

The Thousands Years: Often erroneously called The Millennium

By Lloyd Dale

When Christians consider and/or discuss “The Millennium” they are usually referring to the “thousands years” of Revelation chapter 20, specifically verses 2, 3, 4, 6, & 7. The English term “millennium” comes from two modified Latin words (*mille* + *annus*) meaning “thousand years” which leads many astray causing them to think that “the thousands years” of Revelation 20 was to be a literal 1000 years. In these verses “the thousands years” are discussed in the context of the first century binding of “the adversary” (2 - 3) which occurs at the beginning of the thousands years, the “reign of the resurrected Christ with His resurrected saints (i.e. “the first resurrection,” 4d, 5b, & 6) which also occurs at the beginning of the thousands years and “the release of the adversary” (7) and “the resurrection of the rest of the dead” which occurs after the thousands years have elapsed (5a, & 11-15).”

This paper is our attempt to give a careful, hermeneutically, sound, exegetically correct commentary on “the thousands years.” We think this study will clearly demonstrate that **the “thousands years” actually began shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70**, not at the ascension of Christ in ca. AD 30, nor at some time in our near future.

As for our hermeneutic: We think that the primary task for understanding Scripture correctly is trying to understand **what the writer meant** by what he wrote, within the time frame of which he wrote the text in question, and what he expected his first readers to understand from his writings. This is especially true of the New Testament

Today, some Christians think the thousands years is a symbolic number which represents a yet future earthly reign of Christ. However, most modern Christians insist that this “thousands years” is a literal, by count, 1,000 years – no more and no less - *yet to occur sometime in the future*. . ***We do not think so!***

On the other hand, some modern Christians insist that the “thousands years” in Revelation 20 was fulfilled in the 40 year period between the ascension of Jesus Christ in ca. 30 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Thus, from their perspective, the “thousands years” becomes 40 years that occurred in the early years of the first century. ***We do not think so!***

In his book *Biblical Apocalypics* (1898) the preterist Dr. Milton Terry wrote:

The thousand years is to be understood as a symbolical number, denoting a long period. It is a round number, but stands for an indefinite period... Its beginning dates from the great catastrophe of this book, the fall of the mystic Babylon. It is the aeon (age) which opens with the going forth of the great Conqueror of xix, 11-16, and continues until He shall have put all of His enemies under His feet. (1 Cor. xv, 25)¹

James S. Russell, also a 19th century preterist (1878), who preceded Terry by a few years, also expressed his understanding of the thousands years to be a “symbolic number” representing a undetermined long period of time that began shortly after the fall of Jerusalem.

Russell wrote:

Some interpreters...supposing that the thousand years...may represent a period of very short duration...but this method of interpretation appears to us so violent and unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it.”²

We agree with Russell, Terry, and many other preterists. Our position is that the thousands years, a symbolic number for a long period of time, began with the first resurrection³ shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and continues forward from that point, to an, as yet, undetermined time in the future.

YHWH God gave the Revelation, the messenger is Jesus Christ, the scribe is the apostle John, the place is the isle of Patmos, the time is ca. 46-66 AD, and the style is essentially apocalyptic, metaphoric, symbolic revelation with a literal meaning.

John wrote:

And I see a messenger coming down from the heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain on his hand. And he laying hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the slanderer, and the adversary, and binding him **a thousands years**, And casting him into the abyss, and shutting him up, and setting a seal upon him, that he deceiving the nations no more, until **the thousands years** should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a short while. (Rev 20:1-3, emphasis added)

¹ Terry, Milton S. Dr., *Biblical Apocalypics*, page 451

² Russell, James Stuart, *The Parousia*, page 514

³ First resurrection, “they live again and reign with Christ” - Revelation 20:4d, 5b, 6

At this point, in addition to questions about the thousands years, there are a number of questions that we should ask ourselves about this passage:

