

Revelation 20 — Being a Part of the First Resurrection
With the Heart of Jesus to Reach
Those Headed for the Second Death With the Gospel

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Revelation 20:1 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Revelation 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

Revelation 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Revelation 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Revelation 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Revelation 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

I. An angel comes down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand and lays hold on the Dragon (the Devil/Satan) and bound him 1,000 years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, shut him up, set a seal on him (*so that he should deceive the nations **no more***), until the 1,000 years are fulfilled, after which he must be loosed a ***little season***.

Revelation 20:1 And I saw* an angel come down from heaven,** having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.***

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon****, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, ♥

Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, ♥♥ that he should deceive the nations no more, ♥♥♥ till the thousand years should be fulfilled:† and after that he must be loosed a little season.††

*Notice how verse 1 begins [with] “*Then I saw...*” That phrase occurs repeatedly throughout the Book of Revelation, but especially here in the closing chapters:

Revelation 19.11, .17, .19; Revelation 20.1, .4, .12; Revelation 21.1.

Again and again, we see the expression *And I saw* or *Then I saw*, with the recurring expression strongly implying a chronological sequence of events that begins with the second coming in Revelation 19.11 and runs through event after event to the creation of the new heaven and the new earth in the eternal state in Revelation 21.1. The binding of Satan in this paragraph fits into that chronology: it comes after the second coming and after the defeat of Antichrist at Armageddon. It also clearly fits the context, because at the end of the previous chapter (chapter 19), Christ returns, He defeats Antichrist, and Antichrist and the False Prophet were seized and thrown into the lake of fire. In chapter 20, as it begins, Christ now turns from the Beast to his master: and here the third member of this unholy trinity, Satan himself, is captured and imprisoned.¹

**In the ninth chapter, John saw a “star” which fell from heaven having the key to the shaft of this same earthly compartment (Revelation 9:1). The star (angel) opened the pit to let the demonic locusts loose at the fifth trumpet judgment (first woe). Here, an angel will perform the opposite action with his key: locking up the bottomless pit, probably by means of securing the same shaft.²

Since we reviewed this angel and his authority extensively in Chapter 9, I will put a few reminders here:

- Most likely, this is a holy angel. “*Falling from heaven*,” (Greek word #4098. πίπτω *pipto*) is also translated as **down**. This can simply mean “*having come down from heaven*”. (See pie chart of how this word is used in Chapter 9 Bible Study.)
- Because we saw in Revelation 9 an almost identical thing happening, with a holy angel and the wording and the expressions almost identical, it seems likely that the angel in Chapter 9 and this angel in Chapter 20, who has the keys to the abyss and binds Satan for the duration of the Millennium, could be the same angel.³

*** This is not a *literal chain*, but an object [**like** a chain] describing the angel’s authority and ability to restrain Satan. This is not the first time where an angelic power will have been said to be *chained*:

2Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into **chains** of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;...

Jude 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting **chains** under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Since spiritual beings (such as angels like Satan) cannot be restricted by physical means, we must understand the chain to denote a supernatural restraint which is ultimately provided by God for the express purpose of the angel’s task. In a similar way that the rebellious angels were locked away

and unable to roam, so will Satan be. The figure of a *chain* is used: the restraint provides no degree of freedom whereby it may be stretched.

This passage is one that is twisted mercilessly by proponents of amillennialism. See **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study, Common Errors in Interpreting the Book of Revelation** for how several widespread errors, and how to **Scripturally** interpret them.

**** **This angel laid hold** [#2902. κρατέω krateo, krat-eh ´-o; from 2904; to use strength, i.e. seize or ... hold (by, fast)] **of Satan**. The same Greek verb is used in Matthew 26 of Jesus' arrest, and there it's often translated as take into custody, arrested, and that's the meaning here.

Matthew 26.50b *Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.*

This angel has, as it were, a divine arrest warrant, and he goes with the authority of Jesus Himself to arrest Satan.⁴

♥ See **Handout, A Defense of the Literal, Historical, Grammatical, Dispensational Interpretation of Scripture**.

On that note, let's just take what verse 2 says at **face value** – Satan will be bound for a thousand years.

♥♥ **Shut him up** is ἐκλείσσε αὐτον [ekleise auton]: he locked him. Although some scholars believe... it is the *abyss* which is shut and sealed, not the dragon himself, in any case, the intended result is the same. Satan now has three strikes against him, he is: (1) bound, (2) shut up, (3) sealed in his prison. The word for sealed, ἐσφράγισεν [esphragisen], is the same word which describes sealing elsewhere in the book of Revelation.

Examples of *sealing* elsewhere in Scripture indicate its complete effectiveness:

- Nebuchadnezzar sealed Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6:17).
- Daniel was told to seal the book of Daniel until the time of the end (Daniel 12:4).
- Pilate commanded that Jesus' tomb be sealed (Matthew 27:66).
- Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 2Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).
- Jesus' testimony was sealed (John 3:33).
- Jesus was sealed by the Father (John 6:27).
- The 144,000 witnesses from the twelve tribes were sealed on their foreheads (Revelation 7:3-8).
- The things which the seven thunders uttered were sealed up so they would not be recorded by John (Revelation 10:4).
- The contents of the book of Revelation are not to be sealed (Revelation 20:3; 22:10).

The angel's treatment of Satan corresponds to Isaiah's prediction that disobedient angels would be punished and imprisoned:

Isaiah 24.19-22 *The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again. It shall come to pass in that day That **the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones**, and on the earth the kings of the earth. **They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished.***

First, they are imprisoned, and after *many days* they receive their final punishment. This corresponds to the age of the Millennial Kingdom during which Satan and his angels are locked away. After his release and final rebellion (Revelation 20:7-10), he will meet his final punishment.⁵

💖💖💖 The first human target of his deception was Eve in the garden (1Timothy 2:14). Since then, he has deceived nations throughout history, but never more so than his final attempt at victory during the Great Tribulation. [Note: This is also contorted and twisted by false doctrine in the Church today that teaches that Satan is already bound now during the Church age, and that the thousand years where he is bound is actually describing the time we live in right now. This was covered in **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study, Common Errors in Interpreting the Book of Revelation.**]

Revelation 12:12 *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

This **dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan:**

- restored the Beast from death so that all the world would worship him in Revelation 13:3.
- He spoke by the mouth of the False Prophet in Revelation 13:11 and empowered him to deceive the earth dwellers to their doom by taking the mark of the Beast in Revelation 13:14, 16; and 14:9-11.
- He carried the Harlot as she rode throughout history upon his seven heads in Revelation 17:3 and Revelation 12:3; and made the inhabitants drunk with her fornicating wine in Revelation 17:2 and sorcery in Revelation 18:23.
- He controlled the three unclean spirits which were sent out to gather the kings to the *Campaign of Armageddon* in Revelation 16:13-14, which led them to the slaughter in Revelation 19:21.

His deceptive activities, which affect both believers and unbelievers, are a fact of the Church age:

2Corinthians 11.3 *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

2Corinthians 11.13-15 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

A plain reading of the passage indicates that Satan is *unable* to deceive while he is locked away. But as soon as he is released in Revelation 20.8-10, he immediately goes out to deceive the nations, which he had been completely unable to do while in the abyss. Satan is basically **immobilized**.⁶
This is the pattern of Satan: **misrepresentation of truth through deception** so those who respond to his promises *always* wind up with unforeseen liabilities which [follow or are accompanied by] their participation in his schemes. His two greatest tools are temptation and *compromise*.⁷

✚ As in the authority *given* to the angel in our Chapter 9 study underscored God's sovereignty over both the angel and the place called the abyss, here we see similar references:

- *...having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.* But who could have given him this key? Again, it is likely, it was Christ Himself. (Back in chapter 1:18 Jesus says,

"I have the keys of death and of Hades [the grave]." If Christ has them, **He** must give these holy angels the key of the *bottomless pit*, and then He sends him from heaven on this divine errand.

- Succinctly, *abyss* means *bottomless, unbounded, the pit, or the immeasurable depth*, a place reserved for Satan himself. We also studied that:
 1. There were demons (fallen angels) who involved themselves in patterns of sin so wicked that God eternally bound and held them there until the final judgment when they will be condemned to the Lake of Fire.
 2. The bottomless pit also can be a temporary place of incarceration for other demons because they're going to be released under God's direction.
 3. God uses the bottomless pit as a holding place for the most evil of angels, including Satan himself and those who tried and failed before the Flood to thwart God's plan to bring the Seed of the woman into the world (Genesis 3:15).
- The inhabitants of the Abyss (the locusts) were released for a very short time during the last three and a half years of the tribulation during the 5th trumpet (1st woe) to fulfill God's purpose, namely, to torment the wicked (Revelation 9.1-2, .5).
- This angel has the key, the chain, and the *delegated POWER* to "*lay hold on the Dragon, the old serpent, the Devil, and*
 1. bind him 1,000 years;
 2. cast him into the bottomless pit;
 3. shut him up,
 4. set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.
- By the way, this is not a physical restraint, *this is a spiritual restraint*: it pictures the fact that **this angel has been given power to arrest Satan**. Don't miss the big point here in verse 1: the point here is that our Lord doesn't need to personally come and defeat Satan; instead, He sends an angel. **Why is that important?** Sadly, because there are a lot of Christians that are unwitting *dualists*: they believe in **dualism** (that there are two almost-equal forces that are fighting and battling over the universe). ...[A] lot of Christians think Christ and Satan are like Marvel movie characters: they are closely matched and in the end one just barely wins. [We need to have this clear in our minds and hearts:] Satan's power is not merely less than Jesus' power: Satan's power, compared to that of Christ, is like that of a pop gun and a nuclear missile. Jesus is so powerful He doesn't need to fight Satan personally; He merely speaks and delegates the arrest and imprisonment of His greatest adversary to an unnamed angel: go arrest him, put him in prison.

What an amazing time of blessing this will be! Satan and his demonic realm will be rendered completely inoperative during the coming earthly kingdom of God. **But this great blessing also has a flip side: in the removal of the great tempter is the removal of a convenient excuse by which men hide their own rebellious nature.** This, it would seem, is part of God's plan in locking Satan away for the duration of the Millennial Kingdom: to show man his utter incapability of obedience to God, even in the midst of ideal conditions and in the absence of the influence of the serpent of old.⁸

†† At the end of the thousand years, Satan is released to deceive the nations one final time, and promptly leads an unsuccessful revolt against God, which we will see in vv. 7-10 below.

Here we see the sovereignty of God Who uses *all things* to achieve His ultimate ends. **Satan is no less a tool of God in his rebellion than in his obedience.** Although God is not the author of sin, His sovereignty over the affairs of history is not the least threatened by the disobedience of His creatures.⁹

Here Christ's future plans, although not all clearly set forth, are ...implied, so that we get ...*hints* of things we are going to learn shortly. [First, we see] the purpose of Jesus's binding of Satan. Why is He doing this, and what is this about? Verse 3 says shows the purpose: **so that** Satan "*should deceive the nations no more.*" Satan is bound, in this case, not primarily to punish him, but to prevent him from continuing to deceive the nations (exactly what he's been doing through all of human history and throughout the Book of Revelation, and specifically through the seven years of the Great Tribulation).¹⁰ By the way, the nations in this verse are the nations who emerge after Armageddon – and when we talk about the Millennium, we will [learn] about how those nations come to be.

Here's the point we need to see: With the binding of Satan, Christ ends human history as it has been since Adam's fall in the garden. Clearly this event marks a **huge transition – it ends the current age, the age that has been marked from beginning to end by Satan's deception.** This transition is not yet to the eternal state, but the text is clear that the binding of Satan marks the beginning of a separate thousand-year period. The age comes to an end, and now the binding of Satan initiates a separate thousand years.¹¹

But notice last here, it says the future plans of Christ unfold: **we see the transition from that thousand-year earthly kingdom to His eternal kingdom.** Verse 3 ends with the words, "*after these things, he,*" (that is, Satan), "must be released for a short time." After these things – after the thousand years of Satan's imprisonment [during] the thousand years of Christ's reign [the Millennium] – he must be released. Literally, the Greek text says **it is necessary for him to be released. It's God's sovereign plan – why?** Well, we aren't explicitly told, and when we aren't explicitly told, we can't be dogmatic because **Deuteronomy 29:29** says, "*the secret things belong to the Lord, the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children.*"

It is interesting, [though], when you note that Satan's release after the thousand years shows us and all of humanity two things:

1. After a thousand years of imprisonment Satan will still be **incurably wicked**; and
2. After a thousand years of **Christ's perfect reign on a restored planet with no curse and no Satan and no deception**, unredeemed people are also still incurably wicked, because they will rebel in the end against Jesus Christ.

This justifies God's eternal punishment of both. Notice "**for a short time.**" You can recognize the Greek words, a **microchronos**. After the thousand years without Satan's influence are finished, Christ will release Satan **for a short time.** [We will see in] verses 7-10 Satan and humanity's final rebellion at the end of the thousand years. **Then** will come the Great White Throne of Judgment, the judgment of all unbelievers, in verses 11-15, and **after that** comes, in chapters 21-22, the eternal state: the new heavens and the new earth.

Why does all of this matter? Why do we need to know this? In fact, why are there *special blessings* to us to know this?

1John 3.8 *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

The one who is practicing sin, whose life is marked by an ongoing, unrepentant, increasing pattern of sin, “**is of the devil.**” Such a person is not a true believer, but rather has Satan for his or her father. “...For the devil sinned from the beginning:” **this is what marks Satan.** What distinguishes Satan above everything else? **Sin** – it’s who he is, it’s what he does, it’s what he tries to get others to do.

