

# Revelation 20: An Exegesis

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## I. Introduction

To say the least, the understanding of not only Revelation chapter 20, but the entire book as well, is a challenge. And to help us meet that challenge, it would be helpful for us to review a little background material before getting into the exegesis proper of Revelation 20.

### A. Authorship

A person would think it would be safe to say that the writer of Revelation is just who the title in the KJV says, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." From internal evidence, John is mentioned as the writer four times (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). Clear external testimony to the authorship of John begins with Justin Martyr about the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. He refers to "John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied in a Revelation made to him that the believers in our Christ should spend a thousand years in Jerusalem." His comment on the historical fact of the authorship we shall accept. His interpretation of the contents of the book we shall see about later. All of the early church fathers accepted without question the Johannine authorship. It was up to the higher critics of the 1800s to conclude that the Apostle John did not write Revelation, in spite of its internal evidence to the contrary. Ironically, the critics drew on *subjectively interpreted* internal evidence to counteract the *clear* internal evidence of John's authorship. Their arguments against John's authorship are listed briefly here to help us see the nature of their criticism. They object to John's authorship on these grounds:

1. The author nowhere calls himself an Apostle, nor does he ever designate himself as John, the personal disciple of Jesus.
2. The author speaks in such an objective way about the 12 Apostles that it is hard to believe that he himself belonged to them.
3. The language of the book is completely different from that of the fourth Gospel.
4. The entire style, subject matter, and doctrinal aspect of Revelation are so unlike the Gospel and the Apostles that the same author could not have written both.

Let it be enough of a rebuttal for the purposes of this paper to point out that using only simple logic, orthodox theologians have shot these arguments full of holes. For the Christian, the author remains John, the beloved disciple of Jesus.

### B. Date

The date of the writing of Revelation is another point of contention between the orthodox Christian and the higher critic. The testimony of the early church states that John wrote Revelation in his old age, 95 or 96 AD. It was at this time, according to the Fathers, that John was in exile on the island of Patmos during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian. But again the

higher critics, using subjectively interpreted internal evidence, differ. They point to a writing date between the death of Emperor Nero (68) and the destruction of Jerusalem (70). The interpretation of Revelation by many of the higher critics reflects this earlier date. For they see John referring to Nero on many instances. Many of them also reject predictive prophecy, e.g. Harnack: "All interpretations not strictly historical must be excluded." The idea of language development also plays into the higher critics dating of Revelation. If John was the writer of both Revelation and the Gospel, they contend, Revelation must have been written at least 25 years before the Gospel because it shows a less intelligent use of the Greek language than does the Gospel. Most of them accept the later Johannine authorship of the Gospel.

But again, be it enough of a rebuttal for the purposes of this paper to point out that the early church's dating of Revelation at around 95 has been well stated by others. Rather than casting doubt on the quality of the writing, the veracity of the book, and its meaning for us today as do the critics, we are satisfied to stand with the early church and learn our lessons from the book without criticizing it.

### *C. Canonicity*

Another question to touch on briefly is the canonicity of Revelation, for this obviously affects our interpretation of it. The church has always felt that Revelation was apostolic in origin, no one of importance doubting its Johannine authorship. And thus it was always given an important place in the first 400 years of the Christian church. But it was given a recognized and permanent place in the canon by a decree of the Council of Laodicea (about 350) and the Council of Carthage (397). During the first centuries, however, it was not universally accepted as canonical, being omitted from the Peshito, the earliest Syriac version of the New Testament (2<sup>nd</sup> Century). Also it is felt by some that Revelation is not quoted by writer [sic] in the early church as often as it should be were it considered to be canonical at the time. Lenski offers the opinion that "the nature of Revelation and the difficulty of its interpretation were evidently deciding factors." At one time Luther wondered about Revelation, writing in 1522, "My spirit cannot adjust itself to the book." But in 1546 he fully accepted its canonicity. Zwingli, on the other hand, plainly said it was not a Biblical book.

### *D. Type of Writing*

With the conviction that Revelation has a proper place in the Bible and that it truly is the inspired Word of God, we note that the type of writing in it is unique for an entire book of Scripture. The difficulty in understanding and interpreting Revelation comes from the use of many figures of speech, mysterious symbolism, colors, numbers, etc. Some passages are interpreted and explained only through an insight into other cryptic passages in the book. Since the Bible is a whole and does interpret itself on a broader scale, we also find meaning for some of the symbolism in Revelation from other books of the Bible. Revelation assumes the existence of other doctrines stated clearly elsewhere in the Scripture and often refers to them using symbolic language. And some of the Revelation symbolism must remain uninterpreted for us this side of eternal life.

