

The Means of Grace

July 18, 2021

Comfort in the midst of conflict: Revelation 20

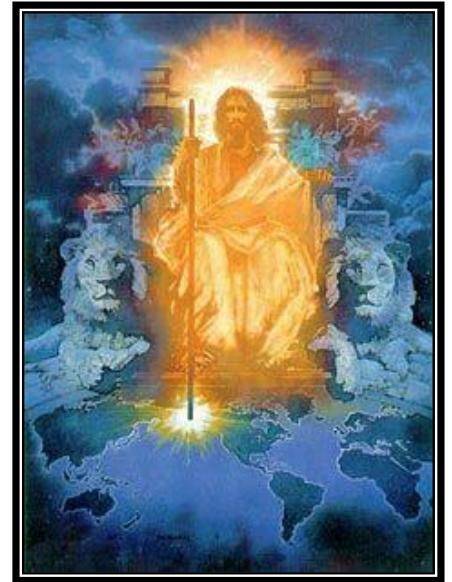
Revelation chapter 20 introduces the seventh and final vision to the Apostle John. Over the centuries since then, many Christians have been taught to expect a coming millennial (thousand-year) reign of Jesus on earth based, in large part, on the words of this chapter taken out of context from the rest of scripture. That is why it's important that we read these words carefully and compare them to the rest of the bible. A literal interpretation of the bible means we let Scripture interpret itself. A study of other passages that speak about this same subject (Ephesians 1:1-10, John 5:24-30, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) would indicate that millennialism in any form is not taught anywhere in Scripture and in fact contradicts other portions of the bible.

So what is meant by a thousand-year reign at John sees in his vision? Chapter 20 begins with the dramatization of a historical truth and the ongoing reality that results from it: Jesus, the angel from heaven, has defeated Satan, the dragon, by his life, death, and resurrection. That good news of Jesus' victory, the gospel, keeps the devil chained up from fully and freely deceiving people and nations with his wicked lies. The dragon will be bound for "a thousand years," a complete number (10 cubed) representing a definite and determined time from Jesus' ascension until shortly before his return in glory. Revelation uses symbolic numbers consistently throughout... 3, 4, 7, 12, 24, 1000, 144,000.

During that same time, we're told that a group of people, those who have taken part in the "**first resurrection**," reign with Jesus. Who are those people? When we remember the Bible teaching that all human beings are born dead in sin we understand the "**first resurrection**" to be the new birth given by the Holy Spirit through faith when we became alive in Christ (Ephesians 2). Our "**first resurrection**" is when we came to faith in Jesus. Revelation 20 is referring to *all believers in Jesus*! Jesus reigns as King in the hearts of all believers on earth now. As believers, while we take part in the first death, a physical one, we all have eternal life in Christ and need not fear the "second death" (eternal separation from God). Along with all people, we will participate in the second resurrection, a bodily one at Christ's return. In the meanwhile, saints in heaven and on earth live and reign with their living and ruling Savior. That why Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come!"

At the end of this period, Satan will be loosed from his chain and allowed to deceive widely and freely. This vision tells us that it will be a "short time" (v. 3). We are reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:21-25, where he speaks of a time of severe testing but promises that he will mercifully cut that time short for the sake of his people. Previous visions in Revelation also point to this time when gospel witness will be nearly silenced. But that short season will come to an end. That end means final judgment for the old evil foe.

That end also means Jesus' return to judge the living and the dead. Those who stand before the judge without the righteousness of Christ by faith are justly sentenced based on their own faulty record. Those who are found in Christ, whose names are written in the book of life, are judged on his perfect life and guilt-removing sacrifice. They have life and peace with God through Christ and need not fear his judgment now or ever. Jesus himself, the victor over sin and Satan, is our life and hope, our comfort in every conflict.



THIS WEEK AT GRACE CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Sunday July 18, 2021

Flowers for the Altar-Faye Rutstein

8:30 AM Adult Bible Study in person

9:30 AM Worship Service

and livestream grace-wels.net/worship or facebook.com/GraceWELS

OFFERINGS CAN BE MAILED TO THE CHURCH - 7610 NE FREMONT

11:00 AM Church Council



A Family of Ministries For Christian
Worship, Education and Care

Monday July 19, 2021

Tuesday July 20, 2021

Pastor in office

Wednesday July 21, 2021

Pastor in office

6:00 PM Google Bible Study- Moments with the Messiah

Thursday July 22, 2021

Pastor in office

Friday July 23, 2021

Pastor in office

Hospital/Shut-ins visits

Saturday July 24, 2021

Pastor in Office-Sermon Prep

Sunday July 25 2021 HOLY COMMUNION

Communion Prep-Marilyn Baer

Flowers for the Altar-Charlene

8:30 AM Adult Bible Study in person

9:30 AM Worship Service in person

and livestream grace-wels.net/worship or facebook.com/GraceWELS

OFFERINGS CAN BE MAILED TO THE CHURCH - 7610 NE FREMONT

PRAYER REQUESTS

Carol & Warren Widmann: As Pastor Widmann's health has rapidly declined we pray that God blesses the Widmann's with healing, strength and courage. Pastor Widmann will be staying at 3583 SE 49th St. Portland, OR 97206 if you'd like to visit or send a card.

