

Revelation 20:7-10

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After the thousand years of the first resurrection of the dead, Satan is released. The devil and his fellow conspirators are relocated to their final destination: the lake of fire.

Now we are approaching a new era of human history. This will include a new heaven and earth. We are now nearing the final days of this present earth: *When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison* (vs 7).

The *thousand years* in which *Satan* was bound, shut, and sealed in the abyss (Revelation 20:2-3) is now over and *Satan will be released from his prison*.

While he was in the abyss, he was unable to “deceive the nations any longer” (Revelation 20:3). This will likely contribute to this thousand-year period being peaceful and prosperous. It is probable that during this thousand-year period the many unfulfilled prophecies regarding Israel will be fulfilled. Some examples follow:

- The full extent of Israel’s promised borders will be established for the first time, from the Nile River to the Euphrates River (Genesis 15:18).
- The reign of a son of David (Jesus) on the throne, restoring the monarchy (2 Samuel 7:12-13).
- The fulfillment of the many prophetic messianic predictions for a messiah that is a ruling monarch, such as Zechariah 14:16-17.
- The fulfillment of the prophecies about a restoration of Israel that goes far beyond anything we have experienced to date, where:
 - Death still exists, but becomes rare (Isaiah 65:20)
 - Nature is restored, and lions and lambs no longer are at enmity (Isaiah 65:25)
 - There is no war on the earth (Isaiah 2:1-4)
 - The Dead Sea’s waters will be healed (Ezekiel 47:8-9)
 - Ezekiel’s temple will be constructed, and be the source of a river flowing to the Dead Sea, that will heal its waters (Ezekiel 40-47)

These prophecies don’t fit well as being fulfilled in the new earth, because in the new earth (which will soon be introduced in Revelation 21:1):

- Death is no more (Revelation 20:13, 21:4)
- There is no physical temple, Jesus is the temple (Revelation 21:22)
- The New Jerusalem has a completely different geography from that described in Ezekiel (Revelation 21:16-17)

Therefore it follows that it will be during this thousand-year reign on the current earth that these remaining prophetic predictions will be accomplished.

After the thousand years of prosperity, Satan is released. Then he will once again resume the role of the deceiver:

“[he] will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.” (vs 8)

Satan is coming out of his prison in full force to *deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth*. It appears he spent his thousand years in prison stewing and plotting; he certainly has not repented. The phrase *the four corners of the earth* indicates that Satan’s goal will be to deceive every nation on the earth.

The reference here to *Gog and Magog* is likely of a land who will lead an attack on the land of Israel. *Gog and Magog* are mentioned also in Ezekiel 38:2. There they are described as: “Gog of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal.”

Tubal, Meshech and *Magog* appear in Genesis: “The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras” (Genesis 10:2). Japheth was one of Noah’s three sons. So this reference could be to the rulers of nations that come from the lineage of Japheth. Today that would include the founding peoples of many western nations, the descendants of the Roman world; the Roman Empire did not fall as much as it crumbled into numerous pieces. Perhaps this anticipates the descendants of the Roman era leading the nations of the deceived.

In terms of biblical eras, the era of human government is the Roman era. As described in King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the statue made out of multiple mediums that Daniel interpreted, the last kingdom of this earth will be a kingdom made “without hands”—a kingdom of God:

“In the days of those kings [Rome] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.”
(Daniel 2:44)

It would seem that the thousand-year reign is something of a first installment of the “kingdom which will never be destroyed.” But the final crushing of the old kingdoms of men (Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman) appears to take place here, at the end of the thousand-year reign.

The descendants of the Roman era have appeared for a great battle, *the war*. Satan deceives the nations to amass for an attack on Jerusalem, *the beloved city*: perhaps for a second time, after a failed attack just prior to his being thrown into prison for a thousand years (Revelation 19:19-20):

“And they [the nations] came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city (vs 9).

This would seem to be a different gathering from that of Revelation 16:16, which appears to occur prior to Jesus's second coming. In Revelation 20:9, Jesus has already returned, and He has already reigned on the current earth for a thousand years. During this thousand year reign, Satan was locked away in prison. Now that Satan has been released for a time, it appears that he attempts to reproduce the same basic campaign that had failed a thousand years prior.

After the nations of the earth *surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city*, they are summarily defeated, as *fire came down from heaven and devoured them*. This would appear to be Satan's final and definitive defeat.

Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 describe a surprise attack on Israel from these people of Japheth when there are no walls protecting the cities, and all is at peace. The attack is described as being on horses. The army is vast, being *like the sand of the seashore*. The term *gather them together for the way* is also interpreted as "gather them together to battle." Ezekiel 38 and 39 could be prophecies of this post-thousand-year-reign battle.

