

Revelation 20:4-9

Verse 4

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them – The purpose of thrones is twofold: ruling and judging. The Apostles are promised to sit on thrones and rule with Christ (Luke 22:27-30, Matthew 19:28). Jesus promises authority and rule to faithful servants in Luke 19:17. *“Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.”*

The identity of “*they*” is uncertain. It could be:

- Faithful saints who have returned to earth with Christ, -The 24 elders of Revelation 5, -The tribulation saints, -The apostles.
- Most likely, it refers to all faithful saints.

And I saw the souls of those...and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years – These are clearly the tribulation martyrs who now receive their bodily resurrection. Their reign is *upon the earth!* Christ returns to the earth, and at the end of His reign, He is still on the earth (20:9). God promised these saints an earthly reign (5:10). Also, all OT messianic prophecies anticipated an earthly kingdom (Ps. 2:8).

Verse 5

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection – “*This is the first resurrection*” is speaking of the saints mentioned in verse 4. The *First resurrection* is not an event but an order of resurrection. They are first in contrast to those who are raised last, after the millennium. These two types of resurrection are separated by at least one thousand years.

The Order of the First Resurrection

- Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:23)
- Some believers shortly after Jesus’ resurrection (Matt. 27:52-53)
- Church age believers at the rapture (1 Thess. 4)
- The two witnesses during the tribulation (Rev. 11)
- The tribulation martyrs at the beginning of the millennium (Rev. 20:4-5)
- Old Testament saints at the beginning of the millennium (Isa. 26:19-21, Ezek. 37:12-14)

Verse 6

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection – This is the fifth of seven beatitudes in Revelation (1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, and 22:14).

Over these the second death has no power – The second death is final, eternal death beyond this earthly life, experienced in the lake of fire. It involves death of the soul (whole person) as well as the body (Matt. 10:26).

They will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years – The right to reign with Christ, which includes Old Testament saints and Church-Age saints, is for those who have been faithful servants.

Where do we go when we die?

Old Testament Saint	Immaterial	Paradise=Sheol=Abe’s Boson	Resurrection at Christ’s Second Coming	Judgment on the Earth	Heaven= Millennium New Heaven & Earth
	Material	The Grave			
Christian	Immaterial	Paradise=Christ’s Presence	Resurrection at the Rapture	Judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ	Heaven Millennium New Heaven & Earth
	Material	The Grave			
Tribulation Saint	Immaterial	Paradise	Resurrection at Christ’s Second Coming	Judgment on the Earth	Heaven Millennium New Heaven & Earth
	Material	The Grave			
Millennial Believer	Immaterial	Paradise	Resurrection at the end of the Millennium	Judgment on the Earth	Heaven Millennium New Heaven & Earth
	Material	The Grave			
All Unbelievers	Immaterial	Sheol=Hades	Resurrection at the end of the Millennium	Judgment at the Great White Throne	Hell = Lake of Fire
	Material	The Grave			

Verse 7

And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison – Satan is not reformed by his imprisonment but picks up where he left off.

Verse 8

And he will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth – How can this be? Because the heart of man, unchanged by God’s grace, is still wicked and rebellious. *Gog and Magog* – This phrase refers to the world’s rulers and nations which are in rebellion against God. Perhaps, from Ezekiel 38:2, “Gog,” the ruler, and “Magog,” his land. *To gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore* – Satan will deceive a great multitude who will attempt to overthrow the throne of Christ.

Verse 9

And they came up on the broad plane of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city – The beloved city is Jerusalem. Christ will rule and reign on the throne of David from the city of Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17). The *broad plane* may refer to the Plain of Jezreel in northern Israel, however, the topographical changes that precede and accompany Christ’s return make this location hard to pinpoint.

And fire came down from heaven and devoured them – Their destruction is immediate and absolute. Just as God rained fire on Sodom (Gen. 19:24), and Elijah called fire down on the soldiers of King Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:1- 16) so shall the final rebellion against God and Jesus be terminated. Note also Ezek. 38:22, 39: