

## Revelation 20:4-6 - Millennialism: Part 2

### Background:

1. Greek has two words for *life*. βίος which focuses on earthly life as it appears to our senses. The word *biology* comes from it. The other word is ζώνη. This, too, can refer to earthly, physical life. But unlike βίος, ζώνη also refers to supernatural life, spiritual life, eternal life. Rather than life in relation to our bodily needs, it's life in relation to the mind, soul, and spirit. It's the word usually used in Scripture. Scripture injects into this word a much greater concept of life than it has in secular Greek. Let's consider what the Bible means by *life*.
  - a) 1 John 1:1-4, p. 1898. What are some words or phrases in these verses that describe what God means by *life*.
  - b) What then is death in the Biblical sense?
  - c) Fill in the chart:

	death = _____	life = _____
<b>physical</b>	from God's _____ blessings	of God's _____ blessings
<b>spiritual</b>	from God's _____ blessings	of God's _____ blessings
<b>eternal</b>	from God's _____ blessings	of God's _____ blessings

**Note:** Although spiritual life and eternal life are listed separately, they are really one and the same as God describes them. Eternal life doesn't wait until you're in heaven. Your eternal life began when God made you spiritually alive by bringing you to faith. Yet during our earthly life we may spiritually die, falling from faith. In heaven, we will never die spiritually or otherwise, and we will fully enjoy all of God's blessings forever.

Those who are now spiritually dead may be brought to life by the Holy Spirit through God's Word and Baptism. But when someone who is spiritually dead physically dies, their time of grace is ended. They have entered eternal death.

2. Let's consider how Scripture uses the concept of rising from the dead to life.
  - a) Ephesians 2:1 p. 1818. What was our spiritual state?
  - b) Ephesians 2:4,5 p. 1819. What kind of life is Paul talking about when he says God “made us alive in Christ”?
  - c) How does this way of talking about conversion emphasize that we are saved by grace, totally undeserved by us but due entirely to God's mercy and power?
  - d) Romans 6:3, p. 1754. How were you buried with Christ and raised with him from the dead? When did this take place for you?

Resurrection or rising from the dead is when God changes our condition from death to life so that we enjoy his blessings. *Bodily* resurrection brings God's *bodily* blessings to those who were *bodily* dead. (Yet for the unbeliever, even the bodily resurrection is a resurrection

to death and damnation, since they will be separated from all of God's blessings forever in hell.) *Spiritual* resurrection brings God's *spiritual* blessings to those who were *spiritually* dead.

The Bible often calls our spiritual life, eternal life. Why? Because eternal life is enjoying God's spiritual blessings, which begin when he brings you to faith. So Scripture will talk about a spiritual resurrection (coming to faith), which brings eternal life, and it will talk about a bodily resurrection, which restores physical life to the body.

3. Let's see how Jesus talks about the two different resurrections
  - a) John 5:24, 25, p. 1654. Who crosses over from death to eternal life?
  - b) What word in John 5:25 shows that Jesus is talking about something going on right then and continuing for the future?
  - c) What is it that brings life to those who are dead? Where do we hear it?
  - d) What kind of death and resurrection is Jesus describing in these verses?
  - e) John 5:28, 29, p. 1655. What words in this verse show that Jesus is talking about the bodily resurrection of the dead (believers and unbelievers) on the Last Day? (see also John 6:40, p. 1657)

So the first resurrection we experience is being brought to faith in Jesus. The second resurrection is what happens on the Last Day when Jesus raises our bodies from the grave. Since all people began life dead in sin already, the first death is the physical death of the body. The second death then would be eternal death of body and soul in hell's tormenting fires.

4. Let's see what Jesus' kingdom is all about.
  - a) Luke 17:21, p. 1627. Where is God's kingdom?
  - b) John 18:36, p. 1683. How does Jesus show that his kingdom is not an earthly kingdom?
  - c) John 18:37, p. 1683. What is it that distinguishes Jesus and his people from everyone else?
  - d) How would you answer Pilate's question in verse 38? (see also, John 8:31; John 17:17)
  - e) How does Jesus' kingdom come into our hearts and the hearts of others?

Jesus kingdom is totally different than any earthly kingdom. The enemies are the spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6). The weapon is the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, the Good News of Jesus as our crucified and risen Savior-God, whose blood paid for all sins so that he freely credits us with Jesus' righteousness and fully forgives us all our sins. (Romans

1:16). The battle ground is our hearts and the hearts of others.

## Revelation 20

### Reigning for 1000 years, vv. 4-6

1. How does John address believers back in chapter 1:6, p. 1913?
2. What phrases in verse 4 show that he is talking about believers who died for their faith?
3. What word in verse 4 shows that their reigning with Christ began *before* their bodies were raised from the dead?
4. In verses 4 and 5 when the NIV translates “come to life” the standard translation for the Greek word there is simply “lived.” This fits better when we remember that *they* refers to the souls of believers who died for the faith. Although their bodies were put to death, they (the souls) lived and reigned with Christ (John 11:26). They did not die. How does this fit into understanding that the 1000 years is the time since Christ died and rose and not some time off in the future?
5. Why is the picture of the believers (who died for the faith) reigning with Christ right now and continuing for the full time until he comes again such a comforting picture, especially in an age of persecution?
6. How long will Christ reign? (Revelation 11:15, p. 1925)  
So does Revelation 20 even mention a 1000 years reign *of Christ*?
7. Since the *believers* are the ones who were once spiritually dead but were made alive in Christ and continue to live with Christ even though their bodies die, who are “the rest of the dead” in verse five?
8. In what sense do they not live even during this time while their bodies are alive?

**Note:** *Until* means “up to a specific time” and doesn't necessarily tell us anything about after that time. For example, “she was barren until she died,” does not imply that after she died she started to have children. In verse 5 the unbeliever is spiritually dead not only during the period represented by the 1000 years (even though their bodies are alive a part of that time), but also after that time as well (even though their bodies are raised).

9. When did God count you as holy? (1 Peter 2:9, p. 1888)
10. So what is the first resurrection that makes people blessed and holy? (Ephesians 2:4, 5, p. 1819; John 5:24-29, p. 1654)
11. What then is the second death that cannot harm the believers? (Matthew 25:41, 46, p. 1542)

12. How does this verse (v.6) show that not only martyrs but all believers will reign with Christ, even though our bodies die?
13. Why is this picture a great comfort for you?