Errol Carlson has moved in to a senior care facility.

His new address is Courtyard at Mt. Tabor, 6323 SE Division, St. 97206 Phone: 503-772-9795

Mary Ellen Hafner, Tyler Hafner's mother has been blessed with successful surgery and is making a remarkable recovery.

Todd Hafner, brother of Tyler Hafner, is also improving and is recovering from pneumonia.

Dori Abernathy, sister of Carl Thompson was called to heaven this past week.

Grandfather of Cole Schwartz, who has been diagnosed with early stage of cancer,



Be Still

and know that I am God.

Sunday, July 25, 2021 at 9:30 AM

A special morning worship service with
guest musician Mike Westendorf & Family

*"I will sing of the Lord's great love forever, with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations!" - Psalm 89:1-4*

Since 2006 Mike Westendorf and his team have helped churches and Christian organizations bring the peace, hope and joy of the Gospel to their communities through concerts, special worship services, musical bible studies and speaking engagements. We're passionate about helping you connect with your community, whether that's the family, your church or your neighborhood. How can we help you inspire your community with the hope of Jesus?





At our voters meeting last Sunday...

**The proposed budget for 2021 – 2022
fiscal year was approved.**

The approved budget is challenging and only by the grace of God will it be met! Pray. Participate. Serve. Grow. Give. Our church budget is our opportunity to plan for next 12 months at our church and school locations and ask God to bless us.



**The Reports On Ministry
for the past 12 months
were approved.**

Pastor Bitter and Principal Eternick reported on the ministries at the church and school over the past fiscal year. While COVID made everything challenging God continued to bless us. Over the next year, a long range plan will be built that will involve the entire congregation and every area of ministry, we are ONE TOGETHER.

**The Voters elected Juan Garcia as our
new President at Grace and thanked
Larry Glasheen for his years of service.**

Please join together in prayer, lifting up Juan Garcia as our new president and asking God to continue to bless Larry in his new role as Chair for our new Financial Oversight Committee.



Juan Garcia



Larry Glasheen

A sunset scene over a mountain range. The sun is low on the right, casting a warm glow over the clouds. In the distance, three crosses are visible on a ridge.

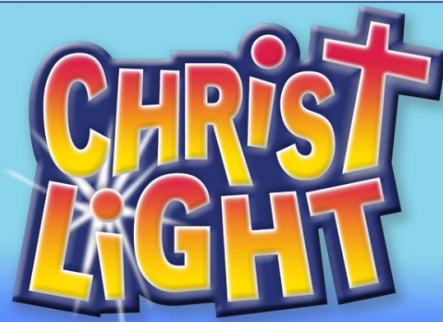
SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

**In Person & Live Streamed on Facebook
8:30 – 9:15 AM Grace Church**

A landscape scene featuring a vibrant rainbow arching over a misty field. The foreground is a lush green field, and the background shows a line of trees under a soft, hazy sky.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS
ENDURES *Forever*

**Bible History Lessons
With Applications
From Luther's Catechism**



Sunday School Lessons for Remote Learning

Sunday School will be on break over the summer.

However, this summer we are planning to restart in person Sunday School in the fall which will require a lot of planning, promotion, and preparation.

We could use your help! If you're interested in teaching, assisting, administrating or participating in our Sunday School program in any way please contact Pastor Bitter.

It is our hope to rebuild and restart at Sunday School program that is better than ever! Please use your powers for good and join us!



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Make the Connection



Wednesday Evenings at 6PM



Online via Google Meet
(invite will be sent via email)



Weekly Mowing!

Please consider signing up for spring and summer lawn care. The lawn at church needs to be cut every week... can you sign up for a weekend to cut.



Weekly Cleaning!

Please consider signing up for spring and summer church cleaning. The church building needs to be cleaned each week and we could use your help!



Various jobs for this week!

- Clearing out the attic over the communion / banner room. Heavy boxes. Steep steps. Strong arms and legs needed.




MEMBER PHOTO BOARD

Cathie Gillespie is working at updating our membership photo board. If you are not yet included on this board, please take a copy of the membership information sheet, complete and turn it in with a colored 4x6 photo and drop it in the box located on the table at the entrance to the church. If you would like to replace your current photo, just drop the picture there with your name on the back.

Welcome to Carol's
 *Downsizing Sale*
Proceeds of this sale will aid
Carol's having to move to a
different apartment.

July 18th, 25th & August 1.
Sale will take place
after morning service
on each Sunday.
Spread the word.
Invite your friends!
Many nice items!



JULY 26-29 · 6-8 PM

GRACE LUTHERAN SOCCER CAMP

WHAT TO EXPECT:

***SKILL BUILDING *GAMES *DEVOTIONS
*PARENTING DISCUSSIONS *SNACKS *FREE EVENT**

GRADES PRE-K TO 8 & PARENTS

To register by July 16, scan the QR code



Address: 2252 SE 92nd Ave. Portland, OR 97216 Questions? Email: glsoffice@grace-wels.net

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE
A NEW MISSION PARTNERSHIP WITH:**



After spending a lovely time in the Cancun area with family and friends, it was time for Sue and me to prepare for the long car drive to Mahahual. We would be visiting the mission and celebrating Día del Niño (Children's day) with the members; I don't think we could have chosen a better Sunday! We purchased a piñata and candy for the children to celebrate this special day.

