

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

It will require only one angel to subdue and incarcerate Satan for 1,000 years, giving us insight into how much more powerful God is than the devil. God could easily immobilize Satan right now if it were His will. The devil, however, serves a purpose in God's eternal plan, namely, as the alternate choice set before free moral agents whom God is testing. This becomes even more obvious when we learn that the devil will be released for a short time at the end of the Millennium, at which time he will deceive the nations into foolishly attacking Jerusalem, from where Christ rules. God will use Satan to reveal those who are inwardly rebellious against Him, and then He will judge them with fire from heaven. Keep in mind that Satan will be able to deceive only those who are rebels at heart. Until they are deceived by him, they would never entertain the absurd idea of attempting to overthrow Christ's global government.

It does seem amazing that anyone would not be happy with Jesus reigning over the world. When you think about it, however, it is amazing that there is anyone who wouldn't want Jesus reigning over his or her life right now. Most people, however, want nothing to do with Him. And just as it will be with those whom Satan deceives at the end of the Millennium, those whom he has presently deceived are those who want to believe his lies and who refuse to believe the truth. It all comes down to the condition of people's hearts.

Scripture promises that those who endure in faith will one day reign with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12), and today's reading affirms that overcomers will "reign with Him for a thousand years" (20:6). Our positions of authority then will be based on our faithfulness now, as Jesus' Parable of the Nobleman reveals (Luke 19:11-27). It is quite possible that the "thrones" (plural) of which we read in 20:4 are thrones on which we will sit. Paul wrote that we will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3)!

Note that John refers to the resurrection of those who had been martyred under the reign of the antichrist as "the first resurrection" (20:5). One wonders how that resurrection---which obviously occurs after believers have been martyred by the antichrist---could be the "first resurrection" if there was another mass resurrection that occurred globally just before the time of the antichrist at the "pre-tribulational rapture" of the church, as so many believe. If, however, the rapture of the church and the resurrection of the dead in Christ---of which Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 15:51-55 and 1 Thes. 4:15-17---occurs when Christ returns at the end of the tribulation period, then it is obvious why that resurrection would be called "the first resurrection."

The bodies of the unsaved dead will not be resurrected until after the Millennium (20:5). The spirits that previously resided in those dead bodies, however, will be very much alive all during those 1,000 years, as disembodied spirits in hell (literally, "Hades"). The only thing they will have to look forward to is their physical resurrection, after which they will stand before the "great white throne" (20:11) of judgment, and then be cast into the lake of fire, which John refers to as "the second death" (20:14).

Words can hardly describe the solemnity of the scene when the book of life is opened and those who stand before the throne of God wait as it is searched for their names. Any hopes of salvation will be crushed. Other books, which describe the deeds of their lives, will be searched as well. Although we are saved through faith in Christ, our deeds reveal our faith or lack of faith. The unsaved will have no defense before God, as their deeds will testify to the unbelief in their hearts.

It seems quite obvious that the most important issue that everyone should resolve is the issue of whether or not one's name is recorded in the book of life. Everything else is insignificant by comparison. How tragic it is that most people spend their lives playing a daily version of Trivial Pursuit.