1John 3.8b For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, **that he might destroy the works of the devil.**

Our only hope of knowing our Creator is for our slavery to Satan to be destroyed, for our sin to be forgiven ...through the One who came **to destroy the works of the devil.** Through His life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has destroyed sin and death (those are the works of the devil), and only those who follow Him experience that freedom.¹²

If I have *truly heard this* and *truly seen* that Satan will be *bound, shut up and sealed* in the abyss for 1,000 years: This **dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,** basically *immobilized: for 1,000 years no more temptation* from the enemy of our souls, *no more accusing us before God’s throne day and night, no more of his deception and trickery to entice us to follow our own way and go against God, His Word and His love for us!* and

If I *truly know it is as good as done* because God has said it (repeatedly) and has been faithful to already show signs of His moving toward it, ***what have I been doing to demonstrate my obedience to the Word of God and WARFARE to the destruction of the works of the devil by Jesus Christ in my life NOW?***¹³ See Handout: Judgments in the Bible.

*It is most significant that the work of Christ, which is so central in our Christian faith, is essentially a work of destruction that terminates the power and work of Satan – Christ came to destroy sin and death.*¹⁴

Do you understand that **at the heart of your salvation is the reality that Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil in your life, that is, sin and death?**¹⁵

Application Questions:

1. How has Jesus **destroyed / terminated** the power and work of Satan (destroyed **sin** and **death**) in my life?
2. What tools did Jesus give me that I need **more of right now**, and what is my plan to use each of them *right now*?
 - prayer,
 - the **power** and **presence** of the Holy Spirit to *lead and guide me into all truth*,
 - the Sword of **His** Spirit — which is **His Word**,
 - the armor of God,
 - the conviction of His Spirit,
3. Does the way I live reflect what I know is true: that Christ came to destroy sin and death in me? Do I receive His gift of salvation, trusting in Him alone, and knowing how I live and what I do can never *earn me* a thing, but simply reflects Who I belong to and Who I serve?

Ephesians 2.8-9 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

II. John saw (1) *thrones and they that were sitting upon them had judicial authority given to them,* (2) *the souls of them beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, those which had not worshipped the beast **nor his image** nor received his mark,* those who lived and reigned with Christ 1,000 years, but the rest of the dead lived not until the 1,000 years were finished (this being the first resurrection): *blessed and holy* are those that have part in the first resurrection and on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ and shall reign with Him 1,000 years.

Revelation 20:4* And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them** and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image,*** neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ❤️

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. †

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. ††

* The most explicit reference in Scripture to the literal one thousand year millennial reign of Christ upon the earth (Revelation 20:4-6). The Millennial kingdom is the future reign of Jesus Christ on earth as He sits on David's throne in Jerusalem. "It is a significant fact that the early adherents of premillennialism (or chiliasm, as it was first called), either had direct contact with John, the longest living apostle, or with his most famous disciple Polycarp."

Again, this is the area where confusion is created to *come against* the literal hermeneutic of the Word of God and undermine faith in the Word of Truth which is in Jesus Himself. See the **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study, Common Errors in Interpreting the Book of Revelation** on how this is done to be aware of it pertaining to Revelation 20.4-6 and *The Abuse of Numbers* section there.

** Even today there is a focus on going to heaven as an *immortal soul* and *very little is taught on **our resurrection** when Jesus comes back and we live in the Millennium with Him.*

Notice John did not actually see the resurrection of the saints taking place, but described resurrected saints being given their places of authority in the Kingdom. It is obvious that they had been previously resurrected. According to verse 4, this resurrection includes those who were slain by the Antichrist. **They must have come through the tribulation, not bypassed it.** This resurrection, **which is clearly post-tribulational**, was called by John, the **first resurrection**.¹⁶

These thrones tell us that the saints will, first of all, have a judicial authority. You'll notice that *judgment was given unto them*. That word *judgment* implies that as believers they will both interpret and enforce God's law during the Millennium. They will also, the word *judgment* implies, resolve civil disputes as the judges in the Old Testament did. At the end of verse 6, we are told that in addition to this judicial authority, the saints will also have political authority: *they will reign with Christ*. That's their role: judicial and political authority...¹⁷

Who is sitting upon these thrones? Who are the pronouns *they* and *them* referring to? The only antecedent that makes sense is back in Revelation 19:14: *the Lamb's armies*. Or you could even go back to Revelation 19:7, *the members of the Lamb's bride*. In other words, **believers/followers of Jesus Christ** are who we are referencing here.¹⁸ Everyone who enters that kingdom will be redeemed by God and therefore righteous (see Isaiah 35:8–10). **Among those redeemed will be two distinct groups of people: those with glorified physical bodies and those with natural, earthly bodies.**

We will see that when Jesus comes, His judgment is of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31–46). The “sheep” are the righteous Gentiles, who showed their faith by their good works toward God’s people; the “goats” are the unrighteous Gentiles, who failed to aid God’s children. **Christ will cast the unrighteous into the lake of fire for eternal punishment** (Matthew 25:46). Because of this judgment, and because all Israel will believe at that time (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25–32), **no unbeliever will enter the millennial kingdom** (also see Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43).

[Other Scriptures identify] the saints who will rule with Christ during His 1,000-year reign, will consist of four specific groups.¹⁹

1. Old Testament saints.

Daniel 7.18 *But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.*

Daniel 9.27 *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

2. The apostles.

Matthew 19.28 *And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

3. New Testament believers. In other words, we are included in these who will reign with Christ.

1Corinthians 6.2 *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge **the world**? and if **the world** shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*

2Timothy 2.12a *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:...*

Revelation 2.26 *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:...*

Revelation 3.21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

Revelation 5.10 *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

Revelation 20.6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and **shall reign with him a thousand years**.* Everyone who has part in the first resurrection, notice, *will reign with Him for a thousand years*. So, all New Testament believers will reign with Christ during this period of time.

4. The tribulation martyrs. The Greek word for *beheaded* literally means *to cut off with an ax*, which was the normal Roman method of capital punishment for its citizens (beheading with a sword). That’s how Paul as a Roman citizen was executed. Eventually, this word *beheaded* came to mean as it does here, simply *to be executed*. [Note: interesting that although this word **may be used** as any type of execution with a broadened interpretation, it is exactly how

the Islamic caliphate executes *infidels*.] **However** they were executed, these are Christians executed under Antichrist *for the witness of Jesus*. Because of their testimony about Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God, the Only One. **It is His exclusivity** that is the issue. And ...because they faithfully declared the **Word of God**. ...[I]t may very well be in our lifetimes that the government begins to persecute us (hopefully not to execute) because of those two things. Because of our claim to the **exclusivity of Jesus** and because we simply say, *I believe the Scriptures. I believe that God created marriage and it's one man and one woman for life. I believe that God made two sexes, male and female. Your simple confidence in the word of God may very well get you in trouble as it has other believers throughout human history.*

The *tribulation martyrs* testified about Jesus and proclaimed the Word of God, but next John describes what they **refused to do: and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image,*** neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.** We have seen this throughout this book starting with chapter 13 where Antichrist insisted that those who wanted to buy and sell get a mark—**his mark** that would prove that they were qualified to buy and sell in his kingdom. Christians will refuse because it involves worshipping Antichrist.²⁰ It's as we will see in the definition of the word *worship*: *it shows where a person literally bows or kneels in submission before a superior.*

John goes on to describe here their resurrection: **and they lived [came to life!] and reigned with Christ a thousand years...** This expression creates a huge problem for amillennials.²¹

Those who occupy the millennial kingdom with *glorified* bodies can be divided into three subgroups: the church, whose bodies were either resurrected or changed at the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 1 Corinthians 15:21–23, 51–53); tribulation martyrs, who are resurrected after Christ returns to earth (Revelation 20:4–6); and the Old Testament saints, who we assume are resurrected at the same time (see Daniel 12:2). Those who occupy the kingdom with *earthly* bodies have survived the tribulation and can be subdivided into two groups: *believing Gentiles and believing Jews*.

Note: Those that believe in the Rapture occurring before the tribulation or the second coming of Christ, believe that believers on the earth when Christ returns will be taken up in their natural bodies.²²

So, those who occupy the millennial kingdom, at the start, will be the righteous...: believing Gentiles in earthly bodies, redeemed Israel in earthly bodies, and resurrected/raptured/martyred believers in glorified bodies. Those who occupy the millennial kingdom will be from “many nations,” but the knowledge of the Lord Jesus will be universal: “*The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea*” (Habakkuk 2:14).

During the millennial kingdom, the saints in earthly, natural bodies will enjoy long lives (Isaiah 65:20), and will produce children. By the end of the thousand years, the world is fully populated, and there are many—“in number they are like the sand on the seashore”—who rebel against the Lord (Revelation 20:7–8).

Children born during the millennial kingdom will have the responsibility to exercise faith in Christ, the same as all people of past ages. Some of those born during the millennial kingdom will choose to not believe.²³ See **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study: The Millennial Kingdom**.

Scripture consistently affirms that those who belong to Christ will be raised in glorified bodies.

1Corinthians 15.42-44 *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: ⁴³ It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it*

is raised in power: ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

This promise serves as a cornerstone of hope for believers, pointing toward a transformation that transcends mortality. Scripture points to receiving your *glorified body* at the Second Coming of Christ.

Note that it is important to recognize that the question of when believers get a spiritual body is not something evangelicals debate about like in Calvinism or Arminianism. There is a universal agreement and understanding that the believer must wait for the resurrection of the dead to receive his or her spiritual body. When you die, your natural body stays here on the earth, and your soul or spirit departs to be with the Lord God and His Christ in heaven.

Twice in Revelation, John says he saw the souls of those who had given their lives for the gospel and testimony of Christ (6:9, 20:4). We have no idea how you see a soul, but that is what he says. In 1Corinthians 15:51, Paul says, “We will all be changed.” The “we” are two groups of Christians—those who have already died and those who are alive when Jesus returns. The dead in Christ rise first (1Thessalonians 4:16). (Then those who are alive are caught up [raptured] to meet the Lord in the air.) If the believer already has his spiritual eternal body, then there isn’t any need to speak of the dead in Christ being resurrected.

Now, don’t run over this part. Christ did not receive his spiritual body until he rose from the dead, and you will not receive your spiritual body until you rise from the dead. But we don’t sleep in the ground—our body does, but not our spirit/soul. Absent from the body is present with the Lord for the believer (2Corinthians 5:8).

Daniel 12:2 *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

The words “shall awake” refer to the resurrection of the just and the unjust.

John 5:29 *And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Acts 24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

It describes us as sleeping in the dust because our body is still on the earth, waiting for the moment when God calls for the resurrection of every soul ever to have lived. If you had a body in heaven already, you would have no interest, need, or relationship to the body you left behind. But you don’t. You are in heaven and are waiting for that moment when God resurrects the dead when Christ returns. What God did for Christ on the third day, He is going to do for you and for all who have been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit from the very beginning of time. When God gives everyone a body like Christ’s, the story of redemption will be complete, and we will spend eternity with our God.²⁴

THE MODEL OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION BODY

Jesus’ physical resurrection provides the primary example of what a glorified body looks like. Following His crucifixion, He rose and appeared to His disciples in bodily form (Luke 24:36-39). Yet this body was fundamentally different from a mere resuscitated corpse: “He appeared in another form” (Mark 16:12). After the Resurrection, Jesus could enter locked rooms (John 20:19), and yet He could still eat (Luke 24:42-43). *This demonstrates both a real, tangible body and capabilities that go beyond ordinary human limitations.*

Paul explains that believers are conformed to Christ’s glorified state: *He... will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body* (Philippians 3:21). Because Christ’s resurrected body was free

from decay and physical limitations, we anticipate a future body that is imperishable and honor-filled.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EARTHLY AND GLORIFIED BODIES

In 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, Paul contrasts our natural bodies with the glorified bodies we will receive. Our current bodies experience labor, sickness, and sin's effects, but our future bodies will not. He depicts an imperishable, powerful, and spiritual existence: *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body* (1 Corinthians 15:44). This "spiritual body" does not mean immaterial; rather, *it exists under the direct life-giving power of God's Spirit.*

THE TIMING OF RECEIVING A GLORIFIED BODY

Believers are resurrected at the return of Christ. Paul explains, "*The dead in Christ will be the first to rise. After that... we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them*" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 excerpt). This indicates that at Christ's Second Coming, those who have died and those still living will be instantaneously changed and clothed with immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

***The word translated *worship* here is fascinating. When we hear the word *worship*, we often think of music, praise teams, emotive services, or devotional moments. But the Bible's original languages point us in a different direction—especially the Greek word most often translated *worship*. This word, **proskuneō**, is widely [transcribed] by English Bibles as *worship*, yet a close look at the original usage shows something more concrete: **prostration and homage**. It was an ancient gesture of bowing down or prostrating oneself in submission or reverence. When translators render *proskuneō* as *worship*, they are often interpreting the meaning rather than translating it directly, because the word itself depicts a physical act—one done before a superior, deity, or person of higher status.²⁵ *A literal understanding of the word traces back to ancient Near Eastern customs, where a person would literally bow or kneel in submission before a superior.*²⁶ Wadsworth's study of all occurrences of **proskuneō** in the Septuagint and New Testament reveals that every instance involves this basic gesture of physical reverence—the same actions whether before people, [Satan] or deity. This consistency shows that the verb is ... a bodily action: **a person physically lowering themselves before someone of higher rank or authority.**

Jesus's conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4:20-24) illustrates the nuance of **proskuneō**. She asks where people should worship (using the Greek *proskuneō*). Jesus responds that true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Here Jesus is not denying the concept of prostration; instead, He is emphasizing that true reverent submission to God must be aligned with His truth and Spirit. The woman may have been performing physical gestures associated with reverence, but **Jesus points out that knowing God intimately is what makes worship genuine.**²⁷

♥ When the Bible says *they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years* this is the first mention of that period of time of 1,000 years [known as the *Millenium*] is mentioned. The **misconception** of those discounting the period known as the *Millenium* is that *the only* passages supporting a literal millennium are found in the six uses of "1,000" in Revelation 20 (Revelation 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). [Note: As an aside, "*thousand*" appears 23 times in 15 verses in the Revelation, so if you *allegorize or spiritualize* the six uses in Revelation 20, you would have to interpret the other 17 uses similarly and many passages would make no sense, **but be nonsense.**] The truth is that there are literally ***hundreds of prophetic promises of the coming Messianic Kingdom scattered throughout the Old Testament.*** When these passages are studied objectively and literally without a systematic

bias (laying aside one's preconceived notions of the different views of the millennium: pre-, post- and a-millennial) and let God's Word speak for itself, the picture emerges **describing a time and place which has not yet come to pass in world history and which is distinct from the eternal state, the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation 21-22**. The challenge is to come to these passages like a little child seeking the guidance of the Spirit of truth and coming with a sincere desire to know the whole truth and nothing but the truth with the help of God! ...In verse 4: the saints' privilege ...says, they *reigned with Christ for a thousand years*. The Old Testament... often speaks of this period of time. [T]here is no clue in the context to interpret this as anything other than an actual thousand years. While there is figurative language in Revelation, we all agree (nobody thinks a sword is going to come out of Jesus' mouth, etc.), we know [when] language is symbolic because to interpret it literally would be absurd, like a sword coming out of His mouth. And we know [that when] language is symbolic [we need] to interpret it symbolically [so that it] makes more sense. Neither of those is true with a thousand years. **There is no reason** to assume that a thousand years here is anything other than a thousand years. While one's stand on the Millennium does not affect one's salvation, the truth is that one's "system" of belief concerning the Millennium will radically impact how one interprets many of the Old Testament passages which if read literally are **clearly yet to be fulfilled in the future**.

