of having their bodies unburied is a judgement in kind – for the Beast and his followers had, on an earlier occasion, denied God's two witnesses of chapter 11 any decent burial. The bodies of those brave men, we read there, 'will lie in the street of the great city ... where their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb', Rev. 11. 8-9.

But now the tables are reversed!

And, interestingly, we have no record of any actual fighting. Indeed, I find the description of the 'war' in verses 19 to 21 – the ultimate 'Holy war' – as striking for its brevity as I do the description in verses 11-16 of the Warrior-King for its length and detail. There is then no clash of arms – no sustained conflict. The text jumps straight from the drawing up of the armies to the capture of both the Beast and the False Prophet and their despatch direct to the lake of fire. And there, generally speaking, the curtain falls.

But what would you expect? For the Rider on the horse is none other than the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords – who wields the mightiest of *all* weapons – spoken of in our chapter as 'a sharp sword' which issues out of His mouth, v. 15 – that by which the armies of the Beast are slain, v. 21. This, please remember, is none less than the One who once spoke innumerable galaxies into existence – the One of whom Isaiah the prophet wrote, 'with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked', Isa. 11. 4 – and, with my eye particularly on the Beast himself, of whom the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2, 'then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming', 2 Thess. 2. 8.

Here we meet then, *not* the *worth* of the Lamb – as in chapter 5 – nor the *wife* of the Lamb – as in chapter 19 – but the *wrath* of the Lamb! And I believe it is right to say that the leaders of the opposing forces – the one who led by *power* and the one who led by deception (the latter being the Beast's Minister of Propaganda) – that these two men have the dubious distinction of being the very first to be cast into the fearful Lake of Fire.

As I understand it, at the present time, the souls of those who die without Christ have their temporary abode in 'hades' – pending their resurrection and appearance before the Great White Throne. And, if I have it right, hell, prepared for the devil and his angels, is to this moment empty. And so, even those, who according to verse 21, are killed in the war described here must await their judgement when they appear before Him, not as the One who sits upon the horse, but as the One who sits upon the throne of chapter 20 verse 11, before they – as one day the dragon himself, according to chapter 20 verse 10 – finally join the Beast and False Prophet in the Lake of Fire.

And I suppose the fate of these two evil dignitaries contrasts remarkably well with the destiny of two of the heroes of faith of the Old Testament. I refer to Enoch and Elijah. For, if Enoch and Elijah were taken by God direct to *heaven* without facing physical death, the Beast and the False Prophet are consigned by God direct to *hell* without experiencing physical death either. And, who knows, perhaps some – or even all – of us here this evening will, as Enoch and Elijah, make it to heaven direct without having to go there via physical death! What a wonderful thought!

And so to chapter 20. But no cause for alarm. I know I have time for only a few brief comments on the passage.

And first I note that, having spoken of the fate of the Beast, the text next speaks to us of the fate of the Beast's *master* – the one who throughout the Beast's near-universal dominion has inspired and empowered him – a fate which straddles a period that John has labelled 'the thousand years' – which expression some regard as symbolic for a long period of time – though, speaking personally, I see no reason to understand it as anything other than of a thousand year duration<sup>8</sup> – but, whichever, an expression that represents the lengthy reign of Christ and His saints<sup>9</sup> – including, as John especially notes, those who had been beheaded because of their loyalty to Jesus, and those who refused to worship either the Beast himself or his image, and who refused to accept his mark. Such may lose their heads, John is saying to us, but they shall not lose their crowns – for they 'shall reign with Christ', Rev. 20. 4.<sup>10</sup>

And what a time that will be for the earth! For the text describes in great detail the elaborate measures taken by heaven to ensure the devil's custody :

(1) he is bound with a great chain, vv. 1-2 – symbolic, yes, of course, for Satan is not flesh and blood – but symbolic, surely, please, of some very real counterpart in the spirit realm. Just as we read that the angels who deserted their own habitation are 'kept in eternal chains for the judgement of the great day', Jude 6. And some chain this must be – to bind the devil himself – but then clearly this chain has been forged in heaven, for it is from there that the angel descends carrying it in his hand.

(2) he is apprehended ('laid hold of; seized' – the same word as is used to describe our Lord's arrest in Gethsemane, v. 3<sup>11</sup>; and

(3) he is cast (hurled) into the Abyss – the 'bottomless pit' of the KJV and NKJV – mentioned by John seven times, and always as the abode of demons<sup>12</sup>. The Abyss is then

(4) 'shut', v. 3 – the word used in Acts 5 to describe the 'shutting' of the prison where Peter was held;<sup>13</sup> and ... **PP** ...

