

Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015  
From Here To Eternity  
Part Twenty

1). At the present time as God looks at the human race upon the earth He makes 3 distinctions within it – From God’s perspective there are Jews, Gentiles and Christians and in anticipation of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ each of these 3 groups must be dealt with in preparedness for His Kingdom.

2). In the course of our study so far we have looked at that which awaits all Christians when we appear at Christ’s Judgment Seat, depicted for us here in – Mt 13:49 *"So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

a). We will remember that now is the time of our preparation as God deals with us in connection with the salvation of the soul; it is the season of our sowing to the spirit as we anticipate the day when we might enjoy the fruit of our labors - Ga 6:8 *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting[age lasting] life.*

All the while realizing that there will be a separation made between those who receive the salvation of their soul and those who won’t; those receiving the salvation of their soul being given a position of rulership with Christ as a co-heir in His coming Kingdom - Re 3:21 *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

And those not receiving this salvation being denied a position of rulership – instead of reaping age lasting life they will instead reap corruption, the opposite of life, in the age to come - death.

3). And we have in past weeks been studying God’s dealings with the nation of Israel, from the horror of their experience through the Tribulation in order to bring them to repentance, to their restoration and return to the land healed, restored and forgiven.

a). And in the process of our study we had seen Israel as a nation, both those surviving the Tribulation and resurrected OT saints brought to a place of judgment where a separation is to take place - Eze 20:33 ¶ *"As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. 34 "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36 "Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD. 37 "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 "I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.*

b). In exactly the same way that a separation of Christians is made at Christ's Judgment Seat so a separation is to be made at the wilderness of the peoples, also on the basis of faithfulness and unfaithfulness – Those who are faithful being allowed to return to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the head of the nations to rule with Christ from the restored city of Jerusalem upon the earth, with those found to be unfaithful, described in Ezekiel as 'rebels' and transgressors, not being allowed to return and therefore denied that position with Christ in the earthly portion of the Kingdom.

c). And as we look at the experience of both Christians and Jews/ OT saints we will notice the common thread – judgment of the type we have just seen is all about the separation of the faithful from the unfaithful amongst the eternally saved for the purpose of rulership in the Kingdom Age.

d). And so we can conclude from this that all judgment of the eternally saved prior to the Millennial Kingdom must follow the same format and be for the same purpose – this is something we will need to keep in mind as we continue with our study today.

4). So then, so far we have seen God's dealings with Christians and with Israel which leaves us with His dealings with the Gentiles – now we have seen God's dealings with Gentile world power as He firstly brings utter devastation upon Antichrist's kingdom through that pictured in the opening of the 7 seals, particularly with respect to the 7<sup>th</sup> seal with the trumpets and bowls, in

fulfillment of the type in Exodus of the 10 plagues which occur prior to Israel's removal from Egypt.

a). And we then saw the complete eradication of Gentile power at what we have come to call the Battle of Armageddon – an event which through the graphic nature of its presentation makes clear the totality of the destruction which will come - Re 14:19 *So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.*

Re 19:17 *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

b). Although the events we see here are God's judgment on Gentile world power we will realize that we are not dealing with the eternally saved and this is therefore not about the separation of the faithful from the unfaithful for the purpose of rulership, but we can see this as judgment with respect to the change in rulership both earthly and heavenly that is about to be set in place.

5). This then leaves us with one final group of Gentiles who are as yet unaccounted for - Mt 24:14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

a). We will remember the ministry of the 144000 Jewish evangelists to the Gentile nations during the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation when they will preach 'this gospel of the Kingdom', a gospel that must of necessity include both the gospel of grace and the gospel of the glory of Christ.

b). So then during the ministry of the 144000, Gentiles from across the world will be eternally saved and given the good news of Christ's imminent Kingdom and inevitably, given the appalling conditions upon the earth at this time, many who are eternally saved will be killed – so what is to happen to them? Well we do already know the answer to this from that which we looked at earlier, 'all judgment of the eternally saved prior to the Millennial Kingdom must follow the same format and be for the same purpose' – but let's see it in context from the scriptures.

c). Now we might remember that some of the eternally saved Gentiles who will be killed are first seen in - Re 6:9 ¶ *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

d). These are the ones that we have come to call the Tribulation martyrs, those who had been slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held. It would though be completely incorrect for us to think that all those eternally saved Gentiles, the Tribulation saints, who are killed during this time will be martyrs – some will be and these are the ones we see here in Revelation Chapter 6, who we will see again very shortly, and some will not be as we shall also see shortly, but not much is said about this latter group.