The non-literal [allegorizing or spiritualizing] reader will be forced to use his or her "sanctified imagination" invoking a variety of allegorical or spiritualized interpretations.²⁸ *Why is the way we look at the Millenium so important?* See Endnote ²⁹.

We already looked at the fact that this reign will be *on the earth*. The word *earth* means *earth*. It is the Greek word **#1093. ghay**; *contracted from a primary word; soil; by extension a region, or the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application): — country, earth(-ly), ground, land, world*. The same word what the *meek will inherit* in Matthew 5.5, where we are *the salt of* in Matthew 5.13, and where it would take for *heaven and earth to pass* if *one jot or one tittle* should pass from the law til it is **fulfilled** in Matthew 5.18! By the way, it is also the same *earth* that we pray God's will to be done *as it is in heaven* in Matthew 6.10. Translated *country* in Matthew 9.31 when Christ's fame spread throughout it, *land* in Matthew 10.15 referring to Sodom and Gomorrhah, and *ground* where the sparrows fall to in Matthew 10.29. Look up all the references to the Greek word #1093 and you will get a good idea of where this reign will be. See also ***Supplement to Revelation Bible Study, Millennial Positions Concerning Christ's Second Coming and Rapture Positions in Relation to the Tribulation***.

✠ **What and When are the First and Second Resurrections in the Bible?** ³⁰

There are various beliefs about the two Biblical resurrections mentioned in the Bible based on what other doctrines [professing] Christians believe, [particularly whether they believe in a pre-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture]. *When does each happen, who is involved in each, and why do they happen?*

Even in Paul's day the Greeks mocked him for his speech in Acts 17 in which he proclaimed the resurrection of the dead. This concept was contrary to the Platonic [and errant] idea of the immortality of the soul³¹ and they did not believe in resurrection and did not see the point. The Corinthian Church did not understand the resurrection, and Paul had to explain why it was a key cornerstone of the Gospel.³²

Defining the Two Resurrections

Daniel 12:2 *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Before we look at what this verse tells us, it is important to note the choice of words *many of them that **sleep** in the dust of the earth shall **awake**.*

This passage summarizes the **two very different fates facing mankind**: The ...*many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*,... See Endnote ³³.

1. some to **everlasting life**, and
2. some to **shame and everlasting contempt**.

Everyone will be raised from the dead, but not everyone will share the same destiny. The **New Testament reveals the further detail of separate resurrections for the just and the unjust**.

In Revelation 20.5, there is a description of **two resurrections**. Since John already mentioned a resurrection at the end of verse 4, *the resurrection of believers*, he begins in verse 5 with a kind of parenthesis mentioning the **second resurrection**. ***But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.*** This **second resurrection** comes at the end of the thousand years. The rest of the dead who are not resurrected until the 1,000 year Millenium is finished—who are they? They are all unbelievers throughout human history.

Revelation 20:13 *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and **they were judged every man according to their works.***

Unbelievers will also experience a physical resurrection in which they are reunited to bodies that are not glorified but [are able to] last forever. That's the **second resurrection of unbelievers**. These will be judged by Christ at the Great White Throne of Judgment (Revelation 20.11-14) and they will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20.15). This is known as the **second death**: the one on which has *no power* on those who take part in the **first resurrection**.

After describing this *second resurrection* (the resurrection of unbelievers at the end of the thousand years), John then returns in verse 5 to the *first resurrection*. **Notice it's timing**: verse 5 says, *This is the **first** resurrection*. Notice that word "*first*," [after] he has just mentioned the *second*. **Here we learn an important fact about eschatology and that is there are two resurrections: not one general resurrection.**

[Because there are] three passages in the Bible that seem to imply a general resurrection of the saved and the lost at the Second Coming, [many will] argue [that those three passages] mean there is only one general resurrection. [Here are the three passages:]

Daniel 12.2 *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

John 5.28-29 *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Acts 24.15 *And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*

Make sure you understand this: those passages do not **exclude the idea of two resurrections**. [What] those passages assert is that **both the saved and the lost will experience resurrection**. Here in Revelation 20 on the other hand, **it is very clear there will not be one general resurrection at the second coming. The resurrection of believers comes before the thousand years, and they will reign with Christ for that thousand years and the resurrection of unbelievers comes afterward.** That's what the flow of the chronology here tells us.³⁴

Recap: Scripture knows of *two births*, *two deaths*, and *two resurrections*. Everyone is *physically born* once. Those who do not undergo the second birth, the *spiritual birth*, also undergo the *second death* which is the permanent separation from God with eternal torment. There are several different resurrection “events” which transpire in history, each of which falls into one of two categories. All but the last resurrection event make up the **first resurrection**.³⁵

The Resurrections³⁶

Order	Which	Timing	Who	Description	Scriptures
1	First	The Third Day	Jesus Christ	The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” [Note fallen asleep .]	Mat. 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18; 1Cor. 15:20
2	First	Shortly after Christ’s Resurrection.	A Few OT Saints, [or those who had recently died]	[When Jesus died see <i>Matt 27:50-54</i> below, graves were opened. After the resurrection of Christ, these saints were raised and seen in Jerusalem. SEE E.N. ³⁷	Mat. 27:50-53
3	First	[My note:] <i>Pre-Trib, mid-Trib, post-Trib?</i>	Church	The resurrection of Church-age believers at the Rapture .	John 14:3; 1Th. 4:13-18; 1Cor. 15:50-53
4	First	Middle of the Tribulation.	Two Witnesses	God’s two witnesses will be raised after being killed by <i>The Beast</i> .	Revelation 11:11-12
5	First	After Jacob’s Trouble	OT Saints	Old Testament saints will be resurrected to enter the Millennial Kingdom. ³⁸	Dan. 12:1-2; Isa. 26:19; Eze. 37:13-14 ³⁹
6	First	Beginning of Millennial Kingdom	Tribulation Martyrs	The Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected so that they can rule and reign with Christ.	Revelation 20:4-6
7	Second	End of Millennial Kingdom	Unbelieving Dead	At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, the final resurrection will consist of all of the unbelieving, wicked dead. They will be found guilty at the Great White Throne Judgment and cast into the Lake of Fire.	Revelation 20:11-15

Participation in Births, Deaths, and Resurrections⁴⁰

Event	Unbeliever	Believer	Description
Born Again	No	Yes	The first birth is <i>physical</i> birth. The second birth is <i>spiritual</i> and occurs when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ. ⁴¹ Only believers are “born twice.”
1st Death	Yes	Yes	The first death occurs at the end of one’s physical life.
1st Resurrection	No	Yes	The first resurrection is a category and occurs in stages, beginning with the resurrection of Christ (1Cor. 15:20) and ending with the resurrection just prior to the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:5-6). Only believers participate in the first resurrection. See E.N. ⁴²
2nd Resurrection	Yes	No	The second resurrection occurs at the end of the Millennial Kingdom at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-13). Only unbelievers participate in the second resurrection. ⁴³
2nd Death	Yes	No	The second death is after the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:14-15). As there is eternal life beyond this present life for the faithful, so there is eternal death beyond the death of the wicked. The second death is commonly known as <i>hell</i> .

When a person is *born again*,⁴⁴ he will only undergo the first death, but the second death has no power over him: “*though he may die [the first death], he shall live [be resurrected never to face the second death]*” (John 11:25b).⁴⁵

See Endnote ⁴⁶ for Old Testament Knowledge of a Resurrection and Old Testament Knowledge of a Resurrection and Issues with the resurrections if people believe that when we die we go to Heaven or Hell.

✠✠ The “*first resurrection*” identifies those involved as “*blessed and holy*.” The *second death* has no power over these individuals.

Revelation 20:14 *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**.* The **first resurrection**, with those *blessed and holy*, is referring to the raising of all believers. It corresponds with Jesus’ teaching of the “*resurrection of the just*” and the “*resurrection of life*.”

Luke 14:14 *And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the **resurrection of the just**.*

John 5:28-29 ²⁸*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,*** ²⁹***And shall come forth;** they that have done good, unto the **resurrection of life;** and they that have done evil, unto the **resurrection of damnation.***

Isaiah 26:19 *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*

Ezekiel 37:12 *Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.* ¹³ *And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,...*

Matthew 27:50-54 *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* ⁵¹ *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;* ⁵² *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,* ⁵³ *And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* ⁵⁴ *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*

Did you notice the graves were opened at the exact moment Jesus gave up the ghost, but they didn't come out of the graves until after His resurrection? When Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up His Spirit, creation reacted. The veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom, the earth *quaked* (earthquake), and the rocks were split. And the Matthew gives us one of the most mysterious details in the New Testament: ...*the graves were opened....* **That line is easy to read past. But it is not random.** Matthew is not adding a "horror scene" to the crucifixion. **He was showing us that the death of Jesus did not only affect the living. It shook the realm of the dead.** Because on the cross, Jesus was not simply dying as a victim. **He was confronting sin, death, and the grave itself.** But then Matthew adds another detail that makes the mystery even deeper: **many of the bodies of the saints which died arose, came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.** Notice the order: The graves opened when Jesus died. But the saints appeared after Jesus rose. Why? Because Jesus is not presented as *one resurrection among many*. **He is the first. The source. The beginning of the resurrection harvest.** That is why 1Corinthians 15 calls Christ the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep.

1Corinthians 15:20-23 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.* ²¹ *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.* ²² *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* ²³ *But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

Acts 26:23 *That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.*

Colossians 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Revelation 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*

In the ancient world, **firstfruits** meant the first part of a harvest that guaranteed more was coming. So when Jesus rose, He was not just coming back from death for Himself, He was opening the way for everyone who belongs to Him. That means that the open graves were a sign. A preview. A prophetic shockwave. The death of Jesus cracked open the prison of death. The resurrection of

Jesus released the evidence. And the saints walking into the holy city became a public witness that something cosmic had happened.

They went **into the holy city**—that **same** city where Jesus Christ had just been condemned, and by Whose resurrection they were now alive.⁴⁷

They appeared unto many—that there might be undeniable evidence of their own resurrection..., and through it of their Lord's. Thus, while it was not deemed fitting that He Himself should appear again in Jerusalem, save to the disciples, provision was made that the fact of His resurrection should be left in no doubt. It must be observed, however, that the resurrection of these sleeping saints was not like those of the widow of Nain's son, of Jairus' daughter, of Lazarus, and of the man who "revived and stood upon his feet," on his dead body touching the bones of Elisha (2Kings 13:21)—which were mere temporary recallings of the departed spirit to the mortal body, which was to be followed by a final departure of it "till the trumpet shall sound." **But this was a resurrection once for all, to life everlasting; and so there is no room to doubt that they went to glory with their Lord, as bright trophies of His victory over death.**

Nothing more is said about these people, which would be unlikely if they remained on earth for long. Evidently, these people were given glorified bodies; they appeared 'to many' enough to establish the reality of the miracle; and then they no doubt **ascended to glory**, a kind of foretaste of 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 when referring to those *which are* 1Thessalonians 4:16.⁴⁸

1Thessalonians 4:13-18 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

There are three parts to each of us, the body, the soul, and the spirit.

If a person who is a Christian dies before the Rapture of the church, then the soul and the spirit go immediately into the heavenlies.

2 Corinthians 5:8 *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

Luke 23.43 *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

Philippians 1.23 *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*

Our bodies, if we die before the Rapture, go into the grave or are destroyed somehow. The bodies of dead Christians will be brought back together with those souls and spirits that are already gone into the heavenlies.

At the same time, those of us who are alive and remain at the Rapture will be caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

1Corinthians 15:51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall*

sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we will be changed. Our bodies will be glorified, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and we will have a body like Jesus Christ. Our glorified body, soul, and spirit will be taken into the heavenlies, and that is how we will live throughout eternity.⁴⁹

Death had been invaded. The grave had been disturbed. The Messiah had conquered. This is why the cross is not just a tragic execution. **It is a victory hidden in suffering.** The Romans saw a criminal dying. The religious leaders saw a threat removed. The disciples saw their hope collapse. **But heaven saw the beginning of death's defeat. The veil tore because access to God was opened. The earth shook because creation recognized its Creator. The graves opened because death had just met its Conqueror.** So the real mystery is not only why graves opened when Jesus died. The deeper question is this: if death trembled at His crucifixion, what will happen when He returns?⁵⁰

Notice that John does not say that they come from heaven or from hell. They come out of the **graves (sheol)**. Jesus Christ Himself (the “first fruits,” **1 Corinthians 15:20**), paved the way for the resurrection of all who believe in Him. This will be the resurrection of *the dead in Christ* (including the Old Testament saints) who will be raised at the Lord's return (**1 Thessalonians 4:16** and **Revelation 20:4**).