On Saturday, May 1, we arrived late in the afternoon. We were greeted by Missionary Martin Vallesky, who was busy preparing for the following day. We had brought a large duffel with 35 backpacks for the smaller children and 15 larger ones for the older kids. We had also purchased craft items, bracelets, cross necklaces, cross door hangers to hand out after the service.

Sue and I set out early Sunday morning to purchase snacks for Bible class and after the service. That morning the driver called in sick, and Meghan had to take his place driving and collecting families, so we were in charge of snacks, juice, and coffee. The kitchen needed a little TLC due to all the ongoing construction, and soon some of the church member women joined us. They seemed so proud of their new kitchen! We introduced ourselves and had a wonderful visit before the service.

Meanwhile, staff members Meghan and Chris were busy filling up their vans, as they picked up member families in time for the service. And soon, the church was full! The service theme honored the children, as Missionary Vallesky delivered a message about the adoption of God's children.



Several of the older children did the lesson readings. Meghan's friend Jennifer led the children with the familiar song, "This Little Light of Mine" (Esta Lucecita Mía). At Pastor's request, I had the chance to say a few words about our connection with Martin's family back in Houston and spoke of the gratitude I have for the support of Martin's father, Pastor Vallesky, over the years.

Soon came time for the breaking of the piñatas! Plenty of candy for all! We prepared a light lunch for the children, and there were lots of happy faces. After the piñatas, we handed out the backpacks. No one left empty-handed!

We stayed to clean up while Meghan and Chris returned the members to their homes. We had plenty of time to tour the impressive new building and to see the adjacent house (it needs lots of work).

We had a lovely time visiting with the staff at Missionary Martin's favorite seafood place, The Big Fish. It was a great opportunity to hear their vision for the ministry and how we can support them. We returned to the US with two projects for our congregation in Portland:

1. Shoes/sandals for every child
2. Warm clothing for the children for the cold months

What an honor it was to have the opportunity to visit the mission and see how the Lord is working in the lives of these precious souls in Mahahual. We hope to be back soon.

Humbly yours in Christ, Juan



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF PENTECOST 8 2021

Sunday Deuteronomy 24:17-18

- ✚ Define the phrase “pervert justice”. How common is this practice in our day?
- ✚ What practices was God condemning when he said, do not pervert justice?
- ✚ How is justice perverted in our day?
- ✚ What should Israel remember? What should we remember along these lines?
- ✚ To whom are we accountable in every aspect of our lives? Romans 2:1-11.

Monday Deuteronomy 24:19-22

- ✚ What are two ways by which the needy could be given necessary food?
- ✚ Who instead of the government takes care of the poor and needy today?
- ✚ What was to motivate the Israelites? What is to motivate us today? Luke 10:26-28
- ✚ Explain how important it is to take care of the poor and needy today?

Tuesday Romans 12:9-13

- ✚ Define genuine love? Who alone has such love? How do we acquire this love?
- ✚ How do we abhor evil? How will serving the Lord abhor evil? Galatians 2:20.
- ✚ There are a number of verbs in verses 12-13 which intensify certain Christian virtues.
- ✚ Consider how this works in life – rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation etc.

Wednesday Romans 12:14-21

- ✚ List all the negative actions we need to avoid.
- ✚ List all the positive activities we need to practice.
- ✚ Imagine what it would be like in this world if all people practiced all of this?
- ✚ What could make it happen? Why should we make these practices our goals in life?
- ✚ Why will most people in this world not do these things? Matthew 15:19

Thursday Luke 10:25-28

- ✚ A lawyer in Jesus’ days was a teacher of God’s laws? What question did the lawyer put to Jesus? What answer was he hoping Jesus would give?
- ✚ What was the answer Jesus elicited from the lawyer? What did Jesus hope the man would understand about his ability to produce such perfect love?
- ✚ Jesus told the man to do this. Why is it unlikely that the lawyer “got it”?
- ✚ Do people “get it today” when we say the same things. Explain. Mark 7:21

Friday Luke 10:29-32

- ✚ What is behind the lawyer’s next question?
- ✚ What happened to a man as he traveled from Jerusalem to Jericho?
- ✚ Consider what the worst sin is in this story – was it the beating the man received or being ignored by his fellow country- men as he lay there more dead than alive?
- ✚ How is this same attitude toward people on the part of many shown today?
- ✚ How do people today “walk by on the other side” from those in need?

Saturday Luke 10:33-37

- ✚ Who finally helped the fallen man? What was the relationship between Jews and Samaritans? How did Jesus show love for His neighbors? Romans 5:6-8
- ✚ How is the sincerity and love shown by this man to an enemy?
- ✚ How does this parable answer the lawyer’s question, “Who is my neighbor?”