e). Let's just go back to that which we already know and follow this through – all Christians appear at Christ's Judgment Seat both those who have physically died and those who are alive and remain and separation takes place for the purpose of rulership.

f). All OT saints who had died and all Jews who are alive and remain following the conclusion of the Tribulation will appear in the wilderness of the peoples where separation will take place for the purpose of rulership.

g). Following the Battle of Armageddon we will find Tribulation saints who will have been killed located in the heavens and Tribulation saints who are alive and remain upon the earth and although these 2 groups will not appear together in judgment they will both experience a separation for the purpose of rulership within the realm in which they will find themselves – their judgment will be identical, following the same format and for the same purpose as we have seen for Christians and OT saints/Jews.

6). Re 20:1 ¶ *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

a). To state the obvious, Revelation Chapter 20 comes immediately after Chapter 19, the conclusion of which we read a little earlier where we saw the 'beast' and the 'false prophet' cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

b). If we ignore the chapter break then we see the events in our verses from Chapter 20 as a continuation of that seen following the conclusion of Armageddon.

c). The beginning of Chapter 20 sees Satan bound with a great chain by an angel and sealed in the bottomless pit for 1000 years – we won't deal with this in detail now, but we will come back to it at a later date.

d). Immediately following this event we then see this - *4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.* Here then is a scene depicting impending rulership – we see thrones and we see those, described in this verse by the pronoun 'they' who sat on these thrones and we see 'judgment' being committed to them. So, who are 'they' and how do they find themselves in this position? Well the verses that follow tell us quite clearly, but first a word about the 'judgment' committed to them.

e). Because of all that we have seen in connection with this word judgment from our previous studies we might have a fairly rigid picture in our mind of what judgment is. It would be good at this point then to realize that judging can also be seen as synonymous with ruling – look at this example that we find in - *Mt 19:27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" 28 So Jesus said to*

*them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Here we see Christ's promise to His disciples that 'in the regeneration' when He will sit 'on the throne of His glory', in other words during the Millennial Kingdom, they will also sit on 12 thrones 'judging' the twelve tribes of Israel.

f). Clearly this 'judging' will have nothing to do with the exercise of vengeance as we had seen against the Gentile nations, nor can it have anything to do with the separation of the faithful and the unfaithful as Israel at this time will be fully restored and fully healed.

g). But, rulership for the Disciples with respect to Israel and the Gentile nations during the Kingdom Age? Yes, this is exactly what we would see; and in this sense the whole of the Millennial Kingdom can be seen as a 1000 years of 'judging' – Re 2:26 *"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 27 'He shall rule [judge] them with a rod of iron....."*

h). And so the thrones and the judgment that we see in Revelation Chapter 20:4 should be seen in exactly this same way.

i). So to return to the 'they', 'and they sat on them' – who are 'they'? They are the Tribulation martyrs who we first saw in Revelation Chapter 6 and we can know that this is the same group because of the verses which follow on from v4 - *Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God,*

*If we compare this with what we read in Chapter 6 - the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

We cannot help but see that this is the same group, but now with their number completed.

j). Now we know from that which we have previously seen with regards to Christians and with regards to Israel that a separation must take place amongst the faithful and the unfaithful before rulership can begin and so as we see these Tribulation martyrs being given positions of rulership we must conclude that a separation has already taken place at this point and this separation is where our next verses take us back to - *Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

k). Those who we see in the last sentence of v4 who 'lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years' are the same ones who sat on the thrones and to whom judgment was committed – the Tribulation martyrs.

l). And their faithfulness is described after this fashion earlier in the verse - *who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.*

m). Because of their faithfulness then we are told they lived and reigned with Christ for the 1000 years – and this is said to be the 'first resurrection'.

n). We then see that 'the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were finished'.

o). And so that we can see the separation between those who lived for the 1000 years and those who did not live, described as dead, until the 1000 years were finished we need to correctly understand what is meant by 'life' and 'death' in this context. Now the first thing to note is that life and death are seen entirely within the context of the 1000 years – those who have life during the Millennial Kingdom and those who don't have life during the Millennial Kingdom. And as we see these 2 groups together in the same location, at the same time, in this scene, we know that we must be dealing with the eternally saved – And so we see one group of the eternally saved having 'life' for the Millennial Kingdom and one group of the eternally saved being 'dead' for the Millennial kingdom – and immediately we will realize that we are not dealing with physical life and death, but with spiritual life and death – this is exactly the same scenario that we have studied many times with regards to our own appearance at Christ's Judgment Seat.

p). If we are faithful we will experience 'life' with respect to ruling with Christ, if we are unfaithful we will experience 'death', in the sense of separation, with respect to ruling with Christ – this is the exact same thing we are seeing here in Revelation Chapter 20.