1. What or who is this messenger?
2. What is this “the **heaven**”? Where is it located?
3. What is the “**key**” to the abyss?
4. What is the “**abyss**”?⁴ Where is it located?
5. What is the “**great chain**” that is on the messenger’s hand?
6. What or who is the character described as the “dragon, that ancient serpent, which is the slanderer, and **the adversary**”?
7. What is the meaning of the “**binding, shutting up, and sealing over**” of this “**the adversary**” in the **abyss**?
8. What is the “**seal**” that is placed “upon him”?
9. What is actually encompassed by the phrase “that he should **deceive the nations no more**”?⁵

Whatever and/or whoever all these events are or pertain to, these events (the appearance of the messenger with the key, the taking hold of the dragon, the binding of the adversary, the casting into, shutting up, and sealing of the adversary in the abyss) **must all take place before the thousands years could begin!** Ostensibly, most commentators on this passage have not bothered to ask the questions, let alone correctly answer them.

2. What is this “the **heaven**”? Where is it located?

Most Christians who read Revelation 20:1 automatically assume that the word “heaven” must always refer to the place where God lives, the messenger is actually an “angel”, the abyss is hell, the dragon is a literal fallen angel, etc. **We do not think so!**

A thorough and careful study of the Old Testament readily demonstrates that the lexeme “heaven” can have several meanings; one of which is that it can refer to a civil governmental structure – Sun, Moon, Stars = heaven.⁶ Thus, the lexeme “heaven” in Revelation 20:1 and numerous other verses in Revelation is an apocalyptic, metaphoric reference to the Roman Empire.

In a prophecy against Babylon Isaiah wrote:

“For **the stars of heaven** and their constellations will not give their light; **the sun** will be darkened in its going forth, And **the moon** will not cause its light to shine. "I will punish the world for *its* evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a mortal rarer than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of

⁴ See article “The Abyss Defined” in Fulfilled Magazine Spring 2010. For a fuller analysis of this “abyss” see the authors paper – The Abyss

⁵ For answers to these questions contact the author of this article

⁶ Genesis 37:9-10; et al.

Ophir. **Therefore I will shake the heavens**, And the land will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger. (Isaiah 13:9-13)”

This prophecy describes what will happen when Babylon is destroyed by the judgment of God. We know from history that Babylon was destroyed; however, none of the literal celestial bodies: heaven, stars, moon, nor sun were actually affected; therefore, we now know that this prophecy was written in apocalyptic, metaphoric, cosmos collapsing language – a language that is common in near Eastern apocalyptic writings.

In the above passage “heaven” is certainly Babylon, the subject of the prophecy. The “stars of heaven” clearly refer to the secondary dignitaries of Babylon court, the “sun” is obviously the king of Babylon, and the “moon” is the queen mother of Babylon. Other examples of this writing style can be found in Isaiah 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7-8; Joel 3:15-16; Amos 8:8; et al.⁷

Most, if not all, commentators agree that the Revelation is a classic example of apocalyptic near Eastern language. Thus, it seems certain that, the lexeme “heaven” in Revelation 20:1 and numerous other verses is an apocalyptic, metaphoric reference to the Roman Empire.

3. What or who is the **messenger**?

With the above information well in hand, we now see that the “messenger” is someone sent to the land by the Roman Emperor and a very careful study of Scripture and history readily demonstrates that this messenger is Titus, the son and chief general of the Roman king, Vespasian.⁸

What is the “key” that this messenger carries? Keys are used to unlock and open something. Thus, a key is a symbol for authority to do something. In our study of Revelation 9 we learned that this “key” was the authority and power to make war in the “shaft” and the “abyss”. In chapter 9 this “key” was given to a “star” who was later identified as the commander over the “locust” army and he was also identified as one who would be the “destroyer” in the “shaft” and the “abyss.”

4. What is the “**great chain**” that is in the messenger’s hand?

The context clearly indicates that the purpose of this great chain is to bind the first century adversary of the first century “ekklesia.” Thus, the great chain is the

⁷ For more information about this contact the author.

⁸ For a detailed analysis of who this messenger was see the author’s commentary on chapters 9 and 17

apocalyptic, metaphoric, symbol for the authority and strength to bind an adversary.

