

Revelation 20

An Exegesis

When studying any passage in Revelation we must keep in mind the nature of the book. It is universally acknowledged to be the most famous book of prophecy and figurative language in the New Testament. Because of this we must follow good hermeneutical principles as we proceed. We must still start with the idea that every word is literal unless there is sufficient contextual evidence to understand it figuratively.

Another thing we often forget is no Bible passage can be understood separate and apart from all the other verses in the Bible on the same subject. If there is an apparent conflict between a verse in Revelation and another verse outside of Revelation, the one in Revelation must be the one to be understood figuratively even if the words of the particular sentence in Revelation do not necessitate this figurativeness. The only exception to this general principle is if there is clear contextual evidence to the contrary.

Trying to understand any passage in Revelation can be challenging and even difficult, but never impossible. God is all powerful and all wise. This implies He *could* make his word understandable. God loves us. This implies that He *did*!! Remember God did not write anything that we *cannot* understand, else why would He write it? There is no "filler" in His Book!

Several ideas in this chapter will be new and therefore challenging. I ask for your patience as you read. I also ask you for an additional effort to maintain your open-mindedness at a very high level. If you begin this study with solidified, preconceived ideas then this study will not be enjoyable and probably not beneficial.

Any valid exegeses requires valid hermeneutics. The author is committed to following the principles of valid hermeneutics mentioned in *From Atheism to Christianity* and *Understanding the Afterlife*. He will seriously evaluate any suggestions that he failed in this endeavor.

Revelation 20 is one of the most controversial passages in the New Testament.

Then why write this?

Because I am firmly convinced that God answers prayer (James 1:5) and, to the extent that I have followed His guidance, the explanation presented here will be in accordance with His will. This explanation harmonizes several apparently conflicting passages and greatly simplifies the picture of the afterlife.

I ask for your thoughtful consideration of this evidence and your willingness to point out any error in my use of scriptures or logic.

The Context of Revelation 20

In order to establish the limits of the context, the first step in any analysis, I have presented the last paragraph in chapter 19 to show that the subject indeed does change after 19:21. I have also added for your convenience the first paragraph in chapter 21 to demonstrate that the subject again changes after 20:15.

The text (NIV) reads as follows:

19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in mid-air, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great." 19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. 20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. 21 The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

20:1 ¶ And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. (2) He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. (3) He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

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(4) I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (5) (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

(7) When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison (8) and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. (9) They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. (10) And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

(11) ¶ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. (12) And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. (13) The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. (14) Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. (15) If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

21:1 ¶ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Analysis of Revelation 20

To begin this study we repeat the first paragraph of the text for convenience.

“¶ And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

Please note all the symbols and figurative language, starting in verse one; key, abyss, chain, bound him, thousand years, locked and sealed it, to keep him from deceiving the nations.

Of course symbols are very common in Revelation, especially after chapter 3. You will notice that I added the expression “thousand years” to the list of symbols. Some would disagree, thinking that the thousand years is a literal time period. I put it here because the context is figurative language and because it is a round number and it is very large. It is difficult to imagine anything in human history lasting *exactly* one thousand years, to the minute. But for our purposes, the length of the period does not matter. It is the identification of the period that is important. Where does this time period fit in the timeline of history and what will the conditions of life be during this time?

The first three verses describe John seeing a vision (maybe like a video) of an angel seizing the devil and putting him into an Abyss (hole or pit) which was then closed over him. This is obviously showing that the forces of God are stronger than the devil and can, and did, control him, thereby limiting the devil's influence. We will look at only three scriptures imply the devil's power is now restricted.

1 Corinthians 10:13:

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

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Notice especially this passage in Hebrews 2:14

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy [καταργησῆ] him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—

Looking at the Greek definition of καταργησῆ (*might destroy*):

Thayer: 1. *to render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative: τὴν γῆν*, to deprive of its strength, make barren, Luke 13:7 ... 2. *to cause to cease, to put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish ...*

B.A.G.: 1. *to cause something to be unproductive, ...* 2. *to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness, ...* 3. *to cause something to come to an end, ...*

Please notice that the first definition of both lexicons is a limitation less than ceasing to exist. This is probably why the ASV gives “*might bring to naught*” in Hebrews 2:14 in stead of “*might destroy.*”

This action of καταργησῆ (*bring to naught or might destroy*) happened at the death of Christ. Since we know that the devil did not cease to exist at the death of Christ, this verb cannot mean to *destroy* in the modern, English sense. It therefore must mean something less than to cease to exist, in keeping with the first definition of both lexicons mentioned above. Some type of limitation, restriction or constraint must have been applied to the devil at the time of Christ’s death. Maybe something that could be described as “*bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him ... until the thousand years were ended.*” This might also explain why demon possession is only mentioned two times (Acts 16:16-18, 19:11-13) after the Gospels, i.e. the devil’s power was limited by the death of Christ. It might also explain why we have such influence over the devil, James 4:7, and such protection from him, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

These three scriptures (Hebrews 2:14, James 4:7, 1 Corinthians 10:13) are very important because they tell us when the thousand years of Revelation 20 started, i.e. at the death of Christ.

The Thousand year reign

This idea of the devil being bound for a thousand years is introduced in verse 2 of Revelation 20. This one thousand year period has generated much interest in the religious world. So much so that a rather detail theory has developed into the doctrine of Premillennialism.

If we put together the prefix meaning “before,” i.e. *pre*, and the word meaning “pertaining to a thousand years,” i.e. *millennial*, and adding the suffix for a belief or doctrine, i.e. *ism*, we get *Pre-millennial-ism*.

This doctrine expects Jesus, at His second coming, to set up a kingdom on earth where he will reign as king for a thousand years. This idea has already been proven incorrect by the fact that the devil was bound by the death of Christ, not His return.

As we begin our study of Revelation 20 we will examine a few texts in New Testament, outside Revelation, which discuss the second coming of Christ, the general resurrection and the relationship of these two earth-shattering events. Since our text is the only place in the Bible that mentions the actual 1000 years of the devil's limitation we may well ask are there other scriptures outside the book of Revelation that teach or generally support this doctrine of *Premillennialism*?

We will first consider 1 Corinthians 15:20 ff.

¶ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet". Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Christ is the “firstfruits” of those who have fallen asleep. Not the first, but the firstfruits. Lazarus (John 11:43-44), the widow’s son (Luke 7:14-15) and many holy men at the death of Christ (Matthew 27:52) were all resurrected before Christ’s resurrection. The

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“firstfruits” means the best or most important, not *necessarily* the first. However, firstfruits could also refer to the fact that Jesus was the first, and only, to rise from the dead **never to die again**. All those who were raised before Christ, only lived a short time.