*7). 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

a). Now we have in previous weeks been dealing with the resurrection of OT saints and before that the resurrection of those who have died in Christ and we have seen the concept of resurrection in terms of the physical body – the one who had physically died is now physically raised from the dead.

b). The Greek word that is translated resurrected, 'anastasis', does not of itself have anything to do with bodily resurrection, being simply a word that means 'to stand up'.

c). We can understand why this is a good word to describe what happens to the one who has died physically – the physical body which has been dead then 'stands up' – hence resurrection.

d). But this is not the way that 'resurrection' should be understood in this verse from Revelation Chapter 20 because resurrection of itself does not indicate 'life' with respect to the age to come as we can see from - Joh 5:28 *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

In this verse 'life' and 'condemnation' are set as polar opposites and therefore resurrection, 'standing up', is associated with both spiritual life and spiritual death.

e). So, in order to make sense of the word 'anastasis' as we find it in Revelation Chapter 20 we just need to go back to look once again at the way Paul uses this word as recorded in - Php 3:11 *if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Clearly Paul is eternally saved and being eternally saved he will experience bodily resurrection at the resurrection/rapture of the church – there is no doubt about this at all, as we have seen many times – but, the phrase 'if by any means I may attain...' says that Paul's 'resurrection' from the dead is not certain.

f). How then do we reconcile these apparently contradictory facts? Well firstly by realizing that Paul cannot possibly be talking about bodily resurrection and secondly by looking at the word translated 'resurrection' itself.

g). We have just seen that the Greek word translated as resurrection is 'anastasis', meaning to stand up – this is the same word used here in Philippians Chapter 3, but with the prefix 'ex' in front of it making the word 'ex-anastasis'.

h). The prefix 'ex' should be understood as 'out of' and so the thought in this word is 'to stand up out of', Paul's desire then is that he should stand up out of the dead – we can see in this then one group standing up out of another group, both groups being in the same place at the same time – this is then a separation of the living from the dead, a separation of those who have life for

the age to come from those who do not have life for the age to come – who are dead, spiritually.

i). This scene takes us to the Judgment Seat where the faithful will stand up out of the unfaithful, where the faithful will have life with respect to rulership in the Kingdom and the dead will have no life with respect to rulership in the Kingdom.

j). How we see things here in Philippians Chapter 3 is exactly how we should understand having a part in the first resurrection as seen in Revelation Chapter 20.

k). If we go back to v5 for a moment we will see - *5 But the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were finished.*

We see that the 'rest of the dead', those who are eternally saved but not found faithful will not live until the 1000 years are finished – they have no life with respect to a position of rulership with Christ in His Kingdom but they will have life with respect to eternal ages which come beyond the Millennial Kingdom because they had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and received the free gift of eternal life. Now there is no mention of it in these verses but this same thing would have to be true for unfaithful, eternally saved Christians, unfaithful, eternally saved Jews and unfaithful, eternally saved Gentiles who are physically alive on the earth after Armageddon – a group we will deal with later.

l). For the Tribulation saints seen in Revelation 20:6 who do have a part in the first resurrection we are told that the second death has no power over them – the implication in this statement being that the second death will have power over those who don't have a part in the first resurrection – and this is something we have also seen with respect to Christians, seen in the letter to the church in Smyrna - Re 2:11 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."* Again we see that overcomers shall not be hurt by the second death, implying that non-overcomers will be hurt by it.

m). So, should we be surprised to see the second death in association with unfaithful Christians as well as unfaithful Tribulation saints? I don't think so. For the eternally saved whether Christian, OT saint, Tribulation saint or Gentile to reject God's purpose for the 7<sup>th</sup> Day must undoubtedly result in the same outcome for the 1000 years and the same outcome for the eternal ages, it cannot be any different.

n). We will pick this up again next time though – if the Lord is willing.