The Book of Revelation (Greek - "Apocalypse") is indeed a revelation. It reveals things that man by himself cannot know, but which God must make known to him. God has chosen to reveal these things to us by means of a vision recorded in words. The vision, and thus the book,

is not structured like most writings where it is relatively simple to follow a progression of thought. This adds to the difficulty of understanding it.

### ***E. Types of Interpretation***

There are generally four main systems of interpreting the Book of Revelation. They are:

1. *The Spiritual System*—“The book embraces the whole period from the first to the second coming of the Lord, but this whole period is the Last Time ... which was to close God’s dealings with man in a present world, and to bring to full light the *principles* upon which the Church was guided to her eternal rest ... While the Apocalypse thus embraces the whole period of the Christian dispensation, it sets before us within this period *the action of great principles and not specific incidents*. It represents in a highly poetic and symbolic form the general principles that mark the Church’s history in the world. The book is written, however, not simply to describe the conflict, the preservation, and the triumph of Christ’s true people, but also to warn against the coming degeneracy of the professing Church” (*The Lutheran Commentary, James to Revelation*, pg. xxiv of “Introduction to Revelation”).

2. *The Preterist System*—“The visions of the Apocalypse relate chiefly to the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the history of pagan Rome” from the reign of Nero to Domitian (68 - 96). According to this system of interpretation, the prophecies of Revelation have, “at least in their primary intention,” been fulfilled (op. cit., pg. xxvi).

3. *The Continuous Historical System*—This system of interpretation regards “the Apocalypse as a progressive history of the fortunes of the Church from the first century to the end of time. According to (it) the visions are partly fulfilled, partly in course of fulfillment, and a portion still remains unfulfilled.” This method has been followed by the majority of conservative commentators over the years, including Luther (op. cit. pg. xxvii).

4. *The Futuristic System*—“The whole book, with the exception of the first three chapters, refers principally to events which are to immediately precede, accompany, and follow the Second Advent of Christ.” This system literally interprets most of the symbolism in Revelation. It sees the visions as portraying events that will follow one another in historical sequence. The Futuristic System is the one out of which millennialism is developed (op. cit. pg. xxviii).

I find myself in agreement with the Continuous Historical System of interpreting Revelation. It is the system that best follows the hermeneutical principle we all subscribe to, that Scripture must interpret Scripture. It does not add new doctrines to what the Scripture says elsewhere. It does not look for a *sedes doctrina* in the unclear symbolical language of Revelation. But it does emphasize the truths of Law and Gospel which strengthen our faith in

Jesus, which inspire a sanctified life, and which prepare us for and make us eager to have the blessedness of heaven.

## II. Translation

- V. 1 And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and (having) a great chain in his hand.
- V. 2 And he took the dragon into custody, the old snake, who is “The Devil,” also “Satan” and he bound him for a thousand years,
- V. 3 and threw him into the abyss, and locked and sealed (it) over him in order that he no longer lead the nations astray, until the thousand years be ended. After these (thousand years) he must be loosed for a short time.
- V. 4 And I saw thrones and they sat on them, and judging was given to them, and (I saw) the souls of those beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God, and whoever did not worship the beast or his image and did not receive the mark on the forehead and on their hand; and they lived and they ruled with Christ a thousand years.
- V. 5 The rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were ended. This resurrection is the first (one).
- V. 6 Blessed and holy is the person having a part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death does not have power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with Him for the thousand years.
- V. 7  
and 8 And when the thousand years has ended, Satan will be released from his prison and he will go out to lead the nations astray, the ones in the four corners of the earth. Gog and Magog, to lead them to the battle, whose number is as the sand of the seashore.
- V. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth and they surrounded the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. And fire from heaven came down and consumed them.
- V. 10 The devil who led them astray was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where both the beast and the false prophet will be tormented, both day and night, for all eternity.
- V. 11 And I saw a large white (or dazzling bright) throne and one sitting on it from whose face heaven and earth flees and a place was not found for them.
- V. 12 And I saw the dead, the large and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. And another book was opened which is (the book) of life. And the dead were judged by reason of the writings in the books according to their works.

