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WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
NUMBER 36
REVELATION 20:4-6

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REVELATION 20:4-6 "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. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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."

As we begin this study let us review the main points in the doctrine of the soul---

1. In a human being the real person is the human soul.
2. The human soul has six essence qualities--
Self-consciousness, mentality, volition, emotion, conscience, and the old sin nature.
3. Distinction must be made between the soul and the spirit.
4. In salvation it is the soul which is saved, not the body.
5. The soul is the seat of human misery.
6. The believer occupied with the details of life is called a full soul.
7. The soul is the basis of human love.
8. At the time of physical death the soul goes to be with God.

REVELATION 20:4 "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." Here is John's vision of future things. This is the administration of judgment. The word "beheaded" is in the perfect tense and refers to all the Tribulational martyrs. The passive voice means they received this beheading from religion. It really means "Beheaded because of their witness for Jesus". "They lived" is what is called an ingressive aorist and means "They began to live" and will live forever. They began to live again in a physical body.

At death the believer's soul and spirit goes to be with God. Then at the Rapture of the Church the Soul and spirit reenters the resurrected body. The dead in Christ rise first, then the living are taken up. During the Tribulation many believers will die, and their resurrection will come also at the time of Christ's Second Coming. So the first resurrection comes in sections.

2 Corinthians 15:23 "Every man in his own battalion". This is a military term and refers to a great parade as they pass in review.

Company A-----This is the Lord Jesus Christ. (The first one resurrected)

Company B-----Has not passed by yet--but will at the end of the Church Age.

Company C-----These are the Tribulational martyrs.

Company D-----These are the saints that will be resurrected at the end of the Millennium. (Believers who have died during the Millennium and those who live through the Millennium and are given a resurrection body without dying.)

AN OUTLINE OF THESE FOUR RESURRECTION GROUPS.1. Company A

1 CORINTHIANS 15:23 "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Three days after Christ died on the cross he was raised up. He is called "The firstfruits". In the Biblical record there are six people who were brought back from the dead, three in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament. But all of these were resuscitations and not resurrections.

In 1 Corinthians 15 we read that the corruption will become incorruption and the mortal shall put on immortality. This means both the dead and living believers will be raised up.

2. Company B

The dead in Christ rise first. "In Christ" is a technical term which refers to Church Age believers. So the millions who have believed in Christ in the Church Age and have died will be raised up at the time of the Second Coming of Christ. This fulfills that promise that the "Corruption shall put on incorruption". Then the mortal (those alive) will put on immortality.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

I believe these verses teach that we will recognize each other in our resurrection bodies.

The dead "In Christ" does not include the Old Testament believers. They will be raised up later. This group "In Christ" does not include David or Abraham or Moses. They belong to the Old Testament saints.

3. Company C

At the beginning of the Tribulation there are no believers in the earth. But the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, who have been saved, will do a great work. Their converts will also do a great work of evangelism. Moses and Elijah will have a great ministry and even angels will preach during this seven-year period.

a. All Old Testament saints get their resurrection bodies at the end of the Tribulation.

b. Martyrs of the Tribulation get resurrection bodies at this time.

DANIEL 12:13 "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

ISAIAH 26:19-20 "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

MATTHEW 24:31 "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

(When Christ died on the cross graves were opened in Jerusalem and many dead were resuscitated and they walked around. This was simply a testimony to Christ and his triumph over sin.)

Elisha was taken out in a chariot but only his soul and spirit went to the place of the departed dead. And when Christ rose from the dead he transferred the souls of Old Testament saints to heaven and they are there now. But their bodies have not yet been raised.

So keep this straight in your minds. At the end of the Church Age, God only dealt with the church, and the church becomes the bride. The Old Testament saints do not get their resurrection bodies until seven years later.

Let us review it one more time--

1. Company A-----Christ arose.
2. Company B-----The church will rise next.
3. Company C-----At Second Advent of Christ Old Testament Saints and Tribulational Martyrs.
4. Company D-----At end of Millennium all other believers will rise.