(5) 'sealed', v. 3 – as was Joseph of Arimathea's sepulchre, Matt. 27. 66. But in that case an angel rolled back the stone, thereby breaking the seal. Here it is an angel that fixed the seal – and nobody would ever brake this seal! And if in Daniel 6 a seal was fixed to the entrance to a den of lions, here the seal is fixed over the Abyss where the 'roaring lion' is now held secure, no longer able to 'walk about seeking whom he may devour'.<sup>14</sup>

(6) Satan will 'loosed' out of his 'prison' (the normal word for a prison) only after 'the thousand years', vv. 3, 7. I suggest that, if these words and symbols mean anything, then, for the specified period, Satan does not have his activities on earth simply curbed or curtailed – but is totally immobilized and cut off as far as any access to the earth is concerned.

He is 'bound' – and that with a 'great chain' – one which not even Samson could have snapped, Judg. 15. 14; 16. 7-12! Nor a Gadarene demoniac for that matter, Mark 5. 4!

He is, as Paul and Silas were once, both chained and imprisoned – but with no possibility of a timely earthquake to set him at liberty!

His prison is 'sealed' – with no angel of the Lord to ignore the seal and open the closed door – as once an angel did to Joseph's empty sepulchre!

Back in chapter 12, the dragon 'who deceives the whole earth' had been 'cast' (same word) down from heaven to earth<sup>15</sup> – and *now* he is 'cast' down from earth into the Abyss, from where he can 'deceive the nations no longer', Rev. 20. 3.<sup>16</sup>

And, if heaven rejoiced when Satan was cast out from there to earth in chapter 12 – and it did! – here in chapter 20 it is earth's time to rejoice!

And why, you may well wonder, is Satan later to be let loose from his prison – albeit 'for a little while' only, Rev. 20. 3, 7? We are not told – any more than we are told why God let the devil loose on earth and on man after he (Satan) first sinned. But, maybe – just maybe – his release – and what follows – take place to prove beyond doubt, on the one hand, that he, the devil, is incorrigibly bad, and that no length of prison sentence will lead to any reform of his character – and, on the other hand, that no kingdom of righteousness, peace and prosperity – no ideal environment or government – will change the unregenerate heart of man.

Maybe! But I don't know. In the end, as the great Baptist preacher, C H Spurgeon, once said of *his* relationship to God, 'I am His servant, not His solicitor!'<sup>17</sup>

What I do know is that, before Satan's forces even launch their attack against 'the beloved city' (Jerusalem) now besieged<sup>18</sup> – God will intervene directly – much as He once intervened directly to deliver the same city when besieged by the Assyrian army in the days of Hezekiah and Sennacherib.

And the very last thing we hear of 'the devil who deceived them' is that he will be 'cast into the lake of fire and brimstone'. And Satan, who was first introduced in the third chapter from the beginning of the Bible, is last mentioned in the third chapter from its end.

Last Tuesday I closed with the words of the school janitor as quoted by Vernon Grounds to the effect that 'Jesus is going to win'. This evening I close by noting that it is *equally* certain that the devil – whose doom was settled by our Lord's decisive victory at Golgotha – as we saw this past Lord's Day – is going to lose.

And what can we say this evening of the solemn and terrifying section which closes chapter 20? Nothing! It is certainly not there to make us argue or debate. It is there to make us weep and pray – to weep and to pray for those of our relatives, friends and contacts who are to this moment strangers to God, His grace and His gospel.<sup>19</sup>