Through one man, Adam, death came to all men because of Adam's sin, 1 Corinthians 15:22. Through another man, Jesus, all will be made alive by His resurrection from the dead, i.e. “...all will be made alive,” (both Christians and non-Christians) but when? Look at verse 23. Although not all will be made alive at the same time; first Christ will be made alive (never to die again) then the rest of those who belong to him, Christians, will be made alive never to die again. But notice when this will happen: “when he comes”! All Christians will be raised (with a new glorified body, Philippians 3:21) to live again, when he comes.

Verse 24 of 1 Corinthians 15 starts with “then” meaning next, in other words after the general resurrection something else will happen: “the end will come.” Does the language allow for a thousand years between the resurrection and the “end”? Paul says first, Christ will be raised, then, when he comes, all Christians will be raised, then the end will come. We must have some kind of evidence to get a thousand years between the resurrection of all Christians and “the end.” I have not yet seen this evidence!

Paul is not finished. He tells us more about what will happen at “the end.” At the end these things will happen:

- 1) Christ will destroy all dominion, power and authority, 1 Corinthians 15:24.
- 2) Christ will hand over *the kingdom* to God. This tells us that Christ is **now** in control of the kingdom i.e. reigning, else how could He “hand over the kingdom” if He was not in control of the kingdom? This is in perfect agreement with:

Matthew 28:18,

“Then Jesus came to them [after His resurrection and before his ascension -cb] and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me," -- Implying sufficient power to “reign.”

And Ephesians 1:19b-23

“That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:25 starts with “For.” This explains the reason for the previous verses. Meaning, these things will happen while Christ is reigning and *until* he (Christ) puts all his enemies under his feet.

Maybe this is the place for the thousand-year reign, that is, maybe Christ is reigning **now** for a thousand years (figuratively) while he is destroying all power, authority and dominion. He is putting all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy is death, which will be destroyed at the resurrection, thereby ending His reign. This possibility seems to fit the facts so far examined.

Verse 25 of 1 Corinthians 15 continues with the length of time Christ is going to reign, only until all his enemies are put under his feet. How long will this take? It will take until death is destroyed, because death is the last enemy to be destroyed or to be “put under his feet.” But when will this happen? Death is destroyed at the general resurrection, because at that time all the dead will rise never to die again!! If death is destroyed at the resurrection and the resurrection happens “when he comes” then we can only conclude that Christ will *end* his reign when he comes, not *begin* it. This implies that Christians who die before the general resurrection are in heaven now, reigning with Christ, 1 Thessalonians 4:13 ff. (See *The Afterlife*, Part 2 by Cliff Baird)

Do we have corroborating evidence for this conclusion that Christ will end His reign at the second coming? Look at 1 Corinthians 15:50-55.

“50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 ¶ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

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The mortal and the perishable will put on immortality and be clothed with the imperishable at the resurrection, thereby destroying death, the last enemy of Christ. This will end his reign when he “hands over the kingdom to God the father” at the end of time (for more detail go to the website cliffbaird.wordpress.com and click on "Time will End").

More corroborating evidence is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17:

“13 ¶ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

In this passage Paul tells us the sequence of events of the second coming:

- 1) the Lord comes bringing with Him *all who have fallen asleep in Him*,
- 2) the dead in Christ (implying *all* the dead **in Christ**) are raised first
- 3) then we who are left (alive and on earth) until his coming *will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) and “will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord *in the air*.”
- 4) “And so we will be with the Lord *forever*.”

We will meet the Lord in the air and be with him there forever. Again, no possibility for an earthly reign here for we will meet the Lord in the air, at His coming, and remain there with the Lord forever in the air.

One more passage to read before we return to Revelation 20. Let us look at 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

“1 ¶ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. 3 ¶ Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

This account of the lawless one being held back for a time and then released until he is destroyed *by the second coming of the Lord Jesus* (vv.1,8) is strikingly similar to the passages in Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10. Please reread these verses in Revelation to observe the striking similarities to the verses in 2 Thessalonians. Also notice the “lawless one” is released after the “held back” period and then “the Lord Jesus” will *overthrow* [the lawless one] *with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming* (vv.6-8). The **end** of the “lawless one’s” release period occurs at the second coming of Christ. At this time the lawless one will also be destroyed.

With this background of scriptures outside of the book of Revelation clearly refuting Premillennialism, we conclude that Christ is reigning now and will end His reign at His second coming.

Let us now return to our text of Revelation 20. We will proceed to the next paragraph of the text starting at verse 4.

Revelation 20:4a

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They [sentence structure from ASV is "... God, and such as"] had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.

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In this vision John saw the “souls of those who had been beheaded...” John saw *souls*, not bodies. Many people want to dispute this plainly stated fact and say “you cannot see a spirit (or soul)” therefore he must have seen the bodies of the martyrs after they had participated in a literal first resurrection, v.5-6. But this is a vision, John’s vision, not ours. Surely he has the right to tell us what he saw. In this vision he saw souls. Since this was a vision by God, He (God) can make John see whatever He wants John to see. “Seeing” souls is not even unique to this scripture. The rich man *saw* Lazarus and Abraham, after their deaths, in Luke 16:23. Peter, James and John *saw* Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration, Matthew 17:3, Mark 9:4, Luke 9:30-31. Also Jesus said in Luke 13:28,

There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.

We are told in our text that John saw souls! What evidence is there to say that John meant to say bodies? There is no contextual evidence that bodies were implied. There is no logical, grammatical or scriptural reason to think this text *I saw the souls* is figurative. Therefore, John saw “souls.”

Whose souls did he see? “Those who had been beheaded...” Should this phrase be taken literally and exclusively to mean that only the souls of the beheaded are in heaven reigning with Christ? If any group is mentioned in the Bible it is always taken to be exclusive unless there is additional information from other scriptures that expands the group to make it more inclusive. Also, any phrase in scriptures should always be taken literally unless there is adequate evidence for it to be understood figuratively. I believe we have adequate evidence to understand that the reference to the beheaded martyrs is a figure of speech representing all martyrs, not just those who were beheaded, cf. Revelation 6:9

9 ¶ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. 10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow-servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

This plainly describes those in heaven as "those who had been slain because of the word of God," not just those who were beheaded.

