

## **Dr. David Mathewson, Revelation, Session 26, Revelation 20: Binding of Satan, Millennium Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Mathewson, Revelation, Session 26, Revelation 20: Binding of Satan, Millennium, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This lecture by Dr. Dave Mathewson **analyzes Revelation 20**, focusing on the **binding of Satan and the Millennium**. He argues that the chapter presents **multiple perspectives on the second coming of Christ**, not necessarily a chronological sequence of events. Mathewson **examines three scenes within the chapter**, including Satan's binding, the saints' reign, and the final judgment, connecting them to similar imagery in other biblical texts. He then discusses **different interpretations of the Millennium** (premillennial, postmillennial, and amillennial), suggesting a symbolic understanding of the "thousand years" and emphasizing the ultimate importance of Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

**2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 26 – Double click icon to  
play in Windows media player or go to the  
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link  
there (New Testament → Revelation).**



**Mathewson\_Revela  
tion\_Session26.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture on Revelation 20:

#### Briefing Document: Revelation 20 - The Binding of Satan and the Millennium

##### Introduction:

This lecture focuses on Revelation 20, a pivotal chapter known for its depiction of the millennial reign and the binding of Satan. Dr. Mathewson emphasizes understanding this chapter not in isolation but within the broader context of Revelation 19:11-21:8, which he argues portrays various aspects of the Second Coming of Christ. He cautions against a strict chronological reading of this section and stresses the importance of recognizing its symbolic language.

##### Key Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. Revelation 20 in the Context of the Second Coming:

- Mathewson argues that Revelation 19:11 marks the beginning of a new section that extends to 21:8, which uses a variety of images to portray and interpret the meaning of Christ's second coming. This section, including chapter 20, is not necessarily a strict chronological sequence of events but rather a series of different perspectives on the same overarching event. He states, *"with chapter 19 and verse 11, I think we're at the very end of history. We're at the second coming of Christ, and that entire section portrays a variety of scenes that describe what will take place when Christ returns to earth at his second coming."*
- Chapter 20 should be viewed in light of this broader series of events, understanding its visions as ways of exploring the significance of the consummation of God's plan for history, rather than as a chronological timetable.

##### 1. Judgment as the Central Theme:

- While chapter 20 introduces the concept of the Millennium, Mathewson asserts that its main theme is still judgment, particularly the judgment of Satan. This includes his initial binding in the abyss and his later final judgment in the lake of fire, a pattern reminiscent of other apocalyptic texts. He states, *"chapter 20, the main theme of chapter 20 is still one of judgment, in my opinion... in chapter 20, we'll see now that Satan will also be judged and deposed, much like the beast was."*

- He notes the parallel between the judgment of the two beasts in chapter 19 and the judgment of Satan, observing that they are dealt with in the same order they were introduced in chapters 12 and 13.

#### 1. **Three Scenes in Chapter 20:**

- The chapter consists of three scenes:
- The binding of Satan in the abyss for a thousand years (verses 1-3).
- The resurrection of martyred saints and their thousand-year reign, followed by Satan's release and a final battle (verses 4-10).
- The Great White Throne Judgment (verses 11-15).
- The first two scenes are interconnected by the mention of the thousand-year period.

#### 1. **The Binding of Satan:**

- Satan's judgment is in two stages: first, binding in the abyss, and then final judgment in the lake of fire. This two-stage process mirrors similar motifs in the Old Testament and apocalyptic literature. The Abyss is a familiar motif in Revelation, previously established as the prison house of demons.
- The binding is performed by an angel, underscoring God's sovereignty. Mathewson comments that *"it's sort of interesting that God does not do this, or not even Jesus does this, but all that is required is for an angel to do this. Again, this suggests that there's no dualism in the book, but God is portrayed as sovereign, and so his angelic beings can do things like this, even binding Satan."*
- The purpose of the binding is to prevent Satan from deceiving the nations for a thousand years. This is a reversal of Satan's activity, which began in Genesis 3, and which has been seen in Revelation chapters 12 and 13.