- V. 13 And the sea gave (up) the dead which were in it, also death and hell gave (up) the dead which were in them, and each was judged according to his works.
- V. 14 And death and hell were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.
- V. 15 And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

### III. Exegesis

V. 1—Historically there has been a difference of opinion about the identity of the angel John saw. Was it an angel sent by Jesus, or was it the Lord Himself? In Revelation 1:18 Jesus said, “I ... have the keys of hell and death.” This leads to the interpretation that Jesus is here the angel. However, the term “angel” as it is used in Revelation never refers to Jesus. In 9:1 the key to the bottomless pit was given to an angel by Jesus and the angel used Jesus’ authority. I believe that fits best here too.

The angel is spoken of as “coming down from heaven.” The question might be asked, “coming down to where?” Where is the location of the activities John was seeing in his vision? We can’t point to a specific location, only to the event that took place. The angel came down to where he was able to do with Satan what he did.

The angel carried two things, “the key to the abyss” and “a great chain.” The key (κλείς) is anything that is used for locking. The New Testament uses it in a figurative sense. Here it refers to the power to lock and hold Satan in check in the abyss. ἄβυσσος means abyss, depth, underworld. In ancient literature it referred to the third part of the universe in contrast to the earth and the sky. It was viewed as a huge dark place which only God and no living humans could see. Hence the KJV translation “bottomless pit.” The New Testament uses it to refer to the abode of the dead (Rom. 10:7) and the abode of demons (Lk. 8:31). Here I take it to be the same as “hell.” The chain (ἄλυσις) was the word used to refer to chaining a prisoner or a demoniac (Mk. 5:3,4). The idea is that the person bound by the chain was powerless, was controlled.

V. 2—The idea of power and control over another that is pictured by “key” and “chain” is carried through by what the angel did with the power Jesus gave. He “took the dragon into custody.” κρατέω is not just a grasping or holding, but a grasping or holding with the idea of overpowering = apprehend, arrest. The dragon (δράκων) is here identified as Satan. The word is used in the New Testament only in Revelation but is used there often. In case you have never seen a dragon, perhaps you can better picture the event in your mind by translating δράκων as “a serpent-like monster.” For this was the form, a serpent, that he took on in the Garden of Eden, referred to by the next phrase describing him as “the snake, the ancient one (lit.).” He is named “Devil” (διάβολος - slanderer) because he was a liar from the beginning and had no part in God’s Truth. His second proper name given here is “Satan” meaning “the adversary,” the enemy of God and all who are God’s.

The action of the angel on Satan with the chain is a binding. δέω (to bind) in this context refers to a binding or tying for the purpose of mastery and imprisonment. The aorist emphasizes

the fact of the action being taken. The binding of Satan by the angel was done. The result of the angel's act is to last "for a thousand years." —accusative of duration of time.

V. 3—The angel has completely controlled Satan with the power given to him by Jesus (the chain), has thrown him into the abyss, has locked it shut (the key) and sealed it shut, closing off the top opening of the pit. The purpose of this seal is not simply to give an official status to what has happened, nor is it to show that the top of the abyss has not been opened should anyone ask (cf. Jesus' tomb). This seal is the kind that would prevent the abyss from being opened. So the great point that is made with the key, the chain, and the seal is that Satan has been completely overpowered, subdued, and put out of commission by the authoritative action of Jesus' angel.

The phrase *ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ* is final, stating not only the result, but the God-ordained purpose of the binding of Satan and putting him into custody. *πλανήσῃ* aorist subjunctive of *πλανάω*—to lead astray, cause to wander (planet), mislead, deceive. *ἔτι*—still, yet; with *μὴ*—"no longer." So a former action of Satan is caused to stop. No longer can he do what he once could do, i.e., lead the nations astray from the way they should go in the way that he once did.

"After these thousand years he must be loosed for a short time." There is necessity expressed by *δεί*. Something forces Satan to be released from the abyss. The necessity cannot come from Satan, for he is powerless. The necessity can not come from some greater force acting upon God. The necessity must come from God Himself. It is necessary that this loosing happen because God has planned and decreed it to be. Nothing can stop it from happening. Satan is to be loosed "for a short time." The word "short" is relative, short in relation to what? The only other time period in the context is the 1000 years. Satan's time of freedom will be short compared to the time of his stay in the abyss.