5. What/who is the character described as the “**dragon, that ancient serpent, which is the slanderer, and the adversary**”?

In Revelation chapter 12 we find this same language:

“So the great dragon was cast, the ancient serpent, called the slander and the adversary, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the land, and his messengers⁹ were cast with him. (Revelation 12:9)”

However, the extended context of this passage adds a very important piece of information to assist our understanding of exactly who this entity with four names was:

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in the heaven, "Now comes into being salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren, accusing them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (Revelation 12:10)”

This verse very clearly reveals that this great dragon, ancient serpent, slanderer, adversary is none other than *the accuser of the brethren!* Who is this accuser of the brethren, accusing them day and night? At this point nearly everyone will agree that we should let Scripture interpret this Scripture and identify this entity; however, when it gets right down to doing just that – very few are actually willing to do so because the result does not agree with their presuppositions about this entity.

Who do the Scriptures of the New Testament identify as the accuser of the brethren?

First let us find out exactly who are “the brethren.” In Romans, the apostle Paul writes:

“For whom He foreknows, He also predestines *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)”

That Jesus Christ may be the firstborn of many brethren. The term “firstborn” refers to the resurrected Jesus—thus; the many brethren are his followers who will be resurrected as well.

With this information we can now certainly identify this accuser of the brethren:

“And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And (the Pharisees) asked (Jesus), saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" —***that they might accuse Him.*** (Matthew 12:10, emphasis added here and in the verses below)

And while (Jesus) was ***being accused by the chief priests and elders*** (of the Jews), He answered nothing. (Matthew 27:12)

⁹ 2 Corinthians 12:7

So they (the Jews) watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might **accuse Him**. (Mark 3:2 NKJV)

And **the chief priests accused** Him of many things, but He answered nothing. (Mark 15:3 NKJV)

So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that **they might find an accusation against Him**. (Luke 6:7 NKJV)

...lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that **they might accuse Him**. (Luke 11:54 NKJV)

And **the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him**. (Luke 23:10 AV)

(Pilate) said to them, "You (the Jews) have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things **of which you accuse Him**; (Luke 23:14 NKJV)

This they said, testing Him, that they might have **something of which to accuse Him**. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear. (John 8:6 NKJV)

The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why **he was accused by the Jews**, he released him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them. (Acts 22:30 NKJV)

And when I wanted to know the reason **they** (the Jews) **accused him**, I brought him before their council. (Acts 23:28 NKJV)

And when it was told me that **the Jews** lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded **his accusers** to state before you the charges against him. Farewell. (Acts 23:30 NKJV)

...he said, "I will hear you when **your accusers** also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium. (Acts 23:35 NKJV)

Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These (Jews) gave evidence to the governor against Paul. And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his **accusation**, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, (Acts 24:2 NKJV)

"...commanding his (Jewish) **accusers** to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of **which we** (the Jews) **accuse him**." (Acts 24:8 NKJV)

"Nor can they prove the things of which **they** (the Jews) **now accuse me**. (Acts 24:13 NKJV)

"Therefore," he said, "let those who have authority among you (the Jews) go down with **me** and **accuse this man**, to see if there is any fault in him." (Acts 25:5 NKJV)

"For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which **these men accuse me**, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar." (Acts 25:11 NKJV)

"To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused **meets the accusers face to face**, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.' (Acts 25:16 NKJV)

"When **the accusers stood up**, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, (Acts 25:18 NKJV)

"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which **I am accused by the Jews**, (Acts 26:2 NKJV)

"To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, **I am accused by the Jews**. (Acts 26:7 NKJV)

...unloving, unforgiving, **slanderers**, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, (2 Timothy 3:3 NKJV)

...having a good conscience; that when they (the Jews) **falsely accuse** you as evildoers those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. (1 Peter 3:16 NKJV)"

How much more evidence will it take to convince the worshippers of "Christianity's other God"¹⁰ that "Lucifer" does not exist and that the true dragon, ancient serpent, slander, *adversary of first century Christians was none other than the apostate Jews*, the synagogue of Satan.¹¹ The very people that Jesus Christ called "serpents" in Matthew's Gospel:

"Ye **serpents**, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:33 AV)

¹⁰ Brayshaw, James, Christianity's Other God,

¹¹ Revelation 2:9 and 3:9

The appearing/Parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ

Many Christians insist that the Second Coming is found along with the resurrection of the rest of the dead and the Judgment in Rev. 20:11-15.

