

# The First Resurrection and the Rest of the Dead

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One of the things that you could say really sets the church of God apart from what you might call popular Christianity of the world, is our belief in the resurrections. The reason I say that is, the popular view among popular Christianity is the belief in an immortal soul. As a result, their belief is that when a person dies, if they have been a good person, their soul automatically goes to heaven and if they've been a bad person and didn't accept Christ as their Savior, many believe that soul automatically goes to hell. If you have this type of belief system, there is really no need for the subject of resurrections. It doesn't fit into that scenario and no need for it.

We in the church of God, as you know, take a pretty different view of this subject. Our view is that the reward of salvation for those can successfully endure to the end is they receive the resurrection to eternal life and become part of God's Family. But that doesn't happen immediately when they die. They are in the grave for a while and then later they receive the resurrection to eternal life.

We also have a very different view in terms of mankind in general as compared to popular Christianity. Popular Christianity typically looks at it like, this physical life is your one and only shot and if you didn't accept Jesus Christ in that physical lifetime, you just missed out on salvation. We take a pretty different view of that. We look at it that only the Firstfruits are being called to salvation at this time and everybody else who hasn't their opportunity they come up in a resurrection in the future. Our view of how the plan of God plays out is very much defined by our belief in resurrections which really sets us apart from popular Christianity.

We also believe in keeping God's Holy Days and those Holy Days reveal to us, the major steps in God's plan of how He's working with mankind and His plan for salvation. If you look at how we interpret all of that, our view of the resurrections very much forms our belief in how the details of this plan play out and even our beliefs in terms of the details of how the Holy Days are fulfilled. If you study into this subject, what you'll find is typical church theology. You'll find two terms that are only found in two verses in the entire Bible that largely build the foundation of how most church of God organizations form their view of the resurrections and how this frames the plan of God and the fulfillment of the Holy Days. The two terms I'm referring to are, *the first resurrection* and the term, *rest of the dead*.

As we are going to see today, these two terms only appear in two verses in the entire Bible, but they literally form the foundation of our view—not only of how the resurrections play out but even the details of how the Holy Days are fulfilled. What we're going to do today is look at these two terms and consider the possibility that maybe we have misunderstood or misinterpreted exactly what these terms are saying and as a

result, have developed some flawed concepts from that. If you would like a title for this sermon, it's:

### The First Resurrection and the Rest of the Dead

We're going to focus on those two terms in this sermon. To start off, turn to Revelation 20 and we're going to see the verses where these two terms appear. They only appear in two verses in the entire Bible but play a very major role in church of God theology, as we're going to see today.

**Revelation 20:4** *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. (NKJV)*

If you notice, the next two verses are where these two terms come into play.

*5) But the rest of the dead did not live again 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. (NKJV)*

This is the only place in the Bible where you are going to find these two terms. These terms and how we have interpreted them play a very major role in not only how we see the subject of how the resurrection plays out in God's plan, but also how we have interpreted this in terms of how the Holy Days are fulfilled. If you ask most church of God members, how does the subject of the resurrections play out? They are going to say it's a numerical system. You have the first resurrection, the second resurrection and the third resurrection. Let's make a very obvious observation to start off with. Sometime, try to find the terms *second* resurrection and *third resurrection* in the Bible. You'll be searching for the rest of your life because they are not there. These terms are not found anywhere in scripture. They are terms we basically made up.

There is a logic on which it's based upon and we're going to take a closer look at that logic today. We know from what we just read the term first resurrection definitely does appear in scripture, we read it here a couple times in these verses. If you assume the term "first resurrection" means first in time order, then that by sheer logic would require at least a second resurrection. It wouldn't make sense to say this is the first one if you don't at least have a "second one". If you follow that logic, adding a "third" makes sense. Let's also make the obvious observation that the terms *second* and *third resurrection* don't appear in scripture at all; they are just made-up terms. That in itself makes us question, is John really trying to establish a numerical system or could he mean something else by this. Let's consider that; let's just ask a few simple, logical questions to consider. Is John trying to say that this is the first in time order? Would it be accurate

to say that this is the first time in time order that any human beings were resurrected back from the dead? What's being described in Revelation 20, would this be the first time—would that be accurate to say—that a human being was resurrected from the dead? Obviously not, that would not even be close to accurate. If you look through the Bible in the Old and New Testament, you find numerous examples of resurrections where people were resurrected back to life. You'll see Elijah was involved in resurrecting people, Christ resurrected Lazarus, the apostles resurrected people—there are numerous examples and you could make a long list of examples that are specifically recorded in the Bible. So obviously this would not be true to say that this is the first time anyone was resurrected back from the death.

You could look at this another way and say that what is being described in Revelation 20 is different from all those examples you just mentioned. This is because this is referring to people being resurrected to spiritual life, to eternal life as a spirit being and that is different and that is correct. That is a very valid point. Let's also ask the question: "Would it be accurate to say that Revelation 20 is the first time, in time order that a physical human being lived, died and then was resurrected to eternal life?" No, it wouldn't be the first time. The Bible tells us explicitly that Jesus Christ is the Firstborn from the dead and that's the point it's making. Let's just quickly notice that in a couple verses here. We are going to return to this section of scripture in Revelation 20 numerous times today. In Colossians 1:18 we find a verse that explicitly tell us that Christ is the First One. If we're going to talk about first in time order of someone being resurrected to eternal life, that's going to be Christ, not the Firstfruits.

