

Revelation chapter 20, marks a significant transition in the book of Revelation.

Up to, and including chapter 20, there's a place and a story for all (whether they be good or evil.)

- We hear the story of the people of God (that is, the disciples of Jesus Christ)
- And we hear the story of those who reject Jesus.
- We've heard the story about the spiritual battle, and what lies behind the physical events of our world.
- And so, Satan and his demons have had a story.
- Our Holy God and **His** holy angels have a story.
- Jesus Christ has a story (in fact, it **is** His story – He is **central** to the story).

But with the end of chapter 20, it all becomes very 'one-sided' – not everybody has a story any more...

- There **is** no heaven, for heaven has come to earth.
- There **is** no good and evil, for evil has been judged and destroyed
- There is no death, for death has been destroyed
- There are no faithless to be found, for..... (well, where have the faithless gone?).....

From the end of chapter 20 on, the story has become 'the story of eternity' – the story of 'God with His faithful children, in glory' ... Heaven has come to Earth, and God dwells with His faithful children, on a renewed Earth.

The thing is, **most** people are under the illusion that **their** story with God, is always going to continue. (That there's always going to be another chance for them – there's always hope for them, – there's always going to be another opportunity).

Even those who are **not** Christians – those who have paid God **no** attention, for their whole lives, expect that at their funeral, their loved ones can take hope in the perception, that they're going to be in paradise with Jesus... – They expect that their story is going to continue on into glory.

But the fact of the matter is, there is no place for them in God's story after chapter 20... And so Chapter 20, is a **hugely** significant chapter. Chapter 20, marks the point in human history, where God deals finally and decisively, with His enemies.... **And** it's the point where we're forced to understand, that the faithless, **are** God's enemies...

In this world, there are 2 camps:

1. One, is a seemingly insignificant, and vulnerable, little minority – represented as **the camp of the saints and the beloved city** (the beloved city is a phrase for Jerusalem), and so “**the camp of the saints and the beloved city**” represents ‘the people of God’. (That's one camp)
2. And the other camp, is a **massive** camp – it's the nations of the world, gathered from the ends of the earth...

Do you sometimes feel that as a Christian, you might be in a minority? – Well, you are...

A couple of weeks ago, we began looking at this chapter 20, and we talked about this thing known as ‘the Millennium’...

Up until now, Satan has been bound – his power is limited. Satan only has the power that God allows him... But for a short period (at the end of history), Satan is going to be released to do his worst, and what’s the worst that Satan can do??? Well, he can get people to act on what’s already in their hearts ... He gathers the nations of the world, to make war on the children of God...

If you don’t believe that the nations of the world could ever go to war against the children of God, well you haven’t been paying attention. You haven’t been paying attention to the intolerance, and the insults, and the venom, and the attacks of the “yes” campaign in the current Same-Sex-Marriage debate...

If you don’t believe that the nations of the world could ever go to war against the children of God, well you haven’t been paying attention to the atrocities of ISIS, or Islamic Jihadists all over the world... Nor have you been paying attention to history and how Marxism has warred against Christians, in many nations of the world, for over a century...

Even in our own society, there is a deep-seated **loathing** of God’s faithful children... I’m not a very good salesman for Christianity, am I??? Here I am telling you, “Become a Christian. Give your life to Jesus, and the whole world will hate you”... Who could say “No” to that offer?

Some Christians are under a very false-impression that somehow the world will respect us a bit more, and acknowledge our goodness because “we’re the church” “We’re God’s representatives here on earth.”... Some people are under the impression that it’s only the religious ‘wacko’s’ who are hated... not so. Jesus said: **Matthew 10:22** **and you will be hated by all for my name's sake.....** *In the A.C.T, this week, 18 year old “Madeline”, discovered just how much she was going to be hated, for being a disciple of Jesus. This week, she was sacked because she let it be known she was going to vote “no” in the SSM survey because she was a Christian.<sup>1</sup> But probably even more hurtful than her sacking, is that she was accused of “hate speech” and of being a “bigot”, and she was told that she wasn’t a safe person to have working with children...*

And my point is, “This shouldn’t be a surprise for us.” Jesus said, “The world will hate you, because of me”...

Even in our own society, there is a deep-seated loathing of God; A loathing of God’s Law; A loathing of God’s faithful children; A loathing of God’s authority... And when Satan is released, he will exploit this deep-seated loathing of God, and gather the nations of the world against Christians (wherever they are). We are told that he will deceive them. How do you think Satan will deceive the nations? I think Satan will deceive Godless humanity, by convincing them that they’re on the right side, and that they’re on the winning side...

And **this**, is the point in history, where God will act... And God will deal finally and decisively, with His enemies...

The Devil and his minions are thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

That’s the image that we have here of ‘Hell’.

It’s not very fashionable to tell people about Hell these days, is it? (“Oh, he’s one of **those** preachers”)..

Nobody wants to hear about Hell. We want to stay **positive** and only talk about **nice** stuff... But for me to be faithful to God’s word, today I **have** to talk about “Hell”. I **must** talk about Hell. It is **imperative** that I talk about Hell...

Oh, Hell is fine if it’s just a place where the Devil and the Antichrist and the False prophet are relegated... Hell’s actually pretty good, if it’s a place where “death” and “Hades” (the land of the dead) are sent... And maybe we might even feel that Hell is a good place for murderers, genocidal despots and child molesters to be thrown....