We also have other scriptures to enlarge the group reigning with Christ to include all Christians. Please consider the following:

- 1) If "beheaded" ones is literal and exclusive, then those martyrs who died a much more painful death, such as crucifixion, hanging, being burned alive, etc. would not be reigning with Christ, but only those who were martyred by beheading. This seems rather arbitrary. God is not arbitrary. Christ himself was not beheaded. It seems strange indeed, to eliminate from this reigning even those who were martyred by the same method of dying that Christ suffered.
- 2) God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) and he promises a “crown of life” to **all** who are faithful to the point of death, Revelation 2:10, and a crown of righteousness is for all Christians, 2 Timothy 4:8.
- 3) “he [any Christian] who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death” (Revelation 2:11b) and this is the exact promise made to those who are reigning with Christ, Revelation 20:6b.
- 4) There is never a mention of a special blessing for those who are beheaded versus any other Christian who dies in the Lord. It would appear on the surface that if only “the beheaded” are reigning with Christ then all the others who have been martyred in other ways are not with Christ. This conclusion is unsupported outside this passage and is not necessitated by this passage. If not with Christ, where are the *non*-beheaded martyrs and why are they not with Christ?
- 5) 1 Thessalonians 4:14 says that God will bring with Jesus *those who have fallen asleep in him*. This implies **all** that have fallen asleep in him were with him before his second coming, not just the beheaded ones. Therefore the souls of all Christians who died before the second coming are in heaven with Christ.
- 6) We also have other references in Revelation to those in heaven. The souls/people seen in these visions are described differently, as follows:

6:9 ... I saw under the alter the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God... (10) They called out in a loud voice, "how long sovereign Lord ... until you judge the inhabitants of the earth ...?" [All who died for the cause of Christ were in heaven before the second coming]

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7:9 a great multitude that no-one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. ... (14) These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; ... [for context read chapters 7 - 9]

15:2 those who had been victorious over the beast and his image...

[They were in heaven before the last plagues were delivered to the earth. cf. 15:5 - 16:21, therefore before the second coming]

20:4a the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony... and whosoever did not worship the beast...

[This all happened before the second death. cf. 20:6, 21:8]

By reading the context of each of these passages we see these descriptions were of events before the second coming of Christ and the destruction of the earth. Because of the verity of groups described we can only conclude that these groups represent all the saved.

- 7) Further analysis of verse 4a of Revelation chapter 20 gives additional reasons for concluding that John saw many more souls in this verse than just the beheaded.

This English text is taken from the ASV:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

And from the Greek:

και ειδον θρονους και εκαθισαν επ αυτους και κριμα εδοθη αυτοις και τας ψυχας των πεπελεκισμενων δια την μαρτυριαν ιησου και δια τον λογον του θεου[,] και οιτινες ου προσεκυνησαν το θηριον ουδε την εικονα αυτου και ουκ ελαβον το χαραγμα επι το μετωπον και επι την χειρα αυτων και εξησαν και εβασιλευσαν μετα του χριστου τα χιλια ετη

The underlined words, and the comma before them, are very important. The meaning of the Greek word οιτινες is critical to our correct understanding of this verse. The problem is this: did John see just one group (the beheaded) or two groups (the beheaded and another larger group)? Are the two underlined words the beginning of a description of the second group, i.e. those who "worshipped not the beast, neither his image..." or are these words just a continuation of the description of the beheaded? Οιτινες is nominative, plural, masculine, from οστις (whoever). It is, therefore the subject of the verb προσεκυνησαν (worship) (Third person plural, aorist tense, indicative mood). The reason for this detail is to help clarify the definitions in the lexicons. The lexicons both give definitions conditioned on the tense of the verb. Our verb is in the **ao**rist tense.

BAG: οστις 1. any person, whoever, every one who, in a generalizing sense: b. with the aorist ...Revelation 20:4.

Thayer: οστις ...hence properly *any one who*; i.e. 1. *whoever, every one who*; Plural οιτινες whosoever (all those who): ... with aorist indicative, ...Revelation 20:4

The ASV and the NKJB gives us the correct sense of this word by the translating it as "**and such** as worshipped not the beast..." This indicates the John saw not only the beheaded but also another group identified as those who "worshipped not the beast..." This understanding is strengthened by the presence of the comma which separates the two phrases grammatically. This comma is present in the Textus Receptus and the Third edition of the United Bible Societies Greek text as well as Berry's (" and those who did not do homage ...") and Marshall's (" and who did not worship...") interlinears. The comma is absent in the Brown and Comfort's interlinear, but the meaning is the same ("and [those] who do not worship ...") .

The preponderance of this evidence supports the ASV translation:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such [any one who, whosoever, everyone who, whoever - cb] as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4a Summary:

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The comma with the *καὶ οἳτινες* (and whoever) indicates the beginning of a description of another group separate from the beheaded, which is much more general and inclusive than just “the beheaded.”

From Revelation we have other descriptions of those in heaven, before the second coming of Christ:

those who had been slain because of the word of God..., 6:9

a great multitude that no-one could count, 7:9

those who had been victorious over the beast and his image..., 15:2

those who had been beheaded ... and whosoever did not worship the beast..., 20:4a

We conclude these verses describe all the saved who died before the second coming. Because, if these are not *all* the saved how do we explain the absence of those not here? We must also answer the question of where are the saved who have died, if not with Christ?

This evidence seems to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that these verses are describing all Christians who died before the second coming. John, by guidance of the Holy Spirit, is merely being specific, not exclusive when speaking of the beheaded ones.

We will now return to our text.

Revelation 20:4b-6:

They came to life (ἐζήσαν) and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life (ἐζήσαν) until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Evidently this is a very difficult passage for the translators. I checked more than ten translations and they were about evenly divided over the translation of the word *ἐζήσαν* (third person plural, first aorist, indicative mood of ζῶω) which means "to live, or to come to life." This word only occurs in these two verses (20:4-5) in the New Testament. Since this word occurs only twice and each occurrence has two possible meanings (*to live* or *to come to life*), we have four possible translations:

- 1) they came to life and reigned the rest of the dead did not come to life until ...
- 2) they came to life and reigned ... the rest of the dead did not live until ...
- 3) they lived and reigned ... the rest of the dead did not come to life until ...
- 4) they lived and reigned ... the rest of the dead did not live until ...

Your choice makes a huge difference in the meaning of the passage. The subject “they” is clear from the context to mean the souls of those who had died and were now reigning with Christ. But how can souls “come to life”? Souls never die, souls never were dead! How then can they “come to life”? But to say they “*lived* and reigned with Christ” makes perfect sense. This implies that the first two options listed above are untenable.

