

The thousand years

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[0:00] When we did chapter 19, I had too much material and we didn't tidy up the last bit about the! The nature of the final end. And rather than go back and tidy it up at this point, I would like us to move on into chapter 20, because I think the two tie together.

It's a bit like a jigsaw puzzle with lots of pieces and the more I thought about it, the more pieces I've discovered and therefore the more difficult it is to put it into a sort of orderly picture.

I once went on a preaching conference and Stuart Olliot was there. I think I was the warm-up act. And he said, I can see what you're doing. He said, you're building a jigsaw puzzle by putting the edge pieces in first and then working towards the center.

That's not a bad tactic. So I guess that's the sort of thing we're going to try and do in chapter 20.

Just get some basic shapes and fill in the details as we go forward.

I was chatting to Daniel about this. The timetables give six sessions coming up to Christmas. And to begin with, I thought, well, that's easy. There's so many chapters and we can fit that in.

[1:27] But I think actually we won't manage to do that. So Daniel says we can extend as necessary. So rather than try and sprint and squash things in, if it's okay with you, we'll just take it at the speed at which it comes.

And as I say, for this evening, let's try and get a basic shape to chapter 20, if that's okay with everybody. Right. So what I would like us to do then is to read chapter 20. Would you be up for reading one verse each?

Yeah. And the microphone is here. So let's hear God's word. Revelation chapter 20.

Yeah. Let's just read it and then we'll try and put it into shape when we've read it. And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.

He seized the dragon, that ancient snake, who is the devil or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the abyss and locked and sealed it over him to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended.

[2:54] After that, he must be set free for a short time. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.

And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.

They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is the first resurrection.

Hang on, you missed a bit. Yeah, yeah. Sorry. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath parted in the first resurrection.

On such the second death hath no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years. Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison.

[4:20] And we'll go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magagog, and to gather them from battle in number.

They are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves.

But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown.

They will be tormented day and night, forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.

Earth and sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne.

[5:25] And books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them. And each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.

The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Thank you very much. Lord, help us to make sense and be blessed as we look at these words of Scripture.

[6:30] Amen. Let's just ask a couple of questions. What's the long timescale in this section?

A thousand years. And is there another timescale in the section? Correct.

There is a short time. So there's a long time and a short time. So that's something we need to try and make sense of. Presumably these are symbolic because everything else in the book of Revelation is characteristically symbolic.

Let me ask another couple of questions. Is there a liquid feature in this section?

A sea. A sea? Which one? A sea in everything. The sea gave up its dead. Oh, thank you. Yes, the sea gave up its dead.

[7:33] Yes, there's another liquidy feature as well. A lake of fire. And where does the lake of fire appear in the text, please? Yes. 14. Yeah.

Verse 10. The lake of burning sulfur. Yeah, I think it's probably the same thing, isn't it? Verse 10. And the lake of fire is also in verse... Chapter 19, verse 20.

The two were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. So that seems to be a common feature with each of these little sections. They end up with a lake of fire or something very, very similar to that.

Okay. Now there's something else I was going to ask you. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I will...

I can't remember what it was. I will venture to say... I think there is a mistranslation in chapter 20, verse 4, where it says, I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.

[8:44] I don't think that's what it's saying. In Greek, it just says they had been given judgment. But I think what it's saying is that they had been given a positive judgment, that the saints, that the court says who is justified, who is condemned, and the court says the saints are justified.

They had a judgment given on their behalf. Does that make sense? So like if you had a car accident and you wait to see who was at fault, and it goes to court and the court says, not your fault.

You're innocent. You don't have to pay damages. You are the righteous ones in this case. And I will try and persuade you of that a little bit later.

But I think that's how that section starts. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given judgment, those who had been given a positive judgment, those on whom God said, the world condemned you, but in my eyes you are righteous and innocent.

I am not against you. I am for you. And I think that's probably one of the really helpful things that I'd like to persuade us of in this passage.

[10:18] And it's, woo, not working. And it's akin to what Paul says in Romans chapter 8, there is now, therefore, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And I think that fits in with what Daniel was saying this morning about the gospel, that the world might condemn us, our consciences might condemn us, Satan would accuse and condemn us.

But God says, there is no condemnation for my people. And this section says, thrones were set, and I saw those over whom God had said, no condemnation.

He had given judgment in their favor. And I'd like to at least present that thought, and if you go to sleep for the rest of it, at least go away with that thought.

There is no condemnation for us as God's people. And these verses talk about the final outcome, and saying, you will be glad if you have followed the Lord through your life, and kept on fighting the fight of faith.

[11:43] And in the end, you'll regret it if you stop fighting, if you turn aside, if you give up. If you let it all become distant, and unreal to you, and you just wander off, and let the word get choked, et cetera, et cetera, and go off the pathway.

In the end, you'll regret it, because this is where the end is. So there's sort of application that says, in view of these chapters, whatever else they may say to us, keep on being a Christian.

The sands of time are sinking, the dawn of heaven breaks. I can't remember how it goes after that. What does it say after that? The dawn of heaven breaks.

