

In our last podcast we did a quick overview of **Revelation 20** and then dove into verses **1-3** which describes the time when Satan will be bound in the Abyss for 1,000 years so that he may not deceive the nations any longer. We discussed what life on earth would be like without the devil and the mystery regarding a spiritual day and the clock that is ticking on the second day moving ever so close to the third day, a day of resurrection and life.

EP169 Revelation 20:4-6 P1

He Must Be Released! What?

Revelation 20:4

... after these things he **now** must be caused to be released for a short time.

Those are not the words anyone anticipated. And with “must” being rendered in the *present* tense, the devil’s release is even **now** a necessity. Yes, it is literally for a short time, literally a micron of time and it is the plan, **Plan-A**. But why, why is this even now necessary?

Trust the Story

This is a hard reality to grasp that it is necessary for the dragon to be released once again. And this is where we must trust the story. God is unveiling an incredible narrative that is all imbedded in His righteousness and His justice; accordingly, it will become evident why this is even **now** a part of His plan. Through the interment of the devil, God will be making a declarative statement to all those who would ever dare question His fairness. We will get to this in **20:7-10**, but for now, just trust the story.

The Resurrection the First (the Reign)

Revelation 20:4-6

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was caused to be given to them. And I saw the souls of those who caused to being afflicted because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the Beast or his image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were caused to be completed.

This the resurrection the first. Blessed and holy he who is **now** having a part in the resurrection the first; over these the second death **now** has no power, but they choose in the **future** to be priests of God and of Christ and in the **future** they reign with Him for a thousand years.

This passage may seem confusing as to who it is addressing, but rest assured it contains key markers, forensic tracks, that help us determine both the who and the when. We will find that this description of those who are “blessed” can only fit one group of people. Let’s dig into the details.

WHO?

The key forensic elements of this passage are tied to the **promises** which Jesus made to one group of people: His bondservants, His 2-witnesses, those who are now believing and are now overcoming—the **Called and Chosen and Faithful**. The **Codex** makes the clear connection between the promises and the recipients of those promises; therefore, we can be confident in our identity of this group.

We will look at two groupings of forensic evidence. The first being the description of various **promises** made to the bondservants of Christ, and second, the path that the **Called and Chosen and Faithful** must walk. The promises and the path.

The Promises

Thrones

“I saw thrones, and they sat on them.” To the church at Laodicea, Jesus promised that they would sit with Him on His throne, as He sat down with His Father on His throne. For those who tend to read things literally, Jesus is not literally sitting on His Father’s throne, nor will we sit on His. This is not a picture of a huge dog-pile (that game where every is stacked on top of each other in one big pile). Rather, this is a beautiful picture that communicates a message of shared authority and power.

Technically, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father, the place of greatest honor, authority, power, and rule. This is a place that is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the age to come.¹ In short, the Father has placed all things, all the works of His hands, in subjection to the rule and authority of Jesus; *“for not even the Father **now** judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may **now** honor the Son even as they **now** honor the Father.”*²

In that same manner, the bondservants of Jesus Christ, those who are now overcoming, will sit on thrones that will be far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the age to come.

We have seen this in the image of the 24-thrones that surround the throne of Christ and the 24-elders that sit on them.³ As we discovered, this was a picture of the completed body of Christ, spoken in **Code**, where 12x2 speaks of both division and witness (the number two) of God’s perfect administration of His kingdom (the number 12). In other words, one group of 12 depicts the full collection of gentile believers and the other group of 12 the full collection of Jewish believers. One group of 24, acting in unity but forever providing a unique and separate witness of the glory of Christ.

It may seem ostentatious to say that the bondservants of Christ will sit on thrones (His throne) that will be far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the age to come, but it makes sense. The bondservants of Christ are heirs of God and joint or **co-heirs** with Jesus Christ.⁴ And in the rapture, in the twinkling of an eye, the bondservants of

¹ *Matthew 22:24, quoting Psalm 110:1; Matthew 26:64; Mark 16:19; Acts 5:31; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22*

² *Ephesians 1:20; Psalm 8:5; 1 Corinthians 15:27; John 5:22-23*

³ *Revelation 4:4*

⁴ *Romans 8:16-17*

Jesus Christ will be changed and will be like Him, and they will share His nature.⁵

The idea of a joint or a co-heir is a legal term, and it speaks of multiple parties who have 100% right to the whole inheritance, as it is all shared-in-common. No one party has more rights to the “inheritance” than any other party; they all share equally.

Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit Himself **now** testifies with our spirit that we **now** are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we **now** suffer with Him so that we may also be caused to be glorified with Him.

As fellow heirs with Christ, it should not surprise us to see those who are now children seated with Him on these thrones of glory. This is a promise from God, and since “*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*”⁶ His word is so solid that the Spirit tells us that God does not even change His mind.⁷ We can take His promises to the bank, so-to-speak.

Judgment

“*Judgement was caused to be given to them.*” To the church at Thyatira, Jesus promised those who are now overcoming and who are now keeping His deeds until the end, that they will in the future be granted authority over the nations and they will rule, or literally “shepherd” them with a rod of iron.⁸

In the **Codex**, the Father promised the Son that the nations would be given to Him as an inheritance, the very ends of the earth as His possession.⁹ Once again, since the bondservants of Jesus are **co-heirs** with Him, this is a promise that belongs to them as well. They will occupy thrones of authority, and they will exercise judgment over the nations.

And since the angelic were given responsibility over the nations, the bondservants of Jesus will also judge the angels, it is part-and-parcel of sitting on the thrones that are above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but in the age to come.¹⁰ This level of authority over the angelic can be said about no other group of people, just the bondservants of God who are now overcoming.

The Second Death

“*...over these the second death now has no power.*” Jesus promised those at the church at Smyrna that

⁵ **1 John 3:2**

⁶ **Numbers 23:19**

⁷ **1 Samuel 15:29**

⁸ **Revelation 2:18-29**

⁹ **Psalm 2:7-9**

¹⁰ **1 Corinthians 6:3**. God assigned the nations to the angelic to shepherd and to judge justly. See **Deuteronomy 32:8; Psalm 82; Psalm 2** and our studies on the Kings of the Earth and the Merchants of the Earth. Note: as for **Deuteronomy 32:8**, the Dead Sea Scrolls read the number of the sons of God, and Greek version, reads the number of the angels of God; and the Masoretic Text reads the number of the sons of Israel.

those who are now overcoming would not be hurt by the **Second Death**, it would have no power over them.¹¹ In a similar manner, Jesus promised the church at Sardis that the names of those who are now overcoming would not be erased from the book of life, and that is notable since those whose names are **NOT** caused to having been written in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire, which is the **Second Death**.¹²

But what we must not miss is that this promise is a statement of their “**now**” and it is exclusively promised to those who are **now** overcoming. “...over these the second death **now** has no power.”

These are those who have been marked or sealed on their foreheads as bondservants of God, those who choose to now be coming out of the great tribulation, those who have been measured off and separated from all others, for they are now worshipping in the Sanctuary (in the “*Naos*”) of God and like the reed that channels the oil of the Spirit to the lamp in the Sanctuary, they flow with the oil of the Spirit. They never let their oil run dry. “...over these the second death **now** has no power.”¹³

Though the **Second Death** literally refers to an eternity in the everlasting fire (the Lake of Fire), it speaks of the absence of life, the absence of any sort of spiritual enlightenment. Once a person’s flesh is destroyed, which is the first death, if they are assigned to the Second Death, any hope of light, any hope of joy, any hope of God, will be stripped away from them. They will know only spiritual death that is amplified by their existence in the eternal darkness, or as it is quoted in **Jude 13**, “*the blackness – or the gloom – of darkness.*”

For those who are now overcoming, this **Second Death now** has no power for they even now have life. The Spirit explained the testimony which God has given concerning His Son, “*And the evidence now is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is now in His Son. He who is now having the Son now has the life; he who is not now having the Son of God does not now have the life.*”¹⁴

Priest of God and of Christ

“... but they choose in the **future** to be priests of God and of Christ.” In the opening introduction of Revelation, the Spirit said that Jesus has made His bondservants a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.¹⁵

Then the Four Living Creatures and the 24-Elders now sing a new song now saying, “*Worthy now are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were caused to be slain and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will in the future reign upon the earth.*”¹⁶