I trust that the reader will understand that Rev 20:11-15 **IS NOT THE PAROUSIA of Jesus Christ** (falsely called "second coming" above). This passage has absolutely **NOTHING** to do with the Parousia! The events of this passage (Rev 20:11-15) occur after the thousands years while the Parousia **clearly occurs at the beginning of the thousands years** as we demonstrate below. It is totally impossible that Rev 20:11-15 is the Parousia - falsely called "the second coming".

The Parousia is found in the following verses:

...in Christ all shall be resurrected. But each/every person in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's in His Parousia. (1 Corinthians 15:23, *this is most certainly not the event described in Rev 20:12ff, but it most certainly is the event described in Rev 20:4d*)

And now, little children, abide in Him, that **when He appears**, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him **in His Parousia**. (1 John 2:28, note that this verse clearly identifies the appearance of Christ as the beginning of His Parousia)

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with **the appearing of His Parousia**. (2 Thessalonians 2:8, *note that this verse, clearly and without equivocation, unmistakably links the Parousia to "the appearing;" as does the verse above; therefore, each of the following verses about the appearing reference the Parousia!*)

When Christ, *who is* our life, **appears** (in glory, i.e. the Parousia), then shall ye also **appear with him in glory**. (Colossians 3:4, *note that this appearance is "in glory", i.e. in heaven, not on earth.*)

That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the **appearing** (Parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ: (1 Timothy 6:14)

But is now made manifest by the **appearing** (the Parousia) of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who abolishes death, and brings life and immortality to light through the gospel (of resurrection. Cf. 1Cor 15:23c, et al.): (2 Timothy

1:10, *Note that this verse states that Christ abolishes death and brings life and immortality through the resurrection of believers in His Parousia! Thus, this was not done at the cross, although the cross and Christ's subsequent resurrection definitely made it possible.*)

I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead in His appearing (His Parousia) and **His kingdom**; (2 Timothy 4:1, *Note this verse, very clearly and without equivocation, unmistakably links the "appearing" with the heavenly kingdom reign! Therefore, contrary to the false 40 year millennium notion, **Christ was not reigning during** the interim period of ca. 30-70 AD.*)

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (Parousia). (2 Timothy 4:8)

For the grace of God that brings salvation appears (in the Parousia) to all men, (Titus 2:11, *note that salvation comes through resurrection in the Parousia of Jesus Christ. Cf. 1Peter 1:3-10, et al.*)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing (Parousia) of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13)

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear (the Parousia) the second time without sin **unto salvation**. (Hebrews 9:28, *note, that here again, salvation is clearly linked to the Parousia*)

...faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory in the appearing (Parousia) of Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 1:7)

And when the chief Shepherd appears (Parousia), ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Peter 5:4, *note that this verse clearly connects the giving and reception of rewards with the Parousia.*)

And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him **in His Parousia**. (1 John 2:28)

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear (Parousia), we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him (in His Parousia) those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we, who remain alive until **the Parousia** of the Lord, will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who remain alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (i.e. that is in the Parousia). And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17)

"Therefore, (by resurrection in His Parousia) they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne dwells among them. "They neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun does not strike them, nor any heat; "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne (as the result of the Parousia) shepherds them and leads them to living fountains of waters. And God wipes away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:15-17)

And the seventh messenger trumpets; and causes to be great voices in the heaven, saying, (thus) 'Becomes the kingdom world of our Lord (Jesus Christ)' and of His ^(God, the Father) Christ, and He (Christ) shall reign into the ages of the ages. (Revelation 11:15)

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, **the mystery of God should be finished**, as he has declared to his servants the prophets." I then hear a loud voice **in heaven** saying, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power (i.e. the enthronement) of His Christ comes (as the direct result of the Parousia)... (Revelation 10:7; 12:10)

With these things I hear a loud voice of **a great multitude in heaven**, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God!