The fair sweet morn awakes. Yes. Dark has been the midnight, but days bring us a hand, the glory, glory dwelling in Emmanuel's land.

And that's the perspective of these chapters. And I'll just add, where am I now? Because I think these chapters are saying, I am in a position of no condemnation.

[12:53] Judgment has been given in favor of the saints. And there is a sense in which I am enthroned with Christ and seated with him in heavenly places now.

That I am justified now. And that I'm a citizen of heaven now. And it's worth thinking about that, isn't it?

Because there's so many things to distract us from that. We just look at the news and all the horrible things that are happening all over the world. And to find that I have security in Christ now. And I'm seated in heavenly place now. And I'm risen with Christ now. I think it's something that we need to remind ourselves of if we're going to live the Christian life. Anyway, those are my sort of introductory thoughts.

So just in case anybody hadn't been here before, this is, the book of Revelation is an unveiling. It's a letter. It's a prophecy. It has behavioral implications.

[13:56] It has behavioral implications. And the horizon is from the time of writing to the end, which we're going to be looking at. We've got his accent. And this actually becomes really important. All the things that we've picked up over the previous chapters are going to be really helpful in interpreting these last chapters.

How does he tend to say things? What is his accent? He uses signs and symbols. He uses signs and symbols, images and symbols, most of them, but possibly not all of them from Scripture. He uses symbolic names, symbolic numbers, symbolic times, symbolic places. And, of course, we see all of those in the chapter that we've got in front of us. The symbols are theological and including theological time.

And we spent one evening looking at theological time, the way that he describes time, not necessarily in terms of its duration, but its content.

So three and a half years is described in different ways, depending on whether you're looking at it from the point of view of the saints or whether you're looking at it from the point of view of Satan.

[15:07] And he uses a different way of depicting the same number according to what theological point he's making. He's prepared to use apparent contradictions, things that, like Jesus is a lion and he's also a lamb.

And he's prepared to use a collage of saying the same thing in different ways. I'm sorry about that. Is that me? And putting them all up for view, like a collage in a primary school with all the different pictures up there, in no particular order.

So we've seen the seven churches, the lamb upon the throne, the seven seals of world history, seven trumpets for repentance, the war between the dragon and the woman and her seed. We've seen that the dragon uses the beast, the false prophet, and the image of the beast.

We've seen final judgment. We've seen seven bowls of wrath. We've seen the prostitute Babylon gloriously defeated. There's the defeat of Babylon coming in.

And we looked last time at the triumph of the rider on the white horse and various images of the end. I shall just see whether something is wobbling in my pocket.

[16:24] That was what we looked at last time. And let's look at it sort of all at one go. Have I got a... No. That should be the pointer, shouldn't it?

Maybe the battery's running out. Yeah. Okay. Well, imagine me pointing. So we... I wonder what... Is it? Hmm? Is it? Okay. Okay. Let's put that a little bit further away.

And where's the microphone? I have turned it off. And where's the... Yeah. Well, perhaps, Steve, could you turn down the radio mic just for the time being?

The handheld mic. The roving mic. Yeah. Yeah. Where have we got to? Yeah.

[17:29] We moved from chapter 19, and there was a bit about don't worship me, the angel said. So we talked about worship, and we went through the things through which God was worshipped in that chapter.

Then we had the rider and the white horse, and there were these, which I think are incompatible images of the end, in the sense that they're like a collage.

You know, they're not meant to fit together in a neat way. So there was the wine press, where the wine press is where people get squashed. There was the defeat in battle, where the enemies of God are defeated.

There was the lake of fire, where everything is burnt up. There was the sword of the rider, which killed people, and there was this gruesome feast where the corpses are pecked at by the birds. And of course, if you were in the lake of fire, your corpse would be burnt up. So that doesn't quite, that doesn't fit neatly with the idea of the corpses being left unburied and being pecked at.

[18:40] But they're all horrible, gruesome pictures of the end. We will come back to those, all being well. So looking just in general, we've got a time period of a thousand plus a little bit in which the dragon is bound, the martyrs live and reign, and that too ends with a battle defeat.

It ends with the lake of fire. It ends with the great white throne, and it has judgment according to what you have done. And then in the following chapters, we have a new heaven and a new earth. So that's what we read. So let's try and tease it out a little bit. Yeah, this is just repeating what I've just said, more or less.

Right. Turn that off. Let's actually work out the text together.

So chapter 20, there's things that go up and things that go down. No, let me start that again. What we saw in chapter 19 was the rider on the white horse and then a battle and the lake of fire.

[20:05] So I would like to suggest to you that we're seeing this, seeing as we end up with a lake of fire in chapter 20, that it's more or less saying the same thing all over again.

So I'd like to suggest that to you. Maybe I can convince you of that or maybe not. But let's, well, let's see what it actually does say.

So let's take it apart a bit at a time. So what's the first thing that happens in chapter 20? Yeah, an angel comes down and does what to who to what?