This understanding implies the Greek word *ἐζήσαν*, from verse 4 means “lived” not “come to life.” I think this choice is the correct possibility because souls (the subject of this verb) cannot “come to life” as they never die, and accepting “comes to life” as a literal bodily resurrection leads to a contradiction of 1 Thessalonians 4:13 ff., John 5:28-29 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, all of which say that everybody will be raised at the same time in the general resurrection. In addition to this, *all* Greek scholars *allow* the simple past tense of “lived” as a translation of this word as it is in the ASV.

The beheaded represent all who have died *in* Christ, that is, as Christians. “The rest of the dead” must be all who have died *outside* of Christ, that is those who are lost spiritually. Since “the rest of the dead” is now the subject of our verb *ἐζήσαν*, is it possible that the translation of the same verb in this consecutive sentence could be different?

If this same word (*ἐζήσαν*) has the same meaning in verse 5 as it did in verse 4 (option 4 from the list possibilities above) we then have:

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“*they lived* [continued to be awake, alert, knowing] *and reigned with Christ...* (5) *the rest of the dead lived not* [had no awakening, alertness nor knowing] *until the thousand years should be finished*” (ASV).

This translation implies that *the rest of the dead* were not alive (awake, alert, knowing) during the 1000 year reign because they *lived not* until after the 1000 year reign. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19 ff. demonstrates that all who die physically are still mentally alert, thereby showing that the above translation of v. 5 is incorrect.

Please note “the rest of *the dead*” implies that the previous group [the souls of the beheaded, etc.] were also part of *the dead*. But this part of the dead [the beheaded ones, etc.] “lived and reigned” during the 1000 years. How can we then say that “the rest *lived not* until ...”? This implies “the rest of the dead” had no life in them, had no alertness, no awareness, existed in nothingness during the thousand years. But the souls of the beheaded and “the rest” are two parts of one whole, “the dead” physically. Luke 16:19 ff. clearly establishes the mental awareness of all the physically dead. Thus, saying that “the rest” lived not during the 1000 years contradicts what Luke says. Therefore this translation (option 4, above) cannot be correct. That leaves option 3 from the list of possibilities, i.e.

3) they lived and reigned ... the rest of the dead did not come to life until ...

is the only viable alternative. It therefore is the correct translation of these two sentences.

By using the other acceptable definition of our verb ἐζήσαν, i.e. “Come to life” in verse 5, the whole context is easier to understand. Then we would have:

(4) “... *They* [the souls of the beheaded, etc.] *lived* [spiritually] *and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* (5) *The rest of the dead* [non-Christians] *did not come to life* [with their new bodies] *until the thousand years were ended* [at the general resurrection].”

Since all the dead in Christ will be raised at his second coming (1 Thess. 4:13 ff.) and both the good and the evil will be resurrected at the same time (John 5:28-29) we conclude that the general resurrection will occur at the second coming, ending the thousand year reign. This supports the idea that verse 5 is talking about the general resurrection and the suggested translation of “... *They lived* [spiritually] *and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* *The rest of the dead did not come to life* [with their new bodies] *until the thousand years were ended.*” is both accurate and easier to understand.

Giving the verb ἐζήσαν (to live or come to life) two different meanings in consecutive sentences is not that unusual if the contextual evidence is sufficient, as I believe it is in this case. Maybe it’s something like saying:

- 1) "While *moving* to our new house I was listening to some very *moving* gospel music on the radio."
- 2) ...I was *coming* to this conclusion as I was *coming* home.
- 3) The soldiers *died*, while the rest *died* as they heard about it.
- 4) As he *read* his newspaper he was being *read*.
- 5) He heard the batter's *hit*, as he took a *hit* while *hitting* the financial pages.
- 6) "...when the dead will *hear* the voice of the son of God and those who *hear* will live." John 5:25
- 7) "Let the *dead* bury their own *dead*" Matthew 8:22

Especially note example 6 and 7. Jesus is speaking. He uses both verbs, *hear* and *dead*, with two different meanings in the same verse.

Do we really need the following bracketed explanation to understand the above listed examples?

- 3) Soldiers *died*, while the rest *died* [emotionally] as they heard about it.
- 4) As he *read* his newspaper he was being *read* [watched].
- 5) He heard the batter's *hit* [baseball], as he took a *hit* [painful experience] while *hitting* [as in "hitting the books"] the financial pages.

In these examples the same verb has multiple distinct meanings in the same sentence, made clear by the context. The same process was used in defining our verb ἐζήσαν.

The first resurrection

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20:5b “ *This is the **first** resurrection.*”

We must first establish to which of the previous actions does this sentence *This is the **first** resurrection* refer? In English the pronoun *This* would generally refer to the closest nounal phrase or sentence. In other words, is the first resurrection in verse 5b referring to *those who lived and reigned with Christ* or to *the rest of the dead who did not come to life until the thousand years were ended ...?* Which of these actions is referred to as the first resurrection?

Verse 6 makes it plain: **6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.** Since "the rest of the dead" are those not reigning with Christ, therefore not blessed and holy, the "first resurrection" must refer to those who are *blessed, holy and reigning* with Christ.

If this first resurrection (Christians going to reign with Christ) is taken literally to mean a bodily resurrection, then we have two bodily resurrections, one before the thousand year reign (Revelation 20:4b) and another one after the thousand years (Revelation 20:5). If the first resurrection is taken literally, implying those reigning with Christ have a physical body, then they will receive a second body at the second coming of Christ, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. But this is in clear opposition to the words of Jesus in John 5:28-29:

28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out— those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

This clearly says that all, both good and evil, will be raised together, in one resurrection.

Also Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:22-23

"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him."

All will be made alive when he comes, not some people before He comes and others a thousand years after He comes.

Paul adds more information on this subject in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10:

"6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

This clearly establishes that the evil ones will be punished on the day He comes, not a thousand years later.

We must also consider that if this first resurrection is taken literally it happened at the beginning of the millennium, in order to reign with Christ throughout that period. Clearly, this first resurrection and the following thousand year reign could only happen, 1) before the second coming, or 2) after the second coming. A bodily resurrection of the saints before the second coming is a clear contradiction to 1 Corinthians 15:22-26:

22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

"Those who belong to him" will be "made alive" when he comes, not a thousand years before He comes. Therefore, this "first resurrection," if literal, could not have happened before the second coming.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

"16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first."

