

Reigning with Christ for 1,000 Years

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[0 : 00] If you've got your Bibles with me, please, and turn to Revelation chapter 20. We look again at a text that I admitted last week have avoided for 25 years.

But now, you know, I think after a few weeks in Revelation, we're ready for this. And somebody told me last week after the sermon that they didn't understand anything I said.

I said, well... You can't speak? No. Well, I don't know. I said, I didn't either, so we're good.

Understanding that these are difficult pictures here. And there are good, good people that see it differently.

And that's okay. That's okay. As we said last time, there are things that are very clear and certain in Revelation. The Lord is returning.

[1 : 14] There will be a resurrection. There will be a judgment. And there will be eternity with God. Those things are clear. We have a certain living hope.

The when and the how, we have different understandings of that. That's fine. Okay. So let's have fun again. Revelation chapter 20. We're going to look at the second part of this section of six verses in chapter 20.

21 through 6. We will be looking, focusing on verses 4 to 6. All right. If you're able, please stand as I read from Revelation 20, 1 through 6.

And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.

And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years and threw him into the pit and shut it and sealed it over him so that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were ended.

[2 : 32] After that, he must be released for a little while. Then, or, and I saw thrones. And seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.

And I saw souls, the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God.

And those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or on their hands.

They, these, came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.

This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. Over such, the second death has no power.

[3 : 40] But they will be priests of God and of Christ and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

So it reads. Let us pray for some understanding. Father, we thank you, oh God, that you reveal these things to us.

You put them into symbols. You put them into mysterious forms. You intend for us to think and connect dots.

Father, we recognize that in these things are things that are clear and yet other things that are not. And so, Father, give us charitable hearts to love our brothers and sisters who see it differently.

But may we come away, Father, with the clarity that we long to be with you.

[4 : 48] This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. So, I think by the Lord, you know, since we do expositional preaching, we work verse by verse.

I can't avoid subjects I prefer to avoid. It has forced me to think more deeply on these things. And it has changed some of my thinking.

Not changed my theology. Not changed my certainty. But given some clarity to things I hadn't thought through before.

So, for example, let's just think about this. What happens when we as believers die? What do we think about that?

What happens when we die? Where do we go? What is our experience? Do we sit on a cloud and play a harp? Do we go to sleep until the resurrection?

[6 : 02] What is our experience? This is profoundly meaningful. And I think this text may give some hints.

So, what happens when we die? So, remember, what did Jesus say to the thief on the cross? Today, you will be with me in paradise.

Today, with me. Immediate. Comfort. With the Lord. Paul in Philippians said, To die is gain. To live is Christ. To die is gain. In fact, he uses poor English. Of course, he was doing Greek. It's much more better.

So, it's bad English, but it's great Greek. Much more better to be away from the body and to be present with the Lord. In other words, to be away from the body is to be present with the Lord.

[7 : 11] Immediate. In 2 Corinthians, he talked about, If this earthly home we have, this tent is destroyed, We have a building from God.

Jesus said to the Sadducees. Remember the Sadducees? They didn't believe in the resurrection. That's why they're... Sadducees. Thank you. Sad, you see.

He said to them, You are greatly mistaken having not understood the scriptures. And he was talking to them about the scriptures they accepted. They didn't accept anything after Deuteronomy.

They didn't accept the prophets. They didn't accept... They accepted the five books of Moses. So, Jesus quotes from Exodus 3. And Jesus says, Have you not read? The Lord said, I am the God of Abraham.

I am the God of Isaac. I am the God of Jacob. Jesus said, Therefore, God is not the God of the dead.

[8 : 20] He is God of the living. Jesus taking that present tense. I am the God of Abraham.

Abraham's alive. Isaac is alive. Jacob is alive. But present... So, in other words. So, what is clear?

What happens when we die? What is clear from the scriptures, both Old and New Testament, is that we go into immediate presence with the Lord. What is not clear is, what do we do there?

What happens? Well, some books, some parts of Revelation talk about playing harps. I'm not saying anything about clouds. I don't know where somebody got that idea.

What do we do? What is it like? So, I believe here, we're getting some information about what it would be like to be with Christ when we die. When we die, we are reigning with Christ.

[9 : 20] Actually, we're already doing that, but we go to another level of reigning with Him. If my interpretation is correct, which you all know it is.