And I hear, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Revelation 19:1, 6-7, *note that the marriage of the resurrected Lamb to the resurrected bride occurs in the Parousia following the resurrection of 1Corinthians 15:23c*) "

In the light of all the evidence presented above, it is absolutely incomprehensible, to say nothing of completely unbiblical to postulate that Revelation 20:11-15 is the Parousia.

Now from this point in this article, the thousands years in Revelation 20:4-6 will be our primary focus:

And I see thrones, and they sit upon them, and judgment is given unto them: and the **living beheaded** (killed) for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of the God, and who not worshipping the beast, neither his image, neither receiving mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and **they** (those dead) **living** (again by resurrection) **and reigning with Christ a thousands years**. But the rest of the dead **living** (by resurrection) **not again until the thousands years finishes**. This resurrection is the first (the resurrection of verse 4 above). Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and **shall reign with him a thousands years**. (Revelation 20:4-6, comments and emphasis added)

In the above passage, we find the exact same sequence of resurrection events that we find in 1Cor. 15:22-24a, i.e. the resurrection of every man born of Adam – each one in a specifically appointed order:

1. Christ, the firstfruits, has been resurrected, He has ascended as “High Priest”¹² and “Prince,”¹³ but He is not reigning **until the Parousia**, i.e. the resurrection of those that belong to Him (1Cor 15:23c).
2. The resurrection of the dead in Christ is the beginning of His reign with His saints for a “thousands years.”
3. The resurrection of the “rest of the dead” at the end of the thousands year reign with the saints.

Or as Paul states in 1Cor 15:22-24a & 28a:

...in Adam all die...in Christ all shall be made alive. But **each one in his own order**:

- 1) Christ the firstfruits,
- 2) Afterward those *who are* Christ’s in His Parousia.
- 3) Then (after the expiration of the saint’s reign with Christ) the end...when He puts an end to all *other* rule and all *other* authority and *other* authority.

Given the controversy that surrounds the resurrection¹⁴ of Rev 20:4 and the interpretation of the thousands years in Revelation 20, it seems to us that the only

¹² Hebrews 3:1 “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:14 “We have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens...Called of God (Yahweh) an High Priest...Hebrews 7:26 “...an High Priest...holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens...”

¹³ “the Prince” Daniel 9:25-28; Acts 5:31; Revelation 1:5

¹⁴ Revelation 20:4d “ezhsan” they live again and they reign with the Christ thousands years

way to resolve this conflict is to determine what the authors of the New Testament actually teach about the resurrection.

What did the Apostles teach about resurrection?

- “Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection!”¹⁵
- Paul said that he was being judged because of “hope and resurrection of the dead ones”¹⁶
- Paul said that the prophets expected that there “is about to be a resurrection, both of the just and the unjust,”¹⁷ two phases of resurrection from the dead.

Thus, contrary to that which some teach, Paul is not saying that he thought the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust would occur at the same time. He clearly stated that *the prophets expected* that there was about to be a resurrection, both of just and unjust. Thus, Paul¹⁸ and the Prophets agree with that which John states about the “first resurrection” and “the resurrection of the rest of the dead” - three phases of resurrection: the resurrection of Jesus, the resurrection of the just in the Parousia of Jesus Christ and, much later, the resurrection of the unjust in the “resurrection of justice.”¹⁹

Paul addresses the subject of resurrection in these words:

“For if we become united with Christ in the likeness of His death so also we shall be (united with Him) in the resurrection...for we believe that if we die with Christ we shall also live with Him (in the resurrection)”²⁰

Thus here, Paul specifically identifies the resurrection of the just which he refers to as the resurrection of “those of Christ in His Parousia” in 1Corinthians 15:23c.