There is no question but that the main problem in interpreting the first 3 verses of Revelation 20 revolves around the phrase *χίλια ἔτη*, "a thousand years." The thousand years has been interpreted literally, 365,000 days, along with a literal interpretation of everything else John saw in his visions. This is millennialism as we commonly understand it. It contains such things as the 1000 year rule of Jesus on earth from His capital at Jerusalem. All the Jews will be converted to Him, will return to Israel, and will rule the world with Him. The "first resurrection" is made to mean the bodily departure of the Christians to meet the Lord in the air. There are many variations on the theme. Some say that Jesus' return will take place at the end of the 1000 years (post-Millennialists). Some say that not just the Jews but all believers will rule the earth with Jesus for 1000 years of political peace and material prosperity for all Christians. The 1000 years thus becomes a literal time period in this the Futuristic interpretation of Revelation.

Our Lutheran response to millennialism is stated by the Augsburg Confession, XVII, 5, "Of Christ's Return to Judgment"—"They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed."

The Spiritual view of the 1000 years would say that the binding of Satan for 1000 years simply shows the principle that the Church has power over Satan. To me this smacks of demythologizing Revelation much like attempts are made on Genesis 1 and other passages of Scripture. For the Spiritualist interpreter the 1000 years is symbolical.

The Preterist view holds that the 1000 years refers to a time of past history, 1000 years again symbolical. There was at some time a period of political peace which John saw in religious terms and attributed it to the binding of Satan.

But it is the Continuous Historical System of interpreting Revelation 20 that gives the most Scripturally satisfying interpretation of the 1000 years. First, the 1000 years is a symbol of time period, but not a literal 1000 years. The purpose of 1000 here is consistent with the use of numbers in other parts of the Scripture. 10 was the number used to express completeness. 10 x 10 x 10 or 1000 or 10 raised to the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree symbolizes the highest degree of completeness, pardoning the redundancy. Therefore the “1000 years” speaks of the absolute completeness of that to which it refers. It is a time (“years”) in which Satan is completely bound and this time will run its full and complete course.

Second, the Scripture also shows us what the binding of Satan by the angel was all about. In his first letter (1 John 3:8) John wrote about the power of Satan being destroyed by Jesus. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” And when the head of a snake is crushed (Gen. 3:15) the result is that it loses its power. In Jn. 16:11 Jesus refers to Satan and says, “The prince of this world is judged.” By casting devils out of people, Jesus showed His power over Satan. And what were Jesus’ death and resurrection but two powerful acts of triumph over Satan’s two weapons, sin and death. Now Satan’s power on earth is not strong like it was before Jesus work of redemption was completed. He may “no longer lead the nations astray” like he once did, cf. vs. 3. Today the Gospel preaching is crisscrossing the globe. Before Jesus came it was pretty well restricted to Old Testament Israel. Satan’s physical control over people has been held in check. No longer does his control lead to the unnatural physical behavior described in the Gospels which was clear and evident proof of not just spiritual but also physical possession by Satan.

Jesus’ power over Satan helps people only as they hear the Gospel and believe it, just as the fact of their forgiveness helps them only when they hear the Gospel and believe it. So the subjective effect of the objective fact of Satan’s binding is given only to the believers. However, the entire earth benefits to a degree from the fact that Satan’s power has been curbed. His power is still felt on the earth. But now, during the “1000 years,” he must work through the 2 beasts and the whore of the two preceding visions. (2 beasts = all anti-Christian power, all anti-Christian propaganda; whore = all anti-Christian seduction - Lenski, Little, Poellot). But the short time will come, shortened for the sake of the elect (Mt. 24:22) when Satan will be allowed to work personally in the world as he once did, when he is released from the abyss. Passages like Mt. 24:12, 21, 24 and Lk. 18:8 describe the effects of his work then