**Colossians 1:18** *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.* (NKJV)

It specifically tells us that it is Christ who is the first in time order to be resurrected to eternal life. This is mentioned a couple times in the Bible. Let's notice another example in Revelation 1:4.

**Revelation 1:4** *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,  
5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,  
6) and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* (NKJV)

Notice the Bible repeatedly tells us, if we are talking about the resurrection to eternal life, the *first* in time order is going to be Jesus Christ. He is the first one that happened. If we just look at this logically in what's being described in Revelation 20:4-6, no matter how we look at it, we have problems with the logic of saying this is the first in time order of someone being resurrected, whether we are looking at resurrections in general—

anyone being resurrected back from the dead—or if we are looking specifically at someone being resurrected to enteral life, in neither case can we say this is the first in time order—the first time this has happened. Neither of these is correct.

Let's consider. Could John be making some other point here? Could there be some other meaning that he is intending? As I mentioned before, we commonly use these terms second and third resurrection but they are not in the Bible. They are terms we made up. The very fact that those terms don't appear in the Bible also raises a question. Is John establishing a numerical order or does he have some other point he is trying to convey to us?

Let's consider what the Greek word means here. If we look at the Greek word that is translated into English as *first* when we refer to *first* resurrection in Revelation 20, it's the Greek word *protos*. It's transliterated into English as *protos* and is Strong's #4413. The definition I'm going to give you is the from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates. I'm just going to give you a portion of the definition that Zodhiates gives. He gives a longer write up than this. To be thorough and accurate in saying this, let me also state up front that, yes, first in time order is a possible meaning of this word; that would be a meaning this word can have. But let's consider the possibility that it could mean something else. It also has a figurative meaning. This is what Zodhiates states in that regard:

*Figuratively of rank, dignity meaning "first" or "chief".*

In other words, it doesn't have to mean first as first, second, third...., as in a numerical order. It can mean "chief" or the "most prominent", the "greatest". We are also going to see a couple of examples where it's more of a "dignity", "rank" or "importance" that it can refer to and not be establishing a numerical system.

Let's look at a couple of verses to show you how the Bible uses it in that regard.

**Mark 9:33** *Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"*

*34) But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. (NKJV)*

Notice the context here is the apostles are having an ego argument of which one of them was going to be the *biggest, baddest and greatest*. Notice verse 35.

*35) And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first [protos], he shall be last of all and servant of all."*

*36) Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,*

*37) Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." (NKJV)*

Notice what he is saying. They were arguing who was going to be *first* but what they meant was, who is going to be *greatest*. It wasn't a numerical system of one, two, three, four, it was who is the most *prominent*? Who is the most *honorable*, the *greatest*, the *biggest* and the *baddest*? That is what they were trying to say and how *protos* was used here. Another example is in Acts 13:49.

**Acts 13:49** *And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. 50) But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief [translated from protos] men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. (NKJV)*

*Protos* is not first, second, third in numerical order, it's the chief, the leaders, the prominent men of the city; that's what *protos* is referring to here. It can have a totally different meaning than establishing a numerical order. Now let's notice one other example, Look at 1 Corinthians 15:3.

**1 Corinthians 15:3** *For I delivered to you first of all [protos is what he is referring to] that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4) and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5) and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. (NKJV)*

Notice what Paul is trying to say here. He's not saying the very first thing in time order was about Christ. The most important point—the most prominent, the biggest, most important thing you should get from what I presented to you was about Christ and the role He played and how significant He is in the plan of salvation. That's the point he's making. He is saying *protos* can mean chief, leading, the greatest, the most in priority. It can have a lot of meanings that are making an emphasis that are not a numerical system of first, second and third. Let's keep in mind we have made it common church of God language to refer to *second* and *third* resurrection but try to find them in the Bible and you won't. They are made up terms. We made them up on the logic that first meant *first in time order*.

Now let's consider *protos*, when he says *protos resurrection*, if he is not referring to a time order but maybe he is saying the most prominent, the one first in rank, in what context does he mean that? We have formulated the resurrections in church of God doctrine and thinking in terms of numerical, first, second, and third order but let's stop and think about second and third not being in the Bible. Let's notice what trend does the Bible actually give us, from scripture. Not terms that we made up; what is the contrast that we see in the Bible that John might be referring to here. If we start looking at how the resurrections are talked about in the Bible, we'll see a clear trend that can clarify this for us. In John 5 there are numerous times in the Bible when the resurrections are referred to and there is a contrast that is continually made. We can see that that's the trend that John is probably following in Revelation.

**John 5:28** *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ... (NKJV)*

We're talking about the people from the grave coming back to life—talking about resurrections here.

Continuing in verse 29.

*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. (NKJV)*

Notice the context. We're talking about resurrection to eternal life—making it to the Kingdom of God—and resurrection to condemnation—going in the lake of fire. Isn't that how the movie ends for all of mankind? Isn't that the ultimate contrast that exists in everybody's story. It always ends for everyone, either making into the Kingdom of God or making it to the lake of fire. That's the general contrast that applies to everyone. What we're going to see is numerous scriptures where this same basic comparison keeps showing up such as Acts 24:15.

**Acts 24:15** *I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. (NKJV)*

Once again, we have this same thing together, the pairing together of the ultimate picture. The just receiving eternal life, making it to the Kingdom of God and the unjust to a resurrection of condemnation where they go into the lake of fire. We'll see this trend numerous times throughout the Bible.

Let's notice another example in Daniel 12:1 and we'll see this same contrast.

