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A0634 – August 20, 2006 – Rev 20:4-6 – The Thousand Years - Part 3

The second thing John saw was **the souls of the beheaded (PerfPassPart)**. These are the souls of the Tribulation martyrs. The word **beheaded** comes from the Greek word *pelekus* which means “axe”, the weapon used for the executions during the future Tribulation. This fits with concept that during the Tribulation the world will resort to primitive standards due to the supernatural judgments of God which wipe out advanced technological capabilities. So, most likely, the Tribulation martyrs will be beheaded with the axe. **beheaded** is also a perfect tense and passive in voice meaning they had been beheaded in the past during the Tribulation and they remained in that unresurrected state until this moment. Obviously those who beheaded them with the axe were the beast and his cohorts or the statue of the beast which was able to kill those who did not worship it (Rev 13:15). Thus, John could only see their **souls**. The **soul** is the unresurrected state of the individual. The **soul** is conscious. The **soul** does not sleep. The soul of the believer immediately goes to be with Christ at the moment of physical death. These martyrs’ **souls** have been with Christ since their moment of physical death but they have not yet been given a resurrection body. Their resurrection will come at the conclusion of this verse before the thousand years. But first, the reason is given why they were **beheaded** by the beast and his cohorts. They were **beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God**. This is a common reason for execution. The **testimony of Jesus** and **the word of God** are not tolerated. Satan detests both Jesus and the word of God and since secular humanism is under his domain and direction they also detest Jesus and the word of God. Toleration extends only so far in secular humanism. Everything except Jesus and the word of God are tolerated. When it comes to Jesus and the word of God they are excluded because Jesus and the word of God are not tolerant. Jesus who is the word of God said “I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me” (John 14:6). Therefore, Jesus is not tolerated because of His intolerance for any other way to God. The Tribulation martyrs lost their own lives for the sake of Jesus and the word of God. Jesus said, “He who loses his life for My sake will find it” (Luke 9:24). For the believer in Jesus, death is the entrance into life. These martyrs have

demonstrated that they attained the ultimate level of discipleship, losing one's own life for Jesus Christ.

Further description of the martyrs comes in the words, **who did not worship (3PAAI actively worship) the beast nor his statue.** They were given the ultimatum to **worship the beast and his statue** or be killed. Since worshipping **the beast and his statue** is contrary to God's commandment not to worship any created thing they refused. If they had worshipped the **beast and his statue** they would not have served as witnesses of Christ and the word of God. The loss of life was required to witness for Christ and the word of God (Rev 13:10, 15). Besides refusing to worship **the beast and his statue** they **did not take (3PAAI actively take) the mark upon the forehead and upon their hand.** They **did not take the mark** of the beast which was issued by the false prophet and required to buy and sell. They did not worry about where their next meal would come from but trusted the Lord for their every provision. They walked by faith and not by sight. The pressure to walk by sight in the Tribulation will be great because even the basics of life will be cut off from those who refuse to take the mark. The mark is the name of the beast or the number of his name which are one and the same and equal 666. Everyone will be given this identical mark so it is not a credit card or social security number. The purpose of the mark is not to distinguish individuals from one another but to distinguish those aligned with the beast from those aligned with Christ. The mark will be *upon* the forehead or *upon* the right hand so that it is clearly an etching or engraving similar to a "tattoo" or "brand". It will not be planted within the forehead or hand. These martyrs refused to **take the mark.** So, they are beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, the word of God, refusing to worship the beast and his statue and refusing to take the mark of the beast. Having lost their physical lives John sees their souls. **And they lived (3PAAI actively lived) and reigned (3PAAI actively reigned) with the Christ a thousand years.** The word **lived** (*zao*) describes their resurrection. Their **souls** are now re-united with their bodies. When a believer dies the spirit and soul go immediately to be with God. To be absent from the body is to be in the presence of the Lord. During that time the body lies in the ground asleep. When the body is called forth from the grave it is transformed into a new, incorruptible, immortal body and united with its spirit and soul. The resurrected body these Tribulation saints who were martyred will be joined to their **souls** before the **thousand years.** Thus, Tribulation saints will be resurrected during the 75-day interval (Dan 12:12). Then they will **reign with Christ** for the **thousand years,** the same period of time which Satan will be bound. Satan thought killing them would make them inactive, but actually Satan will be inactive for the thousand years. As the greatest deceiver he bought into the greatest deception. Satan wanted to rule but now it is the martyrs who will rule. Both the resurrected Church and the resurrected Tribulation