1 Corinthians 15:20 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:...* (this includes the Old Testament saints).

[**Note:** Christians who believe in the pre-tribulation rapture believe that the first resurrection takes place beginning with the rapture before the tribulation (70th Week of Daniel) starts. However, this is not specifically taught anywhere. In order to make this work, they believe that there are “two [unsubstantiated] stages” in the first resurrection.⁵¹]

The natural, unforced, interpretation of Revelation 20 requires a post-tribulation resurrection of the Church of Jesus Christ [in order to line up the Scriptures referring to it]. This [is in agreement] with Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 15.⁵² The first resurrection takes place at the end of the Tribulation as part of the Day of the Lord as Jesus comes back to Jerusalem to rule from there. We studied this in Lesson 12, when we studied Chapter 9, part 2, with the **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study, The Day of the Lord and How It Relates to the Book of Revelation**.

See Endnote ⁵³ on a more detailed study of the *first resurrection* which Paul addresses when answering questions from the Thessalonians addressing the rapture and the Second Coming of the Lord.

When it comes then to this first resurrection of believers, notice in verse 6 John details the **blessings** that belong to those who are part of the first resurrection (the resurrection of believers):

1. We are recipients of God's grace. **Blessed** and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. First, we are **blessed**. We are the recipients of God's grace.
2. We are set apart as God's possession. **Blessed and holy** is he that hath part in the first resurrection. This isn't talking so much about the fact that we are progressively more like Christ, this is talking about the fact that **God has set us apart to Himself.** We are His special possession.

3. We are protected from the second death. ...on such the second death hath no power. What is the second death? John defines it in verse 14: *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death.*** If you have repented of (turned away from) your sins and made Jesus Lord of your life, **you will never face the eternal wrath of God in the lake of fire.** This is what He says: on such the second death has no power.

Romans 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:...*

Romans 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

1Thessalonians 1:10 *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

What a blessing. Being part of the first resurrection, as a believer, means never being a part of the second death.

4. We will also be priests. ...they shall be priests of God and of Christ. This refers to the privilege that we will have of unlimited access to God and an intimate fellowship with God. We will be priests to God and to Christ.

5. We will reign with Christ for a thousand years. ...and shall reign with him a thousand years. ...[A]re you going to be part of the first resurrection? The resurrection of **believers**? Or are you going to be part of the second resurrection? **It is a serious question, because it's going to be one or the other. There is no middle ground. There is no gray area with God. Are you going to be part of the first or the second resurrection?** You are going to die; in fact, if the Lord delays His coming, the mortality rate is 100 percent. You will also be raised at some point. **It will either be the first resurrection, or it will be the second resurrection. Which is it going to be?** ⁵⁴
(We will be looking at the *second resurrection* again later in this Chapter.)

Application Questions:

1. 1Corinthians 6.2+ asks us *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy ("unfit") to judge the smallest matters?* How am I in *judging* ("distinguishing; calling into question") the small matters set before me? Am I **able to** and **seek to apply wisdom** to matters in my life and in the lives of those who ask me for wisdom? Is the wisdom I live by that which comes from above, that is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* Does it yield the *fruit of righteousness*, is it *sown in peace* and does it *make peace* (James 3.17-18)?

2. Do I stand strong against the *wiles of the Devil* that seek to offer me *the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*, if my *submission/reverence bows before him* acknowledging my worship to the Devil by *submitting to him*? How do I demonstrate in my daily life that I am **not** a friend of this world (making me the enemy of God (James 4.4)?

Mark 4.8-10 ⁸ *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;* ⁹ *And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* ¹⁰ *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

3. Which of the **two resurrections** will I be a part of (see Daniel 12.2, John 5.28-29 and Acts 24.15 above)? The resurrection of **believers** that life with **Jesus as Lord**, or the resurrection of **unbelievers** who deny Christ's atonement for their sins?

- (a) How am I the *recipient of God's grace*?
- (b) How do I live *set apart as God's possession*?
- (c) Am I confident that in Christ the *second death has no power over me*?
- (d) Do I live with the *access to God and with the intimate fellowship with God* that Christ died to give me?
- (e) Do I live in a way that reflects that I will *rule and reign* with Christ during the Millenium, by *judging righteous judgment now* with His *wisdom from above*?

John 7.24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

III. After the 1,000 years expire (**teleo**), Satan shall be loosed out of his *prison*, and shall go to deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth and **gather them together to battle**, demonstrating the *broad way to destruction* and the **many there be which go in thereat** (Matthew 7.13-14), daring to compass the beloved city of God and His saints, when **fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them**, [906. βάλλω ballo, **struck down, thrust, thrown (in various applications, more or less violent or intense)**], and the **devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

Revelation 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle:** the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.***

Revelation 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth,**** and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:† and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. ❤

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. ❤❤

* It seems like a great pity, after the world has rested for a thousand years, that this archenemy of its peace should again be let loose upon it. But there seems to be **some sort of necessity for it**. The statement to John was, that **“he must be loosed a little time”**... Some interest of righteousness and moral government renders it proper that he should be allowed this last limited freedom. If for nothing else, it is not unimportant that he should have this opportunity to prove how little an imprisonment of a thousand years had served to change him, or reform his malignity. Even the Devil is granted a final trial to make a better record to himself, if so minded. But neither judgment nor mercy has the least effect. He is, and remains to the last, the same depraved and wicked being, and employs even the little time of freedom before he is cast into perdition in tempting, seducing, and deceiving the happy and peaceful world. Perhaps, too, it was necessary for the millennial nations to be taught that, even after having been so far redeemed as to live a thousand years of holy obedience, they still are unable to stand without the special help and grace of Almighty God. At any rate, this brief period of Satan's last freedom proves that he is still Satan and that man is still man... after a thousand years of bonds and imprisonment for the one, and a thousand years' experience of the next thing to Paradise for the other; the Devil is just as eager to tempt and deceive, and man just as liable to be tempted and deceived. Nor can it be of small account to the after ages, or for the

generations to whom it is foretold, that **the full demonstration of these facts should be made before things are finally settled into the eternal state.** Hence, Satan is let loose for a little time.⁵⁵ Consider this: Once the generation of those who live through the Day of the Lord dies, no human will have ever experienced Satan's [influence]. Think about having a 1,000-year history when nation will have never lifted up sword against nation, never learned how to make war. The nations will reap the abundance of Christ's rule, especially the blessing of peace.

Despite this, human nature in the nations will cast aside everything they have achieved because it believes it can have more, even though "*having more*" will mean opposing God's perfect will. Their human nature will wager that attacking is better than submitting.

As a test for the nations in the four corners of the earth, God releases Satan so those who are inclined to listen to him can be separated from those who listen to God, as chaff is separated from wheat. The Almighty [will] finally judge the Adversary [of God Himself and of our souls] for his **never-ending opposition**, and He will judge the nations who follow the Deceiver for choosing to heed his poisonous message. Clearly, Satan is the instigator of the rebellion, but the root problem is human nature's unchanging proclivity to find common cause with his **self-centeredness.** **For mankind that possesses the character and heart of Jesus Christ, the Devil's fiery darts will have nothing to hit.**

While Satan's influence and work amplify the perversity of human nature, carnality is a malignant force on its own.⁵⁶

The real solution to sin is to replace human nature entirely with God's nature—one that is incorruptible, will not follow Satan's urgings, and will never become another adversary of God. This is what God is doing, and when the divine purpose has been fully worked out, nothing will ever again defile the Eternal's magnificent creation.⁵⁷

** See Endnote ⁵⁸ for the background of the name Gog.

***One of the purposes of this passage is to justify the **necessity of eternal punishment.** This book proves that even the equivalent of fourteen lifetimes (based on the current life expectancy of about seventy years divided into one thousand years) are not enough to overturn their allegiance to Satan. Therefore, the eternal lake of fire is a necessity.⁵⁹

**** The word *breadth* comes from the Greek word #4116. **πλατύς** *platus, plat-oos* ; from 4111; spread out "flat" ("plot"), i.e. broad: — wide. Reminds me of when Jesus told His disciples:

Matthew 7.13-14 *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and **broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction**, and **many there be which go in thereat:*** ¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

✚ How could so many turn against Christ? Charles Swindoll gives an insightful glimpse as to how this so quickly happens even during the Millenium in Endnote ⁶⁰ .

♥ Christ permits the army to assemble and encircle His capital city. No sooner has Satan's army been assembled, however, than fire comes down from God out of heaven, and the besiegers are destroyed, like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Thus is shattered the last vain attempt of Satan to overthrow the throne of God and usurp His prerogatives. *Fire coming down from God out*

of heaven, demonstrates **God's immediate and absolute judgment. The battle is over before it begins, showing God's supremacy.**⁶¹ This also ends the false theory that human beings in a perfect environment will willingly serve the God who created and redeemed them. **Even in the ideal situation of the Millennium, innumerable people respond to the first temptation to rebel.** This is the end of the road for the nations who rebel against God as well as for the career of Satan.⁶²

♥♥ At the coming of Christ, it was the instrument of the devil, the False Prophet, who deceived but was captured and cast into the Lake of Fire. Now the **devil himself meets a similar fate.** The devil has been cast, in a series of stages, from the highest point in creation to the lowest. Satan was previously cast out of heaven to the earth (Revelation 12:9), probably near the mid-point of the Tribulation. After the Second Coming, he was bound and cast into the abyss (Revelation 20:2). Now, he is cast into his final destination, the Lake of Fire, which was originally prepared for him and his angels (Matthew 25:41).⁶³

The career of Satan will then come to an end. With this final revolt, the Millennial Kingdom will come to an end, and there will be a transfer of authority as described in

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.* ²⁵ *For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* ²⁶ *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* ²⁷ *For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.* ²⁸ *And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

It should be remembered that death will still exist in the Kingdom. It is **only after Satan's final revolt and his confinement in the Lake of Fire that death can be abolished.**⁶⁴

The devil joins his two henchmen from the time of the Tribulation who are already in the Lake of Fire. *The Beast and the False Prophet were cast into the lake at the Second Coming of Christ one thousand years earlier* (Revelation 19:20). **They are still there and undergoing continuous torment. The Lake of Fire does not annihilate its occupants. They suffer eternally.** See **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study, Annihilation or Eternal Judgment? part 2** (part 1 was an additional Supplement which was given with Chapter 9).

Day and night is a figure of speech meaning continually

Revelation 7:15 *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

Revelation 12:10 *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

Concerning the eternal aspect of torment for the unjust:

Isaiah 66:24 *And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*

Daniel 12:2 *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Same Hebrew word— #5769. עֹלָם 'owlam, o-lawm'; or עֶלְאָם 'olam, eternity, without end, always.)*

Matthew 3:12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with **unquenchable** fire. (Greek word #762. **ἀόβεστος** asbestos—not to be quenched; unquenchable.)

Matthew 25:41-46 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting** fire, (Greek word #166. **αἰώνιος** *aionios*, ahee-o'-nee-os—**perpetual, eternal, forever, everlasting**) prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: ⁴³ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. ⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. ⁴⁶ And these shall go away into **everlasting** (Greek word #166. **αἰώνιος** *aionios*, ahee-o'-nee-os—**perpetual, eternal, forever, everlasting**) **punishment** (Greek word #2851. **κόλασις** *kolasis*—**penal infliction, torment**) but the righteous into **life eternal** (Greek word is the same as **everlasting** in vv. 25.41 and first part of 25.46).

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into **hell** (Greek word #1067. **γέεννα** *geena*, gheh'-en-nah—**place of everlasting torment**), **into the fire that never shall be quenched**: (Greek word #762. **ἀόβεστος** asbestos—not to be quenched; unquenchable.) ⁴⁴ **Where their worm** (Greek word #4663. **σκώληξ** *scolex*—**maggots**) **dieth** (Greek word #5053. **τελευτάω** *teleutao*—**expire**) **not, and the fire is not quenched**. ⁴⁵ And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, **into the fire that never shall be quenched**: ⁴⁶ **Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched**.

2Thessalonians 1:9 Who shall be punished with **everlasting** (Greek word #166. **αἰώνιος** *aionios*, ahee-o'-nee-os—**perpetual, eternal, forever, everlasting**) **destruction** (Greek word #3639. **ὀλεθρος** *olethros*, ol'-eth-ros—**death, punishment, ruin**) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

2Peter 2:17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved **for ever**. (Greek word #165. **αἰών** *aion*, ahee-ohn—**without end**.)

Jude 13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the **blackness of darkness** (literally gloom of obscurity) **for ever**.

Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up **for ever and ever**: and they have **no rest day nor night**, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and **shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever**.

At all events the doctrine of **conscious, eternal torment for impenitent men is clearly revealed in the Word of God**. Whether we can defend it on philosophic grounds or not, it is our business to believe it; and to leave it to the clearer light of eternity to explain what we cannot now understand, realizing that God has infinitely wise reasons for doing things for which we in our ignorance can see

no sufficient reason at all. It is the most ludicrous conceit for beings so limited and foolish as the wisest of men are, to attempt to dogmatize how a God of infinite wisdom must act. All we know as to how God will act is what God has seen fit to tell us.⁶⁵

Application Questions:

1. With the realization of the devil's end, how does that change the way I look at the way Jesus died to give me victory over sin now?

1John 2:16 *For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

1Peter 1:24 *For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:²⁵ But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

Isaiah 40:6 *The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:⁷ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.⁸ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*

2. Read Romans 8 to see God's plan for me now over the battle waging for my soul. Talk to the Lord about how you can live more in Romans 8.