It is a legitimate interpretation, I will tell you that. It's not a guess or a stab, it's legitimate.

There are other legitimate interpretations of this text. We're just trying to look at what's most likely. What makes the most sense? Not just what I want.

I mean, that factors in. Can't deny that. All right, so, last time, in the first three verses, we looked at this thousand-year period where it talks about the dragon is seized, he is bound, right, he's thrown into the abyss, it is shut and sealed over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer. So, we talked about that restriction. It's limited. I take it as that is, that happened when Jesus ascended into heaven, Revelation chapter 12, when the Son, the Messiah, ascended and took his seat beside the Father, that then war happened in heaven, Satan and his angels against Michael and his angels.

[10 : 39] Michael and his angels, obviously, ha, overpowered and threw him down to earth. He's limited. Limitation number one, he's limited away from heaven.

Limitations continue because then, as he goes to earth, he seeks to make war on the woman, which is a picture of the church. The woman is on the wings of an eagle flown into the wilderness where she is protected from the dragon.

Limitation number two for the dragon. He can't get to her. Not the way he wants. So we have this parallel from chapter 12 and chapter 20 about this, the dragon, he's ID'd the same way.

He is the dragon. He is the ancient serpent. He is also, he is called the devil, the slanderer, and the Satan, which means the adversary.

So he has two names that are symbolic, dragon and serpent. We saw the serpent in the Garden of Eden. And then two actual designations, the devil and the Satan.

[11:49] So it's described the same way in chapter 12 as here in chapter 20, verse two. Now he's restricted. The church is protected. The effect in chapter 12 said when he was thrown down, the statement in 12:10 was that now the kingdom has come.

When Christ has ascended and the Satan is thrown down, cast out of heaven to earth, now has the kingdom come.

It has come. There is raining going on. So, and we see here verse three, it's what's further defined here in chapter 20, verse three.

Why is he bound? Why is he thrown into this pit? Look at the end of verse three. So that, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer.

His restriction now is also, not only can he not accuse the saints in heaven, not only can he not get to the saints on earth the way he wants to, but thirdly, he can no longer deceive the nations.

[13:07] So we have to understand that phrase, any longer, the way he had been all along. And so, I made, I made the case that, as we think about Jesus coming, this whole season epiphany, the light shines, right, the shining of Christ.

when Jesus came, a light shined in a dark place, which happened to be Galilee of the Gentiles. And all of a sudden, as Jesus begins to minister, Gentiles start coming like they never did before.

I mean, there's a few Gentiles that come with Israel, right? There's Rahab, there's Ruth, there's a few, but Jesus comes, they start coming, centurions and Syrophenicians and Greeks.

And then with Acts, it explodes. Right? Samaria, uttermost parts of the earth. All of a sudden, Gentiles are being saved.

Something changed. Right? Right? He's no longer restraining them like he, he still does to some extent, but no longer like he did.

[14:26] So, that's, that's some thought. Second thing I want to clarify again, remind you of some reasons why to see this thousand years as not a literal thousand year time on earth, but rather this thousand years as symbolic.

One reason is because most of the numbers, if not all the numbers in this book of Revelation are symbolic. It's seven churches, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls.

It's symbolic of fullness, right? Of representation. Seven heads. Right? And then we have ten. We have things like the number three and a half. Three and a half seasons.

How long is a season? It's symbolic. Right? So, so, so that's one reason, but there's another reason because there's so much symbol, so many obvious symbols in these six verses.

He's an angel coming down. He's holding a key. Is it a literal physical key or is it symbolic? Is the abyss a literal physical place or is it a spiritual place, a place in a spiritual dimension?

[15:38] Right? It's not a place I can go find. We got a chain. Is he, does it really take a real chain to wrap up the dragon who is a spiritual being?

Right? So, there are lots of symbols here. Right? Even shut and sealed it. Is it lots of symbols. So, that's another reason to see this as a symbolic number. The nature of the book of Revelation is a mystery.

It is a showing and unveiling of mysteries. Chapter 1, Jesus unveils the first mysteries. The mystery of the seven lampstands.

He says, the lampstands are symbolic of seven, I know, it's a long time ago. Seven churches.

Right? It's just a picture of the seven churches.