**Daniel 12:1** *At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. [We have an obvious reference to the Day of the Lord] And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book. (NKJV)*

An obvious reference to the Book of Life. Now notice verse 2.

*2) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake ... (NKJV)*

Obviously, we're talking about people who are resurrected from the dead because they are sleeping in the dust of the earth, they are dead and buried and now they are waking—that's being resurrected.

*2 continued) ... Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (NKJV)*

Once again, this same basic contrast—some to enteral life, some to everlasting death. Notice when you read everlasting life, we automatically know what that means. A resurrection that occurs in the Day of the Lord time frame, some to everlasting life—that seems pretty obvious, doesn't it? Resurrection of the Firstfruits, receiving eternal life, they become God beings reigning with Christ. Notice the very next phrase is some to everlasting contempt and shame. We're going to come back later and look in more detail at this verse and what we're going to find is that some of the Hebrew words say that *everlasting contempt* means *everlasting abhorrence*. If you think that through, we know what *everlasting* has to mean because everlasting life—eternal life, permanent—if your *abhorrence* is *everlasting* wouldn't that mean you go in the lake of fire? Wouldn't that be the only way that your *abhorrence* could be *everlasting*? The reason I mention that, is because sometimes we do mental gymnastics around this verse. We're going to come back to this verse but I want you to pay attention to this verse because when we start to talk about the rest of the dead, this is going to be a major clue. What did we have described here? A Day of the Lord time frame and resurrection referred to and two groups being talked about, not just one. We have a group receiving *eternal life* and a group talking about *everlasting condemnation* and they are mentioned together in the same sentence. If we just accept what it says, that's going to give us some clues as to what *the rest of the dead* might mean.

To follow our original logic, as I pointed out, we typically have a deeply engrained logic in church of God culture of a numerical system of resurrections, but we've done it by making up two terms that the Bible doesn't have. We talk about first resurrection, second resurrection, third resurrection and if you mention them in church of God circles and you throw out the term second resurrection and third resurrection, people immediately know what you're talking about and they have a very specific meaning that they attach to those terms. Try to find the terms in the Bible. You won't, you'll be looking for the rest of your life, they aren't there. The first resurrection does appear in the Bible, but we've made the assumption that it refers to first in time order. We see some problems with that logic because no matter how we look at it, we can't argue it's the first in time order, but we can see that *protos* is often used in a different meaning to say the most honorable, the prominent, the leading or those types of concepts. Then you ask, in what context? If we follow the context of the Bible, what do we keep seeing popping up? We don't have to keep making up these terms, we can just notice in scripture when the resurrections are being talked about, we have this same contrast resurrection to eternal life, resurrection to condemnation in the lake of fire. If that is your context and you say, the prominent, the most honorable one, the first in rank, that would obviously be the resurrection to eternal life wouldn't it?

Now let's consider the possibility that the term first resurrection is not establishing a numerical order for us and that's why we don't find the terms *second* and *third resurrection* in the Bible because it wasn't meant to be in numerical order. It's the most *prominent in rank*. If the contrast is resurrection to eternal life versus resurrection to condemnation and the lake of fire, it's obvious which one would be the desirable *chief, leading one* that is the most honorable and most important—that would be the resurrection to eternal life wouldn't it? Let's look back to Revelation 20—we're going to

really dissect these couple of verses because they are key to the whole subject. Back to Revelation 20. For the moment, let's just go down to the beginning of verse 6 because we're going to put together verses 5 and 6 together in great detail but I just want you to follow a thought. We're considering a possibility that the term *first resurrection* just simply means the resurrection to eternal life.

**Revelation 20:6** ... *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power.* (NKJV)

We're going to come back to this a little later and explain the latter part of that sentence and how all of that makes sense. But notice once again the contrast. The first resurrection, what is it contrasted with? It's the second death. What do we know about the second death? It means going into the lake of fire. That would be the resurrection to condemnation and the lake of fire. If we say the unique blessing of the first resurrection is that second death has *no power over them*, if the term first resurrection is exclusively something that refers to the Firstfruits and only the First fruits—which is what it would have to mean if we're talking about a succession of time order—wouldn't the *second death has no power over them* also apply to anyone who was resurrected to eternal life later? We know that the Firstfruits are not the only ones offered resurrection to eternal life—everyone else who is called to salvation later in God's plan, they get the chance to receive the resurrection to eternal life as well. Wouldn't the second death have no power over them as well? Doesn't this match with the idea that first resurrection is just another way of saying resurrection to eternal life? We're going to come back to the rest of verse 6 later, just follow my logic here.

Now let's look at verse 5. We need to look at this term "*the rest of the dead*". I'm going to read first out of the New King James.

*5) But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.* (NKJV)

There are some inherently awkward things about the way we have always explained this verse which creates some contradictions and mental gymnastics in how we have explained it. In typical church of God logic, the term *rest of the dead* is a blanket statement that basically requires that no one can be resurrected for any purpose whatsoever, other than the Firstfruits until after the millennium. In fact, ask any church of God person:

"Why do you place Ezekiel 37 as a part of the 8th day rather than being a part of the millennium, when the context would seem to suggest otherwise, and the answer you'll get is *the rest of the dead*. The *rest of the dead*, that has to be after the 1000 years, it can't be during the millennium."