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Please forgive this repetition for emphasis. Again, this says that the “dead in Christ” will rise first, at the second coming, not a thousand years before his coming. Therefore, if this “first resurrection” from Revelation 20:4b was a literal bodily resurrection it can not have happened before the second coming. Could it happen after the second coming?

If this “first resurrection” from Revelation 20:4b was a literal bodily resurrection which happened after the second coming, then it must be the general Christian resurrection of 1 Thessalonians 4:16 which happened *at his coming*. What then is the *second* resurrection, which is implied by the expression “*first* resurrection” of Revelation 20:5b and when will the “rest” be made alive? Premillennialists are forced to say “the rest” (from Revelation 20:5) will be resurrected a thousand years after the Christian resurrection of 1 Thessalonians 4:16. But we know from the simple and plain language of Jesus in John 5:28-29

28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

and Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

"6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you."

Both the righteous and the unrighteous will be resurrected at the same time is very plain from these passages. That means that either there will be no second resurrection (and, therefore, we have no meaning for the word "first" of the phrase "first resurrection") or we have completely misunderstood the verse and/or the expression “first resurrection” in Revelation 20:5b.

I cast my vote for the latter possibility *if* we say that the first resurrection is a literal bodily resurrection.

If the expression “first resurrection” is figurative, meaning simply the transition from the earthly physical state to the heavenly spiritual state with Christ, then the meaning is simple and clear and harmonizes with the simpler language of the other scriptures mentioned above, John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. This interpretation is also supported by Ockham's razor.

Revelation 20:4b-6. Summary:

- 1) The correct translation is: "...they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.
- 2) The expression "the first resurrection" refers to the transition at death of faithful Christians to heaven where they will reign with Christ until His second coming.
- 3) The "come to life" from v. 5 refers to the general resurrection which occurs at the second coming of Christ, at the end of His thousand year reign.
- 4) The thousand year reign is occurring now. Jesus and all the faithful Christians who have previously died are reigning in heaven together.

All of this evidence is in harmony with John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 and conflicts with no other scriptures, and is therefore the preferred meaning.

Revelation 20:7-10:

As an introduction to these verses in Revelation please read this passage from 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12:

"1 ¶ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. 3 ¶ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so

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that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6 And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Compare this to the passage in Revelation 20:3, 7-10:

3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. ...

7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

This passage also has generated a lot of interest and speculation. I will simply make several observations.

First, the length of this time period between the Devil's release and his destruction is unknown. It will obviously be less time than the figurative thousand years of the previous verses because it is referred to as a "short time" compared to the 1000 years, verse 3. The actual length of this time period we simply do not know. But, based on the evidence we do have, it may be very short. Consider:

- 1) The devil will not be released until after the thousand year reign, vv. 3, 7.
- 2) The general resurrection will occur at the end of the thousand year reign, v.5.
- 3) The general resurrection will occur when Christ returns, 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- 4) Therefore Christ will return after the thousand year reign, destroying the devil in the process, v.9 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10
- 5) The "lawless one" (2 Thessalonians 2:8) will be revealed and then "destroyed" by the splendor of the second coming, seemingly soon after his being revealed.

There is no evidence that the "short time" after the devil is released will be very long. Maybe these verses imply that the "short time" might, indeed, be a very short time.

Second, During this *short* time the devil will have more influence because he has been freed from the Abyss, verses 7-9, and revealed at the proper time, 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8. Christ is still reigning during this period because at His return He will destroy the devil and turn over the kingdom to the Father, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

Third, this short period will be worse for the Christians because the evil's forces will be consolidated against us. But with God's help, protection, guidance and assistance (as previously mentioned) *we will prevail*.

Fourth, Christians will be victorious, the Devil and his associates will end up in Hell, the lake of burning sulfur for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:11-15:

For this section of our text we will compare two versions, the NIV and the ASV.

The NIV text says:

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Each verse of the ASV text is listed separately, as follows:

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

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

13 *And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

14 *And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.*

15 *And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.*

Each verse in the ASV and in the Greek text starts with *and*. This indicates a continuing thought from the previous verse. This just means that John is continuing his description of his vision. The pictures keep changing, maybe like a video or movie, but each new picture is continuing the overall vision. This implies that the new picture in each verse follows the scene from the previous verse. This, in turn, implies that the **casting into the lake of fire** of verse 14 was done after the **judging** of verses 12 and 13. That is why the NIV, WHY, RSV, NKJV all start verse 14 with “then.”

Returning to the context,

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

Who sat on the throne? Who is assigned the task of judging? To my knowledge it is universally accepted that Christ has been appointed this responsibility, Matthew 28:18, John 5:22, Romans 2:16, 2 Timothy 4:1, etc.

Why is the vision depicting heaven and earth as leaving or vanishing from his presence? This scene is occurring in the spirit world, with the spirit of Christ judging the dead, i.e. the spirits of those who have died. This detail is just completing the picture of a place where there is no physical or material matter, as the physical world has no influence in this judgment. The absence of both the earth and the sky emphasizes that the whole picture is spiritual. The Greek word here translated heaven means sky as it does in these other nine verses: Matthew 5:18, 16:2, 16:3, 24:35; Mark 13:31, Luke 4:25, Luke 21:33, Acts 7:49, James 5:18, Revelation 6:14.

Verse 11 also implies the control, majesty and power held by the judge over the physical things created by Him, Colossians 1:15-17.

The main thought in this paragraph is the judging done in verses 12 and 13.

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

13 *And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

Who is described as being judged? The dead. But who are the dead? As has been noted, the expression “the dead” is used 103 times in the (NIV) New Testament, see Appendix B for a complete list. Of these 103 verses, 99 times it is clearly referring to the spirits of those who have physically died. Thus, this normal, regular meaning of the phrase “the dead” should be considered first. If we determine that “the dead” means the physically dead, then there is harmony between this passage and the rest of the New Testament which teaches that judgment comes after physical death, Hebrews 9:27.

If some should consider the possibility that the phrase, the dead, means spiritually dead then we would have several contradictions:

- 1) Those who are spiritually dead are lost, they have already been judged.
- 2) Some of “the dead” from verse 12 are not thrown into the fire, i.e. those whose names were written in the book, verse 15. But if “the dead” means those who are spiritually dead then all must be thrown into the fire.
- 3) Some who are spiritually dead are still living physically on the earth because this is happening before the general resurrection. We know this is true because after the general resurrection there will be no “dead,” all will be alive. Those who are still alive physically have a chance to obey and be “raised to life” spiritually. Our text is the scene of **a** final judgment, with no more chance to change, i.e. those whose names are not written in the book are thrown into the fire.