And not seven churches as if that was all there was. There was many, many more churches.

They're just representative of all churches. So, you have mysteries there.

[16:47] And then, we saw that in chapter 17 too. He's going to reveal the mystery of the seven heads and of the beast and of the woman. He's going to, those are symbols and they stand for this.

Okay? So, we have that, the whole nature of the book. And then, the fact that the number of thousand, if you look up the number thousand throughout the Bible, you won't see it very often. Not just one thousand.

But you'll see it in a couple places. You'll see it in Psalm 90 where it says, a thousand years to the Lord is like yesterday.

So, is he being literal? No. Peter does the same thing in 2 Peter 3. one day to the Lord is like a thousand years.

Of course, you can reverse that. A thousand years to the Lord is like a day. Like. Not literal. Like. Doesn't mean that two thousand years have gone by since the crucifixion of Christ so that way we're two days in.

[17 : 50] That's not how we, it's like it. So, in other words, so a thousand is used as kind of a picture, a figurative thing.

Okay. So, I think that's more likely. It's certainly possible to interpretate, interpretate, maybe that's what we're doing, interpretate, interpret the thousand years as a literal physical time on earth. That's possible. It just doesn't seem likely in this book. Okay. That's a statement I didn't want to make 25 years ago. Alright.

So, now let's look at the second section of the thousand years. The verses four through six. So, first, one through three, the binding of Satan for a thousand years. Now, we hear about a thousand years again and now it's talking about those who reign with Christ for a thousand years.

So, what's going on there? So, we want to ask two questions here in these three verses. Who are those who are reigning with Christ for a thousand years and how does it look?

[18 : 58] What does that mean that they're reigning? So, verse four talks about who. Who is reigning? Verses five and six we'll talk about how. So, who are these people?

Let me summarize it this way. As I understand it, the people who are reigning with Christ are saints. saints. They are saints who are raised from death and they are now reigning with Christ in heaven. From the time of their death, they reign with Christ. Let me see if I can show you the legitimacy of that. First of all, John sees thrones.

Now, thrones, he didn't say who's sitting on them. It just says, I saw thrones. Right? Verse four, and seated on them were those who had authority to judge.

Also, I saw souls. So, it could be there's people sitting on the thrones and then the souls are over here. Or it could be the thrones and souls who were on them.

[20 : 05] See where people can just see different things? I saw thrones. So, first of all, where are the thrones? It doesn't say where they are. It doesn't say if they're on heaven or on earth. One interpretation takes it as these are thrones set up on earth and a physical kingdom by God for a literal 1,000 years.

Others see this as symbolic of thrones that are in heaven. They're reigning with Christ in heaven. Doesn't say if it's earth or heaven here. See?

So, you get to go either way you want. Which do you want? So, but here's a fact. So, the word throne is used 47 times just in this book of Revelation.

47 times. 42 of those times it's absolutely clear the throne is in heaven. Absolutely. It's God's throne or it's Christ's throne or it's the 24 elders on their thrones.

Right? So, you have throne, throne, throne, throne. Lots of thrones in heaven. Usually it's God or Christ. And then there's three references where it's an earthly throne. So, Satan's throne was in one of the cities where the seven churches were.

[21 : 18] Beast's throne we heard about. Okay? Not in heaven, obviously. So, does that weigh in? So, do we take the measure? You know, so it's 42 out of 47 times it's earth or heaven then it must be thrown in heaven.

Well, makes it more likely. Doesn't make it exclusive. So, we see thrones related to believers though. We see in chapter 3 Jesus said to the one who conquers he will sit with me on my throne.

Okay? There's a least. The conquering Satan in chapter 3 sits with Christ on his throne in heaven. Then we see chapter 4, 4 talks about the 24 thrones around God's throne and the 24 elders that sit upon them.

Remember, who are those 24 elders? Are they angels? Are they 12 and 12? Is it 12 and 12? So, 12 apostles and 12 tribes of Israel. Is that what 24 is or is it just, yeah.

So, so the question is what do they do there? What do they do there? Well, it talks about how the 24 elders fall down and worship, right?

[22 : 28] They're worshipping. If the 24 elders are representative of believers, which is a legitimate possibility, then believers are worshipping in heaven.