That's how they will answer. They will also do some mental gymnastics around Daniel 12, which we just read. What did we read? We read a "Day of the Lord" time frame and then it referred to a resurrection. We had two groups—one receiving everlasting life and

everybody in church of God circles will agree, that is an obvious reference to the Firstfruits, Day of the Lord, the Seventh Trumpet is blown and they are resurrected to eternal life and reign with Christ—no question. Then you read the next verse and it says, some to *everlasting contempt* and you'll hear some mental gymnastics. They're going to say, that because of *the rest of the dead*, we can't really accept what that says. Let's consider that maybe we've misunderstood what *rest of the dead* means.

What I read to you a second ago was directly out of the New King James. Let me also read this verse to you out of the New Revised Standard Version because this is worded in a more consistent way with what the majority of Bible translations will translate verses 4 and 5. It's more than just a translation issue, there is a manuscript difference that we'll get into as well. Just follow my logic. I'm going to read the last sentence of verse 4 and 5 as it appears in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

**Revelation 20:4** *They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5) (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. (NRSV)*

Notice that is worded differently because it says "*come to life*" rather than "*lived again*". It gets into a manuscript issue that we'll talk about. Notice the phrase "*this is the first resurrection*" is mentioned after the rest of the dead are mentioned. Typically, the way the church of God explains this and honestly how I have explained it for most of my life, is we chop this up because we look and say that it's awkwardly worded because John mentioned this is the first resurrection at the end of verse 5 and that belongs with verse 4 because it exclusively refers to the Firstfruits and doesn't include the rest of the dead, so we chop it up to get it to say what makes sense to us. Let's notice that is not how John wrote it. The way John wrote it was, he mentioned the Firstfruits and he mentioned the rest of the dead and then he says, "this is the first resurrection". Just notice an objective fact, that's how John wrote it.

Now let's also consider the meaning of the words here. As I mentioned, the majority of Bible translations, with exception King James and New King James Versions, don't say "*lived again*" in verse 5, referring to the rest of the dead, they word it more like "*come to life*". That's because the manuscripts they are based upon, use the exact same Greek word in verse 5 that is used in verse 4 when it refers to the Firstfruits. It's the Greek word *zao*. Let me just read this again so you can follow my logic. This is out of the New Revised Standard version.

**Revelation 20:4** *They came to life [that's zao] and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5) (The rest of the dead did not come to life [zao] until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. (NRSV)*

Let's look at what *zao* means. I'm going to give you a definition from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates. *Zao* is transliterated in English as *zao* and is Strong's #2198. *Zao* can refer to physical life and to spiritual

life. We know how it's used in verse 4—it's referring to the Firstfruits reigning with Christ. It's obviously referring to spiritual life at that point. What Zodiates says about that definition is: *In the sense of to exist in an absolute sense and without end, now and hereafter to live forever.* In other words, he's talking about receiving eternal life. Obviously *zao* used in verse 4 referring to Firstfruits reigning with Christ, we know when it says they came to life, they were resurrected to eternal life which is what it refers to. Now consider that *zao* in verse 5 has the exact same meaning that it has in verse 4.

5) (*The rest of the dead did not come to life [zao] until the thousand years were ended.*) *This is the first resurrection.* (NRSV)

What that would mean is, John didn't write verse 5 awkwardly making this statement that we have to pull out and stick with verse 4 because it doesn't fit where it's at. No, it means he put it exactly in the right place because when he says this is the first resurrection, he was saying this is the resurrection to eternal life. Aren't there two groups who receive the resurrection to eternal life? There are the Firstfruits, who at the return of Christ receive the resurrection to eternal life and then there's the rest of mankind—the fall harvest—and when do they receive that? That would be after the 1000 years, after the 8th day period and this would exactly fit and it wouldn't be an awkwardly worded statement at all; we could just read it exactly the way John wrote it.

As I mentioned, there is a manuscript disagreement. The New King James and the King James both have the word *anazao* there rather than *zao* which does carry a different meaning. *Anazao* would give you the meaning of "lived again". In other words, it would indicate being resurrected to physical life because it would indicate something you have done previously. When you have a situation where you have valid manuscripts that you could point to in either case and say, I think manuscript A is correct, or no I think manuscript B is correct, you have an equal argument either way. So, you have to look at the greater picture of everything and ask what works? If we go with the traditional, "lived again" of how the church of God tends to look at this, as a blanket statement that no one can be resurrected for any reason until after the millennium, then we can't read Daniel 12 for what it is. We would have to accept that some to *everlasting life* are the Firstfruits, but some to *everlasting contempt*—we would have to do some mental gymnastics for that to not say what it says.

We also would have to reject the context of Ezekiel 37. If you read Ezekiel 37—read 36 and then the beginning of chapter 37 just in context—what is described in the resurrection of Ezekiel 37 very much fits with chapter 36, which is the beginning of the millennium. Ask any church of God member, why do you insist that that resurrection has to take place 1000 years later rather than in the context it's described? The answer you're going to get is because of *the rest of the dead*. In other words, how I've interpreted that one phrase is why I insist that this is the case. You have a handful of issues you have to deal with if you take *anazao*, but if you just put *zao* and give it the same meaning in verse 5 that it has in verse 4, *the rest of the dead* is not a blanket statement saying that no one else can be resurrected, it simply refers to the fact that there is a second group who receive the resurrection to eternal life and theirs is 1000

years later. That's why John says right after that, he mentions both of these groups and says, this is the first resurrection, this is the resurrection to eternal life. Because there's two groups who receive the resurrection to eternal life and this is both of them. It would make perfect sense.

Now let's look at verse 6.

