

Order of Some Key Resurrections and Judgments

Water of Life

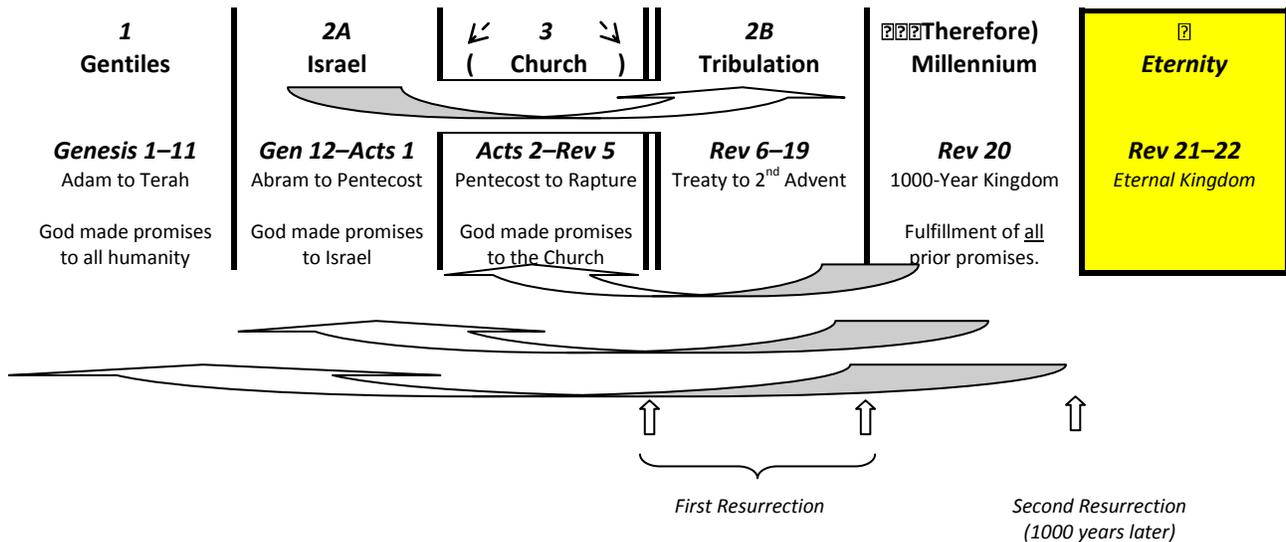
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Introduction:

Outline of Biblical History:



A Key to the Chronology: Rev 20:4-6:

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they [the twenty-four elders of Rev 4–5]^A sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. **Then** I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded^B 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.^C ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.^D This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part [meros] in the first resurrection.^E 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. Rev 20:4a speaks about people already seated on thrones, the twenty-four elders of Rev 4–5. Note Rev 5:9-10 (corrected translation of underlined words) in the new song:

⁵⁹ (sung by the twenty-four elders concerning themselves)

You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

⁵¹⁰ (sung by four living creatures concerning the twenty-four elders)

And have made them kings and priests to our God; And they shall reign on the earth.

1. God declared the twenty-four elders to be kings before the Tribulation (soon after Rev 5:10). The Tribulation begins at Rev 6:1 when the first seal judgment is opened.
2. They are Gentiles (redeemed from every tribe, tongue, people and nation).
3. The twenty-four elders are the most highly rewardable Church-Age believers.
4. The Bema Seat (Judgment of Church-Age believers for rewardability) has necessarily already happened, so the Rapture already occurred (cf. Rev 4:1).

- B. Rev 20:4b views a second group (the first group was already seated on thrones, the second group is not yet reigning). These are people beheaded by the beast (during the tribulation) for testifying to Jesus and to God's word, who had not worshipped the beast nor worshipped the image of the beast).
- C. At the Second Advent (Rev 20:4c) Jesus resurrects the beheaded saints, who also (along with the twenty-four elders) will have positions of reigning in Christ's administration of His Millennial Kingdom.
- D. Please note, Rev 20 does not mention the resurrection of Old Testament saints nor the resurrection of Church-Age believers, nor the resurrection of Millennial saints. However, Rev 20:6 assumes that other believers (besides the beheaded saints) will be resurrected in the first resurrection. My solution is simple: the focus of this part of Rev 20 is upon those believers resurrected at this time—not upon those already resurrected (including the twenty-four elders who were already seated).
- E. Rev 20:5 says that the rest who died in the Tribulation (e.g., unbelievers) to be resurrected (Rev 20:11ff) will rise 1000 years later—right after the Millennium ends.
- F. The word *part* in Rev 20:6 is crucial. *Having a part = having an inheritance*. Not everyone in the Millennial Kingdom will have an inheritance. Recall that the tribe of Levi lacked an inheritance in Israel, but were in that kingdom. The blessing is not pronounced upon everyone who is resurrected in the first resurrection. The blessing is upon those believers who have a part (an inheritance) within the first resurrection. All believers have eternal life as a secure possession, so the second death has no power over believers who lack rewards inheritance (I may devote a future session to this).