And finally, reaching further into the **Codex**, the Spirit says, “...you also, as stones **now** living, are caused to **now** be built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” ... “*But you a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a preserved people*

¹¹ Revelation 2:8-11

¹² Revelation 3:1-6, 20:14-15

¹³ See Revelation 7:1-3, 14, 11:1; Matthew 25:1-13

¹⁴ 1 John 5:11-12

¹⁵ Revelation 1:1, 6

¹⁶ Revelation 5:9-10

...”¹⁷

“... but they **choose** in the **future** to be priests of God and of Christ.” This idea of **choice** is powerful. This is the group who, in a like manner, even “**now** are choosing to **now** be coming out of the great tribulation.”¹⁸ By their choice to be a bondservant of Jesus and to be found in the Sanctuary now worshipping, now being a reed through which the oil of the Spirit flows, they choose not only to now be coming out of the great tribulation, but they choose to be those who in the future will be ordained as priests of God and of Christ.

Their Forever Reign

“... and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” This is a fulfillment of the promise Jesus made to those at the church at Thyatira, to those who are **now** overcoming. He promised that He will give them authority over the nations and that they will in the **future** rule them with a rod of iron, just as Jesus received this same authority from the Father.¹⁹ This is the benefit of sitting on Jesus’ throne, they get to exercise His authority.²⁰ This promise was affirmed in a song that is now sung by the twenty four elders and the four living creatures.

Revelation 5:8-10

When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one **now** holding a harp and golden bowls **now** being full of incense, which **now** are the prayers of the saints. And they **now** sing a new song, **now** saying,

*"Worthy **now** are You to take the scroll and to open its seals; for You had been caused to be slain and purchased for God with Your blood from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And You made us kings and priests to our God; and we will in the **future** reign upon the earth."*

And this promise goes above and beyond the 1,000-year period, for like Jesus, they will reign forever and ever, a reign that will extend though and to the time where God creates a new heaven and a new earth.²¹ Forever is hard to fathom, but it means that the Bondservants of Jesus Christ will always possess this rule and authority, always.

The Path

There are other key forensic elements of this passage that are tied specifically to the path Jesus mentioned His bondservants must travel.

¹⁷ **1 Peter 2:5, 9**

¹⁸ **Revelation 7:14**

¹⁹ **Revelation 2:26-28; Psalm 2:7-8**

²⁰ **Revelation 3:21**

²¹ **Revelation 21:1, 22:5**

Beheaded or Afflicted?

Revelation 20:4

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was caused to be given to them. And I saw the souls of those who caused to being **afflicted** because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the Beast or his image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Fiction Alert: Beheading

FICTION ALERT

Ignoring for a moment the lack of adherence to the **Code**, practically every translation of the Bible says that John saw the souls of those who have been “**beheaded**” because of their testimony of Jesus and the word of God. The Greek word at issue is the verb “*plekizo*” and it is rendered in the *perfect passive participle*, an ongoing thing that was done to these souls. It is important to note that this is the only time that this verb is used in the **Codex**.

For some reason, the translators have rendered the word “*plekizo*” as meaning “to cut off” as with an axe, and claim it is connected to the Greek word for “axe” which is “*axine*”.²² However, that is a huge stretch and requires a vivid imagination.

The verb “*plekizo*” is a derivative of the word “*plesso*” which means to pound, to flatten out, to inflict with calamity. And “*plesso*” is another form of a primary verb “*plasso*,” which means to be molded, shaped, or fabricated. In short, this would have best been translated as “afflicted,” “crushed,” or “brutalized”. It picks up the idea that true believers are considered as sheep to be slaughtered, being put to death all day long.²³ Yet, this death is working within them all manner of glory as it effects their molding, or transformation, into the image of the Son, so that the life of Jesus might be manifested in their bodies.²⁴

Romans 5:3-5

And not only this, but we also choose to **now** exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation chooses to **now** bring about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not **now** disgrace, because the love of God has been caused to be poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been caused to being given to us.

