

The Revelation –The First Resurrection

In last week's lesson we came to the glorious appearing, the time when Christ returns to reclaim His Church. At this point in time he will also claim his rightful position on the throne of David. Revelation 20:1-6 tells us a little about this period. This Scripture says:

- (1) And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
- (2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,
- (3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.
- (4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
- (5) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.
- (6) Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

When Jesus returns to the earth we are told in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that Antichrist will be destroyed with the brightness of Christ's coming. Here we see a little more about what happens. Satan himself is bound during the reign of Christ.

Let's look for just a moment at what happens here. There appears to be two places into which the Devil is cast. In this lesson he is cast into the bottomless pit. This is, in one aspect, hell, but it is not the hell into which all of those who have not received Jesus as their personal Savior will be cast. Have you ever had a dream that you were falling? I'll bet you woke up before you hit the bottom. Still, though, it was very scary. The bottomless pit will be such that the Devil will be continuously falling but there is no bottom to be reached.

There's also no way out of the bottomless pit unless the chains are removed, and a mighty angel has the keys. No demon is strong enough to take on this mighty angel who has the power of God himself behind him.

Once the Devil is bound it is almost time for the start of the millennial reign, but there's just one problem. There is a need for the bride to be prepared to reign with Christ. In order to do this the bride must be able to stand judgment. This judgment is discussed a little more in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, which says:

- (10) According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

- (11) For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- (12) Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
- (13) Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.
- (14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
- (15) If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

So at this judgment all of those sins for which forgiveness has not been asked will be burned away. For some people the only part of their life that will enter into the kingdom will be the blood of Jesus Christ. Others will have works built upon Jesus Christ for which they will be rewarded in the kingdom. What will these rewards be? I don't know, but I do know that I would like to be the recipient of God's rewards.

The time of Jesus' appearing is referred to here as the First Resurrection. At this resurrection the "dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16) and then the remaining living Christians will be caught up (raptured) together with them in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). All of the dead who are not in Christ will remain in the graves. Their time of judgment will not come for another thousand years.

The Bible says that those who have part in the First Resurrection are blessed and holy. Are you part of that number that is blessed? If not do you want to be? The gospel is simple. If you'll call upon the name of the Lord, recognizing that you are a sinner, and believing that Jesus Christ took your place on the cross at Calvary so that you might be saved, you will be saved. I hope today that you are a part of that number and not of those that we'll study about in the next lesson.

Yours in Christ,

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