V. 4—John’s vision continues to show us, in verses 4-6, what happens during the 1000 years to believers and unbelievers. He saw thrones and people sitting on them. The people on the thrones had the power to rule, as royalty. Their ruling is in the authority to judge, an authority which was given to them. The thrones are occupied by two groups of people. There are the souls of the martyrs and there are the souls of those who did not worship the beast. “The ones beheaded with an ax,” the basic meaning of *πελεκίζω*, refers to all who died because of a direct connection with “the testimony of Jesus” and “the word of God”—subjective genitives. They refused to disassociate themselves from God’s Word and were killed because of it. The second group is those who did not worship the beast or his image or receive his mark on their forehead and hand. *προσκυνέω*—“worship”—an act of doing reverence to a deity. These people who did not follow the lies of the devil and who did not live their lives in submission to his power. They conquered by faith in Christ. The “beast” (*θηρίον*) literally means a wild animal of some kind. But in its very many uses in Revelation, especially chapter 13, it refers to animal-like beings of a supernatural type. Lenski’s interpretation of “beast” (cf. above) seems to fit best. This is the sum

total of anti-Christian power and propaganda through which Satan influences and controls people. The “image” of the beast refers to a statue built under the direction of the second beast and given the breath of life by it (chapter 13). The idolatry of the worship of the beast refers to following the temptation of Satan. For sins are acts of praise and worship of him. The “mark of the beast” is something else that is missing from those whom John sees sitting on thrones of judgment. Again we look to Revelation 13 for the meaning of this term. “Mark” (χάραγμα) is a mark or stamp that is engraved, etched, cut, or imprinted on something to show ownership, such as a brand on cattle. To have the mark of the beast on the hand and forehead refers to people belonging under the power of Satan in thought and deed, in both mind and action, i.e. completely belonging to him. The mark is “666,” which in numerology would express incompleteness, completely falling short of the grace of God in following Satan. All people have a “mark” or a “seal” on them. Either it is the mark of the beast, or, it is the mark and seal of faith upon the 144,000, all the believers in Christ. John saw, in heaven, those with the mark of God’s servants on their foreheads (cf. Revelation 7:3-9). Thus they did not have the mark of the beast.

So John sees the souls of the martyrs and the souls of the dead who died in the Lord, i.e., as believers in Jesus Christ. He does not see them sleeping. He does not see them in a limbo or in some nameless state of existence in the realm of eternity. They are alive. The souls of the believers have entered heaven at their death. They are “with Christ.” And what they are doing during the 1000 years is ruling in judgment. Upon death, the souls of the believers enter heaven and join Jesus in His kingly rule. This is a rule over Satan and all his power. The ruling began for the believers already on earth where, by faith in Jesus, they had His power to rule over Satan by the power of His Word. They shared in the judgment against Satan that was decreed by the victoriously resurrected Savior. Luther caught the meaning of this very well in the third verse of “A Mighty Fortress.” The ruling of God’s royal priests (1 Peter 2:9) reaches its fulfillment when they share Jesus’ rule in heaven.

V. 5—Verse 5 tells us the fate of the unbelievers who die during the 1000 year time of reference. They do not “live” during that time. They enjoy no eternal life, ruling with Christ in heaven. They did not get spiritual life during their time of grace on earth. They remained “dead in trespasses and sins.” “The wages of sin is death,” and therefore they do not receive the life of the believer. John does not say here what they have or where they are, just what they do not have, life.

All of what John has been describing in verse 4 is now referred to in this way, “This resurrection is the first one.” “Resurrection” (ἀνάστασις) is a rising up of some kind. Here it refers to a rising in connection with the believers John sees in heaven. What is the essence of that resurrection? Is it the resurrection to faith in Jesus Christ through contrition and repentance (justification)? Is it the resurrection from dead works to a life of good works (sanctification)? Is it the resurrection of the souls of the believers into heaven at the moment of their physical death? Or is it the bodily resurrection of the dead Christians at the beginning of the millenium, the bodily resurrection of the rest of the dead following 1000 years later?

The millennialist argues that ἀνάστασις refers either to a spiritual resurrection to faith and good works, or to a physical resurrection. Since the word never does refer to a spiritual resurrection in the New Testament, it must mean a physical resurrection, they claim, of course at the beginning of the millenium. But their fault lies in not realizing the context. John sees *souls* that are resurrected, not bodies. So by the word “resurrection,” John here pictures the souls of the believers entering heaven at their bodily death.



V. 6—The believers in heaven are truly happy, blessed, and pure before God. For they, as a foregone conclusion, have been declared holy in God’s eyes by His forensic declaration of forgiveness in Jesus. They have experienced the true blessedness which that gives. And now they live in its culmination in heaven. Since they have a part in the first resurrection, they shall not be touched by the second death. Death touched them once and only once. But there shall be no second time for them. Death will strike a second time for the unbeliever, the eternal death of hell, the “lake of fire” in verse 14.