#### 1. **The Millennium and the Reign of the Saints:**

- The thousand-year reign is a period during which the martyred saints are resurrected, vindicated and reign with Christ. Mathewson suggests that the thrones mentioned in verse 4 are not necessarily distinct from the souls of the martyred saints, but rather they are different ways of depicting the same group. He poses the question, *"Is this a separate group? So do you have one group seated on thrones, and then now you have a different group, those who have been beheaded because of their testimony? Or I wonder if we should take this as*

*referring to the same group, again from different perspectives."* He ultimately concludes " *So probably 4A and 4B, the two groups both introduced by, I saw, probably describe the same group. "*

- He points to the language of judgment being given *for* the saints (rather than given *to* them), suggesting a vindication, an answer to the cry of the martyrs, a fulfillment of Daniel 7. He comments that "*the point of this then would be that judgment is given or rendered on their behalf or in their favor. That is going back to Daniel chapter seven and especially verse 22, the saints here are finally vindicated.*" This is a clear reversal of Satan's reign, where he was able to persecute and kill the saints.
- The description of the martyrs is linked back to chapters 6, 12, and 13, emphasizing that these are the people who refused to worship the beast and his image and refused the mark of the beast. Mathewson believes that the group described as not worshiping the beast, etc. in this section would have likely faced martyrdom. He says "*I doubt that John would have conceived of someone who refused to worship the beast and his image and refused the mark that that person would not have been slain or killed, or martyred because of their refusal to conform and to submit.*" Thus, all the saints are represented by the martyrs.
- The mention of the thousand year period is disproportionately influential in church history and eschatological systems, and has been largely responsible for labeling various hermeneutical approaches to the entire book of Revelation.

#### 1. **Interpretations of the Millennium:**

- Mathewson describes the three primary views on the Millennium: Premillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Amillennialism.
- **Premillennialism:** Christ will return before the Millennium, setting up an earthly kingdom.
- **Postmillennialism:** The Millennium is a future golden age on earth brought about by the church's mission, after which Christ will return.
- **Amillennialism:** The Millennium is symbolic of the entire church age, where Christ reigns from heaven with the saints.

### 1. Symbolic Interpretation of the Thousand Years:

- Mathewson suggests the thousand years should be understood symbolically, as other numbers in Revelation, representing fullness and completion rather than a literal period of time. He argues "*the importance of this is the symbolic value of one thousand. It's a large round number indicating fullness and completion that could refer to a period of time of virtually any duration.*"
- He believes that the millennial reign, in whatever way it is understood, should be associated with and occur at the Second Coming of Christ.
- He cautions that the chronological ordering of chapters 19 and 20 is not certain, emphasizing that John's focus is on conveying a visionary sequence, not a literal timeline. He suggests that chapters 19 and 20 may be different perspectives on roughly the same event.

### 1. The Brevity and Cryptic Nature of the Millennium:

- The description of the millennial reign is short and does not include many details about who the saints rule over, where they reign from (heaven or earth), or what happens during the period. Mathewson notes "*intriguingly, it just says very little about where the saints are, who they reign over.*"
- Mathewson suggests the brevity of this section implies that chapter 20 is not the main point but a preparation for the climax in Revelation 21 and 22. He suggests "*one of the reasons why this is so brief is because this is merely a prelude.*"
- The true emphasis of the book, he argues, lies in chapters 21 and 22, where the full vindication and reward of the saints are depicted, along with the fulfillment of Old Testament promises.

### Conclusion:

Dr. Mathewson's lecture emphasizes a non-literal interpretation of Revelation 20, urging an approach that focuses on symbolic meaning, the overarching theme of judgment, and the broader context of the Second Coming. He encourages humility and tolerance regarding different views of the Millennium, stressing that the focus should be on the core message of Christ's victory and the ultimate vindication of the saints, which he sees in chapters 21 and 22.

## 4. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 26, Revelation 20: Binding of Satan, Millennium

### Revelation 20 Study Guide

#### Quiz

1. According to Mathewson, what is the main theme of Revelation 20?
2. How does Mathewson describe the structure of Revelation 20 in terms of scenes?
3. What is the significance of the abyss in Revelation, according to Mathewson?
4. Why does Mathewson suggest that Satan's judgment occurs in two stages?
5. What does Mathewson say regarding the binding of Satan and Jesus' teaching in Matthew 12:29 and Luke 10:18?
6. How does Mathewson describe the connection between the binding of Satan and the deception of nations?
7. How does Mathewson describe the relationship between the figures seated on the thrones and the souls who were beheaded in Revelation 20:4?
8. According to Mathewson, what is the primary significance of the saints reigning with Christ for a thousand years?
9. What are the three primary approaches to the Millennium that Mathewson mentions?
10. What are the four key observations that Mathewson makes that should guide the way we interpret the text?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Mathewson states that the main theme of Revelation 20 is judgment, specifically the judgment of Satan, though it also includes the vindication of the saints and the final judgment at the great white throne.
2. Mathewson describes Revelation 20 as having three main scenes: the binding of Satan in an abyss for a thousand years (verses 1-3), the resurrection and reign of the saints followed by a final battle with Satan (verses 4-10), and the great white throne judgment (verses 11-15).

3. Mathewson explains the abyss as the prison house of demonic beings, citing examples like the locusts and the beast that emerge from it, indicating it is a place of confinement and punishment for evil entities.
4. Mathewson suggests that Satan's judgment occurs in two stages—first, being bound in the abyss and then, after a short release, being thrown into the lake of fire—to reflect a common Old Testament and apocalyptic conception of how demonic evil beings are judged.
5. Mathewson suggests Jesus' teaching was the initial binding of Satan with the arrival of the kingdom. The binding described in Revelation 20 is the final binding, which is part of Jesus' second coming.
6. Mathewson points out that Satan is bound in the abyss so he cannot deceive the nations, which was his primary role from Genesis onward, but upon his release, he once again finds the nations susceptible to his deception.
7. Mathewson suggests that the figures on the thrones and the souls who were beheaded for their testimony are likely the same group, presented from different perspectives. One is the position of authority and the second the reason they are on the thrones.
8. According to Mathewson, the saints reigning with Christ for a thousand years is primarily significant as a vindication of the saints who had suffered at the hands of Satan, representing a complete reversal of their previous powerlessness. It shows their witness and suffering was not in vain.
9. The three primary approaches to the Millennium that Mathewson mentions are Premillennialism (Christ returns before the Millennium), Postmillennialism (Christ returns after the Millennium), and Amillennialism (the church age is the symbolic Millennium).
10. The four key observations that Mathewson makes are: the thousand years should be understood symbolically, the events of chapter 20 should be understood as happening at the second coming of Christ, chapters 19 and 20 may not be a chronological sequence, and the reference to the thousand year reign is cryptic and should be viewed as a prelude to the focus of Revelation 21 and 22.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the imagery used in Revelation 20, drawing connections to other parts of Revelation and the Old Testament, particularly focusing on the depiction of Satan's judgment and the vindication of the saints.
2. Compare and contrast the different millennial views (Premillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Amillennialism), explaining their core tenets and how they interpret Revelation 20, and then defend one of the three options.
3. Analyze how Revelation 20 contributes to the overarching themes of judgment and the victory of God in the book of Revelation, and examine whether the view of the Millennium is central or peripheral to these themes.
4. Explore the concept of the binding of Satan as portrayed in Revelation 20, and analyze its relationship to both the first and second coming of Christ, considering the nature of evil and God's sovereignty over it.
5. Discuss the purpose of the thousand-year reign of the saints, and discuss whether this period should be interpreted literally or symbolically and how this interpretation affects our understanding of the nature of salvation and reward in Revelation.



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Millennium:** A period of one thousand years, especially as referred to in Revelation 20, which has been interpreted in various ways regarding the reign of Christ and his saints on Earth.
- **Premillennialism:** The eschatological view that Jesus Christ will return *before* a literal thousand-year reign of the saints on earth.
- **Postmillennialism:** The eschatological view that Jesus Christ will return *after* a metaphorical or literal golden age or millennium, initiated by the church through the gospel.
- **Amillennialism:** The eschatological view that there will be no literal earthly millennium; instead, the thousand years in Revelation 20 is symbolic of the present church age or the eternal reign of Christ.
- **Abyss:** In Revelation, a deep, bottomless pit or chasm often associated with the imprisonment of demons and evil forces.
- **Binding of Satan:** The act of restraining Satan in the abyss for a thousand years, as described in Revelation 20:1-3, meant to curtail his deceptive activities.
- **The Saints:** In Revelation, referring to the faithful followers of Christ, particularly those who have suffered martyrdom or persecution for their faith.
- **Vindication of the Saints:** The act of God justifying and restoring honor to the faithful who have been persecuted, demonstrated by their resurrection and reign with Christ.
- **Great White Throne Judgment:** The final judgment scene in Revelation 20:11-15, where the dead are judged based on their deeds and their names found in the Book of Life.
- **Book of Life:** The book in which the names of those who have been chosen by God for salvation are recorded, an important image in judgment scenes in Revelation.