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In addition, **the dead** always means the dead, either physically or spiritually. This phrase never refers to those who have experienced a resurrection. After a resurrection the “person” is always assumed to be “alive.” This is always true, whether we are talking of the spiritually dead or the physically dead. The term never refers to those who have experienced a spiritual or physical resurrection.

This seems to be enough evidence to warrant the decision that the phrase “the dead” in our text means the spirits of those who are physically dead and before their physical resurrection at the second coming..

Some may think this judging is being done after everyone has died and before the general resurrection and therefore includes “everybody” who ever lived. This cannot be so because some will never die, 1 Corinthians 15:51 “... we will not all die, but we all be changed...” Some will never die, therefore could never be referred to as part of “the dead.” The phrase in Revelation 20:12 represents a very large group, but not everybody. Also Luke 16:19 ff. says many will die and receive their judgment, punishment or comfort, immediately. In our text “the dead” are the spirits of those who have died and not yet received their judgment until verse 15.

But, how is it possible to *see* the spirits? Don’t forget that this is a vision, a supernatural work of God. In a vision John can *see* anything that God wants him to see. The Holy Spirit told John to write “I saw the dead,” therefore, John saw the dead! Why is this so hard to believe? For example, we see spirits all the time in movies and think nothing of it. Oh yes, I know, we really only see some image that we “know” are spirits from the context of the movie. Likewise, John saw something and he knew what it was, **and was told** what it was. He was told he saw “the dead.” John was also told to write “I saw” the dead. “Seeing” the dead is not even unique to this scripture. The rich man “saw” Lazarus and Abraham, after their death, in Luke 16:23. Peter, James and John saw Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration, Matthew 17:3, Mark 9:4, Luke 9:30-31. Jesus said in Lu 13:28 “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you *see* Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.”

And just a few verses earlier in Revelation 20:4 (see the previous comments on that verse), John had also seen the souls of those beheaded for the cause of Christ.

We, therefore conclude, John *saw* the spirits of those who had died physically and had not yet been resurrected.

When was this event going to happen? Not, when did John see the vision (about 100 A.D.), but when did the event in John’s vision occur? Since he saw the dead, the event would take place before the general resurrection because after the general resurrection those same spirits would have a new body and no longer be classified as **the dead**! This is in perfect harmony with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, a judgment after death and before the resurrection.

If this judgment took place before the general resurrection then everyone could not possibly be there all together, all at that same time, because before Christ’s return (and the general resurrection) many people are still alive on earth and could not be classified among the dead. Therefore, this cannot be a scene describing everyone being judged all together at the same time.

Another reason that this judgment cannot be of everyone at the same time is that it would contradict Luke 16:19 ff. and other verses that teach at death we go to Heaven or Hell which implies that a judgment has already occurred at the time of death (Understanding the Afterlife, Part Two, Chapter 2, Paradise).

Remember John wrote down exactly what he saw. It is our responsibility to gain the meaning from the facts as reported by John, even if those facts might encourage us to rethink some of previously held conclusions.

We must first try to understand the meanings of the words according to their regular, natural and literal meanings. If we can reach a conclusion that does not contradict any other scriptures and is consistent with the general context then our conclusion is probably correct.

Since our text cannot mean that everyone will be at this judgment at the same time, why the reference to “the great and small” being there, and “...the sea and ... Death and Hades” all giving up the dead in them?

If the evidence presented so far is sufficient to prove that Jesus taught a judgment immediately after death (Luke 16:19 ff.) how is it possible to have a very large group here experiencing judgment at the same time?

How then can we understand this vision?

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When did the people from the Old Testament time experience judgment? We see from the evidence that before Christ died no one received the forgiveness of sins, Hebrews 9:15. Those sins were "passed over" (ASV), "passed by" (Marshall's interlinear) or "left unpunished" (NIV) until the "present time" of Romans 3:25-27. Therefore before the time of Christ all who died went to the same place, neither comforted (as was Lazarus) nor tormented (as was the rich man), i.e. Sheol, Ecclesiastes 9:10.

This is discussed in more detail in *Understanding the Afterlife*, by Cliff Baird, Part Two, introduction to the Hadean World and chapter 8, "Jesus in Hades ...".

When Christ died He went into Hades, Acts 2:27,31. Where was this "place." Why did He go there? The normal translation of the Hebrew word *sheol* into Greek is Hades. The word Sheol is used 63 times in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word Sheol was translated 59 times by the Greek word Hades in the Septuagint (LXX), the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek c. 240 BC. This demonstrates that anytime a Greek writer wanted to refer to Sheol he would have probably used the Greek word Hades.

We also have an **inspired translation** of the Hebrew word *Sheol* into the Greek word *Hades* in Acts 2:27. The Holy Spirit inspired David to write *Sheol* in Psalms 16:10. The same Holy Spirit also inspired Luke to write *Hades* in Acts 2:27 when quoting David. Thus when Jesus was **not abandoned** to *Hades*, Acts 2:31, implies Jesus was **in Hades** before his resurrection. But in this context, Acts 2:25-31, the Greek word *Hades* is a translation of the Hebrew word *Sheol*. But *Hades* was also the place where the rich man went in Jesus' parable recorded in Luke 16:19 ff., which could only be a description of Hell. So when the word Hades is used in the New Testament only the context can tell is it refers to Sheol or Hell. The context of Acts 2 says *Hades* was the Greek work for the Hebrew word *Sheol* when Luke quoted Psalms 16:10. Ecclesiastes 9:10 gives a vivid description of *Sheol* "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in **Sheol**, whither thou goest" (ASV).

Everyone who died before the time of Christ went to Sheol, a place of peace, quite and ... nothingness (Ecclesiastes 9:10), until Christ visited there while His body was in the tomb.

Looking at the following three passages will help us to understand Christ's trip into Sheol.

- 1) 1 Peter 3: 18-20 (NIV) For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 **through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison** 20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. ...
- 2) 1 Peter 4:5-6 (ASV) 4 ¶ wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: 5 who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 **For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead**, that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.
- 3) John 5:25 (NIV) 24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. 25 I tell you the truth, **a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.**

The book of 1st Peter was written about 64-65 A.D. In verses 3:18-19 Peter says plainly that Christ went "through the Spirit" and preached to the spirits in prison. Then he defines those spirits as those who died during the time of Noah.