*6) Bless and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection, over such the second death has no power. (NKJV)*

Same contrast as resurrection to eternal life versus resurrection to condemnation and the lake of fire. If we're talking about both groups, this makes perfect sense. What always trips us up is the rest of the sentence, but we miss a very important word in verse 6. The rest of the sentence reads:

*6 continued) ... but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years. (NRSV)who*

Obviously the second part of the verse can only refer to the Firstfruits because they are the only ones who can reign with Christ for 1000 years. What we skip right over and miss is the very, very significant word in verse 6, which is the word "but". Notice it is not the word "and", it is the word "but". "But" requires a contrast in thought. It means the second part of the sentence has to apply somehow differently—there is some contrast to what was stated before or otherwise he would have the word "and". We often treat it as one consistent thought and all of these concepts uniquely and specifically apply to the Firstfruits. If that were the case, you would put the word "and" there.

To back up that I'm not making something up, if you look at an interlinear and see the word "but", it is translated from the Greek word *alla*, and is Strong's #235 and Zodhiates defines it as:

*"A particle implying in speech some diversity or super addition to what proceeded. It serves therefore to mark opposition, antithesis, or transition. In the New Testament it means "but" in various modifications.*

In other words, the English word "but" is the correct word to put in the sentence there. It's "but", not "and". It requires a contrast in thought. Where is the contrast? All we have to do is follow the subject and the pronouns that are used to see the concept of what is happening here. If you read the very end of verse 4—again from the New King James.

*4) And they [notice "they", notice the pronouns] lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (NKJV)*

Obviously, that is specifically referring to the Firstfruits. Now, in verse 5, we talk about *the rest of the dead* and *the first resurrection* which we are considering is just a term

that refers to a resurrection to eternal life which would include both groups. Then in verse 6:

*6) blessed and holy is he [notice it's he and not they] who has part in the first resurrection [in other words the resurrection to eternal life] over such the second death has no power, but they ... (NKJV)*

Notice he talked about “they” when he was referring specifically to the Firstfruits, then he talked about all those who received the resurrection to eternal life and says “he”, then he said “but they”—he transitioned back to referring to just the Firstfruits. If that’s not the explanation, what other explanation to a transition in thought do we give? If all of verse 6 specifically and uniquely applies to the Firstfruits and no one else, what contrast in thought is there? There would be no contrast in thought. John should have put “and” in there but he didn’t—he put the word “but”. It’s a contrast in thought.

What we are seeing here is that if we want to understand the terms “*first resurrection*” and “*rest of the dead*”, first resurrection is not about a numerical system. This is why the terms *second* and *third* resurrection don’t appear in scripture anywhere, because we made them up. That’s not what John was even saying., he was saying that this is the resurrection to eternal life, this is the most honorable, it’s the greatest resurrection because it’s obviously greater than the second death going into the lake of fire. He mentioned that there are two groups—the Firstfruits and then the rest of the dead which refers to the fall harvest. These two groups receive the resurrection to eternal life. If we look at it like this, notice the problems that we don’t have. Now we can read Daniel 12 and accept the words on the page. We can read Ezekiel 37 in context and we don’t have to make the mental gymnastics to separate it from 36; we can just put 37 at the beginning of the millennium like it stated and just read what it says. We don’t have to treat verse 5 in Revelation 20 by saying: “This is the first resurrection”—well, it doesn’t really fit there we need to move it to verse 4 and need to move it around to get it to say what we want it to say. You see, we won’t have to pound a square peg into a round hole, we can just read what it says. What we’re going to see is that that is consistent throughout the Bible and how the Bible describes a harvest; we’ll get to that in a minute. The harvest isn’t broken up—processing the good crop today and the waste 1000 years from now—they are always done together, just like the Bible always describes it.

Daniel 12 is a key in looking at this whole subject and putting this puzzle together. I mentioned before that we’re going to go back and look at Daniel 12 in greater detail to fully form this argument. So, let’s go back to Daniel 12 and we’re going to look at the Hebrew words and nail down what’s being said.

**Daniel 12:1** *At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time [obvious reference to the Day of the Lord]. And at [in the Day of the Lord time frame] that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book. (NKJV)*

Obvious reference to the book of life.

*2) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake [dead people awakening, we're talking about a resurrection, no question here], Some to everlasting life ... (NKJV)*

Book of life, Day of the Lord time frame, some being resurrected to everlasting life, pretty easy conclusion, this is the resurrection of the Firstfruits at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, but now notice the next phrase.

*2 continued) ... Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (NKJV)*

I've mentioned before that the word *contempt* actually means "abhorrence". The Hebrew word transliterated into English as *deraon* and is Strong's #1860 and according to The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, they define it as:

*A masculine noun meaning abhorrence; it is used only twice in the Old Testament and in both cases speaks about the abhorrence of wicked men in the eternal state, Isaiah 66:24; Daniel likewise spoke about the everlasting abhorrence of the wicked who are resurrected, Daniel 12:2.*

He is directly saying, being abhorred in the *eternal state*—in other words this is permanent *abhorrence*. If these people had any chance of repenting and later making it into the Kingdom of God, we wouldn't be talking about *everlasting abhorrence*. We're talking about people going into the lake of fire. If we just follow the other references of this word, it makes it very obvious. Turn to Isaiah 66 and we'll see the only other time in the Bible where this word *deraon* is used.