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who **walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but **they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.**⁶ For to be carnally minded is death; but **to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.⁹ But **ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.** Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.¹⁰ **And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.¹³ For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but **if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.**¹⁴ For **as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.¹⁶ **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.²² For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.²³ And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,*

waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ²⁵ But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. ²⁶ Likewise **the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:** for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but **the Spirit itself maketh intercession** for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And **we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.** ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. ³⁰ What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us?** ³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. ³⁴ Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. ³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** ³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷ Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.** ³⁸ **For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

IV. Heaven and earth flee away with no place to hide from the presence of the Lord on the Great White Throne, and **and the second resurrection comes**, and the dead all stand before God and the books were opened, and the dead were judged *without the righteousness of Christ from which they turned away, and by their works, which they opted to "save" them instead of accepting the sacrifice of Jesus and His righteousness*, and **death and hell were judged as well**, and **they were cast into the lake of fire**, and **whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire**.

Second Resurrection

Revelation 20.11-15 identifies those comprising the second resurrection as the wicked judged by God at the *Great White Throne Judgment* prior to being cast into the lake of fire. The second resurrection, then, is the raising of all unbelievers; **the second resurrection is connected to the second death**. It corresponds with Jesus' teaching of the "resurrection of damnation" (see **John 5.29**, *quoted above*).

The event which divides the first and second resurrections seems to be the Millennial Kingdom. We saw the last of the righteous are raised to reign "*with Christ a thousand years*" (v. 4), but the "*rest of the dead [that is, the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished*" (v 5).

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a **great white throne,*** and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.**

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;*** and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.****

Revelation 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.⁶⁶

Revelation 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. ❤️ This is the second death. ❤️ ❤️

Revelation 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

* Very little is said concerning the scene. The description of the throne is pregnant with foreboding: Weigh each word. **Great**,—it is **the Infinite** before whom the **finite** must stand; **White**,—it is the unveiled, undimmed blaze of the divine holiness and purity and justice; **Throne**,—it is majesty unlimited, in which holds the inherent utter right to dispose of the destiny of creatures. Before such a throne, creatures cannot stand; but the lost *shall stand* before it!⁶⁷

** The Great White Throne is unlike other thrones mentioned in Revelation (which are associated with grace and mercy). This throne is linked to **justice and accountability**. The fleeing of the earth and heavens signifies the **totality of the judgment that is about to take place, indicating that there is no refuge from this divine scrutiny**.⁶⁸ This reinforces the idea that God's judgment transcends earthly limitations and that all creation is subject to His authority. **The passage serves as a reminder of God's holiness and the seriousness of sin, as every action will be judged accordingly.**

Mention of God's *face* speaks of His immediate presence, before which no man can stand without divine protection.⁶⁹

The flight of His own creation from before his unmitigated presence also infers a degree of terror for those who are about to stand before the piercing gaze of His omniscient eyes of fire. There is nowhere to flee from His presence.

Revelation 1:14 *His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;*

Revelation 19:12 *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

Hebrews 4.13 *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Their judgment is before the completely righteous, all-powerful Perfection of Perfections.

*** For saints who pursue after God and desire to be in His presence, the ultimate blessing of the eternal state is to see the face of Jesus:

Revelation 22:4 *And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

Just the opposite is true for the unrighteous dead about to be judged. The immediate presence of God will be a terror unimagined by them, for they are the object of His wrath in righteous judgment. This will be their only time of intimacy with God, and it results in **devastating negative consequences**. While living, they expressed their desire to be independent from God. Soon their desire will be an eternal reality.

The flight of earth and heaven underscores the awful reality that nowhere remains to hide from God. Those in the Tribulation had attempted to hide in the rocks and caves from the wrath of God (Revelation 6:15-17), but now the entire material universe is gone and all that remains is a perfectly just, righteous, all-powerful God face-to-face with sinners without any covering for their sin. ***Previously there was the illusion that sin could be hidden from God, but all illusion has been stripped away.***⁷⁰

**** When we speak to people who reject the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and ask them by what means they hope to enter heaven, they almost universally reply with the notion that they are basically good and that by their deeds they will find entry. They are convinced: (1) that their good deeds will outweigh the bad, (2) so long as they are better than some other person then they are acceptable to God—that God grades their sin on a scale relative to other people. The truth is, from God’s perspective their bad deeds universally outweigh the good. Moreover, God does not grade on a relative scale to other people, but relative to the perfection of God Himself. This is an *absolute scale*. Blind to these realities, they are convinced they will gain “heaven” by their works. And **God has promised to judge them by their works:**⁷¹

Psalms 28:4 *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.*

Psalms 62:12 *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.*

Proverbs 24:12 *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?*

Ecclesiastes 12:14 *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

Jeremiah 17:10 *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Jeremiah 32:19 *Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:*

Matthew 16:27 *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Revelation 22:12 *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

Isaiah 64:6 *But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

The unbelieving dead will get what they desire: **they will be judged by their works. But their works will be found to be imperfect.** Not only in application, but in *motivation* because it is impossible for those who lack faith to please God. Even their altruistic works are flawed by selfish and deceptive motivations. Our “righteousness” is as **filthy rags**.

Hebrews 11.6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

The books will be opened and sin will be found. Lacking a covering for sin and unable to produce perfection, they will be unable to be in God’s presence and are destined for the Lake of Fire. Being

a righteous and just God, the degree of their sin will determine their relative degree of torment. *But all torment is torment.*⁷²

For this to happen the wicked had to have been resurrected. *Small and great, no matter **what position they held on earth**, no matter if they were rich or poor, bond or free.*

2Corinthians 5.10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive his due for the things done in the body, whether good or bad.*

Galatians 6.7-8 *Do not be deceived: God is not to be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap in return. ⁸The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

Matthew 25.40 *And the King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'*

This is the resurrected wicked standing before God at the final judgment. The wicked are judged by God at the Great White Throne Judgment prior to being cast into the lake of fire. This judgment is *fair, transparent, and reveals God's justice*. Those who reject God's gift of salvation through Christ are not forced into heaven but are allowed to choose eternal separation from their Creator and thus experience permanent death. The difference between the first death and the second death demonstrates that **God is just**. Everyone dies the first death, **but only those who refuse Christ experience the second**. No one is forced into anything. No one suffers unjustly.

The **second resurrection** is the raising of **all** unbelievers from the beginning of time and through the Millennium. Including Millennial saints who have been saved and their names put in the Book of Life which is opened as we see above seemingly for this set of people.

The second resurrection is connected to the second death for unbelievers. It corresponds with Jesus' teaching of the "resurrection of damnation" (**John 5:29** *quoted above after Revelation 20.6*). The event which divides the first and second resurrections is the Millennial Kingdom. The last of the righteous (tribulation saints who had been martyred) are raised to reign "*with Christ a thousand years*" (**Revelation 20:4**), but the "*rest of the dead [that is, the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished*" (**Revelation 20:5**).

Those who participated in the first resurrection need not fear the second death.

Revelation 2.11 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.***

Revelation 21:7-8 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. ⁸But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

What great rejoicing will attend the first resurrection! What great anguish at the second! **What a responsibility we have to share the Gospel!**⁷³

Jude 23 *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*⁷⁴

We heard about the book of life before:

Exodus 32:33 *And the LORD said unto Moses, **Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.***

Psalms 69:28 *Let them be blotted out of **the book of the living**, and not be written with the righteous.*

Revelation 22:19 *And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

Revelation 13:8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the Beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Revelation 14:9 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

Luke 10:20 *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather **rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.***

♥ Death (representing the bodies of the dead which had lain in the earth and sea) and Hades (the place of torment for soul and spirit of the unrighteous dead between death and the judgment) will be destroyed. Their physical reality vanishes in the fleeing of the earth and heaven—the destruction of the old order.

Death and Hades, here seemingly viewed as if they were personal beings, share the same fate (They are not personal beings, hence their casting into “the lake of fire” is the end of them; but, conceived of as persons, they are consigned to exactly the same eternal punishment with the other wicked.) They, of course, cease to be. There is nothing more of temporal death or of the place of departed spirits after this.

They are the final enemies to be destroyed before the eternal state and are vanquished to the Lake of Fire. Their casting into the Lake of Fire may be another indicator that none who stand in this judgment are saved. All who were part of the second resurrection (which emptied Death and Hades) are bound for the Lake of Fire. This is the fulfillment of the promises of God to destroy death and the grave. ⁷⁵

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

1Corinthians 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

Hosea 13:14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

1Corinthians 15:24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.



All of those who partake in the first resurrection have no fear of eternal punishment. This can only mean that no one who partakes in the first resurrection is unholy or is damnable. This confirms that the first resurrection will only involve the righteous.

There are a number of different terms used in Scripture that describe a place of judgment after death. See **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study, Annihilation or Eternal Punishment? part 2 (part 1 was an additional Supplement which was given with Chapter 9).**



God is righteous and just. He will dutifully check the *Book of Life* for the name of each and every one who stands in this judgment. Scripture records the sober outcome: those not written in the book face eternal doom. Being “*the resurrection of condemnation*” (John 5:29), **none of these will be found written.** The Beast worshipers in their midst—a relatively small proportion of the sum total of unbelievers of all ages—will never have been written in the book (Revelation 13:8; 17:8). The rest of the unsaved dead were written in the book at one time, but having rejected God until their death, **their names were blotted out** (Exodus 32:32; Psalm 69:28; Revelation 3:5).

Although their deeds determine the relative degree of punishment, all who reject the Lamb of God stand without atonement for their sin and are condemned. It is their absence from the *Book of Life of the Lamb* (Revelation 13:8; 21:27) which seals their fate and indicates a complete lack of relationship with Jesus—He *never knew them* (Matthew 7:22-23).

John 3.18 *He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Mark 16.16 *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

John 3.36 *He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

1John 5.11-12 *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

The redeemed will be blessed with God’s intimate presence for eternity, but these go away into torment and **eternal separation from all that is good—God.**

2Thessalonians 1.9 *These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.*

Yes, O man! O woman! whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a scene of wrong in all your history, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold hand, by its true name, and **set down to your account, to be then brought forth for final settlement, if not clean blotted out through faith in Christ’s blood before this present life of yours is ended.**⁷⁶

Luke 12.4-5 And I (**Jesus**) say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!⁷⁷

Application Questions:

1. Do I have the **fear** of God that is the beginning of **wisdom**? (Proverbs 9.10)? The word is **fear** [#5399. φοβέω **phobeo**, fob-eh'-o; **to frighten**, i.e. (passively) **to be alarmed**; by analogy, **to be in awe of, i.e. revere**: be (+ **sore**) **afraid, fear (exceedingly)**.]
Hebrews 10.31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
2. Do I **truly** realize the final irreversible **everlasting** verdict of the **lake of fire** and what that means to those **not trusting in Christ for His righteousness for salvation**? How do I show that in my daily life by how I interact with those headed there? What priority do I place on sharing the **good news** of the Gospel with others?
3. What can I do using my time, talents and money to impact others with the gospel in a more expansive way?

Summary: The Dragon joins the Beast and Antichrist and is bound and sealed for 1,000 years in the *abyss*, where he has no ability to *deceive the nations* any more until the 1,000 years are *fulfilled*; John sees **the first resurrection (blessed and holy are they which are part of it because on them the second death has no power and they shall be priests with God and Christ and shall reign with Him for 1,000 years!)**: John sees *thrones*, and them sitting on them had *judicial authority* given to them, and he sees the souls of them beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God, which had not worshipped the beast **nor his image**, nor received his mark: these being those who reigned with Christ 1,000 years (but the rest of the dead live not until the 1,000 years are ended), then Satan is let out to *deceive the nations*, daring them to gather and compass the beloved city of God and His saints, and **fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them** and the **devil is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.** Heaven and earth flee away with no place to hide from the presence of the Lord on the Great White Throne, **and the second resurrection and death comes**, and the dead all stand before God, the books are opened, and the dead are judged **without the righteousness of Christ from which they turned away**, trusting only their own works, *which they opted to “save” them instead of accepting the sacrifice of Jesus and His righteousness*; and **death and hell were judged**, and **they were cast into the lake of fire**, and **whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire**.

Aim: This passage of Scripture would cause me to live for Christ and be a part of the *first resurrection*, and *show that I believe and care about what Jesus wants by following Jesus* and giving up my life to share *the pearl of great price*, and the *treasure in the field* with those heading for the **second death**, taking the *Great Commission* to wherever Jesus allows me to be a part of it, *taking heed to the ministry I have received of Him*.

Matthew 28.19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Colossians 4.17 *And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*

¹ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240121a-186464>

² https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

³ Some teach the star that had let the locusts loose in Chapter 9 was the Devil, [but if so], the irony which would confront him now is being a prisoner in the very abyss which he was previously able to unlock. [This does not make logical sense.]

⁴ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240121a-186464>

⁵ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

⁶ *"If this language does not mean that the immobilization of Satan is complete, so far as his deception of the nations (Greek ethnē) is concerned, then there is no way to express the idea."* Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books. 1959), 481., as cited in https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#77617E

⁷ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

⁸ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

⁹ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

¹⁰ We read about him deceiving the nations in chapter 12, verse 9; chapter 16, verses 13-14; chapter 19, verse 20.

¹¹ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240121a-186464>

¹² <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240121a-186464>

¹³ **Romans 6:18** Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Romans 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. **Galatians 5:1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: **it is the gift of God**: ⁹ **Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;...

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that **through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;** ¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

¹⁴ John Murray, as quoted in <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240121a-186464>

¹⁵ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240121a-186464>

¹⁶ <https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/22/the-first-resurrection-in-revelation/>

¹⁷ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240204a-187429>

¹⁸ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240204a-187429>

¹⁹ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240204a-187429>

²⁰ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240204a-187429>

²¹ *...and they lived* [came to life!] *and reigned with Christ a thousand years...* This expression creates a huge problem for our amillennialist friends [a reminder here that they **are** our **friends**]. This [creates] a big problem [for their doctrinal beliefs] because amillennialism says that the events in this passage are happening right now during the church age. [Because of that *false foundation*, the statement that *they lived* can't be referring to the physical resurrection of believers because that hasn't happened yet. **So, they have to redefine it.** [How they redefine it is that they say that *they* refers not to [their] physical resurrection but to their *spiritual resurrection*, that is, to their new birth (to regeneration). That is simply impossible and there are several reasons why it is impossible:

1. The second resurrection in our passage is clearly a physical resurrection of unbelievers and [even] everyone who disagrees with our position on the millennium would agree with that. The second resurrection [in Revelation 20 refers to] a physical resurrection of unbelievers. There is no reason to make the first resurrection *spiritual* right here in the same context. There is no justification.
2. These tribulation saints were martyred because they had already been born again. They don't need to be born again after their death. That's illogical.
3. In verse 5, [this very same word used in the phrase] *lived not again* is called the *first resurrection*. Now, here's a serious problem because the Greek word translated **resurrection** occurs 42 times in the New Testament; and, except for **Luke 2:34** (where the context is clear), it **always** refers to physical resurrection.
4. Because the Greek verb translated *they lived* is used in Revelation two times before this of physical resurrection. In Revelation 2.8, it is used of Christ's physical resurrection. And in Revelation 13.14, it is used of Antichrist's fake physical resurrection. Those are the only other two places. It is a physical resurrection. So, in verse 4 then, John describes the physical resurrection of the martyrs who will die during the tribulation.

