

## Revelation 20:4–10 (ESV)

### Do you want to go to Heaven?

*If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; - Paul to his protégé Timothy.*

- The above verse is in the context of being a soldier of Christ –

**2 Timothy 2:3–4 (ESV)** **3** *Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4* *No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.*

*If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;*

- it's in the context of combat; what's in the background is a battleground -
- This life is more of a battleground than a playground.

*If we have died with Jesus, we will also live with Jesus; if we endure, we will also reign with Jesus; if we deny Jesus, Jesus also will deny us;*

**Vs 4** *Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

- This vision includes thrones, martyrs, and all believers.
- *Where* is the location of this vision? According to the premillennial view, these thrones are on earth, since the thousand years sees faithful Christians as reigning with Christ on earth. BUT, Notice the thrones.
- However, of the forty-seven times that the word *throne* is used in Revelation, the thrones are almost always in heaven. The only exceptions are three occasions when the throne of Satan or the beast is mentioned on earth (2:13; 13:2; 16:10), and the references to God's throne after he has come down to reign in the new heaven and new earth (22:1, 3).
- Moreover, Jesus earlier gave a promise that is fulfilled in this scene, locating it in heaven: "The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne" (3:21).

- I believe this is a vision of the present heaven, the intermediate state, paradise – the place we go when we leave this earth before the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.
- No matter your view of the millennium, there are still applicable NT truths we can apply.

*If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;*

- Q: Where will we live with Christ when we die?
- A: The intermediate state – the present Heaven.

### **1. We remain conscious after death.**

**Ecc 12:7 (ESV)** *and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

**Luke 23:43 (ESV)** *And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

**2Corinthians 5:8 (ESV)** *Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

### **2. The present Heaven (intermediate state) is an actual place.**

**Hebrews 9:24 (ESV)** *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.*

- In Luke 23:43 we see Lazarus and the rich man - both in places.

**Philippians 1:23 (ESV)** *I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

- **It’s where Jesus is.**
- **If Jesus were not in Heaven would you still want to go?**

### **3. The present Heaven is not our final destination.**

**Rev 21:1-3 (ESV)** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their*

*God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

- **The present heaven will pass away**

**2 Peter 3:10 (ESV)** *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

**Luke 21:33 (ESV)** *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

**\*\*Read HEAVEN by Randy Alcorn**

**Vs 5** *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.*

- The first resurrection, is a reference to the life and blessing reserved for the saints ... who have died, referring not to the future resurrection of their bodies, but to a spiritual participation in Christ which brings the blessings of living and reigning as priests with him.

**Colossians 3:1–2 (ESV)** *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

**Vs 6** *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*

- Priests are the ones close to God – this speaks of intimacy with Him.
- The good news is that wherever your position of the millennium...

*If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;*

- There will be a second death for those who deny Him...we will look at that next week.

**Vs 7** *And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison*

- We have an enemy that is real and vicious and violent. An enemy full of hate, an enemy with no capacity to love, an enemy driven by nothing but his own selfish ambition. An enemy who seeks to use you and discard you.

- Throughout the Bible, he's known by various names,
  - the evil one, the ancient serpent, the god of this age, the prince of the demons, the murderer, the tempter, the liar, the father of lies, the accuser of the brethren Belisle, Beelzebub, Apollyon, the adversary, the enemy, the great red dragon, the devil, Lucifer, and of course, Satan.
- Seven of our Old Testament books speak of his existence. So does every New Testament writer and Jesus Himself refers to Satan some 25 times, often in direct conversation.
- He is driven by two great passions, his hatred for God and His hostility toward the human race.
- He relentlessly engages us on this battleground of life with temptation, persecution, seduction, and suffering.
- “The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist” The Usual Suspects.
  - He wages warfare against Believers Ephesians 6.
  - He undermines confidence in the Word of God Genesis 3.
  - He blinds the minds of people to the gospel message 2Corinthians 4
  - He hinders Christian ministry 1 Thessalonians 2
  - He breeds discouragement 1Peter 5,
  - He infiltrates the church with erroneous doctrine 1 John,
  - He promotes division in the congregation 2 Corinthians 2.
  - He is described on the one hand is a roaring lion, while on the other hand an attractive angel of light...which means he can skillfully adapt himself and his tactics to every situation and every individual person.
- The first phase of Satan's eternal judgment was the announced in the Garden of Eden. “He would strike the heel of the woman's seed,” that very act of doing so would result in his own “head being subsequently crushed.”
- The second phase of that judgment was inaugurated in the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ.
- But we give praise to God this morning, because what was announced in the garden and inaugurated at the cross, is now brought to full consummation in the scenes set before us.
- It is this text in Revelation 20 that marks the final mention of the devil. We are never to hear of him

**Vs 8** and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

- As soon as Satan is released, this is precisely what he does: he “will come out to deceive the nations” (20:8)
- Once loosed from prison, Satan picks up where he left off and men rally to his cause again.
- **This life is more of a battleground than a playground -**
- The great battle of chapter 19 draws the imagery of birds feeding on the flesh of mighty men and of kings – this is from Ezekiel 39, and the battle of Revelation 20 draws the names “Gog and Magog” from the same Old Testament chapter.
- “Here, the assembled nations of the world are identified by the names “Gog and Magog.” This reference originates in Ezekiel 38, where the prophet foretold a great assault on God’s people after the age of their blessing. Ezekiel chapters 1–33 deal with God’s judgment on wicked Jerusalem, involving the fall of the city to Nebuchadnezzar. In chapters 34–37, God promises the revival of his people through the gospel of Christ: “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you” (Ezek. 36:26). In chapters 38 and 39, however, Ezekiel foretells a final great assault on God’s people, before showing the symbolic temple of chapters 40–48, which depicts the eternal age in Christ’s return. Regarding the final battle, Ezekiel wrote: “Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him” (38:2). By using this same designation, Revelation is saying that its final battle is the same final battle anticipated by Ezekiel.” Phillips, R. D. (2017).
- The symbolism of Gog and Magog was picked up in rabbinic writings, which used their names for the entire rebellious nations.

**Vs 9-10** And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, **10** and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

- The two phrases used by John here, the camp of the saints, and the beloved city are symbolic references to the people of God the church.

- The very next chapter, he tells us what the beloved city is - the bride, the wife of the Lamb. The beloved city here is a reference to the people of God, the New Jerusalem inaugurated, but not yet consummated.
- There is no battle. Not anywhere to be found. You didn't miss it. It's not there. Why? **Because there can be no battle when the one opposed is the God of overwhelming power.**
- These visions John sees is to give God's people hope – a hope that helps us persevere. Not self-protection that comes from prediction.

Something happened for you in the second phase of satan's judgement,

- Jesus, on the cross, experienced the hell we deserve so that for eternity we will experience the Heaven we don't deserve.

Why would we forsake Jesus Christ amid the afflictions of this world **when we know how the story ends?** Jesus wins! Why would we abandon his victorious cause, even though it may entail suffering for a little while in tribulation, and even if discipleship to him requires us to renounce the sinful pleasures of a condemned world?

- *If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;*