**Isaiah 66:22** *For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.*

*23) And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. (NKJV)*

Notice we have the new heaven and new earth and physical flesh human beings keeping the Sabbath so we're obviously talking about a millennial time frame. Now let's notice verse 24.

*24) "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence [deraon] to all flesh." (NKJV)*

He's basically referring to people during the millennium being able to go up and see the lake of fire and see the warning that if you decide to rebel against God, this is your

ultimate outcome—you wind up in this fire. How do I know that these verses are a reference to the lake of fire? Jesus Christ tells us that. Notice that when it refers to “the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched”. Christ quotes this several times in the New Testament in a context that makes it very obvious He is referring to the lake of fire. Turn to Mark 9:42.

**Mark 9:42** *But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.*

43) *If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— (NKJV)*

Notice what he questions here several times.

44) *where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’*

45) *And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—*

46) *where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’*

47) *And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire—*

48) *where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’ (NKJV)*

He contrasts the Kingdom of God versus being thrown into a fire where we have this same reference quoted multiple times from Isaiah 64. Obviously, what was Isaiah talking about? It was the lake of fire. Oftentimes, church of God people assume that the lake of fire doesn’t actually even exist until the very end, the end of the 8th day; it’s not around until prior to that. We can prove from the Bible conclusively that that’s not the case. In Revelation 19:19, we’re in a Day of the Lord timeframe where Christ is returning to earth and fighting the armies that are there to do battle with Him. Notice the reference to the lake of fire in these verses.

**Revelation 19:19** *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. (NKJV)*

Notice it specifically says that in the Day of the Lord time frame you have the beast and the false prophet cast into the lake of fire. The lake of fire has to be in existence at that point for this to take place. It’s totally logical then to say, during the Day of the Lord time frame, we could have all those who had their chance at salvation and were judged prior

to Christ's return, to be cast into the lake of fire just like Daniel 12 says. And we can have the picture during the millennium of the warning of, you rebel against God, that's where you're going to end up—you're going to end up in that fire, that's how that movie ends if you decide to do your own thing and rebel against God. If we put all this together, the Bible, at numerous times, refers to the resurrections in a pair. The resurrection to *eternal life*, the resurrection to *condemnation* and the lake of fire and they are spoken about together. They are always meant together. What we have done with our interpretation of, first, second and third resurrection, we've broken up that connection. What we do is assume, obviously the Firstfruits receive the resurrection to eternal life at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, but those who are condemned to the lake of fire, they aren't addressed until 1000 years later. That's not how the Bible describes it. The Bible refers to spiritual judgment, using the analogy of a harvest. That simply is not how a farmer harvests a crop.

Let's notice how Christ Himself explains this subject in Matthew 13:24. We're going to see the parable of the wheat and tares.

**Matthew 13:24** *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;  
25) but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.  
26) But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.  
27) So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?  
28) He said to them, 'An enemy has done this. The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'  
29) But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.  
30) Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'" (NKJV)*

Notice He is describing a harvest just like an agricultural harvest takes place. You don't process the wheat today and say, we'll wait 1000 years to deal with the tares. We'll wait centuries to deal with the tares—that's not how that works. When you harvest a crop, you do them together. Christ later gives His explanation to this parable and again verifies this same picture.

Continuing in verse 36.

*36) Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."  
37) He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.*

38) *The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.*

39) *The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

40) *Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.*

41) *The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,*

42) *and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

43) *Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! (NKJV)*

He's clearly describing a scenario where the righteous go into eternal life, the wicked go into the lake of fire, but how is He describing it? Like a harvest, as a farmer would do a harvest, where both would happen in a similar time frame because that is simply how a harvest takes place. Also take note of another observation here. As I explained in a sermon about a year ago, I called them *Spiritual Harvests* and I went through the major harvests in the Bible and pointed out that the barley harvests correlate with the wave sheaf which pictures Christ. The wheat harvest correlates with Pentecost because that was the Firstfruits—in fact the two wave loaves are made with wheat which pictures the resurrection of the Firstfruits. Then you have the grape harvest which refers to the fall, that's the rest of mankind. Notice the example He gives is specifically of wheat and tares. That matches exactly with Daniel 12. If we just follow what the Bible says, it gives us a clear picture. What we've done is broken this up because we've tried to make the rest of the Bible fit how we misunderstood two terms. We took the term *first resurrection* and the term *rest of the dead* and misunderstood them and instead of realizing that's where the problem was, we've tried to make the rest of the Bible fit. The Bible refers to a harvest as spiritual judgment; there's a theme throughout the Bible. If we look at the fall harvest, it plays out exactly like we've just described the spring harvest. Turn to Matthew 25 and we'll see once again, this unified picture that comes together.

**Matthew 25:31** *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

32) *All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. (NKJV)*

Notice He has all the nations before Him. He's not judging the Firstfruits, He is judging the rest of mankind—all the nations, the population of the earth. Notice how it takes place; it's this unified event, just like everything else that we have described.