---

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> In the section 21. 9-22. 15 the references to nations and kings seem to describe an earthly kingdom better than they describe the eternal condition (21:24, 26); references to leaves "healing" the nations (22:2) seems to describe an imperfect condition better than they describe the perfected eternal state; and, finally, the blessing pronounced on those who come and eat the tree of life while a curse rests on all those outside the city (22:14-15) seems to relate better to the thousand years than to the eternal state when the wicked are in the lake of fire. But it 21:9 ff. to the millennial New Jerusalem without the slightest hint from the text that this is a recapitulation of 20:1-10. Thus, there is an eternal state New Jerusalem followed immediately by a millennial New Jerusalem, both bearing the same title. This is hardly plausible. This view also strongly argues for historical progression in 19:11-21:5; Parousia—defeat of Antichrist—binding of Satan—first resurrection—Millennium—release of Satan—last judgement—new heavens and earth—and then argues for recapitulation in 21:9 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The beast coming up out of the sea holds political power over the masses of humanity. The False Prophet is mentioned by name three times, Rev. 16. 13; 19. 20; 20. 10, and described more fully as the 'beast coming up out of the earth', Rev. 13.11-17. There is no suggestion that the False Prophet will be a king or possess any political power in his own right (as will the Beast); his role is plainly subordinate to that of the Beast, directing all worship to him and his image. He will be the ultimate 'false prophet', just as the Beast will be the ultimate 'false Christ', Matt. 24. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Warren Wiersbe, 'Be Victorious', on Revelation 19. 20.

<sup>4</sup> 'He began an expedition against Gaul and the Germanies, which was uncalled for and from which his father's friends dissuaded him, merely that he might make himself equal to his brother in power and rank. For this he was reprimanded, and to give him a better realisation of his youth<sup>6</sup> and position, he had to live with his father, and when they appeared in public he followed the emperor's chair and that of his brother in a litter, while he also attended their triumph over Judaea riding on a white horse', Suetonius, 'The Lives of the Caesars', 'The Life of Domitian', paragraph 2. 1. ([http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Domitian\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Domitian*.html)). Riding a white horse was the usual procedure for a youthful prince; cf. *Tib.* vi.4.

<sup>5</sup> 'His campaigns he undertook partly without provocation and partly of necessity. That against the Chatti was uncalled for ... ', Suetonius, 'The Lives of the Caesars', 'The Life of Domitian', paragraph 6. 1. ([http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Domitian\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Domitian*.html)). But see also <http://www.ut.ee/klassik/sht/2005/adams1.pdf> - page 8.)

<sup>6</sup> Rev. 11. 18; 13. 16; 19. 5, 18.

<sup>7</sup> I am reminded of the words of our Lord Jesus in Luke 12, 'That servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required', vv. 47-48. For, clearly, in the same way that differing rewards will be meted out to believers at the judgement seat of Christ – based on what we have done in the body, whether good or good-for-nothing, 2 Cor. 5. 10 – so too differing degrees of punishment will be meted out to unbelievers at the Great White Throne.

<sup>8</sup> Irenaeus (c.175-c.195) clearly connects the first resurrection with the 'resurrection of the just' (Luke 14. 14); Irenaeus *Contra Haereses*, 39. 3-10). 'Is it credible that that excellent and pious father, with the advantage of being instructed by Polycarp, who was himself instructed by St. John, did not know what the beloved disciple held, as to the fact, whether the second coming of Christ would usher in the millennium, or be delayed to its close. We think not', Edward Winthrop. (Irenaeus was born not far from the beginning of the second century. He was pupil of Papias and Polycarp, both of whom were disciples of John.)

Likewise Justin Martyr held to a physical resurrection before the Millennium (*Dialogue with Trypho* 80) and a general physical resurrection after the thousand years (ibid., 81). He wrote, 'I and whatsoever Christians are orthodox in all things, do know that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in the city of Jerusalem, built, adorned, and enlarged according to the Prophets.'

Eusebius himself says of Papias: "Other things also, the same writer has set forth, as having come down to him by unwritten tradition, some new parables and discourses of the Saviour. Among these, he says, that there will be a certain thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ, will be established visibly on this earth."

Bunyan – 'Christ shall set up his Kingdom on earth: according to that which is written, 'They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.' Also Robert Murray McCheyne. William Ramsay.

<http://www.godrules.net/library/topics/topic353.htm>

'The fact is, in reading this passage with an unbiased judgement, having no purpose whatever to serve, having no theory to defend, — and I confess I have none, for I know but very little about mysteries to come, — I could not help seeing there are two literal resurrections here spoken of, one of the spirits of the just, and the other of the bodies of the wicked; one of the saints who sleep in Jesus, whom God shall bring with him, and another of those who live and die impenitent, who perish in their sins', CHS, 'The First Resurrection' 'Turn to Philippians 3., verses 8 and 11, and compare the two. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto

---

his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." What does he mean there? Every one will rise, no orthodox Christian doubts that. The doctrine of a general resurrection is received by all the Christian Church. What, then, is this resurrection after which Paul was exerting himself, if by any means he might attain unto it? It could not be the general resurrection; he would attain unto that live as he list. It must have been some superior resurrection', CHS, *ibid*.