The position of the souls of the believers in heaven has been described in two ways. 1. They are royalty, ruling with Christ. 2. They are judging with Christ. And now they are described in a 3<sup>rd</sup> way. “They shall be priests of God and of Christ.” A third aspect of their existence now in heaven is that they are carrying out the priestly function of worshipping their God and Savior. This lasts for the 1000 years along with their judging and ruling. With the judging, ruling, and worshipping by the saints referred to as something they do during the 1000 years, it could be an indication that something greater awaits them after the 1000 years.

V. 7—But John’s vision does not take us into that here. Rather we see something else happening at the end of the 1000 years. Satan will be released from his prison. “Prison” again brings us the picture that Satan was personally completely restrained.

V. 8-10—The release that had to come (δεί) will come. Released from prison, we see that Satan was not rehabilitated during his incarceration. “He will go out to lead the nations astray.” This will be his express purpose (infinitive *πλανήσαι* to express purpose). He will go back to what he had been doing before he was restrained so that he, along with all his weapons and henchmen, can finally be dispensed with for good.

Satan’s final strategy is to gather the innumerable nations of the earth, “Gog and Magog,” for one great battle against the holy ones and the beloved city. The millennialist sees this “Battle of Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16) as armed physical contact on the Plain of Jezreel in Palestine. They see Gog and Magog referring to historical political nations, like Russia. Some see this as Communism’s last great battle with Christianity. “Gog” and “Magog” are references from Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 where they are enemies of Israel that God destroyed with fire from heaven. They are used here to refer to all the enemies of God’s New Testament Israel, the Holy Christian Church, “the holy ones and the beloved city.” This is Satan’s final hour, the period described by Jesus in Matthew 24. But we note that the Lord makes quick work of them, sending fire from heaven to consume them. This tells us that God’s power from heaven will bring an end to their harassment of the elect, a note of hope and encouragement for them. The devil, the leader, is thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, a picture of torment in hell, a torment that the devil will experience forever. So Satan is disposed of.

V. 11—Now we come to the third vision of this chapter, John’s vision of the judgment at the end of the 1000 years + “a little season.” John saw a large white, or a dazzling bright throne. Again we have a symbol of ruling and judging. There is an awesome person on the throne because heaven and earth flee from before his face and can find no place to hide from him. This awesome Person is none other than the mighty Judge, the Son of God. The heavens and earth have been corrupted by sin and must pass away and in their place comes the “new heavens and new earth.” cf. 2 Peter 3:10-13.

V. 12—But the main picture in this vision is the judgment of all people. All the dead have been physically resurrected and are standing before the throne of the Judge. The judgment is made on the basis of what has been written in books. There are “books” and there is another book, “the book of life.” The “books” contain the record of all the works of the resurrected

persons during their earthly lives. It is by reason of these works that they are judged, on the basis of that evidence, the evidence showing faith in Jesus Christ or absence of that faith. ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων—the use of ἐκ to denote origin, cause, motive, or reason (Bauer 3, f.).

V. 13—The fact that *all* the dead appear for judgment is emphasized. They appear in complete form. The sea and all the earth give up the dead bodies they hold. Death and Hell give up the souls of the dead with they hold. “Death” is the power that separated the soul from the body. It relinquishes its hold on the bodies of both the believers and the unbelievers. ἄδης = hell, where the souls of the unbelievers went at death.

V. 14—The destruction of death and hell are pictured as they are thrown into the “lake of fire.” “Lake of fire” = eternal hell. Death will never again touch anybody. Hell (ἄδης), which held the souls of the unbelievers before Judgment Day will not receive any body after this judgment. The devil, his angels, the people who followed him, his power, his propaganda, his seduction, his deception, death, hell, they are all thrown together into a final, yet eternal, misery of being forever separated from the love of God.

V. 15—This is the fate of all the people who stood before the Judge’s throne and whose works were read, but whose names were not found written in the Book of Life, who were not listed as believers in Jesus. They were not quickened and regenerated by the Holy Spirit in time, they are not heirs of eternal life with Christ.

On this positively negative note, John’s visions in Revelation 20 end.

“He which testifieth these  
things saith, ‘Surely I  
come quickly.’ Amen.  
Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”  
Revelation 22:20

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