This is why in verse 6 he will say, "Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection". "Holy" refers to the fact that we will be like Christ. We will then be minus the old sin nature and minus human good. This then is an explanation of that phrase "Every man in his own battalion".

REVELATION 20:5 "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." But the rest of the dead (unbelievers) were in torments. This is where all unbelievers reside. Death and hades will deliver up the dead--this refers to fallen angels and unbelievers. They will then appear before the great white judgment throne. "This is the first resurrection" goes with verse 6.

REVELATION 20:6 "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." This is the fifth beatitude in Revelation. This is put here in Jewish style. They give the summary and then go back and give the facts.

The Seven Beatitudes In Revelation

REVELATION 1:3 "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

REVELATION 14:13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

REVELATION 16:15 "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

REVELATION 19:9 "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

REVELATION 20:6 "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."

REVELATION 22:7 "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

REVELATION 22:14 "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Whenever you find a beatitude in Hebrew style, it is plural--"Happinesses". It refers to both inner and overt happiness. Inner happiness is always based on knowing Bible doctrine. No matter how difficult circumstances become you have inner happiness by having the Word of God within.

The term "1,000 years" appears in these verses six times. Do you think God would tell us of something six times if he did not mean to carry it out? After the Church Age the seven-year Tribulation period will come. Then following that period, which will be the worst period of world history, the 1,000-year reign of Christ will come. He will reign physically on this earth, from Jerusalem. These blessings teach this principle. When you have Bible doctrine, you can go through anything, but today we are substituting everything else for Bible doctrine.

Those who are in the first resurrection are blessed, and faith in Christ qualifies us for this first resurrection. This comes to us by grace. We do not get a resurrection body because we deserve it. God prepares you for eternity at the time of your conversion. There will be no regrets in Heaven. Since Christ did all the work of salvation, all the credit for our salvation and our resurrection will go to him. The second death has no power over us.

THE SEVEN DEATHS IN THE BIBLE

1. SPIRITUAL DEATH

The possession of an old sin nature spells spiritual death. The wages of sin is spiritual death.

EPHESIANS 2:1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins"

ROMANS 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Separation from God, no fellowship with God refers to time only.

2. PHYSICAL DEATH

MATTHEW 8:22 "But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:8 "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

PHILIPPIANS 1:21 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

In Isaiah 53:9 we read, "He made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his deaths". That last word is plural. Christ died spiritually for our sins and then he died physically. We are not saved by his physical death but by his spiritual death. In those last three hours on the cross, all the sins of the world were poured out on him and were judged. When the last sin had been paid for he said, "It is finished". All people who are saved are saved the same way, by faith in Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing us from our sins--but it is not the physical blood but what that blood stands for that saves us.

3. THE SECOND DEATH

This is the carrying of spiritual death on into eternity. Every unbeliever in the history of the world will experience this death.

REVELATION 20:12-15 "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
HEBREWS 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"

4. POSITIONAL DEATH

This is discussed in Romans 6.

COLOSSIANS 2:12 "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

COLOSSIANS 3:4 "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

We are identified with Christ in his death. When we get out of fellowship we can use 1 John 1:9 and get back in fellowship.

5. OPERATIONAL DEATH

JAMES 2:26 "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Faith without works is dead. If you do not produce divine good, you are non-productive.

6. TEMPORAL DEATH

This means to be out of the bottom circle, to be out of fellowship.

ROMANS 8:6 "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

ROMANS 8:13 "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

REVELATION 3:1 "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

1 TIMOTHY 5:6 "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

EPHESIANS 5:14 "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

JAMES 1:15 "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

(The Prodigal Son is a perfect picture of one who was temporally dead.)

7. SEXUAL DEATH

ROMANS 4:17-21 "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

HEBREWS 11:11-12 "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."

Both Abraham and Sarah died sexually, but God revived them and gave them a child.