But, if you say those are angels, then what else? Well, chapter 15 of Revelation. Remember that? Right before the bowls are poured out, right after the trumpets.

So, chapter 15, they're getting ready to pour out the seven plagues. Chapter 15, verse 2, and I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire. And also, I saw those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

So, they got harps. And clearly, we're talking about people that have been saved because they have conquered the beast. In fact, they're almost described the same way we have it in chapter 20, verse 4.

Right? They have not worshipped and they have conquered. So, these are believers. What are they doing? So, read on, chapter 15. They're standing beside the sea of glass with harps in their hands. [23 : 40] And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God. So, it's a Jewish song, Exodus 15. And the song of the Lamb. So, there's a Christian song. So, it's both. What they say is, great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name for you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed.

What are these saints doing in heaven? They're worshipping. They're singing. They're playing harps. So, there's one thing. We do play harps, apparently.

Cool. You know, you don't have to do the calluses, Ron. You just, I'm trying to play again and it hurts. So, sorry.

Ron's like, man up, dude. Come on. But they're also saying, why? They're affirming God's judgment.

[24 : 42] Just and true are your judgments. What if that's what we do when we die? We go into the presence of God. Obviously, we're going to do that. But what if what also we're doing is we're singing and we're praising him and when he makes judgments, we're going, yes, that's right.

That's just, that's true. Wouldn't that be cool? So, you know where I'm going with this whole thing, right? I think that's what we do.

I think that's what this thousand years reigning with Christ is. Okay? First Corinthians 6, Paul says, did you not know that the saints will judge the world?

Oh, when do we do that? When do we judge the world? I thought God just judges. I thought Jesus separates the sheep and the goats and that's it. Somehow, we judge the world and he says, we'll also judge angels.

Whoa. Okay, what's that about? Right? So, so then we have verse four, it says judgment was given them.

[26 : 00] No wonder I can't see it's the wrong chapter. Verse four, like, where did that go? I saw thrones and seated on them were those to whom authority to judge was committed.

What it actually, what John actually wrote was I saw thrones and seated on them and those seated upon them, judgment was given them.

It doesn't distinguish whether the judgment was given for them or to them to judge. So, our translators of the ESV took a position.

they gave, because the word authority is not in the text, to whom authority to judge was committed but I think they're probably right. Recognize that all translations, these scholars are making interpretations, okay?

They're trying to translate as fairly as they can but sometimes if you just translate it word for word it's like, what do you mean?

[27 : 10] Yeah, well that's that's fair to us because then we get to think, okay, what do you mean? Which way do I go with this? Translators, oh I'm sorry, it's not the point of the sermon.

Just something to know. Go New American Standard. Go King James. They're the most faithful. Sorry. Again, didn't I pray yesterday? The Lord kept me from saying are you guys not praying that too? We have a Bible study for you.

Watch your mind. I'm trying to. I'm just not, oh, taming the tongue. Okay. I know. Sorry, bless you. So, so here, Jesus said something to his disciples in Luke 22.

He said to them, right? I assign to you 12 disciples as my father assigned to me, I assign to you a kingdom.

[28 : 14] What does he mean by that? I assign you a kingdom. That, here's what it means, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and that you may sit on thrones judging the tribes of

Israel.

Same thing. Judgment given to them to judge. Say, well, they're part of those 24 elders, right? So, they're, I don't know, maybe they represent all of us. Okay. So, he sees souls, saw thrones and souls.

He has a question, but whether it's two groups or one group, how it reads, I saw souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, for the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast and its image and not received a mark on their forehead or on their hands. Are these two groups or one group with the same description? Clearly, the first description is martyrs, right? Does he literally mean that this group of souls are exclusively the beheaded ones? [29 : 36] So, if you're not burnt, you know, it doesn't count, Peter and Paul weren't beheaded, so they're not in here. John the Baptist is in there. James, the son of thunder who went out early, right?

Because he couldn't keep his mouth shut about Herod. He went out, so they're in. Is that what it means? Is it literally just the physical, or is beheaded a symbol for sacrifice of every believer who has put down in their life?

I mean, because remember the souls in chapter 6? They didn't say they were beheaded, but it said they were slain for the word. Remember that he opens the fifth seal and they see souls under the altar, and the souls, right, had been slain, and then they cry out, oh, Lord, how long?