- Paul taught that YHWH God promised before hand through the writings of the holy prophets concerning His Son Jesus that He would be of the seed of David according to the flesh; **the one designated the**

¹⁵ Acts 17:18

¹⁶ Acts 23:6

¹⁷ Acts 24:15; see also Daniel 12:1b-2. Please note that Daniel specifically stated that, “at that time (i.e. at the time of the first resurrection of the just) your people (the followers of Christ, “every one that is found written in the book [of life]) shall be delivered” by the resurrection of the just into “everlasting life.”

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:20-24a; The resurrection of Jesus Christ; the resurrection of the just; and the resurrection of the unjust. (For full documentation of these three phases of resurrection that Paul teachers contact the author of this article)

¹⁹ John 5:29: Greek “krisewv” decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension, a tribunal; by implication, **justice** (especially, divine). See also Revelation 20:5a, 12-13 – The rest of the dead live again and are judged...according to their works. This is the epitome, the very essence of Divine Justice.

²⁰ Romans 6:5, 8

Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness **by His resurrection** out of the dead ones.²¹

- Paul taught that he had not yet (ca.64 AD) attained the resurrection, but that he was certainly looking forward to “attaining unto the resurrection out from the dead ones”²²
- Paul taught that as of ca. 66 AD no resurrection had occurred.²³
- Peter taught that through the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from among the dead, and according to His great mercy YHWH God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ generates in us a living hope of our own resurrection into an incorruptible, undefiled, and non-fading inheritance reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith into salvation which was ready to be revealed by resurrection in the last time, ...at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It was in this first phase of resurrection that these first century saints would “receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their lives.”²⁴

What did Jesus teach about resurrection?

- Jesus, without equivocation, clearly taught that there is no marriage in the resurrection.²⁵ People now living on this planet are regularly being given in marriage and being married. Therefore, all claims to the contrary notwithstanding, no person, walking around on this planet is living in the resurrection.
- Jesus clearly taught that the Christian receives his reward/recompense in heaven.²⁶
- Jesus taught that there is no second death for the just who have been resurrected.²⁷
- The just in the resurrection are equal with the angels. They are the children of the resurrection²⁸
- People on this planet are regularly dying. Therefore, all claims to the contrary notwithstanding, no one living and then dying on this planet is “in the resurrection”

²¹ Romans 1:4; “ex anastasin” see also Philippians 3:11 for essentially this same Greek construct “exanastasin”

²² Philippians 3:11-13

²³ 2 Timothy 2:18; Here Paul states that the teaching that the resurrection had already occurred had overthrown the faith of some. Thus, it is clear that at that time (ca. 66AD) no resurrection out from among the dead, other than Christ’s, had occurred.

²⁴ 1 Peter 1:3-5, 7, 9

²⁵ Matthew 22:29-32; Mark 12:23-27; and Luke 20:33-36

²⁶ Matthew 5:12, 6:1; Luke 6:1, 14:14

²⁷ Fourth Gospel 11:25-26; Revelation 20:6

²⁸ Luke 20:36

- Jesus taught that the Father raises the dead, thus, He is not the God of the dead but of the living.²⁹
- Jesus taught that He is the resurrection and the life that comes through resurrection, i.e. immortal, eternal life.³⁰
- Jesus taught, “The one believing in Me, even though he may die, he shall live again”, i.e. living again by the “resurrection from the dead.”³¹
Compare this statement by Jesus with Paul’s, Peter’s and John’s statements about the resurrection of the dead.³² Paul, Peter, John and Jesus are in complete agreement.
- Jesus taught that, “Whoever living and believing in Me by no means dies into the age,” i.e. before the resurrection into life on the “last day.”³³
Compare this statement by Jesus with Paul’s statement about the “change of the living” and their “harpazo”.³⁴ Paul clearly got his information from Jesus.
- Jesus taught a “resurrection of justice”³⁵

Now let’s return to our passage and examine a few other points. John wrote: “**And I saw thrones...**” What does the New Testament teach us about thrones?