Ezekiel 38-39 could also describe battles leading up to the second coming of Jesus, where He touches on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4) then destroys enemies from the nations of the earth, who gathered on the plains of Megiddo (Revelation 16:16) then marched on Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2).

Since it seems that during the thousand-year reign there are no weapons of war (Isaiah 2:1-4) perhaps these rulers, stirred up by Satan, decide to recreate primitive weapons and mount an attack on people unarmed and unsuspecting. It could also be that horses are figurative for warfare.

In Ezekiel 39, God sends fire upon Magog (Ezekiel 39:6). It could be that the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39 refers to this event after the thousand-year reign. It could also refer to the time when the nations come against Israel prior to Jesus's return. It could apply to both.

The word translated *broad plain* is usually translated "breadth." The picture seems to be of a great number (*sand of the seashore*) assembled in a great area against the *beloved city* (Jerusalem), which is inhabited by God's people. Jerusalem is described as *the camp of the saints*.

Here, since the *beloved city* is probably Jerusalem, this would likely represent an attack on all Israel. And the *saints* are likely the faithful witnesses who are reigning with Christ (Revelation 20:4-5). Those reigning with Christ certainly include those who were martyred during the great tribulation ([see commentary on Revelation 20:1-3](#)). Reigning with Christ during this thousand years could also be part of the reward for those who overcome as Jesus overcame, as set forth in Revelation 3:21. The promise of Revelation 3:21 does not specify which era in which [overcomers](#) will be rewarded by sharing Jesus's authority to reign.

While Satan and the armies of the nations whom he deceived are attacking the *camp* of God's people, God sends *fire down from heaven to devour them*. Satan has been released out of the pit, but God still has the power to destroy him and his army.

Now Satan finally gets thrown into the lake of fire, which was prepared for him and his angels (Matthew 25:41):

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (vs. 10).

Isaiah foretold that this would be the ultimate demise of Satan:

“But you said in your heart,
‘I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.’
Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
To the recesses of the pit.”
(Isaiah 14:13-15)

Satan thought highly of himself and wanted to be like God and rise above God’s authority. Instead, he was thrown into Sheol, into the pit, while the thousand-year reign transpired. Satan was then released from the pit, and now, having been defeated again, he is thrown into the *lake of fire and brimstone*, which appears to be his final resting place.

Describing this *lake of fire*, Revelation tells us that it is *where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever* (Revelation 20:10). It seems that part of Satan’s torment will be that he will be visible to those walking by, who will recognize who he is and marvel at his demise:

“Those who see you will gaze at you,
They will ponder over you, saying,
‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms.’”
(Isaiah 14:16)

One way this could occur is if we consider the *lake of fire* as being God’s unveiled presence, which will be as bright as the sun (Revelation 22:5). This would fit the Bible’s description of God as a “consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29). It would seem then that the resurrected and redeemed saints of God will thrive in this brilliant light, while the damned will *be tormented day and night forever and ever*.

If this model is directionally correct, then everyone will experience the full presence of God, and it will either be ecstasy or misery for them, depending on who they have become. The image of the three faithful Hebrews enjoying their time in the fiery furnace with the Angel of the Lord

while their enemies are slain after escorting them to the fire might provide a prophetic picture of this future *lake of fire* (Daniel 3:19-25).

After the flood of Noah, God promised that water would never destroy the face of the earth again (Genesis 9:15). This time the earth is going to be destroyed with fire (2 Peter 3:7, 10).

Fire is often used throughout the Bible as a means of purification. Take for example Isaiah 6 where the prophet Isaiah received a vision of God in His throne room, in which Isaiah cries out,

“Woe is me, for I am ruined!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.’
Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth *with it* and said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.’”
(Isaiah 6:5-7)

In the presence of God’s holiness, Isaiah became aware of his sinfulness, and, because he was a righteous man, his reaction was to desire to be purified. This purification took place by fire, with a coal from the sacrificial altar God provided Isaiah, that his sins may be burned away.

Even though none of us should wish for fiery trials, they should not surprise us. When they do come, we should choose to be grateful and rejoice in the knowledge that as we share the sufferings of Christ, we are also promised to one day experience the glory of Christ (Romans 9:29).

As it says in 1 Peter 4:

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.”
(1 Peter 4:12-13)

All will experience the fiery trial, but not all will be hurt by it. Unbelievers will be burned up/consumed by God’s judgment fire. But God’s people will be refined. As we see in 1 Corinthians 3:

“Each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”
(1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

The “work” referenced in 1 Corinthians 3 refers to the deeds believers do during their lives on this earth. If we suffer now as faithful witnesses, and are [overcomers](#), then we will receive rewards after the refining process. All of God’s people are destined to be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29).

Biblical Text

⁷ When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.