

Beatitudes
What The Bible Teaches About Being Blessed

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS PART
IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION**

Text: Revelation 20:6

Introduction:

1. The biblically blessed are those who depend upon God.
2. They inherit the promise made to Abraham by submission to God.
3. Throughout the New Testament, beatitudes describe the heart of one who is a faithful member of the Lord's kingdom – his church.
4. These blessed attitudes will enable one to make it to the eternal kingdom of God in Heaven.

I. The First Resurrection

- A. Revelation 20 is one of the most challenging and debated chapters in the Bible.
 1. Many ignore the symbolism and try to force a literal interpretation onto the chapter.
 2. Others interpret the symbolism in ways that are not consistent with the rest of the book nor harmonious with the rest of the Bible.
- B. John saw that Satan was bound (limited in power or influence) for 1,000 years (a symbolic but complete period of time).
- C. During this same time, certain souls were said to live and reign with Jesus.
 1. Those who had been martyred for the cause of Truth
 2. Those who had not worshipped or compromised with the beast
- D. This living and reigning with Jesus is called “the first resurrection.”
- E. The First Resurrection may refer to the new life that begins at baptism.
 1. Paul pictures baptism as a death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:1-7, 21-23).
 2. Thus, the Christian life is referred to as a resurrection (Ephesians 2:1-7; Colossians 2:13; 3:1-4).
 3. The church is a royal priesthood, in which every Christian serves as a priest (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10).
 4. In this view of the passage, the 1,000-year reign of Christ is the synonymous with the Christian Age – from the cross to the return of Jesus.
 5. A problem with this view is the loosening of Satan after the 1,000 years.
- F. The First Resurrection may refer to spiritual life in Paradise with Jesus.
 1. This view also holds that the 1,000-year reign of Jesus refers to the Christian Age.
 2. However, it sees the “first resurrection” as the Christian's “spiritual entities going into the presence of Christ and reigning with him.”

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3. “[T]he ‘first resurrection’ is therefore the experience of living and reigning with Christ in that realm beyond the grave.”
 4. “The first resurrection is in order to sit on thrones and reign with Christ while the earth continues to exist (vs. 4, 6); it is only for the saved. The second resurrection is in order to stand before the judgment throne of God after the earth has ‘fled away’ (vs. 11-14); it is for the saved and lost alike.”
 5. Like the previous view, the loosening of Satan after the 1,000 years is problematic for this interpretation.
- G. The First Resurrection may refer to the victory of the church over persecution.
1. This imagery was used in the Old Testament for the victory of God’s people over captivity (cf. Isaiah 26:19; Hosea 13:14; Ezekiel 37:1-14).
 2. In fact, Jesus’ victory over Satan was confirmed by His being raised from the dead to reign from His throne.
 3. Furthermore, this fits the context of the book of Revelation – souls under the altar are now reigning with Jesus (cf. Revelation 6:9-11).
 4. When the cause of Christ triumphs over its enemies, those who died for that cause also share in the victory!
 - a. Of course, this is a reference to those who were baptized into Christ for the remission of sins.
 - b. They are also the saved who have died and entered Paradise to be with Jesus.
 - c. However, the resurrection is of the cause for which the suffered and died.
 5. Persecution will arise again when Satan is loosed, but it will be only for a “little season.”
- H. Whatever view one holds, the first resurrection is not the resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns.
- II. The Second Death
- A. The “first death” that man will experience is the separation of the soul from the body (James 2:26; cf. Ecclesiastes 12:7; Genesis 35:18).
 - B. The “second death” is the eternal separation of the soul from God in Hell (Revelation 20:14-15).
 - C. Those who are faithful to Jesus – even unto death (Revelation 2:10) – will not be harmed by the second death.
- III. The Blessed Reign
- A. The beatitude joins blessedness with holiness – those who are pure from sin and forever separated unto God.
 - B. They are blessed because they do not have to fear the second death – eternal loss in the fires of Hell.
 - C. They are blessed because they are priests of God – eternally worshipping Him in the glory of His presence in Heaven.
 - D. They are blessed because they reign with Jesus!