²² See *Matthew 3:10; Luke 3:9*

²³ *Romans 8:36*

²⁴ *2 Corinthians 4:8-10*

Besides, such trials, or the testing of their faith, produces endurance. “And let endurance **now** have its perfect result, so that you may **now** be perfect and complete, caused to **now** be lacking in nothing.”²⁵ “Indeed, all who are **now** desiring to **now** live godly in Jesus Christ will in the **future** be caused to suffer persecution.”²⁶ This is a guarantee. True believers must suffer for His sake, for it is the means by which they have chosen to be done with sin and in effect, walk as He walked in this world.²⁷ There is purpose in our affliction, in our crushing. As we discovered with the church at Smyrna, our crushing releases a fragrance of beauty and delight that overpowers the stench of all that is dead and dying.

The Spirit through a man named Elihu said it this way in the book of Job.

Job 36:15

But by means of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer. For he gets their attention through adversity.

Suffering, crushing, affliction, persecution, are all words to describe how God works in us, molds us and transforms us to produce His beauty that is released through our lives to be a sweet-smelling fragrance in the lives of all who are dead and dying.

Beheading

Moreover, there is a proper Greek word for “behead,” and it is not the verb “*plekizo*,” rather, it is the verb “*Apokephalizo*.” We find this verb used in connection with the beheading of John the Baptist.²⁸ Thus, it is unusual that the Spirit did not utilize this word if he was meaning that these “souls” had *literally* been beheaded.

This **fiction** suggesting that Christians will be beheaded in the **End Times** has created a lot of fear and terror in many people. Back in the 70’s there was a movie titled, “*A Thief in the Night*.” This was a movie that promoted the fiction of a pre-tribulation rapture and depicted what might happen to those who were left behind and who did not choose to follow the Antichrist. In short, they were marched before a guillotine and beheaded. In the final scene of the movie, the main character Patty was placed in the guillotine. This freaked everyone out, and it instilled a deep fear in many people.

Yet, if the Spirit literally meant that this passage applies only to those who have been or will be *literally* beheaded, he would have used the actual Greek word for beheading, “*Apokephalizo*.” The translators’ contortions of the verb “*plekizo*” is wrong, misleading, and has created a painful **fiction**.

Therefore, it is best to understand this passage in light of the **path** that true believers must walk, a path of tribulation, suffering, crushing, affliction, all of which is purposed to put to death to their Old Sinful Nature (the *flesh*). This is the war which **Yahweh** wages against them for them, and in other cases, literal

²⁵ **James 1:3-4**

²⁶ **2 Timothy 3:12**

²⁷ **Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 2:21, 4:1**

²⁸ See **Matthew 14:10; Mark 6:16, 27; Luke 9:9**

death is the result as they are ushered home into the arms of Jesus.

As an example, Paul was pounded, crushed, flattened, cut off, and inflicted with calamity. As he said,

2 Corinthians 11:23-29

Are they **now** servants of Christ? — I **now** speak as one **now** being insane — I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was caused to be beaten with rods, once I was caused to be stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is **now** weak without me **now** weak? Who is **now** caused to be led into sin without me caused to **now** have intense concern?

This practical example gives weight or understanding to the verb “*plekizo*” and the path that a bondservant of Jesus Christ must walk. Even John identified in this manner. He introduced this letter by saying, “*I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus.*”²⁹ Inserting the idea of “beheading” is an editorial indulgence that is not consistent with the verb “*plekizo*” and does not accurately describe the path which the bondservants of Jesus must walk.

Their Testimony

This group was afflicted “*because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God.*” And what is this testimony? “*And the testimony now is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life now is in His Son. He who is now having the Son now has the life; he who is not now having the Son of God does not now have the life.*”³⁰

Keep in mind, the 2-witnesses were permitted by God to prophecy and give **testimony** for 1,260 days (or 3.5 years—during the first part of the tribulation). As we learned, the 2-witnesses are a picture of the bondservants of Christ, comprised of both Gentiles and Jews. When they have finished their testimony, the Beast will overcome them and kill them, and they will die. Their bodies will lie in the streets of the “*great city*” of religious apostasy.³¹

As to the crushing and affliction, versus the beheading, Jesus spoke to this occurring in connection with the **testimony** of true believers. He said,

²⁹ **Revelation 1:9**

³⁰ **1 John 5:11-12**

³¹ See **Revelation 11:1-14**

Mark 13:9-13

But you are commanded to **now** be on your guard; for in the **future**, they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be caused in the **future** to be flogged in the synagogues, and you will be caused in the **future** to stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

The gospel **now** must first be caused to be preached to all the nations. But when they may **now** arrest you and **now** be handing you over, you are commanded to not **now** worry beforehand about what you may say but say whatever may be caused to be given you in that hour, that you are commanded to **now** speak; for it is not **now** you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit **now** speaking.