John 5:25 is especially noteworthy. Notice two things:

- a) "the dead" will hear the voice of Jesus. The hearers will have an option, "...and those who hear will live."
- b) When will this happen? Jesus said the "time is coming" (future tense) and "has now come" (present tense) when the dead "will hear" (future tense).

When Jesus spoke these words the event had not yet happened, but it was to happen soon enough to say "the time has now come." This timing seems to fit His trip into Sheol (Hades) at His death as reported in Acts 2:25-32.

Who then was there at this judgment described in Revelation 20:12? Verse 12 says *And I saw **the dead**, the great and the small, standing before the throne.*" Do we have any other information about a judgment of a large group of dead individuals that were/would be judged at the same time?

At the second coming of Christ all the people living on earth at that time will be judged at the same time. But the group in verse 12 cannot be those living at the time of the second coming, because the judgment described in Revelation 20:11 ff. occurs before the general

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resurrection. The people on earth at the time of the second coming are alive, not part of "the dead," 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Those alive at the second coming will "not sleep" but will be transformed "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye," never having died, therefore never having been a part of "the dead."

The only group of people who fit the description in Revelation 20 are all the people who were in Sheol when Jesus went there and preached. They were all together at the same time and in the same "place," Sheol. Both good and bad. In the same place, waiting to be judged. They were judged in verse 13:

*13 And the sea gave up **the dead** that were in it; and death and Hades gave up **the dead** that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

Some have objected that *the dead* cannot have its usual meaning of spirits because verse 13 says, in part, *And the sea gave up the dead that were in it...* and there are no spirits in the sea. What then would the objector say was in the sea to be given up? Certainly not bodies because the sea has no bodies either. After only a few weeks in the open sea the human body decays either to nothing or to just bones depending on how many sea creatures have feasted on the remains. If, in verse 13, "the dead" does not mean spirits and it does not mean bodies, then what does it mean?? Once again Ockham's razor might help us here. All that was previously said about the ability to *see* spirits can apply here. The simplest explanation that fits the facts is that in this verse also "the dead" means the spirits of the physically dead, and the sea, death and Sheol giving up their dead is just harmonizing with the previous idea in verse 12 that everyone who died before Christ will be judged, without exception, even those who died at sea, and *"and they were judged every man according to their works."*

A Second Chance?

Some have objected to this idea that Jesus went to sheol to preach because, it is said, "then those people would then be given a second chance. And that can't be right because, because well, because that would not be fair, God is no respecter of persons, Acts 10:34, Romans 2:4, Ephesians 6:9!"

Let us assume, for the moment, that this faulty reasoning was correct. If God decided to give those people who died before Christ a second chance, who are we to say He was wrong!

This faulty reasoning forgets to ask the most basic question, i.e. "Second chance to do what?" Certainly not a second chance to obey Christ because the souls in Sheol had not had any chance to obey Christ! Did the souls in Sheol have the same motivation to obey God as we have? Did the Old Covenant motivate as well as the New Covenant? (Reviewing Hebrews 9 & 10 will help in answering this question.) Did the souls in Sheol know about Christ giving up His equality with God, Philippians 2? Did they witness, or read an eye witness account of Christ's teachings, His miracles, His love, His sacrifice, His sufferings, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension and promised return? It seems that the evidence warrants the decision that God would be a respecter of persons if He **DID NOT** send Jesus to preach to the spirits in prison, 1 Peter 3:19-20, and have the same Gospel of Jesus preached "even to the dead," 1 Peter 4:6, and have the "dead hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live," John 5:25.

Does the objector mean to imply each and every person must have exactly the same number of "chances" to obey Him? Does the objector mean that every person who dies in his twenties, thirties or forties has had the exact number of chances to obey God as the person who dies in his fifties, sixties or seventies? If not then God is a respecter of persons?? Or is it more reasonable to think each person who has ever lived deserves at least one chance to respond to the Gospel of Christ, even those who died before Jesus lived.

Returning to our text in Revelation 20: The end of Death and Hades

14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.

15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Verse 14 says, in part, *And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.*

In "Understanding the Afterlife," Part Two, it has been proven that Tartarus is synonymous with Hell and that Paradise is just another name for Heaven. That book also proves the word *Hades* means Sheol in Acts 2:27, 31, and in the Gospels the word *Hades* is equal to the word *hell*. Therefore, when the word Hades is used in Revelation it either means Sheol as it does in Acts 2:27, 31 or it is synonymous with Hell as it is in the Gospels.

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Remember this event of judging in Revelation 20 is occurring before the general resurrection which occurs at the second coming, 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Therefore, the throwing of death and Sheol into the lake of fire happens before the second coming. This being true, Hades cannot be understood as it is in the traditional view, else the traditional two part Hadean world would be thrown into the lake of fire before the general resurrection. This would leave no place of residence for those who died after the "throwing" event and before the second coming.

The traditional view of a two part Hadean world would require that Paradise, also, is thrown into Hell, which seems very incongruous.

However the discarding of Sheol into the lake of fire signifies the end of the place where all the dead resided before the resurrection of Christ. After the resurrection of Christ there would be no need for it as all would go directly to heaven or hell, Luke 16:19 ff.

What about *death*? Why is *death* also thrown into the lake of fire?

Death is used 18 times in the book of Revelation. All four times *Hades* is used in this book it is tied to *death*, i.e. *death and Hades*. The other six times where Hades is used in the New Testament it is used alone. Why in the book of Revelation is Hades always tied to death?

Could it be just a coincidence, with no special meaning? Are there words or combination of words in the Bible that have no significance? We know that God does not use *filler* in His word! Every word, in context, means something! Every combination of words, in context, has a purpose for being there. If this is true, then the use of *death* and *Hades* together has some significance.

The word *death* is used 18 times in 15 verses in Revelation (see Appendix A for a complete list). Four times (2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8) death is tied to the adjective *second*. The *second death* is defined as the lake of fire (Hell) in 20:14 and 21:8. Therefore in these four verses *second death* refers to hell.

Four other times *death* is tied to Hades (1:18, 6:8, 20:13 and 20:14). The other 10 uses of the word *death* are talking about physical death. Let us look at the 4 times *death and Hades* are used together:

1:18 *and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.*

6:8 *And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth.*

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

20:14 *And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.*

Death is a state of being. It is not a place. It is used here figuratively as if it were a place, a place tied to Hades (or Sheol). Why? John, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wants to use *death* in these 4 verses to tell us something different than the word specifies if used alone or with the adjective *second*. If the word is used alone its normal and usual meaning is physical death. This normal use of *death* is not what John is trying to tell us else he would not have tied it to Hades consistently in this one book of Revelation. If *death* is not the physical death experienced by all before the second coming, then what?