...This verse alone demolishes any effort to argue that the thousand years happens before the resurrection as both amillennialism, and post millennialism argue. Why? [Read] carefully. **In this text, the tribulation martyrs are physically raised from the dead before the millennium.** So, whatever the millennium is, it comes after the resurrection **not before**. So once the first resurrection here is established to be a physical resurrection, as shown above, then it simply destroys any view that says the millennium happens during the church age. Because clearly the [physical] resurrection hasn't happened [yet].

<https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240204a-187429>

²² They believe that since there is no mention in Revelation 19—20 of any kind of rapture event, this implies that saints who are on earth when Christ returns will remain on earth to enter the millennial kingdom in their natural bodies. From <https://www.gotquestions.org/millennial-kingdom.html>

²³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/millennial-kingdom.html>

For a further look at who will live in the millennial kingdom, see these passages: Isaiah 2:2–4; Zechariah 14:8–21; Ezekiel 34:17–24; Daniel 7:13–14; Micah 4:1–5.

²⁴ <https://bbcfnc.org/christ-centered-bible-focused-blog/when-i-die-when-do-i-receive-my-glorified-eternal-body/>

²⁵ Wadsworth, 2025, as cited in <https://medium.com/@jeffreybarlatier/rethinking-worship-in-the-new-testament-what-proskune%C5%8D-really-means-729986212f02>

²⁶ BibleHub, n.d., One of Wadsworth's key points is that *proskuneō* is never used in the New Testament to describe activities of the Christian assembly itself. That is, it doesn't refer to what Christians did together like singing, prayer, or structured liturgy in the way modern churches often understand "worship services" (Wadsworth, 2025; Bible-Bridge.com, n.d.).

For example, Acts 13:2 is sometimes translated as "they were worshiping the Lord and fasting." However, the Greek there is not *proskuneō* but *leitourgeō*, meaning to perform service or minister (Wadsworth, 2025; Bible-Bridge.com, n.d.). *Proskuneō* simply does not appear as a term used for ritual activities or corporate gatherings among believers. Instead, its use is tied to individual acts of reverent respect or homage (Wadsworth, 2025).

When *proskuneō* appears in the New Testament, it consistently involves a bodily posture of reverence or submission:

- The magi fell down and prostrated themselves before the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:11, ESV).
- Satan tells Jesus, "All these I will give you if you will fall down and prostrate yourself before me," using *proskuneō* to signify a physical act (Matt. 4:9—10, ESV).
- Angels or heavenly beings also bow down before God in Revelation using language connected with *proskuneō* (Revelation 4:10; 5:14, ESV). As cited in

<https://medium.com/@jeffreybarlatier/rethinking-worship-in-the-new-testament-what-proskune%C5%8D-really-means-729986212f02>

²⁷ <https://medium.com/@jeffreybarlatier/rethinking-worship-in-the-new-testament-what-proskune%C5%8D-really-means-729986212f02>

²⁸ <https://www.preceptaustin.org/the-millennium-in-the-old-and-new-testament>

²⁹

1. First and foremost because God says it and that settles it, whether we believe it or not.
2. Hundreds of prophecies especially regarding the nation of Israel would and could not be literally fulfilled if there were no Messianic Kingdom in which there existed a literal nation of Israel.

The easy solution for the **non-literalistic interpreter** of the Word of Truth is to **allegorize** or **spiritualize** those prophecies that are specifically promised to Israel, which is **exactly the tact of the aberrational teaching of so-called "replacement theology."** [*Replacement theology* believes (without substantiation) that the Church has replaced Israel in the Scriptures, which we have reviewed extensively during this course, particularly in **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study (Chapter 12) Israel** and throughout our study of the book of Revelation.]

See <https://www.preceptaustin.org/the-millennium-in-the-old-and-new-testament> for an extensive study on what is quoted briefly here on the topic of the Millennium and the Old Testament prophecies regarding the same.

³⁰ This question and answer is from <https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/26/what-and-when-are-the-first-and-second-resurrections-in-the-bible/>

³¹ <https://philonotes.com/2023/03/platos-view-on-the-immortality-of-the-soul>

³² See **Greek Christians Did Not Understand the Resurrection – 1 Corinthians 15**, <https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2021/07/18/greek-christians-did-not-understand-the-resurrection/>

³³ As this metaphor is used in the Old Testament, that is where we will begin. It is related to three Hebrew words: *shakab* (Strong's #7901), which means "to lie down"; *yashen* (Strong's #3462), which means "sleep"; and *shenah* (Strong's #8142), which also means "sleep".

In one of the oldest books of the Bible, death is described as to "lie down in the dust" (Job 7:21; 20:11; 21:26 NIV). In death an Israelite's body is said to be resting with their ancestors (Gen. 47:30; Dt. 31:16; 2 Sam 7:12; 1 Ki. 2:10). Here we see that in ancient history, death is associated with lying down to rest.

In Psalms, death is described as the “sleep of death” (Ps. 13:3; 90:5) and the death of the Assyrian army is called their “final sleep” (Ps. 76:5). In God’s predicted judgment of Babylon, they will “sleep forever and not awake” (Jer. 51:39, 57). Here we see that the Israelites associated death with sleep...

In the following verse the word “sleep” has been added by the translators by inference as it isn’t in the text, “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). Clearly in this context “sleep” means “death” and “sleep in the dust of the earth” means the body after death (corpse). So, in the context of death, the word “sleep” refers to the corpse. Therefore, “awake” means resurrection of the body. Here we see a clear indication that death isn’t the end of the body.

New Testament

Both Jesus and Paul use “sleep” as a metaphor for death in the Bible. They would have been familiar with this metaphor from their knowledge of the Old Testament.

The Greek word *koimao* (Strong’s #2837) means “to sleep, to fall asleep, or to die”. Similarly the Greek word *katheudo* (Strong’s #2518) means “sleep or sleeping”. Both words are also used metaphorically for death, with the meaning in a particular passage being determined by the context in which it is used.

The clearest explanation of the metaphor is given in the following Scripture passages. *‘After He had said this, He went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” Jesus had been speaking of his death, but His disciples thought He meant natural sleep. So then He told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead ...’* (Jn. 11:11-14 NIV).

“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope” (1 Th. 4:13).

The metaphor is used to refer to the deaths of:

- The girl who died and was raised back to life (Mt 9:24, Mk 5:39, Lk. 8:52)
- Lazarus (Jn. 11:11-14)
- Some godly people who died in Old Testament times (Mt. 27:52)
- Stephen (Acts 7:60)
- David (Acts 13:36)
- A husband (1 Cor. 7:39)
- Some of those who abuse the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:30)
- Christians (1 Cor. 15:6, 18; 1 Th. 4:13-15)
- People who died in Old Testament times (1 Cor. 15:20)
- Jewish ancestors (2 Pt. 3:4)

Also, 1 Corinthians 15:51 and 1 Thessalonians 5:10 say that not all Christians will die (or sleep) because the bodies of Christians that are alive at the rapture will be transformed without going through death.

“Death”, “departure” and “sleep”

How is death like sleep? Sleep is the time period between falling asleep and awaking when the body rests. It is a temporary condition, not a permanent one. How is death a temporary condition, not a permanent or eternal one? The Bible teaches that although our bodies decay after death, they will be resurrected on a future day. In fact everyone will be raised from death to one of two destinies (Acts 24:15). Jesus said ***“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned”*** (Jn. 5:28-29). Here goodness is evidence of salvation and evil is evidence of unbelief.

At death there is a separation of the body and soul and the believer’s soul goes to be with Christ (2 Cor. 5:8). ***As the soul is very much alive, when the word “sleep” is used in connection with death in the New Testament, it refers to the body, not the soul. The body is “sleeping” until its resurrection.***

It is said that the early Christians called their burial grounds *koimeterion* (or “sleeping places”, a word derived from Strong’s #2837 and used by the Greeks to describe a rest-house for strangers). This is the derivation of the English word “cemetery” (meaning “the sleeping place”).

The state of the soul after death is illustrated by the story of the rich man, Lazarus and Abraham (Lk. 16:22-31). After he died, the rich man had an extended conversation with Abraham, who died about 2,000 years earlier. Likewise, Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:3; Mk. 9:4; Lk. 9:30-31). Moses died about 1,400 years earlier and Elijah was raptured about 850 years earlier. This is consistent with the soul of a believer living with the Lord after death. The Bible metaphor for the soul at death is “departure” as the soul departs from the body to be with Christ, which is better than the struggles of life on earth (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23).

Awakening

As people awake after sleeping, so in a coming day our bodies will be resurrected. The first resurrection takes place in various stages, including the rapture (1 Cor. 15:20; Mt. 27:52-53; 1 Th. 4:16; Rev. 20:4). **It includes Jesus Christ and all those who have trusted in God.** These are rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). **They are raised to eternal life and immortality with the Lord.**

The second resurrection is when those who have rejected God's witness to them are judged at the Great White Throne (Jn. 5:29; Rev. 20:4-5, 12-13). The penalty is to be thrown into the lake of fire where they are tormented forever. **They are raised to condemnation and banishment from the presence of the Lord.**

So the metaphor of sleep for death should be a warning to be ready for the resurrection when we will face Jesus as either a lifesaver or a judge. What will it be?

<https://georgesjournal.net/2015/01/30/why-does-the-bible-describe-death-as-sleep/>

³⁴ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240204a-187429>

NOTE: We have been continually referring to examining a teacher's *root, fruit and motive*, to gain trust in their teachings, and to line up their teachings with *Scripture*. That doesn't mean *any teacher* will know everything or teach everything the way you understand it in Scripture.

Many well-meaning Bible teachers believe differently about complex issues like the Rapture (see **Complex Questions** below). Just a heads up because many good Bible teachers (even with *root* going deep, *fruit* in their lives of the *fruit of the Spirit*, and *motives* that appear holy and set apart and lifting up Jesus) believe differently about each of the pre-trib, mid-trib, and post-trib timings of the *Rapture*. As a good *Berean*, *it is up to you* to line up the Word of God to see these positions through what **Scripture** shows us and know how you feel about what God tells us about the Rapture, which is one of those complex questions addressed below in **Complex Questions**. Even after you decide what you believe, you will know that you will not be in 100% alignment with *all well-meaning* Bible scholars who have laid down their lives to study the Word of God.

1Corinthians 13.9-10 *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

Complex Questions. (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/views-of-the-millennium/>)

The questions of the millennium and rapture are ongoing in-house family debates among Christians and requires:

- diligent study
- coupled with a willingness to engage robustly in biblical text and its interpretation.

The differences between these views are the result of hermeneutical, exegetical, and theological perspectives **and are not a matter of heresy vs. orthodoxy.**

The hermeneutical questions one may resolve include:

- how to interpret the language and imagery of Revelation,
- whether to take numbers as literal or figurative, and
- how to approach the relationship between the Old Testament in the New Testament.
- Exegetically, with the millennium there are differences in how one views the relationship between Revelation 19 and 20 (if they are chronologically successive or recapitulative).
- Exegetically, with the rapture there are differences in interpretations of 1 Thessalonians.
- Theologically, how one views the relationship between Israel and the Church, the nature of prophecy, and the order of eschatological events will determine their hermeneutical and exegetical decisions.

The various views, if not anything else, provide ample evidence of the difficulty and complexity of interpreting Revelation 20 and related passages, and this warrants a healthy dose of humility when approaching it.

When studying Revelation and eschatology it is all too easy to lose sight of the call of Christ in Revelation, which is to live victoriously as overcomers of sin, the world, and the devil and to remain faithful to Christ at all costs because he will make all things right in the end. Whatever view one thinks best reflects the teaching of Scripture, it must always be kept in mind that **Scripture always presents the doctrine of last things as a motivation for faithful living.** In the end, perhaps John Frame draws our attention to the most important eschatological point: ***So far as I can see, every Bible passage about the return of Christ is written for a practical purpose –not to help us develop a theory of history, but to motivate our obedience.***

Wondering about the timing of the rapture and [the millennium and other complex end times passages in the Bible] can cause confusion and anxiety for a lot of people. For ages, people have tried to figure out the exact and time that the prophecy of Jesus's return will happen. The best place to turn for answers about the rapture, [the millennium and other

questions] is Scripture! God tells us everything we need to know in the Bible. There are some things that God has left a mystery for us. Let us be confident in what He has revealed and live a life of joy knowing we will spend eternity in heaven!