Filling in a Few More Details about the First Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:17-26)

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep [koimaō, e.g., died] in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. ²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Some of the Corinthian believers started to deny the resurrection, the P.C. [politically correct] thing to do in Greece (cf. Acts 17). Paul seeks to persuade them again here in 1 Cor 15 (we are only looking at part of his argument).

In vv 17-19, Paul shows that the resurrection is crucial to Christianity. Without it, our message would be false, so our sin issue would remain. Furthermore, deceased believers would be hopeless and our message would be a pathetic non-solution.

Vv 20-22 refer to Jesus as the firstfruits of those who have died. This means more than that He was the first one resurrected (never to die again—people raised like Lazarus later died). It means that Christ's raising also necessitates that all believers also be raised. [Though not part of Paul's argument here, unbelievers will also be raised to go to the Great White Throne].

Verse 23 speaks of all those that belong to Christ [from the Church Age, from the Millennium, from the Age of Israel, from the Tribulation, and from the Age of the Gentiles] being raised in their own order. Thus, the first resurrection does not happen all at once.

Verse 24 speaks of the end, when He delivers the Millennial Kingdom to the Father (e.g., the transition from the Millennial Kingdom to the Eternal Kingdom). The point of vv 25-26 is that by the end of the Millennium, Christ will have conquered every enemy, so He can give His kingdom to the Father. The very last enemy that He conquers is death itself—by resurrecting all dead believers [of course, he also has raised dead unbelievers].

Revelation 20:7-10

At the very end of the Millennium, Satan (who was bound during the Millennium: Rev 20:2) is briefly released. He leads all unbelievers who are living in the Millennial Kingdom in a revolt.

⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

You may wonder, “How would there be any unbelievers in the Millennium?” The first group of people in the Millennium were Tribulational believers who were alive at the Second Advent. They entered the Millennium in natural bodies. Consider Isaiah 65:19-25.

¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. ²⁰ No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. ²⁴ It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.

In other words, people will be born in the millennium. Anyone born in the Millennium who does not believe will be an unbeliever. It is these who will join in Satan's rebellion.

Revelation 20:11-15 discusses the Great White Throne, which is at the end of the Millennium

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the **dead**, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Let us ask a question: **Who are still dead at the end of the Millennium?**

Answer: **Those who were not already raised: e.g., unbelievers.**

Consider John 5:24 in relation to John 5:28-29

²⁴ *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment [the judgment of vv 28-29], but has passed from death into life.*

²⁸ *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves [at the time of the Great White Throne] 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.*

How many of the people at the Great White Throne will be found good enough to merit life? None.

What about the Resurrection of Church-Age Believers?

Our resurrection will be at the Rapture, which precedes the seven-year tribulation, which precedes the 1000-year Millennium. We have discussed this in prior sessions.

1 Corinthians 15:50-53

⁵⁰ *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

What about the Evaluation of Church-Age Believers?

Romans 14:10-13

¹⁰ *But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat [Bēma] of Christ. ¹¹ For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." ¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat [*Bēma*] of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The Supreme Way to Please the Lord at the *Bēma*: Romans 8:16-17

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness along with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God—and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

All believers have the general inheritance that belongs to God's children.

Believers who suffer for Christ have a special joint-heirship with Christ (highest reward).

CONCLUSION

All believers (from all dispensations—other than those who come to believe during the Millennium) will be resurrected before the Millennium starts, but each in their own order (as 1 Cor 15:23 says). Those who believe during the Millennium will receive resurrection bodies at the end of the Millennium). We do not know when the evaluations of any of these believers will occur (other than for Church Age believers at the *Bēma*). All believers participate in the first resurrection, but not all believers have a portion (inheritance) in the first resurrection. In other words, not all believers will be rewardable.

Church Age believers will receive their resurrection bodies at the pre-trib Rapture. The *Bēma* (according to Rev 5:9-10) must happen during the interval between the rapture and the start of the tribulation. Please note: even in the worst-case scenario at the *Bēma*, the person is still *saved* (e.g., still has life). No believer goes to the Great White Throne.

Unbelievers are the only ones still unresurrected at the time of the Great White Throne. Any of them who truly did only good—such goodness that they impress Christ—would be raised unto life (John 5:28-29). All unbelievers end up in the lake of fire, the second death (Rev 20:14-15).