33) *And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

34) *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

35) *for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;*

- 36) *I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.*
- 37) *“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?’*
- 38) *When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?*
- 39) *Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’*
- 40) *And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’*
- 41) *Then He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:*
- 42) *for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;*
- 43) *I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’*
- 44) *Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’*
- 45) *Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’*
- 46) *And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (NKJV)*

Once again, we have this unified picture where both of these occur together in a similar time frame. I can tell you when I first began to see this a couple years ago, I honestly felt a little stupid. The reason I say that is, I personally grew up in a small farming community in Southern Alabama. So, as I kid, I grew up seeing farms around me and crops being harvested on a regular basis, when it dawned on me that this happens like a harvest, as a unified event, I went—how have I lived into my 50’s and not seen something that obvious. I grew up watching harvests all the time and never have I seen a farmer say, we’ll harvest the good crop today and let’s wait a couple centuries until we deal with the waste. That’s just not how it happens; that’s not how a farmer does a harvest, it’s always a unified event together. If we understand the terms, first resurrection which just means resurrection to eternal life and rest of the dead which is a reference to the fall harvest—all those who receive eternal life at the end of the 8th day period, then we can understand what the Bible is saying and follow all these other references that show us, these are unified events that happen together. We don’t have to deny Daniel 12, we don’t have to deny the obvious context of Ezekiel 37 and we also don’t have to wind up creating a time frame in the Holy Days that doesn’t actually even exist.

What I’m referring to is, we’ve also taken our view of second resurrection and what we did was use it as a logic to then place Satan’s release in some time frame that was supposed to take place after the end of the millennium and before the beginning of the 8th day. If you look at the layout of the Holy Days, when you get to sundown on the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles, where are you? You’re in the 8th day. There’s nothing in between. The reason of how we created that scenario which facilitated making the release of Satan, this insignificant event that we can just make go away and ignore, I

talked about this in my last sermon, Framing the Picture of Prophecy, because if you look at the whole foundational requirements for salvation throughout the New Testament, it doesn't describe this easy slide into the Kingdom God where you don't have to face adversity and you don't have to overcome Satan's trials—no, it's integral to how our character is developed and what we have to endure. *Through much tribulation you enter the Kingdom of God. All who want to live righteously in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*—there is scripture after scripture. Our misunderstanding of the resurrections was part of how we created this dis-jointed picture and denied the foundation of the New Testament. To see that, turn back to Revelation 20. We've already explained verse 4-6, but we'll see verses 11-15 also speak of resurrection as well. Notice, it reads as a single event. Historically in the church of God, we've forced breaking it up into two different events which defies the context. What we did was take verses 11-12 and said that's the second resurrection—a term that doesn't appear in the Bible and then we took verses 13-15 and said that's the third resurrection. What that did was facilitate making verses 7-10 be this time frame that was supposed to somehow fall after the millennium and before the 8th day and we made it insignificant and tried to make it go away. Let's read these verses and notice they read as a single event.

**Revelation 20:11** *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.*  
(NKJV)

As I mentioned, if you read through those verses, it reads as a single event, because it is. That's what it's describing. But when we tried to place a second resurrection—Ezekiel 37—in verses 11 and 12, notice what that created. We know in verses 4-6 we have references to the Firstfruits reigning with Christ for 1000 years, that's the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles and if you tried to make the 8th day verses 11-12, now you have verses 7-10 that you have to somehow stick in between the two. When we properly understand this, you will see that Revelation brings out the Holy Days just as logically and systematically as you would expect. If you read the chapters prior to chapter 20—there are some inset chapters that break up the story flow—you see a detailed account of all the plagues of the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord is picture by the Day of Trumpets—that pictures the Day of the Lord. If you notice, Revelation 20:1-3 you have the binding of Satan. That's the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. Verses 4-6, there are other things mentioned, but it's the first fruits reigning with Christ

for 1000 years—Feast of Tabernacles. Then after the 1000 years is Satan’s release and then the final judgment of everyone—that’s the 8th day. It lays out just as logically as you would expect. As I mentioned before, we have taken our misunderstanding of two terms on the resurrections and tried to chop up the Bible to get it to match that. Whereas, if we understand those two terms, that goes away.

To understand what verses 11-15 are talking about, we need to dig into some of the symbolic language that is used here. We need to remember that the book of Revelation is full of symbolic and figurative language, so we can’t always take every term and assume it’s literal. We have to sort out what’s literal and what’s figurative and sometimes that can be challenging. The key is noticing verse 13.

*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. (NKJV)*

Typically, the way this is interpreted is, we interpret sea to be a body of water and dead to be physically dead. For a little clarity, as you’re reading through this, the word “dead” that appears several times in these verses is a different Greek word than the word “death”; death versus dead. Notice that it talks about this group that is coming from the sea and a group that is coming from death in the grave—death and Hades. If dead mean physically dead and we are resurrecting them all and these are two dead groups—because how this is typically interpreted is, these folks were buried at sea and had a watery grave and these folks were buried on land and they are both brought up together. That makes sense if you assume sea is referring to a body of water. But we have another logical problem. If they are both physically dead and being brought back to physical life so they can be judged, why is only one group coming from death in the grave? Wouldn’t both of them be coming from death in the grave? If they are both dead and being resurrected, wouldn’t that be a problem? So, let’s dig into what else these two terms can mean because once we sort this out, I think the picture becomes clearer.

The Greek word that is translated as *dead* is *nekros*, Strong’s #3498. I’m going to give you a definition from Zodhiates. Just to be thorough, *nekros* can refer to the physically dead, so it could actually refer to the physically dead but let’s consider another possibility, it can have a figurative meaning. Zodhiates says:

*Figuratively, those dead to Christ in His gospel, meaning spiritually dead.*

In other words, it can also be referring to the spiritually dead. Let’s look at a couple of examples in the Bible that use the term in that way. Notice Matthew 8:19.