Brother will in the **future** betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will in the **future** be caused to rise up against parents and in the **future** have them put to death. You will in the **future** choose to **now** be caused to being hated by all because of My name, but the one enduring to the end, he will in the **future** be caused to be saved.³²

The interplay of the *present* tense and the *future* tense is mind-numbing and critical that we do not miss. Jesus was addressing things that are and things that will be. However, did you notice that Jesus did not say that they would be “beheaded,” ha. But they would experience massive ordeal: delivered to courts, flogged, arrested, handed over, betrayed, put to death, and hated. It is especially interesting how Jesus said that those who are hated, choose to be hated. Why? Because they choose not to compromise their **testimony**. They choose to stand in the Lord and in the power of His Word knowing full well what it would cost them, which in some instances would be broken relationships and all manner of hateful contempt.

We should also take special note of the fact that Jesus emphasized that the one enduring to the end will in the **future** be caused to be saved. This is a statement of the **Called and Chosen and Faithful**. They are called “faithful” because of those who have been **Called and Chosen**, they chose to endure and to remain in the Sanctuary worshipping regardless of what they must endure in this life.

NOT, NOT, NOT

“... and those who had not worshiped the Beast or his image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand ...” When it comes to the **path** they walked, this group of people did **NOT** worship the Beast, they did **NOT** worship His image, and they did **NOT** receive the mark of the Beast on their forehead or on their hand. This is a fundamental requirement to being a true believer in Jesus and being identified as one who is now overcoming.

Another way of stating this truth, which the Spirit previously used, is that this group are **spiritual virgins**. “These **now** are the ones who have not been caused to be defiled with women, for they **now** are virgins. These **now** are the ones who are **now** accompanying the Lamb wherever He may **now** go. These were caused to have been purchased from among men as first fruit to God and to the Lamb. And no falsehood was caused to be found in their mouth; they are **now** unblemished.”³³ In short, they refuse to be identified with any other so-called “god;” and even if the path the Lamb leads them down is a path of

³² See also **Luke 21:12-19**

³³ **Revelation 14:4-5**

affliction and death, they follow and refuse to turn from their path.

They Do Not Break or Bend

Despite the tremendous pressure, they do not conform to the ways of the world, and they do not give themselves to the false Messiah or to the whispers of the image, which speaks forth religious falsehood in the name of Jesus Christ. Endurance is so critical because the consequences of compromise are potentially deadly.

Revelation 14:9-12

If anyone **now** worships the beast and his image, and **now** receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will in the **future** choose to drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is having been caused to be mixed in full strength in the cup of His furious wrath; and he will in the **future** be caused to be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment **now** goes up forever and ever; they **now** have no rest day and night, those who are **now** worshiping the beast and his image, and whoever **now** receives the mark of his name." *Here **now** is the perseverance of the saints who are **now** keeping the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.*

Yes, this is the perseverance, or the endurance, of the holy ones who are the recipients of the promises and who must walk down the path which the Lamb sets forth before them. *"The one who has been enduring until the end, the same will in the **future** be caused to be saved."*³⁴

WHO – The Bondservants of Jesus Christ

Based on the evidence in the **Codex** regarding the **PROMISES** of God and the **PATH** which these ones must walk, this passage can only be talking about the bondservants of Jesus Christ, His 2-witnesses, those who are now believing and are now overcoming—the **Called and Chosen and Faithful**—the wife of Christ.

Throughout the **Codex**, there are no others that could be identified with this very specific forensic evidence. *"Blessed and holy he who is **now** having a part in the resurrection the first ..."*

Let's stop here and in our next podcast we will pick back up with more on the Resurrection the first.

I am glad you "tuned in" and have been "ready to listen."

³⁴ **Matthew 24:13**