³⁵ See Steve Lewis, *The Resurrection of Church-Age*

Believers, www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_1st_Thessalonians/08_1Thess_4_13-18/webshow.htm#5., as cited in https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#78279E

³⁶ John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible* (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Publishing. 1990, 1999), 464, 275., as cited in

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#78286E

³⁷ “Matthew alone mentions this miracle. Nothing more is said about these people, which would be unlikely if they remained on earth for long. Evidently, these people were given glorified bodies; they appeared ‘to many’ (Mat. 27:53), enough to establish the reality of the miracle; and then they no doubt ascended to glory—a kind of foretaste of 1Th. 4:16.”—John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. 1997), Mat. 27:52. as cited in

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#78286E

³⁸ There are many differences of opinion regarding when the Old Testament saints are resurrected. Here is one of them. “The chief problem relative to the resurrections at the second coming of Christ among premillenarians is the question of whether righteous Israel and Old Testament saints in general are raised at this time. A popular interpretation originating in Darby and his associates is that resurrection of Old Testament saints takes place at the same time as the rapture of the church, that is, before the tribulation. This interpretation has been followed by such worthy expositors as William Kelly, A. C. Gaebelien, C. I. Scofield, and a host of others. Support for this interpretation is provided by three general arguments: (1) Christ died for Old Testament saints as well as for the church and therefore they are entitled to resurrection at the same time as the church, (2) According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the voice of the archangel is heard at the time of the rapture. Inasmuch as Michael, the archangel, is the special protector of Israel, his presence at the rapture would indicate Israel’s resurrection. (3) The twenty-four elders of Revelation 4 are composed of both Old and New Testament saints and, inasmuch as these are pictured in heaven crowned and therefore rewarded in Revelation 4 before the tribulation, it would indicate that Old Testament saints as well as the church have already been raised from the dead. . . . [But], there are good reasons for reconsideration. The reference to ‘the dead in Christ’ (1Th. 4:16) by no means clearly includes all saints. The expression ‘in Christ’ is uniformly used in the New Testament, wherever it has theological meaning, as a reference to those who have been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, and is never used in reference to saints before the Day of Pentecost. It is significant that the word *saints*, a more general designation of the righteous, is not used but a technical expression, ‘the dead in Christ,’ is used instead. It would seem to indicate a limitation of the prediction to those [having been baptized by the Holy Spirit] who die in the present dispensation. . . . Over against the obscurity in the New Testament, however, is the fact that the Old Testament seems to place the resurrection of Israel after the tribulation [Dan. 12:1-2].”—Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 279-281.

Footnote #54 of

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#78286E

³⁹ Opinions differ as to whether this passage includes any reference to a literal, physical resurrection. The context of the passage argues against it: (1) The bones are seen laying on the surface of the ground; (2) The bones are said to be “the whole house of Israel” (Eze. 37:11); (3) The manner in which the resurrection occurs—stage by stage and in response to Ezekiel’s command—is unlike any other physical resurrection recorded in Scripture., as cited in

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#78286E

⁴⁰ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

⁴¹ Luke 15:24, 32; John 3:3, 7; Gal. 6:15; 1Pe. 1:3, 23; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18.

⁴² “The order of events in the resurrection program would be: (1) the resurrection of Christ as the beginning of the resurrection program (1Cor. 15:23); (2) the resurrection of the church age saints at the rapture [note: pre-Trib, mid-Trib,

post-Trib???) (1Th. 4:16); (3) the resurrection of the tribulation period saints (Revelation 20:3-5), together with (4) the resurrection of Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19) at the second advent of Christ to the earth; [note: those who believe the Rapture to be post-Trib and pre-wrath would see the Rapture as being the believers who meet Christ in the air here at His second coming; and finally (5) the final resurrection of the unsaved dead [the second resurrection] (Revelation 20:5, 11-14) at the end of the millennial age. The first four stages would all be included in the first resurrection.”—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 411. See

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.5.1

As cited in

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

⁴³ See

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.5.1

As cited in

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

⁴⁴ John 3:3-7; 1Pe. 1:23; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18

⁴⁵ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#13245

⁴⁶ **Old Testament Knowledge of a Resurrection**

That there would be a resurrection from the dead was known by the Jews as seen in the Old Testament. Job is likely the oldest book in the Bible, and Job said that even though his flesh was destroyed in the grave, in his flesh he would see God (Job 19:25-27). Isaiah 26:19 says the earth will give birth to the dead. Ezekiel 37:12-14 is very clear about the resurrection. Daniel 12:2 and 12:13 both speak of the resurrection, as does Hosea 13:14 (cp. also Deuteronomy 32:39; Psalm 71:20; Isaiah 66:14).

Issues with the resurrections if people believe that when we die we go to Heaven or Hell

The common Christian teaching that when people die they go immediately to heaven or “hell” has blurred and basically nullified the biblical teaching of the resurrections and a future Judgement Day.

Why would there be a resurrection and judgement if everyone is either in heaven or hell and thus everyone **has already been judged**? Theologians answer that question by saying that people are reunited with their bodies at that time, but the Bible never says that.

However there are serious problems with that answer:-

1. Why would a person who has existed (lived) in an “spirit” form for hundreds or even thousands of years now need a body?
2. The Bible never speaks of people who have died as being some kind of ghost until the resurrection occurs in the future.
3. The Bible never speaks of people being reunited with their bodies.
4. The Bible never speaks of only “bodies” being raised from the dead; it always speaks of “people” being raised (cp. Job. 19:25-27; Psalm 71:20; Isaiah 26:19; 66:14; Ezekiel 37:12-14; Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14; Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31; 14:14; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 42-49, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 20:4-15). A “person” is a living body, not just dead flesh.
5. The Bible never states that people are judged when they die. It always speaks of a future day of judgment. For example, the Queen of Sheba (referred to as the “Queen of the South”) had been dead for nearly 1,000 years when Jesus lived, but he spoke of her as getting up from the dead and being judged in the future, not as a past event (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31).
6. The bible never says that people who have died are in their “spirit” form but somehow still waiting for their judgment. The correct biblical teaching is that when people die they are dead and awaiting being raised from the dead, at which time they will be judged. They are in **Sheol**.

<https://rayofflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/26/what-and-when-are-the-first-and-second-resurrections-in-the-bible/>

⁴⁷ **Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary**, as cited in <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/27-52.htm>

⁴⁸ 1Thessalonians 4:16.”—John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. 1997), as cited in

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#78286E .

⁴⁹ <https://www.vcy.org/prophecy-today/prophecy-questions/2024/02/09/when-we-are-raptured-will-our-flesh-body-fall-dead-and-only-our-spirits-go-to-meet-jesus/>

⁵⁰ (Taken from Instagram, @KingdomMindsetRevealed,
https://youtube.com/shorts/mwdaKLLl6aY?is=F69P843W7DMI_lyH.)

⁵¹ This interpretation is extremely strained and unnatural. If John meant this was the “second stage of the *first resurrection*,” he would have said so, especially since up to this point there is no other resurrection mentioned in Revelation. For that matter, there is no resurrection before the tribulation anywhere in the Bible! ...The original readers of [Revelation 20.4-6] would have had no basis to draw a conclusion that the *first resurrection* referenced [in v. 6] had “two stages.” <https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/26/what-and-when-are-the-first-and-second-resurrections-in-the-bible/>

⁵² **1Corinthians 15:22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.
<https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/22/the-first-resurrection-in-revelation/>

⁵³ Paul indicated to the Thessalonian believers his main reason for addressing the resurrection and rapture was so they would not sorrow as those who had no hope. It is apparent the Thessalonians had a question about the resurrection that Paul was trying to answer. Their sorrowing had to do with those who had died. In his answer, Paul clarified the exact events surrounding the resurrection and rapture. While the question is not stated, we can reconstruct it from Paul’s answer.

Notice his answer linked the timing of the resurrection to the catching up of the living saints. Therefore, their question most likely concerned the fact and timing of the resurrection of the dead in Christ. In answering their question, Paul assumed his readers were familiar with the Lord’s coming itself. He attached the timing of the resurrection of dead saints to an event they were already familiar with, the catching up of the living saints.

1Thessalonians 4:13-17 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

1Thessalonians 4.17 shows that ***we who alive when Jesus comes back will meet Jesus in the clouds and we shall always be with Him.*** No mention of the rapture being before or after the tribulation (which Paul **does** cover in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7).

The dead in Christ will rise first, then the living will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Paul continued in Thessalonians Chapter 5 by addressing the question of when they might expect the rapture and resurrection to come.

1Thessalonians 5:1-2 *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. ²For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night..*

1Thessalonians 5.4 *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief...*

1Thessalonians 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

Notice Paul was placing the rapture in the *Day of the Lord*. This is an extremely important point. Here Paul shifted from describing the events surrounding the rapture to speaking about when the rapture might come. And he referred them again to something they already knew, ***yourselves know perfectly...*** that the *Day of the Lord* comes as a *thief in the night*.

Paul used a phrase that was familiar to these Christians. The *Day of the Lord* is found several times in the Old Testament, always in the context of Christ’s coming to destroy the enemies of Israel (Isaiah 13:6-13, Joel 3:9-17, Zechariah 14). This is exactly what Revelation 19 records as the battle of Armageddon. How [did the Thessalonians know] about the coming of Christ, and the catching up of the living saints, but did not understand where the resurrection fit in? It is because of their familiarity with the Olivet Discourse. In that passage, Jesus described His coming, and the

gathering of the elect, but He did not specifically mention the resurrection of the dead, or how it would fit into the end time drama.

[This is a] table that [shows definite alignment that] Paul was using Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew, Mark and Luke as the [reference point] of his instructions to the Thessalonian believers. He was simply repeating Jesus' instructions to His disciples. In effect, he was applying the teaching of Jesus to the Thessalonians, connecting their "watching" for the rapture with Jesus' instructions for His disciples to be watching for His coming "immediately after the tribulation."

Event/Statement	Jesus	Paul
Coming of the Lord from heaven	Matt 24.30 "...they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."	1Thess 4.16 For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven...
Angel(s)	Matthew 24.31 "...He shall send forth His angels..."	1Thess 4.16 "with the voice of the archangel..."
Trumpet blast	Matthew 24.31 "...with the sound of a trumpet..."	1Thess 4.16 "...with the trumpet of God."
Catching up of the living	Matthew 24.31 "...they shall gather together His elect..."	1Thess 4.17 "...shall be caught up together..."
Thief in the night	Matthew 24.43 "...if the goodman ...had known in what watch the thief would come..."	1Thess 5.1, 2 "...so cometh as a thief in the night."
Warning against "sleeping"	Mark 13.16 "lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping"	1Thess 5.6 "... Let us not sleep as do others"
Warning against "drunkenness"	Luke 21.34 "take heed...lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness."	1Thess 5.6-8 "be sober...they that are drunken in the night. ...be sober."
"Watching" for Christ's coming	Mark 13.35-37 "Watch ye therefore... What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."	1Thess 5.6 "let us watch..."

[Also,] throughout the Old Testament, a catastrophic sign is associated with the coming of the *Day of the Lord*. The darkening of the sun and moon will herald that day. (Isaiah 13:9-10, Isaiah 24:19-23, Joel 3:13-15.)

Joel 2:31 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.*

Matthew 24:29-31 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: ³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Paul's words would, no doubt, bring to memory the words of Christ in the Olivet Discourse. Notice the similar language. Both mention the coming of the Lord. Both mention the sounding of the trumpet to gather His own. Both mention angelic participation. But when we look at Jesus' words, we see that He did not mention the resurrection of the saints specifically in the Olivet Discourse. Based on these things, the Thessalonians' question for Paul becomes apparent. They wanted to know what will happen to those who have previously died. Will they be raised to witness the revelation of Christ to the world in all His glory, and to participate in the establishment of Christ's Kingdom? Or will they be raised at some other time? Or perhaps not at all?

The fact that Jesus only spoke of the living, and did not place the resurrection in His sequence of events described in the Olivet Discourse, caused these Christians to worry about their departed brethren not participating in the spectacular events surrounding Christ's revelation to the world in power and glory, and the setting up of His Kingdom. Paul's answer indicates that this was indeed the problem. By linking the timing of the resurrection to the gathering of the living that Jesus spoke of, Paul completely resolved the problem for them and gave them reason for hope regarding their loved ones who had died.

These verses establish a clear sequence of events. **They place the cosmic signs, the darkening of the sun and moon, between the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the Day of the Lord.**

Matthew 24:42-44 *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. ⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. ⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

This comes across that the whole world will know that Jesus has come back. It is not a *silent affair* as the pre-tribulationists believe, which fact adds [even more credibility] to the rapture being at the end of the tribulation. Paul makes no attempt to add any further clarification for the Thessalonian church on this important event. They were concerned that they had missed the resurrection, so they needed *clarity*... [Note: If the first resurrection is to be in at least two parts, it is not mentioned at all, which shows it **less likely** to be a possibility given that Paul is trying to clarify the resurrection of the dead].

For a deeper dive into these subjects and as the citations from where this material is taken from see:

<https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2019/06/20/the-day-of-the-lord-and-the-rapture/>

<https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2021/05/28/when-is-the-resurrection-from-the-dead/>

<https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/12/does-the-falling-away-the-revelation-of-man-of-sin-come-first/>

<https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/06/24/rest-from-persecution-after-the-tribulation-2-thessalonians/>

<https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/26/what-and-when-are-the-first-and-second-resurrections-in-the-bible/>

<https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/22/the-first-resurrection-in-revelation/>

These studies are well referenced with the Word of God and perfectly explain the connections with the two resurrections and two deaths talked about in Revelation. It is a great study showing alignment with the Olivet Discourse and Paul's books to the Thessalonians and explains the Word of God throughout thoroughly.

NOTE: We have been continually referring to examining a teacher's *root, fruit and motive*, to gain trust in their teachings, and to line up their teachings with *Scripture*. That doesn't mean *any teacher* will know everything or teach everything the way we see it in Scripture.

When we studied the woman giving birth in Revelation 12, and examined Scriptures and saw that scripturally it would be difficult to say she is **not** Israel, we studied that many knowledgeable and well-meaning Bible teachers who have devoted their lives to studying the Bible (even with *root* going deep, *fruit* in their lives of the *fruit of the Spirit*, and *motives* that appear holy and set apart and lifting up Jesus) feel that the woman represents the *Church* and not Israel alone. This is one of those teachers. Just a heads up that you may run across the belief that the woman giving birth in Revelation 12 is the *Church*. As a good *Berean*, line up the Word of God to see both sides through Scripture and know how you feel about what God tells us about the woman in Revelation 12. Even after you decide what you believe, you will know that you will not be in 100% alignment with *all well-meaning* Bible scholars who have laid down their lives to study the Word of God.