**Matthew 8:19** *Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”*  
**20)** *And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”*

21) *Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."*

22) *But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."* (NKJV)

He's saying, let the *nekros* bury their own *nekros*, as far as what the Greek is here. Obviously, Christ is not saying let those physically dead people bury these physically dead people. That would be ridiculous, He's obviously not saying that. He is referring to, let the spiritually dead bury their physically dead. You can see *nekros* can have both meanings because He is using both in this verse but what I want you to see is *nekros* can mean "spiritually dead". For another example, look at Ephesians 5:8.

**Ephesians 5:8** *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

9) *(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),*

10) *finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

11) *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

12) *For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.*

13) *But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.*

14) *Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." (NKJV)*

Obviously, He is not referring to the physically dead here, He is referring to the spiritually dead. He is saying, arise from this—referring to people who are physically alive but spiritually dead. To notice one other example, turn to Revelation 3 and we'll see another statement that is made to the church at Sardis.

**Revelation 3:1** *And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, "These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead." (NKJV)*

In other words, you're *physically* alive but you're *spiritually* dead. We need to consider that possibly what John is referring to in Revelation 20:11-15 when he says the dead and these two groups are the dead he's talking about, maybe he is referring to the spiritually dead.

Let's also consider that maybe sea is not a body of water. Maybe sea is a different reference as well. We also need to consider that sea is often used in the Bible as a figurative reference to Satan's domain and those who are following him as their god, as their leader and following his way of life. You can see that in a lot of figurative language. Turn to Job 41 and we'll see that Satan himself is described as a sea monster named Leviathan. Obviously, he is not literally a monster who lives in the literal ocean, this is a

figurative picture. It's referring to him and you can see that it describes as him dominating the sea. It's referring to his domain and those who are following him.

**Job 41:1** *Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?*

2) *Can you put a reed through his nose, Or pierce his jaw with a hook?*

3) *Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you?*

4) *Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever?*

5) *Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you leash him for your maidens?*

6) *Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants?*

7) *Can you fill his skin with harpoons, Or his head with fishing spears?*

8) *Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle— Never do it again!* (NKJV)

He's referring to battling Satan but notice how he is picturing him—as this monster in the sea. If we go down to verse 33, we can see very clearly, it's Satan that God is referring to. How he has him totally under control, but you don't want to mess with him.

33) *On earth there is nothing like him, Which is made without fear.*

34) *He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride.”* (NKJV)

In other words, that is not a literal sea monster, it's a figurative picture of Satan. He is king over the children of pride. Turn to Psalms 104 and we'll see that his domain is the sea. It's a figurative picture.

**Psalm 104:24** *O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—*

25) *This great and wide sea, In which are innumerable teeming things, Living things both small and great.*

26) *There the ships sail about; There is that Leviathan Which You have made to play there.* (NKJV)

Leviathan's domain—where he plays—is the sea. This is those under Satan's rule. Notice that the beast is also described as coming from the sea as well. It's that figurative picture. Turn to Daniel 7:1.

**Daniel 7:1** *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.*

2) *Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.*

3) *And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.* (NKJV)

I won't go through all these different visions he sees here, my point is, notice how these world ruling empires—referred to as the beast—are pictured. We know they are not

literally animals coming out of the sea, it's a figurative picture. They are all like this physical beast but they are rising up out of the sea; they are controlled by Satan. In Revelation 13 we see one more verse that backs this up.

**Revelation 13:1** *Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. (NKJV)*

I just want you to see, how is it pictured? The beast is rising up out of the sea. It's not a physical beast, this is a figurative picture and has basically been controlled by Satan, it's part of Satan's domain. We can see that sea can have a totally different meaning that isn't referring to a body of water.

With that in mind, let's wrap this up. Back to Revelation 20 and let's read through verses 11-15 and consider that the word *dead* is referring to the *spiritually dead* and the word *sea* is referring to "Satan's domain", not a body of water.

**Revelation 20:11** *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 [spiritually 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 [the spiritually dead] were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*

13) *The sea [Satan's domain] gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades [death and the grave, notice only one group is coming from death in the grave] 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. [Talking about the lake of fire]*

15) *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (NKJV)*

What we're talking about here is the parallel to Matthew 25, just only addressing how the wicked are judged. You're going to have two groups at that point. As you know, the Gog and Magog battle happens during the 8th day period, so you know there are a number of people that physically died before the 8th day period in direct rebellion to God. You have to resurrect those people; they are coming from death in the grave so they can face their judgment before God and be thrown in the lake of fire. Then you have those from the sea—those who are physically still alive but who followed Satan's way of life and they are going to be cast in the lake of fire as well. That's what these last four or five verses are talking about. It's only addressing the wicked but is the direct parallel to Matthew 25.

If we put all this together and correctly understand the two terms that we have based so much of our scenario on—the terms *first resurrection* and *rest of the dead*—and we

understand that first resurrection is just another way of saying resurrection to eternal life and the rest of the dead is a reference to the fall harvest of those who will receive their chance at eternal life after the 1000 years, in other words during the 8th day period, then we can read this and understand how the plan of God plays out. We can place Satan's release during the 8th day just like the book of Revelation places it. We can understand Ezekiel 37 in its context—it fits with 36 and is the beginning of the millennium. We can read Daniel 12 and just accept what it says on the page and we can understand that spiritual judgment plays out just like the Bible describes it, as a harvest. How does a farmer harvest crops? He handles the good product and the waste together in a unified event. If we understand this, then we can look at God's plan and understand this is a unified picture throughout the Bible that tells us how the resurrections happen. It's just like the Bible describes it, it's just like a physical harvest.