Is the death associated with Sheol (or Hades) different than all other physical death? Yes, it is, **at least in this one way**. The death associated with Sheol is a transfer from the state of the living into a state ofwell, ... nothingness, Ecclesiastes 9:10. At least it is nothingness as far as the Bible tells us. Those who died before Christ were not in a state of comfort **or** torment. Therefore, nothingness. If you prefer the word "rest" or "sleep" that is understandable. We know these two words and are comfortable with them and they may even be better choices than "nothingness." The point is, the process that transferred souls into Sheol (i.e. death before Christ's resurrection) was a different process than the death after Christ.

The *death* before had no judgment associated with it. The *death* after Christ came with a judgment attached to it, Luke 16:19 ff.

All death that occurred after Christ's resurrection transferred a person into comfort, as Lazarus, or torment, as the rich man. It seems the *death* that is tied to Sheol in the expression *death and Hades* (Sheol) is the death that transferred someone into nothingness. Not *all* death or *any* death but only the death that was tied to Sheol (Hades) was cast into the fire. That type of death or process was

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terminated, finished and ended at the same time as Sheol, i.e. after Christ died and before His resurrection when both *death* and *Sheol* were cast into the lake of fire.

The simplest solution that accords with all the facts and produces the least problems is that all four times the word Hades is used in Revelation it means Sheol, the place where all the dead resided before Christ's resurrection. The *death* that was cast into the fire was that special death that transferred the souls of the living into the nothingness of Sheol before the resurrection of Christ.

Summary

In our study of Revelation 20 we have demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that:

- 1) All five times that the phrase "the dead" is used in our text, Revelation 20, it means the spirits of those who have died and been separated from their bodies and have not yet been resurrected.
- 2) The beheaded ones (v. 4) represent *all* who died for the cause of Christ.
- 3) Those who did not worship the beast (v. 4) represent all who died *in Christ*,
- 4) The souls of all who died *in Christ* "lived" and reigned with Christ a thousand years, v. 4.
- 5) The rest of the dead (v. 5) represents all non-Christians, they did not "come to life" until the thousand years were over. This will occur at the general resurrection when Christ returns.
- 6) The first resurrection (v. 5) refers to the transferring of the saved, at death, from the earthly physical state to the heavenly spiritual state to reign with Christ.
- 7) The thousand year reign of Christ began when the devil was limited (Hebrews 2:14) by Christ's death and will end at Christ's second coming when the last enemy, death, is destroyed.
- 8) After the thousand year reign there will be a "short time" or "Little while" (v. 3) when the devil is released and cause havoc in world until he is destroyed by Christ at his second coming (v. 7, 9).
- 9) The large group of "the dead" that are judged in verse 12 are all those who died before Christ and were judged by Him while He was in Sheol (Hades), John 5:25, Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Peter 3:19, 4:6.
- 10) The special death that put people into Sheol, and Sheol itself, were both terminated, being cast into the fire (v. 14) during the time that Christ was in Hades (Sheol), Acts 2:29-35.

Remember that if these conclusions are not accepted, there must be more or better evidence to support an alternative view or you will be guilty of accepting a position with less evidence than the one you rejected and you will be implying that God is supporting the truth with less evidence than a false alternative.

Of course, it is understood that not everyone will agree with these conclusions. Our plea is that all will evaluate this evidence with an open mind and a sincere heart and share with us any errors you find in our use of scriptures and/or logic.

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Appendix A - Every verse using "death" in Revelation

Re 1:18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Re 2:10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

Re 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Re 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works.

Re 6:8 And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Re 9:6 And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them.

Re 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.

Re 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast;

Re 13:12 And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed.

Re 18:8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her.

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

Re 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Re 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.

Re 21:4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

Re 21:8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

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Appendix B - All 103 uses of the expression "the dead" in the New Testament

Matthew 8:22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Matthew 11:5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Matthew 14:2 and he said to his attendants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

Matthew 17:9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Matthew 22:31 But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you,

Matthew 22:32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

Matthew 27:64 So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

Matthew 28:7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

Mark 6:14 King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

Mark 6:16 But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

Mark 9:9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Mark 9:10 They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

Mark 12:25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Mark 12:26 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

Luke 7:15 The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Luke 7:22 So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Luke 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed, because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead,

Luke 9:60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Luke 16:30 "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

Luke 16:31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Luke 20:35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,

Luke 20:37 But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'.

Luke 20:38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Luke 24:5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

Luke 24:46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

John 2:22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

John 5:25 I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

John 11:39 "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days."

John 11:44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

John 12:1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

John 12:9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

John 12:17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.

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John 20:9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

John 21:14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Acts 3:15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

Acts 4:2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

Acts 4:10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.

Acts 9:40 Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning towards the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

Acts 10:40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.

Acts 10:41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

Acts 10:42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

Acts 13:30 But God raised him from the dead,

Acts 13:34 The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: "I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David."

Acts 13:37 But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

Acts 17:3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.

Acts 17:31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

Acts 17:32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."

Acts 23:6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead."

Acts 24:21 unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

Acts 26:8 Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

Acts 26:23 that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

Romans 1:4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 4:17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

Romans 4:24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness— for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Romans 7:4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

Romans 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Romans 10:7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 11:15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Romans 14:9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

1 Corinthians 6:14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

1 Corinthians 15:12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

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- 1 Corinthians 15:15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.
- 1 Corinthians 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.
- 1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- 1 Corinthians 15:21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.
- 1 Corinthians 15:29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptised for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptised for them?
- 1 Corinthians 15:32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."
- 1 Corinthians 15:35 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"
- 1 Corinthians 15:42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;
- 1 Corinthians 15:52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
- 2 Corinthians 1:9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.
- 2 Corinthians 4:14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.
- Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—
- Ephesians 1:20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
- Ephesians 5:14 for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."
- Philippians 3:11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.
- Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
- Colossians 2:12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
- 2 Timothy 2:8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel,
- 2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:
- Hebrews 6:2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
- Hebrews 11:19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.
- Hebrews 13:20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,
- 1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- 1 Peter 1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.
- 1 Peter 4:5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.
- Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,
- Revelation 11:18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth."
- Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."