<sup>9</sup> John has elsewhere indicated that the kingdom reign will be shared by every believer who overcomes (Rev. 2. 26-28; 3. 12, 21) and is purchased by Christ's blood (Rev. 5. 10). Also, in 1 Corinthians 6. 2-3, Paul clearly speaks of all believers—not just martyrs—exercising judgement in the future.

<sup>10</sup> These will come to life (only a literal, not spiritual, resurrection will meet the demands of the context, in which individuals have been beheaded) and reign with Christ. Those who belong to Christ die once – if at all – but, if so, rise twice (spiritually and physically), whereas those who have rejected him rise once but die twice (physically and spiritually).

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 26. 50; Mark 14. 46.

<sup>12</sup> Rev. 9. 1, 2, 11; 11. 7; 17. 8; 20. 1, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 5. 23.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Pet. 5. 8.

<sup>15</sup> Rev. 12. 9.

<sup>16</sup> We can perhaps trace the devil's downward course as when :

(i) he was degraded from his original exalted position, Isa. 14. 12-15; Ezek. 28. 12-17; Luke 10. 18;

(ii) his power was broken decisively at the cross, and his ultimate fate sealed, Heb. 2. 14;

(iii) he is ejected from heaven to earth, and, with great fury, sets about persecuting 'the woman', Rev. 12. 7-17;

(iv) he is cast into the Abyss, Rev. 20. 1-3; and, finally,

(v) he is cast for ever into the lake of fire, Rev. 20. 10.

<sup>17</sup> 'It is mine to obey His commands; it is not mine to direct His counsels. I am His servant, not His solicitor', C. H. Spurgeon, 'Faith's Cheque Book' – January 16<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> The names 'Gog' and 'Magog' do not equate this battle with that described in Ezekiel 38-39. There the army invades from the north; here from the four corners of the earth. Ezekiel records the war referred to in Rev. 16. 14; 17. 14; 19. 17-21, which takes place before the Millennium; while Rev. 20 takes place after it. This is clear from the fact that Israel's restoration is mentioned after the destruction of Gog and Magog. See Ezek. 39. 25, 'Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel'.

<sup>19</sup> Fictional account of the final judgement ... .

*At the end of time, billions of people were seated on a great plain before God's throne. Most shrank back from the brilliant light before them. But some groups near the front talked heatedly, not cringing with cringing shame - but with belligerence.*

*"Can God judge us? How can He know about suffering?," snapped a young brunette. She ripped open a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp. "We endured terror ... beatings ... torture ... death!"*

*In another group a Negro boy lowered his collar. "What about this?" he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn.*

*"Lynched, for no crime but being black !"*

*In another crowd there was a pregnant schoolgirl with sullen eyes: "Why should I suffer?" she murmured. "It wasn't my fault. I was raped" Far out across the plain were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering He had permitted in His world.*

*'How fortunate God was to live in Heaven, where all was sweetness and light. Where there was no weeping or fear, no hunger or hatred. What did God know of all that man had been forced to endure in this world? For God leads a pretty sheltered life', they said.*

*So each of these groups sent forth their leader, chosen because he had suffered the most. A Jew, a negro, a person from Hiroshima, a horribly deformed arthritic, a child with Down's Syndrome. In the centre of the vast plain, they consulted with each other. At last they were ready to present their case. It was very well thought out.*

*Before God could be qualified to be their judge, He must endure what they had endured. Their decision was that God should be sentenced to live on earth as a man.*

*Let him be born a Jew. Let the legitimacy of his birth be doubted. Give him a work so demanding that even his family will think him out of his mind.*

*Let him be betrayed by one of his closest friends. Let him face false charges, be tried by a prejudiced jury and convicted by a cowardly judge. Let him be tortured.*

*At the last, let him discover what it means to be terribly alone. Then let him die – a humiliating and agonising death. Let him die so there can be no doubt he died. Let there be a host of witnesses to verify it.*

*As each leader announced his portion of the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the throng of people assembled. When the last had finished pronouncing sentence, there was a long silence. No one uttered a word. No one moved.*

*For suddenly, they all knew that God had already served His sentence. For the One who sat on the throne to execute judgement on all men was Himself a man, and He carried in His body the scars of crucifixion.*

Based on ... <http://ldolphin.org/silence.html>