But we still don’t like to **talk** about Hell, because if we were to talk about “Hell”, we have to face up to what the Bible teaches us, Hell really is:

- Hell is a place of eternal torment
- And Hell will be populated by those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Revelation Chapter 20, tells us about the day of Judgment...

- It’s the day that Jesus spoke about when he talked about the separating of the sheep and the goats

- He told us about it again, with the separating of the wheat and the tares, and the burning of the tares<sup>ii</sup>
- And yet again, He talked about the separating of the good fish and the bad, and he said **Matthew 13:49** **So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous<sup>50</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

On The Day of Judgment, there is going to be a great separation – a great sorting out – a great division,,,, between those who enter God's eternal glory, and those who do not...

*When I hear of this sorting out, I always think of drafting sheep. Up until now, the sheep have been running together, but then you run them through the drafting race, and all the good ones go to one yard, and they're going to be the ones that get to go to a new fresh paddock, but all the culls get drafted into the other yard, where they're going to be loaded onto the truck to the meatworks...*

There's going to be a great division – a great sorting out...

It is very important that today, I talk about judgment, and the great sorting out... Let me give you an illustration of **why** it's so important for us to hear about judgment, even though it's not a popular topic:

*In Australia, we have what's being termed as "a first-world problem". Health authorities are becoming increasingly concerned that child immunisation rates are dropping in our*

*community. In fact, the immunisation rates of children in some districts (mainly the wealthier suburbs by the way), are dropping well below a level that assures a ‘herd immunity’ ...*

*What that means, is some children are too young, to yet be immunised... If at least 95% of the population **are** immunised, then the population at large, is not infectious, therefore children are pretty safe, until they **are** old enough to be immunised themselves...*

*But today, most new parents have had no experience or first-hand knowledge of diseases that (not so long ago) were so prevalent in our society, and so debilitating, and so deadly to our children...*

- *Polio*
- *Diphtheria*
- *Whooping cough*
- *Tetanus*

*(just to name a few) - diseases that were killing our children... But these diseases have been so well controlled by our immunisation programs, that to some people, it’s just not important any more... The ideology of “I’m not going to put anything unnatural in my child’s body” wins over reason... In some quarters, there has materialised a negligent disregard – an apathetic complacency, because they don’t believe that these diseases are a risk any more...*

*In the Australian this week, a doctor wrote a letter to the editor, and he said this:*

*As a younger doctor, I would come across parents who declined vaccination for their children on the grounds that we don’t see these diseases any more. One of my techniques to counteract this belief, was to ask the parent*

*to ask her grandmother to name somebody she knew who had died from polio. It worked.*

*This generation has failed to heed the lessons of history.*

*Nick Bretland, Yokine, WA<sup>iii</sup>*

And, just as apathy regarding immunisation exists because of ignorance of the awful reality of these diseases,,, apathy regarding our response to God exists because of our ignorance of the awful reality of Hell; Judgment; and the great division that is going to occur on judgment day...

You know “the Gospel” means “Good News”, don’t you... Do you know why the Gospel is such good news??? The Gospel is such “Good news”, because the Gospel gives to us the path to Life. The Gospel,,,, is that when we put our faith in Jesus and follow Jesus, we get drafted to Glory, and we escape Hell...

So, what does judgment look like?

**Verse<sup>11</sup>** Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up

the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

On the Day of Judgment, a great heap of books are going to be opened. One for each of us, containing all of our deeds that we've ever done... Imagine that... Imagine that everything you've ever done, was read out, for all of heaven and earth to hear... I don't know about you, but I'd be ashamed... And God would be quite just in His judgment "Michael, Off to Hell"...

And so I thank God for the other book – the Lamb's Book of Life...

Anyone who's name is **not** written in the Lamb's Book of Life, will be thrown into the lake of fire.. And we know that the 'lake of fire', is an image for 'Hell' – it's a place of eternal torment<sup>iv</sup>. And if your name is not in the Lamb's Book of Life, that's exactly where you're going to go...

So, it's pretty important to get one's name in the lamb's book of life, isn't it???

If your name, is in that book, you get to move on to chapters 21 & 22 – your story will continue with Jesus Christ, in His glorious eternity... But if on judgment day, your name is **not** found in that book, then you'll be thrown into the lake of fire... There couldn't be a greater division...

All will be raised: Some will be drafted off to eternal life; and the rest will be drafted off to Hell....

That’s the warning, and it’s important to hear that warning, isn’t it?

Righto, so how do I get my name into the book of Life???

Well, there’s only one way – be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ... That’s it... I can’t be any plainer than that... It means to have faith in Jesus, and to follow Jesus. That’s it...

In life, some will be tempted to fall away from following Jesus... But if there’s one thing that the Book of Revelation makes clear, it’s that “When we stay faithful to Jesus, our name won’t get rubbed out of the book of life...”

It’s not rocket science – to be drafted into the good gate, be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ – Make Him the priority of your life – the Lord of your life, because that’s how our name gets in the book – guaranteed.

Pray.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/samesex-marriage-no-one-should-be-sacked-for-political-view/news-story/ae4fc8aac85565d8d0559b5122c1c1e1>

<sup>ii</sup> Matthew 13

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/letters/turnbull-should-create-market-conditions-that-will-sustain-coal-power/news-story/fa1fa4e11f857c361d86943643180de6>

<sup>iv</sup> Rev 20:10