How long before you judge and avenge our blood? Right? And they're told, here, wear this white robe and rest.

So they're kicking back on a cloud, is that what they're doing? Or is this scene two of what they're doing? I think we're getting another perspective on the same picture.

[30 : 53] So two groups, I think, you have those who are martyrs for their witness of Jesus, the word that they're preaching, now they're vindicated.

There's a second group that they weren't martyrs, but they were faithful. They did not compromise with idolatry. They did not compromise with making their identification with the world by taking the mark on the forehead or on the hand.

They didn't identify with their mind, their ideology, and they didn't identify with their service, their hands, their work with the worldly system led by the worldly leaders, right?

The beast. Okay, then we have the universe where they come to life. Lots of questions in this. What are the thrones?

Who are the souls? What's this coming to life thing? And there's another coming to life later in the next verse, so it's, what's that? What kind of coming to life is this? Is it a resurrection?

[31 : 57] Well, yeah, it is a resurrection because it's called that in the next verse. But what kind of resurrection? They lived. They came alive. What does that mean? Does it mean they physically, they had died and now they physically resurrect, they have their new bodies?

Is that what I mean? Could be. That's legitimate. Although I don't know if it makes sense in this context. Does it mean that they spiritually resurrect? Does it mean those who come to life in Jesus Christ here on earth have been made alive?

Is it referring to regeneration? Could be. Could be. Could be. Could be. Does that mean we're reigning now?

That's a legitimate understanding of this text. Problem. They died. They were killed. Is that physical death?

Oh boy, don't do that, don't do that, Bill. Or is it spiritual? Oh, now you're blowing everything up. How do we understand anything if everything's spiritual? Something's got to be physical, right?

[33 : 06] how do we understand this book? What's clear is there's a resurrection.

And there's a first one and then there's a latter one. So, I think I lean this way.

I think these souls that he's talking about are people that have physically died. And now they're with Christ. And what they're doing now is they're reigning with Christ.

They're judging with Christ. They're participating. We go to the presence of the Lord, we don't just sit there. We don't get thrones, if that's literal.

Participate. Like the multitude in chapter 15. like the elders in chapter 4 and 5. Like the 144,000 in Mount Zion in chapter 7.

[34 : 16] And the other multitude in chapter 7. I mean, that's meaningful to me. resurrection.

So, if they physically died and were killed, and if this is at the very end, this is a resurrection that's a physical, a new body.

A spiritual body, but a body. Right? If it's at the very end. If it's not at the very end, if it's now, if it's now as we, at death, when we are translated to be with the Lord today in paradise, then this is a resurrection that is spiritual.

Our souls are reigning with Christ, which maybe that's why he says the word souls. They're still souls.

They have not yet got a new body. Right? But man, if this is now, if this is now at death, right, I'm not only going to heaven, I get to do stuff.

[35 : 34] Or at least, I get to cheer him on. But I get to worship. You know, we just sang presence. We won't be singing that song because we ought to be there. We already have the presence.

We already have the that. Okay. So, once again, Revelation echoes the prophet Daniel. Daniel chapter seven.

There are echoing of these words, same, similar, different, but similar. So let me just read you so you can kind of pick up the tone here. Because Daniel talked about all of this before.

Now, John is taking from that and clarifying thing. Okay. Daniel talked about the impact of Christ coming. Okay.

So here's how he says it. Daniel 9, verse 9. Excuse me, Daniel 7, verse 9. As I look, Daniel says, thrones, plural, thrones were placed. There you go.

[36 : 35] I saw thrones. He's coming up. He's coming. He came to the ancient of days. the hair of his head was like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames and its wheels were burning fire.

I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like a son of man. Is he coming down or coming up? He, he, he's coming.

He came to the ancient of days. Oh, he's coming up. He's coming up to the ancient of days and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom.

So, what's Daniel talking about here? When did the son of man go up to the ancient of days? That's the ascension of Jesus. That's Revelation 12, 5 and 6.

He goes up. So, he goes up and what happens? He's before the father and the father gives him a kingdom. To him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples and nations and languages should serve him.

[37 : 45] His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away and his kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed. What's the effect of that?

A little bit farther down in Daniel 7, verse 18, he says, but the saints, now the saints come into all this. First, it's all about the son and the father. Now, it's the saints. The saints of the most high shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom.