1Corinthians 13:9-10 *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

⁵⁴ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20240204a-187429>

⁵⁵ J. A. Seiss, as quoted in <https://www.bibleoutlines.com/revelation-201-10-the-millennial-reign-and-condemnation-of-satan/>

⁵⁶ We may wonder why God waits a thousand years after Satan's binding before judging him or why God did not judge the sinning angels as soon as they sinned. God shows us a consistent pattern that He allows deplorable circumstances to drag on as a testimony that His way is the only way that works, and all other ways bear only miserable fruit. God uses our experiences with sin to teach us what does not work. Likewise, rather than exact immediate justice,

1. God will use Satan's post-Millennium rebellion as a powerful lesson.

However, we should also understand that even though God uses Satan's activities as part of humanity's education, He in no way depends on Satan. During the Millennium and after, God will bring many more sons and daughters to glory *without* Satan being around than *with* Satan being around. Satan is not integral to God's plan, but he does serve as an extraordinary warning against high-mindedness. His reservation for the judgment of the great day illustrates God's perfect sovereignty. His plan did not require the angels to rebel, but neither was His plan thwarted by it.

Satan is released so he can commit his final rebellion. We catch a glimpse of his first rebellion in Genesis 1:2, where the earth became without form and was void and in darkness. God did not create it like this, but it became that way.

Rebellion against God is introduced at the beginning of the Book, which rebellion Revelation 20 resolves—in God’s good time.

History Written in Advance

The prophesied release of Satan after the Millennium teaches us significant lessons. God says, *“For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done”* (Isaiah 46:9-10). What Satan does after he is released is history written in advance. His deceptions and warmongering are the future, recorded thousands of years before they happen.

This fact is remarkable to consider. Mankind desires to know the future; we look to news analysis and weather forecasts to glimpse an idea of what lies ahead so we can respond appropriately. We use such indicators to prepare for the future or perhaps to work to change the course of events.

What is astounding is that the Adversary also knows the Scriptures, and he sees his future written in advance. This reality provides vivid testimony of Satan’s nature—that he simply will not change, even knowing how disastrous the end will be for him. The advance knowledge makes no difference.

2. So, in addition to God giving Satan his freedom so he can commit his final rebellion, a second reason He must release him is to provide us with this final, powerful lesson about the Serpent’s nature.

When God releases Satan, the Deceiver does what he has always done. Even after a thousand years of stasis, his nature remains unchanged. After a millennium of reflecting on his plight, calculating his ideal course of action, and contemplating his spiritual navel, as it were, he reaches the conclusion he started with: He knows better.

Maybe he will not be aware of the peace and prosperity as it blooms outside the pit, but when he is released, he will be able to see that goodness and abundance with his own eyes. Yet even with all the years of mankind under Christ, living the best that people can live, and all the good humanity will produce in cooperation with God, Satan will emerge, discount the evidence, and continue to act in the way that seems best to him, even though it destroys the lives of others. Isaiah 14 reveals this attitude when it speaks of Helel ascending, exalting his throne, and trying to become the Most High. His image of self-perfection is written in stone. In his heart, he is convinced that he deserves more and better than God gave him.

In Satan’s Image

We shake our heads at this most wretched of creatures, and rightfully so, for his existence is miserable. His removal will bring relief to the whole earth because even without making anybody sin, his presence always spawns turmoil. His fruits are always chaos, sin, misery, and destruction.

But before we become self-satisfied, consider substituting the phrase “carnal human nature” for Satan in Revelation 20:7-9. When our carnal nature is released, it immediately does what it has always done. Our carnality retains the spiritual image of Satan, and in type, it always produces the same things, even though we, too, have been told the end in advance!

3. Therefore, a third reason Satan must be released is to remind us that even as our Adversary never changes, human nature is always ready to choose spiritual blindness.

In Revelation 20:7-9, the nations fall for the deceptions, just as Eve did because Satan easily manipulates the natural inclination of the human heart toward self-centeredness. It hears the siren song of getting more, of asserting itself over others, and it begins dancing to the tune.

Satan’s spirit permeates this world, and it works in those who disobey, as Paul writes in Ephesians 2:1-3. Such was our condition before God regenerated us and endued us with His Spirit. However, the indwelling of God does not mean that our former selves have been banished. Thus, the epistles urge us to put off the works of the flesh, the hidden things of darkness, and the old man. Corruption will remain until the day of our resurrection or change when we finally put on incorruption. Until then, we wrestle with the law of sin and death at work in our members, struggling to keep our old man bound in chains.

But when we let down, we release our old man for a little while. Like Satan, he goes to war against God and man just as soon as his chains slacken. What remains of Satan’s image in us is ever-ready to spring forth and risk all the spiritual abundance we have received.

Once let loose, our old man resists God. He bends the truth or even lies boldly for camouflage, self-preservation, or self-advantage. He radiates pride, antagonism, competition, selfish ambition, and unflinching confidence in his own rightness, even if it means God Himself would be wrong. **He challenges God’s sovereignty in his thoughts, perhaps in his words, and even in conduct.**

Our old man has no problem using people for his own ends—even sacrificing them like Satan does the nations—because his ends always justify his means. Just as Satan gambles that he can skirt the consequences that always fall, our old man also bets that it will be different for us and the consequences the Bible foretells will not happen. God

recorded the effects of sin for us millennia ago, yet when we are in the moment, we still convince ourselves that His Word is not absolute—that all those bad things will never happen to us. Yet Revelation 20 tells us—just as it tells Satan—where those choices lead. We, too, know the result of sin, for it is written in advance.
<https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.sr/CT/PW/k/1864/why-must-satan-be-released.htm>

⁵⁷ <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.sr/CT/PW/k/1864/why-must-satan-be-released.htm>

⁵⁸ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#78286E

The name Gog first appears as a descendant of Joel, of the tribe of Reuben (1Chronicles 5:4). The leader of the rebellion which came against Israel more than one thousand years prior to this event was also named Gog:

Ezekiel 38.1-9 The prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal (*“the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal,”* KJV),...

who, Ezekiel said, would invade the restored land of Israel from the far distant northern land by the appointment of God in the last times, with a powerful army of numerous nations (Ezekiel 38:1-9) and with the intention of plundering Israel, now dwelling in security (Ezekiel 38: 10-16).

Attempts to identify Gog have included proposals of connections with (1) Gyges, King of Lydia (*Gugu* of Ashurbanipal’s records); (2) *Gaga*, a name in the Amarna correspondence for the nations of the N; (3) *Gaga*, a god from Ras Shamra writings; (4) a historical figure, especially Alexander; and (5) mythological sources, with Gog being a representation of the evil forces of darkness which range themselves against Yahweh and his people. None of these identifications has been demonstrated with certainty.

The name Magog is introduced to us as a son of Japheth and grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:2). In the previous attack against Israel, Gog is said to be “of the land of Magog” (Eze. 38:2):

The descendants of Magog (Eze. 38:2), possibly a people who lived in northern Asia and Europe. The Jewish historian Josephus identified these people as the Scythians, known for their destructive warfare. Magog may be a comprehensive term meaning “northern barbarians.” The people of Magog are described as skilled horsemen (Eze. 38:15) and experts in the use of the bow and arrow (Eze. 39:3, 9).

Although Gog and Magog are both mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39, this rebellion is not the same event, as a comparison of several factors reveals:

This prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog cannot be identified with the prophecy in Revelation 20:7-10 for [several] reasons.

1. The former (Ezekiel) takes place **before** the Kingdom is established on earth; the latter (Revelation 20:7-10) **after** this Kingdom. Also, in Ezekiel the invasion comes only from the north, but in Revelation it comes from the ‘four quarters of the earth.’ Furthermore, the rebellion of Gog and Magog and their destruction in Revelation 20:7-10 marks the ushering in of the eternal state (Revelation 20:11-15); but in Ezekiel it is preliminary to the Millennial Kingdom on earth.
2. The Ezekiel invasion comes from the north; the Revelation invasion comes from all over the world.
3. This view also fails to answer the problem of the seven months burning weapons (Eze. 39.9) and seven years of dealing with the corpses (Eze. 39.12). This earth is done away with soon after the invasion mentioned in Revelation, not allowing any time (or place!) for seven years of burial or seven years of burning.

Whether Gog and Magog is a general reference to the enemies of the people of God or specific peoples in the rebellion of the end is difficult to determine from the scant details of this final rebellion.

[NOTE: Barnhouse suggests that the Gog of Ezekiel, by way of demonic powers, is brought back after the Millennium for this final rebellion: “Just as Satan entered into Judas (John 13:27), whether personally or through one of his mighty principalities and powers we do not know, and as Satan clothed the human being called the wild beast, with his power, his throne, and great authority (Revelation 13:2), thus making him the Antichrist, so Satan possesses some princeling, perhaps named Gog, through one of his mighty angels who own his sway.”—Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 387.]

While many explanations have been made, one of the intriguing ones is that Gog refers to the ruler and Magog to the people as in Ezekiel 38. Hence, what the passage means is that the nations of the world follow Satan, including the rulers (Gog) and the people (Magog) under the rulers. Another plausible explanation is that the expression is used much as we use the term “Waterloo” to express a disastrous battle, but one related to the historic origination of the term.

⁵⁹ Grant Osborne, as quoted in <https://www.bibleoutlines.com/revelation-201-10-the-millennial-reign-and-condemnation-of-satan/>

⁶⁰ During the thousand-year reign, the mortal survivors of the Tribulation —Jews and Gentiles —will populate the earth by marrying and having children. By the end of the thousand years, the world will be filled with numerous generations of their descendants, who will still have bodies of mortal flesh and, more importantly, will still struggle with sin and temptation as we do. Those subjects of the kingdom will not be like the resurrected rulers, who will be immortal, glorified, and neither marrying nor giving in marriage (Matt. 22:30). Yes, during the thousand-year reign the physical world will be made like Eden, harmonious and peaceful (**Isa. 11:6-9; 65:20-25; Ezek. 36:33-36**). Yes, the corrupt system of human government underwritten by Satan and his demonic powers will be replaced by Christ and His saints (**Dan. 7:21-22**). However, the human population will still have a sinful nature —after the likeness of fallen Adam rather than perfected and glorified after the likeness of Christ.

At the end of the thousand years, the descendants of the Tribulation survivors will be tested. After his thousand-year imprisonment in the abyss, Satan will be released for a short time (**20:7**), during which he will be successful in rapidly recruiting a massive force of rebels willing to march against the King of kings and Lord of lords. How will this be possible? Who in the world would turn against the Messiah enthroned in Jerusalem? The term “*Gog and Magog*” may give us a hint. This is a general term in the Bible for the enemies of God spread throughout the remotest parts of the earth (**Ezek. 38-39; Revelation 20:8**).

- Those enlisting in Satan’s army will likely be geographically remote, from among those cities and regions farthest from the center of the Messiah’s kingdom in Jerusalem.
- They will also be generationally removed from their original ancestors who survived the onslaught of the Beast, the memory of which will sound to these distant descendants like mere fables.
- Finally, the rebels will be spiritually distant, perhaps conforming to the outward expectations of worship and civil duty, but inwardly harboring cynicism, selfishness, and rebellion.

Chuck Swindoll, as quoted in as quoted in <https://www.bibleoutlines.com/revelation-201-10-the-millennial-reign-and-condemnation-of-satan/>

⁶¹ <https://www.pastorjasonelder.com/bible-facts-all/the-battle-of-gog-and-magog-in-revelation?rq=Revelation>

⁶² John Wolvoord, as quoted in <https://www.bibleoutlines.com/revelation-201-10-the-millennial-reign-and-condemnation-of-satan/>

⁶³ Since it was prepared for both him and *his angels* (Revelation 12:4), we can infer that the fallen angels, who were confined during the Millennial Kingdom, are either cast with him into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 18:2; Isaiah 34:8-17), or join him shortly thereafter following the Great White Throne Judgment when the earth (including the abyss) is no more.

⁶⁴ Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 520-521, as quoted in http://spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#76687

⁶⁵ Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 389, as quoted in http://spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#76687

⁶⁶ Hades followed along when Death rode forth at the fourth seal which resulted in widespread death (Rev. 6:7). Jesus has the keys of Hades and Death (Rev. 1:18). The righteous dead, whose soul and spirit were at one time in Hades, have already been resurrected. Their soul and spirit has been reunited with their body at their participation in the category of the first resurrection. Thus, Jesus has emptied Hades and Death of those who are His prior to this judgment.

This delivery of the dead—their casting out—probably occurs at the moment when the earth and heaven flee away at the presence of the Mighty Judge (Rev. 10:11). As the old order dissolves, “the dead are brought back to this judgment, their bodies being delivered from the grave, whether in the sea or on the land, and their soul and spirit is brought up from hades.” Every person born into the world has eternal existence and is resurrected after death. “The essential identity of the dying and risen body is hereby shown; for the sea and grave give up their dead. The body that sinned or served God shall, in righteous retribution, be the body also that shall suffer or be rewarded.” The number given up by the sea will be enormous, the overwhelming majority being those lost in judgment in the global flood (Luke 17:27).

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.11

⁶⁷ Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter*, 328, as cited in https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#76717E

⁶⁸ Bible Hub.

⁶⁹ **Exodus 3:6** *Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*

Exodus 19:21 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.*

1Kings 19:13 *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?*

Isaiah 6:5 *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

1John 4:12 *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.11

⁷⁰ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.11

⁷¹ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.11

⁷² Supra.

⁷³ <https://rayoflight2020.data.blog/2022/12/26/what-and-when-are-the-first-and-second-resurrections-in-the-bible/>

⁷⁴ Taken from <https://www.gotquestions.org/resurrection-first-second.html> and <https://versebyversecommentary.com/1999/01/26/revelation-204-6/>

⁷⁵ http://spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.11

⁷⁶ Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 479, as quoted in https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.11

⁷⁷ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/20.html#3.20.11