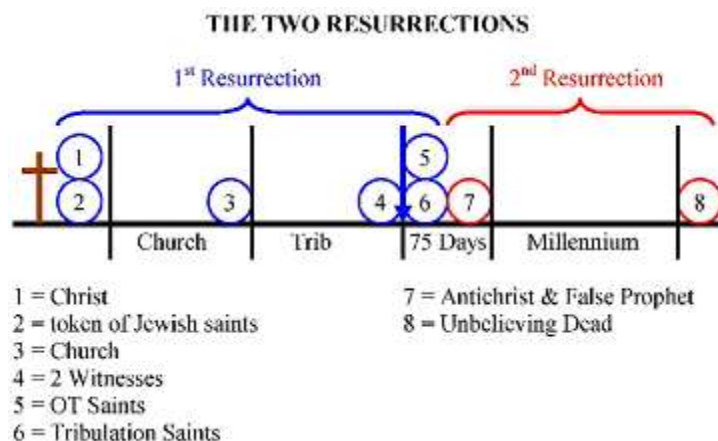
martyrs will reign on the earth with Christ (Rev 2:27; 5:10). And who will the **reign with? with Christ**, since He is the King of kings. It is very important for all who **reign** in the millennial kingdom to be in resurrection bodies. With resurrection bodies the rulers will not be subject to the sin nature which has been dealt with. A system of perfect government such as the Theocratic Kingdom must have rulers in perfect bodies, incapable of sinning. Christ was the first resurrected. Both the Church and Tribulation martyrs will have been resurrected before the thousand years. Therefore, they will each be qualified to **reign with Christ**. So, during this period immortals will not only live alongside mortals but they will also rule over mortals.

Revelation 20:5 **The rest of the dead did not live (3PAAI *zao*; unbelieving dead, must refer to physical death) until the thousand years were completed (3SAPSubj)** is a parenthetical remark designed to briefly explain what happened to **the rest of the dead**. **The rest of the dead** refers to the unbelieving dead. This is everyone who did not believe in Jesus Christ as savior and either died during the Tribulation or during the judgments during the 75-day interval. John did not see their souls because their souls descended into a place called Sheol or Hades at the moment they died. Sheol or Hades is a holding place for the souls of all unbelieving dead. The bodies of these individuals will remain on earth. Their bodies will be the main course at the supper of the birds (Rev 19:21) while the believers enter to feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Their souls will remain in Sheol or Hades **until the thousand years are completed** at which time their bodies will be resurrected and re-united with their souls.

After the parenthesis John notes, **This is the first resurrection**. This cannot mean first in an absolute sense because clearly Jesus was resurrected in the 1st century AD and His resurrection is called the “firstfruits” (1 Cor 15:23). What this means then is that this is the completion of **the first resurrection** which has several phases. Let me explain.

In several Bible passages two resurrections are clearly distinguished; the first to everlasting life and the second to everlasting death (Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29). However, this does not exclude the possibility of different phases in these resurrections. There is no reason the resurrections must take place all at the same time. In fact, we already know of two resurrections that have taken place; 1) Jesus Christ (Matt 27:52-53) and 2) a token of Jewish saints on the same day as Christ but after Him (Matt 27:52-53). Since there have already been two phases of the first resurrection there is no reason to think there cannot be further phases. I suggest that the first resurrection takes place in six phases; (1) Christ, three days after His crucifixion, (2) token Jewish saints on that same day but after Christ, (3) the Church on the day of the pre-trib Rapture (1 Thess 4:16; 5:9-10), (4) the two

witnesses near the end of the Tribulation (Rev 11:11-12), (5) OT Jewish saints at the 2nd Coming of Christ (Dan 12:2, 13; Job 19:25-26), and (6) Tribulation saints before the Millennium (Rev 20:4). The second resurrection is unto death and occurs in two phases; (7) the resurrection of Antichrist and the False Prophet before the Millennium (Rev 19:20) and (8) the resurrection of the rest of the unbelievers after the Millennium (Rev 20:5). The issue of the resurrection of Millennial saints is not revealed in Scripture so we will discuss them later when we get into the New Heavens and New Earth.



Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy the one having (PAPart an active part) part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death does not have (3SPA) power, but they will be (3PFMI) priests (mediators between man and God) of God and the Christ and will reign (3PFAI Rev 2:26-27) with Him [the] thousand years.

This is the fifth blessing announced in Revelation. This is the only one that adds **holy**. Daniel mentioned that the one who attains to the 1,335th day is “blessed” (Dan 12:12). Daniel meant that the one who attained to that day will have lived through the 75-Day interval and will enter the kingdom. He spoke of those in natural bodies who had already believed in Jesus as Savior during the Tribulation. But this blessing is announced for all who take **part in the first resurrection**. So, this includes all saints from the beginning of history until the end of the Tribulation, that is, from righteous Abel who was killed by his brother Cain, to the righteous Tribulation saints who will be killed by the Antichrist. Cain was a type of the Antichrist (1 John 3:10-15). Not only are the **blessed** but they are **holy**. All who take part in the **first resurrection** are **holy** not only positionally but also experientially. From that point forward our experience will always conform to our position of holiness. We will not sin anymore.

Over these the second death does not have power. What is the second death? Rev 20:14 answers, “This is the second death, the lake of fire.” When an unbeliever dies their

souls do not immediately go to the lake of fire but to a place called Sheol or Hades. Their souls remain there until after the thousand years are completed when their bodies will be resurrected and re-united with their souls. Then they will be cast into the lake of fire which is the **second death**. Death means “separation” so the **second death** is the second separation. The first separation or first death occurs at physical death when the body is separated from the soul. The second separation or second death occurs when the body and soul are re-united but separated from God for all eternity in the lake of fire. Jesus warned in Matt 10:28, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The Greek word for “hell”, *geenna*, refers to the final resting place of unbelievers in the lake of fire. So, the first death is separation of body from soul and the second death is separation of body and soul from God—this occurs in the lake of fire. Those who **take part in the first resurrection** are exempt from **the second death**. It has no authority over them but complete authority over all who do not place their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Rather than undergoing the **second death**, those who take part in the first resurrection **will be (3PFMI) priests of God and the Christ and will reign (3PFAI Rev 2:26-27) with Him [the] thousand years**. The function of a **priest** is that of mediating between men and God. I don't know much more than that about this function in the millennial kingdom. Perhaps it has something to do with taking difficult cases to God and Christ. The function of reigning is clear. All those who take part in the first resurrection will be fit to rule perfectly with Christ and will therefore **reign with Him for the thousand years**. Immortals will reign over mortals with perfect justice and yet next week we will see what the mortals do when Satan is loosed.

Revelation 20:7 And when completed (3SAPSubj) the thousand years, Satan will be loosed (3SFPI) (so, Satan will not be loosed at the end of the thousand years but after the thousand years are complete) **from his prison** (the location of his imprisonment is in the abyss, or bottomless pit, which is a subterranean cavern in the center of the earth. Presumably the one who will loose him is the same angel who arrested him and locked him in the abyss before the thousand years. Verse 3 said, after these things he must be released for a short time. Why? Why is it necessary to release Satan for a short time? Why can't he simply be taken from the abyss and cast into the lake of fire? A partial answer may be to demonstrate that fallen creatures are not rehabilitated by jail time. Some may argue that if Satan were just given enough time to think through his failures then he would change and submit to God, that he would reform and be rehabilitated. But obviously the rehabilitative justice system, though popular among humans, does not work. Satan will be the supreme demonstration that time in prison under a rehabilitative

justice system will not do away with the sin nature. Notice in verse 8 that when Satan is released from the abyss his very first activity is to go forth to deceive the nations. Therefore, in the Bible, there is not a rehabilitative justice system but a restitutionary justice system. This system requires the criminal to pay back; life for life, item for item and often pay back more for lost time and profit.

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