What kingdom? The same one that Christ received. And as I looked, now he's referring to a vision of the beast there in chapter 7. I've cut some of those verses out. As I looked, this horn, the horn from the beast, the fourth beast.

As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, just like revelation. until the ancient of days came and judgment, here's the same words from Revelation 20, and judgment was given the saints.

Hebrew, it can be translated either to the saints or for the saints. ESV has said it's for the saints, whereas in chapter 20, they say it's to the saints.

[38 : 53] Make up your minds. Same thing. judgment was given to the saints, that's the more likely, of the most high, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

A little bit further down Daniel 7, and the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of saints of the most high.

Their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dimensions shall serve and obey who? Them. Everyone obeys the saints.

I call that reigning. Who possesses the kingdom? The saints of God. Why did he mention thrones at the beginning because he doesn't refer back to them?

What are the thrones? I saw thrones. Then he kind of leaves that aside and talks about the throne, the kingdom, and the son, and the saints. I think the thrones are for these saints who get the kingdom.

[40 : 02] That's where they sit, just like Revelation 20. When does this happen? In Daniel, it's after the son goes up to the father and receives the kingdom, Christ's ascension.

kingdom. As we see in Revelation 12, that's when the kingdom has come. Not will.

Has. Has come. Because the dragon has been cast down. Now there's a change. A radical change. Okay, so who? I believe it's the saints. I believe that this, the picture we have in verse 4 is a picture of all the saints. And part of that is because of what he also says in verses 5 and 6.

So how does this look? With the reigning with Christ, what does it look like? Well, he's going to explain that more in verses 5 and 6. Let me summarize it this way. The risen saints rule and judge as priest kings with Christ now at their death, taking the thousand years as symbolic of from the time Christ ascended on.

[41 : 22] So he clarifies the resurrection. Verse 5. He says, he had just talked about these special ones who have come to life, reign with Christ. Verse 5. Now the rest of the dead. Rest of the dead.

Who's that? Everybody else. If verse 4 is a special group of only martyrs and elite Christians, then the rest of the dead, that's me.

I don't think that's what this means. I think the rest of the dead are the unbelievers. The rest of the dead are the ones who have not been made a kingdom and priests.

the rest of the dead. Okay, I don't like that part. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. So in other words, at the end, if the thousand years is a church age, Christ comes back, we get our new bodies, and that's when the dead are raised because that's when the judgment is.

Well, that's what it says actually in a couple of verses later here. Revelation 20, look down at verse 11. I saw a great white throne. We're looking at this in a couple of weeks.

[42 : 29] Great white throne and him who was seated on it from his presence, earth and sky fled away. No place was found for them. Pretty clear who's sitting on the throne. And I saw the dead. Here they are again. I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

And then another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it.

Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged each one according to what they had done. So we're talking about the judgment. The dead are raised and then what?

Judgment. They're brought up before God. That's what verse five is talking about. Then he says, talking about verse four again, he's talking about this is the first resurrection.

The rest are not raised until after, so the first one is verse four. Those who are raised during the thousand years.

[43 : 32] This is the first first resurrection. My voice is changing. First resurrection when the saints' souls are made alive before God. They have been dead, now they're spiritually resurrected before the end.

So then we see a promise. Verse six, now blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. Over such, the second death has no power.

Okay. So verse six means, I think clarifies verse four. Who are these saints in verse four? Is it an exclusive group?

Because if it's an exclusive group, they're the only ones that get the promise that the second death has no power over them. So I don't think it means that because the rest of scripture is clear.

If we are with Christ, we're safe. So I think verse four, see, I think it's a picture, it's representing all of us. Some of us give the ultimate sacrifice and are beheaded or slain or killed.

[44 : 44] some of us give the sacrifice of our life. We sacrifice in other ways. We sacrifice glory and power and fame and whatever, whatever, whatever it is for Christ.

Whatever he calls each of us to do in our life. So we're not compromising with the world. people. So there's the blessing, right?

Second death. Okay, that's new, isn't it? Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first erection over such second death. You die twice? Isn't once bad enough?

Second death. Well, he talks about the second death a little bit later. Verse 14. Death and Hades, talking about the judgment, right? They're judged according to their deeds.

Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. Okay, that's what the lake of fire, that's what the second death is, it's the lake of fire. Got it? Good? No?

[45 : 51] Sorry, missed that. Okay, let's back up just a second. How do we die twice? What does that mean? Isn't death, death? Doesn't that just mean, okay, remember your body.

Let's go all the way back to Genesis 3. Some of you are already ahead of me, I bet. Genesis 3. Adam and Eve were told, in the day you eat of the forbidden fruit, you shall die.

Did they die? Not physically, they're still breathing, got fig leaves and then got, right? Still moving around, so not die physically, but he died.

Because what changed? His relationship with God, all of a sudden he's hiding from God and he's blaming Eve and she's blaming, you know, it's the woman you gave me, that's your fault really.

So there's a separation. So death can mean, see, in its essence, death means separation. So in that sense it's a separation from God. Ephesians 2 says we were all dead in our trespasses and sins.

[47 : 04] So we're dead in sin. So we weren't physically dead, but we're spiritually dead to God. And then we were made alive. All of a sudden things change. All of a sudden I could see, I could hear, I could feel what I never got before about that.

Right? And then Revelation, excuse me, 1 Corinthians 15, Paul's talking about the resurrection.

Right? We die physically and now we get a new body.

It gives a whole chapter devoted to that wonderful promise. There's a physical death and then a resurrection. So what kind of death are we talking about here?

What's the second death? Well, it's not talking about physical death, it's talking about another death beyond that. Another separation. The lake of fire is a death.

A further separating from God. for eternity. Literal lake of fire? No, I don't think so. They don't have physical bodies.

[48 : 12] Not a physical pain. We'll hold off that discussion until later.

Oh, we're looking forward to that one, huh? Aren't you? No, no, no. But the Lord wants us to understand it. So then what kind of reigning is going on here? So the end of verse 6 says, so over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

So what's the nature of this reigning? What is the role of the saints as they reign with him? Well, he says as priests. They will be priests. So one part of this reigning with him is as a priest.

You know that you're all, if you're saved, did you know that you're a priest? Did you know that?

You're actually a holy Catholic priest.

Did you know that? I'm not saying Roman Catholic. Catholic means all believers are priests, which is odd that the Catholic church goes different with that.

[49 : 25] Because it's in 1 Peter, the first pope says it. I don't think he bought the other. So we're priests.

What do priests do? You know, Peter talks about we have a holy priesthood to offer up what?

Sacrifice, spiritual sacrifices unto God.

We're doing that now. As we worship him, that's an offering. We call offering an offering. That's just one way we give to him, right?

We give by our gifts, we give by our service, or sacrifices. Those are acts of worship. Those are priestly acts. Right?

Worshipping, serving, singing. But they also reign. He says they're priests and they will reign. They will exercise power as a king.

[50 : 25] That's what reign means. Exercise power as a king because we have a kingdom. He assigns to us a kingdom.

And when he ascended to his throne, his kingdom has come. Oh, Jesus said his kingdom came when he was on earth, right?

If I'm casting out demons by the spirit of God, kingdoms come. Kingdoms come. I'm ruling. See ya. Catching this spiritual symbol of casting out demons for Jesus. It's not hard.

So, so when does this happen? I believe it happens at our death. We immediately go to the presence of God. We become in his presence priests and rulers with him.

[51 : 36] We're like the multitude in chapter 15. We're just bowing down. We're praising. We're picking the harp. singing. And then we're actually thinking too though.

Because we're seeing what he's just done and we're saying, yes, yes, right and true. Did you see that again? Another right one.

He's always right when he makes these judgments. We'll see it over and over and over again. what we didn't see when we lived on earth where we know by faith he's doing all these right things.

We don't get to see like we will see in heaven. Remember Hebrews 11 said we're surrounded by what? A cloud of witnesses. witnesses.

What are they witnessing? They're with Christ. They're witnessing how he's working through our lives and conquering and reigning. Okay, so that's then for sure.

[52 : 38] But it's already actually happening, folks. we've already chapter 1 of Revelation 1 6 says he's made us to be a kingdom and priests.

Chapter 5 he says he's made us to be a kingdom who reign on earth. He actually uses those words on earth. We reign on earth. Wait, wait, we're already reigning?