A short time after His transfiguration Jesus told His apostles that when He sits in the throne of His glory in the regeneration...they shall sit on twelve thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.³⁶ Following that last Passover meal together with His disciples, before His crucifixion, Jesus told the apostles that He “appoints unto them a kingdom, as my father has appointed unto me **that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging** the twelve tribes of Israel.”³⁷ Thus, we can now see that Matthew and Luke had already informed us who these thrones in Revelation 20:4 are for, who is sitting on them, and to whom authority for judging was given.

These events described in Revelation 20:4 specifically fulfill the prophecy in Daniel 7:

²⁹ John 5:21; Matthew 22:32

³⁰ John 11:25a

³¹ John 11:25b; “from the dead” Matt 17:9; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35; John 21:4

³² 1 Corinthians 15:21, 23, 51-53; 1Thessalonians 4:14-17

³³ John 11:26; John 11:24

³⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:17

³⁵ John 5:29; Greek “krisewv” decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension, a tribunal; by implication, **justice** (especially, divine). See also Revelation 20:5a, 12-13 – The rest of the dead live again and are judged...according to their works. This is the epitome, the very essence of Divine Justice.

³⁶ Matthew 19:28

³⁷ Luke 22:29-30

"I watched until thrones were put in place...The court was seated..."I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* which shall not be destroyed. ...the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'... "I was watching; and the little horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, "until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. ...the court shall be seated, and they (the saints) shall take away³⁸ (the little horn's) dominion to consume and destroy (the saints). Then the kingdom and dominion...shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.' (Daniel 7:9-27)

In this prophecy from Daniel we see a sequence of events similar to that which we see in Revelation 20 and 1Corinthians 15:

1. Christ (the son of man, the Most High) is resurrected and seated at the right hand of the Father (the Ancient of Days)
2. The saints are resurrected, escort the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, and together the son of man and the saints are given the kingdom to kingdom with Christ.

As far as we can tell, all preterists agree that the Parousia of Jesus Christ occurred in 70 AD. Thus, it should now be clear that the first resurrection of Revelation 20:4d, 5b, 6 is the resurrection "in the Parousia of Jesus Christ"³⁹ and the beginning of the thousands years. We have demonstrated above that God, Jesus, Daniel, Paul, Peter, and John all concur that resurrection occurs in three stages. In summary these three stages of resurrection are:

- 1) The first stage of resurrection is the ca. 30 AD resurrection of Jesus Christ (1Cor 15:1-23b; see also Ac 4:33; Mr 16:9; Mt 28:6-7; Mr 16:6; Lu 24:6; Joh 21:14).
- 2) The second stage of resurrection, which occurs at the beginning of the thousands years, is the resurrection of those which are Christ's in His Parousia ca. 70 AD. (1Cor 15:23c). This verse specifically identifies that this stage of resurrection occurs within the context of the "Parousia". In Revelation 20:4 John describes the "parousia" without actually using that word. In verse 4, John writes about thrones and those who are seated on those thrones. As we have noted above, Jesus, prior to the Revelation, told the disciples exactly who would be sitting on those

³⁸ Jesus' statement to the Jews in Matthew 21:43 is a clear reference to this portion of Daniel's prophecies.

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:23c

thrones in the resurrection/regeneration. According to Jesus, it would be Him and the 12 apostles sitting on 13 thrones.⁴⁰ THEREFORE, this parousial resurrection phase is "the end of the Mosaic age" and the actual beginning of the new age of the new heaven and the new earth.

3) The third stage of resurrection, which occurs after the finish of the thousands years ca. ???? AD, is the resurrection of "the rest of the dead," i.e. the "resurrection of justice"⁴¹ to which YHWH God, Jesus, Paul, and Peter, all agree with John's description of these latter two phases of resurrection – "the first resurrection" and "the resurrection of the rest of dead in Revelation 20:5 and more fully described in 20:11-15.

⁴⁰ Matthew 19:28, 25:31; Luke 22:29-30; Revelation 3:21

⁴¹ John 5:29; Greek "krisewv" decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension, a tribunal; by implication, **justice** (especially, divine). See also Revelation 20:5a, 12-13 – The rest of the dead live again and are judged...according to their works. This is the epitome, the very essence of Divine Justice.