## 5. FAQs on Mathewson, Revelation, Session 26, Revelation 20: Binding of Satan, Millennium, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Revelation 20: The Binding of Satan and the Millennium

1. **What is the main focus of Revelation 20, and how should it be viewed in relation to the surrounding chapters?**
2. Revelation 20's primary theme is the judgment of Satan, encompassing his binding, temporary release, and ultimate defeat. It's crucial to understand it within the context of Revelation 19:11 through 21:8, a section that uses various images to interpret the second coming of Christ. These chapters aren't a strictly chronological sequence of events but rather different perspectives and scenes depicting the significance of Christ's return and the culmination of God's plan for history. Chapter 20 functions as an additional series of judgment scenes, particularly focusing on Satan's fate, following the judgment of the beasts in chapter 19.
3. **What are the three distinct scenes in Revelation 20, and how are they connected?**
4. Revelation 20 presents three connected scenes: (1) the binding of Satan in the abyss for a thousand years (verses 1-3); (2) the resurrection and reign of martyred saints for a thousand years, followed by a final battle with a released Satan (verses 4-10); and (3) the great white throne judgment (verses 11-15). The first two scenes are linked by the mention of the thousand-year period. These scenes emphasize the different stages of judgment and the ultimate vindication of God's people.
5. **What is the significance of Satan's two-stage judgment in Revelation 20?**
6. Satan's judgment is presented in two stages: first, he is bound in the abyss, preventing him from deceiving the nations for a thousand years, and second, he is released for a brief time before his final defeat in the lake of fire. This two-stage judgment is likely drawing from the Old Testament and apocalyptic literature, which depicts demonic beings being imprisoned before their final judgment, as seen in Isaiah, 1 Enoch, and 2 Peter. It underscores the complete and ultimate victory of God over evil.

7. **Who are the individuals sitting on the thrones in Revelation 20:4, and what does their reign signify?**
8. The individuals seated on the thrones in verse 4 are the martyred saints who have been given authority to judge. This group is the same as the souls of those who were beheaded for their testimony and refused to worship the beast and his image. These saints are not to be seen as two different groups but as the same group from different perspectives. Their reign signifies their vindication and their participation in Christ's victory over Satan. It's a complete reversal of their earthly suffering where they were put to death by Satan, now they reign while he's bound. This vindication mirrors the cries of the martyrs in chapter 6.
9. **What does the "thousand years" symbolize in Revelation 20, and why is it interpreted differently by different groups of Christians?**
10. The "thousand years" is a symbolic number representing fullness and completeness rather than a literal period of time. The different interpretations of the Millennium in Revelation 20 have led to the development of three primary views: premillennialism, which sees the Millennium as a future earthly reign of Christ after his return; postmillennialism, which believes the Millennium will be brought about by the church's missionary efforts and Christ's return will happen after it; and amillennialism, which views the entire church age as the symbolic Millennium where Christ reigns in heaven with the saints. This verse has a vast impact on theological views despite the fact that the passage is relatively brief.
11. **How do the Premillennial, Postmillennial, and Amillennial views interpret the events of Revelation 20?**
12. Premillennialism understands the Millennium as a future, literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth after his second coming, often emphasizing the fulfillment of Old Testament promises to Israel. Postmillennialism sees the Millennium as a future, golden age on earth brought about by the church's influence through the power of the Spirit, with Christ returning at the end of that era. Amillennialism interprets the thousand years as symbolic, representing the entire church age, where Christ reigns from heaven and believers are with him; it does not see the Millennium as a separate and future earthly kingdom.

**13. Should the events in Revelation 19 and 20 be viewed as a strict chronological sequence?**

14. No, it's unlikely that Revelation presents events in a strict chronological sequence. Chapter 19, with the rider on the white horse representing the judgment of Christ, and chapter 20, describing the binding of Satan and the Millennium, should not necessarily be seen as events occurring one after the other. Rather, John uses different images and scenes to portray the various aspects of what occurs at Christ's second coming. The purpose is to explore the significance of these events and to provide varying perspectives on Christ's ultimate return, not to establish a strict timeline.

**15. Why is the focus placed more on the new heavens and new earth in Revelation 21-22 rather than the millennial reign?**

The brief and somewhat cryptic description of the Millennium in Revelation 20 serves as a prelude to the more extensive and detailed description of the new heavens and new earth in chapters 21 and 22. These chapters contain the full disclosure of the rewards and vindication of God's people. The main emphasis of Revelation is on the consummation of God's plan, which comes to a climax in the new heavens and new earth, not on the millennial kingdom. The book's own focus is to highlight the culmination of redemption in the new creation, where the saints reign forever and ever, and the promises made in the Old Testament are fulfilled.