Yeah, this is where I want you to think a little bit. Listen to Ephesians 2. You know this wonderful, wonderful text. John read chapter 1.

Let me read part of chapter 2. See, scripture reveals there are some things that are already but not yet. They're already true but they're not totally full.

Listen to Ephesians 2. You, you, speaking to believers, you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the fashions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind.

[53 : 51] We were by nature children of wrath. We did what was natural. It's just what we did. It's who we are. We're dead. But God, this changes everything, but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us.

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, he made us alive. They lived. Dead lived.

He made us alive. Watch this now. Watch this language. He made us alive together. How? How? With Christ. By grace you have been saved.

Oh, he's not done. And not only did he make us alive together with Christ, he also raised us up with him and seated us with him.

Where? In the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Why? So that in the ages to come, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

[55 : 04] Look who I brought to my throne. Look who's in my presence. Wow. And the angels are looking on going, we remember who they were.

See, what I want to show you, what Paul is saying in Ephesians 2 is we're already reigning with Christ. We've already been raised up. We've already been seated with him, not physically, but spiritually.

In some sense, we're already there. Colossians 3 says our life is hidden with him in heaven.

Our real life's already there. So live like that. God. So in a sense, we're already reigning with Christ. We've already spiritually been raised with him and seated with him.

And just as Christ was already king on earth, right? Wasn't he already, he came as a king, didn't he? Yeah, I brought a kingdom, right? My kingdom's not of this world. I came as a king.

[56 : 15] As he was, he was already king on earth, he's already reigning on earth, he's casting out Satan, he's plundering his house. We too, watch this now, like Christ, we too conquer the dragon.

We too conquer the dragon by the blood of Christ. That's our ground and authority. And by the word of our testimony, what we say, what you say conquers the dragon.

We say, how is that? We overcome him by resisting, resist the devil and he will flee. Are you that scary?

No, you just have somebody much more powerful inside. And by wearing armor, we are given armor of God that we might be able to stand and resist in the evil day against his schemes.

And we're given one offensive weapon. Take up the sword of the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

[57 : 25] So this word, right? And like Jesus, we say to the devil, uh-uh, it is written. It is written.

I know how you're tempting me. It is written. I don't say, go fly away from me. Now, I can't say, in Jesus' name, I rebuke you, but let's use the words Jesus uses.

It is written, flee immorality. It is written, flee idolatry. It is written, do not love the world or the things of this world.

You ever do that when you're tempted with worldly things? When you're tempted with lust, when you're tempted with anger? Don't, don't, it is written, don't be angry. Be angry, but do not sin and don't go to bed angry.

I can kind of short quote there. I mean, there's a lot of verses you could, you could take a nice, if you're struggling with some issue, just find a quote that you can remember and just put that in your pocket and when you need it, you just bring it out.

[58 : 32] Just say, it is written. I guarantee it works. Because it's not you, power, it's word, but I swore to, we've got to write a song, word.

As Jesus crushed the head of Satan, how did he do that? By laying down his life. He won by death. We also lay down our lives and we win. Does it make sense to the world? But we don't live according to the world.

Our power is not according to the flesh. As we trust him, as we surrender to him, as we abide in him, right, we resist in the spirit with the armor and he's toast.

God he's so he's so powerful, he's so scary, not to the spirit, no match.

[59 : 50] Jesus starts praying, preaching, and these guys are just popping up, hey, what are you doing here? Hey, what are you doing here? Shut up, gone. no battle.

I hope some of this is coming across. Our reigning with Christ does not look like winning to the world, but it is winning over the dragon.

that's what matters. What happens when a Christian dies? We are in the presence of Jesus, and not just that, but I believe we are serving him, and worshiping him, and praising him, and judging with him, and affirming his judgment, and reigning in some way.

We're participating in his kingdom. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this text, which can take us so many different directions, and we pray, oh God, that you synthesize it for us, connect some dots for us.

What matters, Lord, is that you reign, and for us, you give us the promise of the second death has no power over us, because you have changed us, because you have made us alive.

[61 : 20] I pray for those here, Lord, today, or listening that have not yet been made alive, their eyes have not yet been opened. Oh, Lord, say the word.

Just say the word. Open the eyes, give them ears to hear, give them hearts, not of stone, but of flesh, that receive your word and live it.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.