He has a key. And the abyss, let's assume the abyss is down here. So, and a chain. Yep. And who gets chained and put into the abyss?

The dragon. The dragon. Okay. So I don't know whether I can quickly draw a dragon. So that's the dragon.

[21:11] And the dragon gets chained up and thrown into the abyss. Okay. Right. So here is a significant action. let's see what happens after that.

Yep. There's a thousand years. What's going to happen at the end of the thousand years? Yeah.

Okay. There's a, it's difficult to know how to, what scale this is on, but there is this short time.

Satan has been told his time is short earlier on. I haven't got the reference.

It was when the woman, when he became angry with the woman and her seed because he knew his time was short. Let's come back to that.

But anyway, there's a short time when he's released. released. What can he not do in this thousand years? Yes.

[22:18] He can't deceive the nations. So here the nations and during this time the nations are undeceived. Previously they'd been deceived but now they're undeceived.

So, okay, they're undeceived. Let's, let's, let's go a bit further. What else is seen? Thank you. I'm just going to give myself a little bit more room here.

There's the thousand years. There's the nations. I'm going to put the thrones up here. Who sits on the thrones?

Who sits on the thrones? The saints. Does it say saints? I said it.

Okay, did I? What does it, what does it actually say here? authority to judge? Authority to judge.

Yeah, well, yeah, these, these, let's put them up here.

[23:33] They're given, NIV says authority to judge. I think it's saying they were given judgment for. I'm going to put a tick. So they're, they're described, these people here.

Well, well, first of all, what happens to them? There's two verbs of what happens? Yep.

And before that? Yeah, there's a cluster of descriptions about them.

So they have not received the mark of the beast. Anything else about them? Sorry?

Yeah, these have been beheaded. And I think, once again, it's one of those things where one aspect is taken for a whole.

[24:31] So my example is, you know, somebody who asks your daughter's hand in marriage. Well, he doesn't just want her hand, does he? I mean, there's a way of saying he'd like the rest of her as well.

So I think the idea of the same, the beheaded ones is just saying they were faithful unto death.

They might have been killed with the sword. They might have been thrown to the lions.

But the point about it is that they were faithful unto death. Yep. And what happens to them? There's something else that happens to them first.

Yeah, it says, came to life in the NIV. It simply says in Greek, they lived. So I'm going to take them from here, being beheaded, and they lived.

And I'm going to take them up there. And so they had been beheaded, but they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Is that fair enough so far?

[25:31] I mean, okay, right. Anything else that we're told? This is the first resurrection. Yes. There's a...

Tell us about verse 5. What does it say about verse 5? The rest of the Lord have not come to life until the thousand years were ended. Okay. So I don't know whether to put that here, that's specifically where the thousand years were ended, or after the thousand years plus a short time there, or whether I put it in the middle.

But there is here people who were dead, they come to life when the thousand years are ended.

Yep, that's what it says, isn't it? And this is the rest of the dead. So that's the rest. So that's not the faithful ones, but everybody else. Yep.

Am I okay so far? Okay. Now then, this is the first resurrection. Now would you tell me, does he mean this bit over here is the first resurrection?

[26:46] Or does he mean this bit over here is the first resurrection? And the way to tell is by looking at the next sentence. So this is everybody.

This is the faithful. Which of these is the first resurrection? Hands up who thinks this one. Hands up who thinks this one.

Hands up who thinks this one. I think it's this one. So this is described, these are the people. This is described as resurrection number one.

That's the first resurrection. Presumably then, this is resurrection number two. He doesn't say that, but presumably if he was counting, that would be resurrection number two.

And what are we told about people who share in resurrection number one? They're blessed and holy.

[27:55] So I'm going to put this in here as well. Okay, they're blessed and holy. And anything else that we're told about them?

The second death has no power. Correct. So the second death, so death number two, has no power.

Which leaves us thinking, well, which is death number two? And it does go on to tell us, actually, you read it. Okay, have you got a text to back that up?

I think you have. What about chapter 20, verse 14? Yeah? Chapter 20, verse 14 says, The lake of fire.

The lake of fire is the second death. So I'm going to put this over here, death number two. So we've got a resurrection number one and a resurrection number two.

[29:11] Presumably, we've got a death number one and a death number two. Presumably, that's the idea he's giving us.

So we've got something that happens at this stage, resurrection number one, death number one. Something that happens in the meantime and something that happens in the end, resurrection number two, death number two.

Is that a fair description of the text? Okay, right. Yes. Question. Have you got the microphone so it can be recorded?

So those people who are reigning with Christ for a thousand years are the same as the ones at the top on your diagram?

That's what I was intending. So those are the thrones. These are the ones who live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

[30:19] And you were saying that it wasn't that they'd been given authority to judge, but that in some way they had had a good judgment.

Correct. Spoken about them or something. Correct. Yeah. So Oh, I've forgotten where I was going with it now.

Sorry. Which sort of fits in with the second death having no power over them because they've already been judged worthy or something like that?

I would I would agree with that construction. Yes. Okay. And I will try and give you another place in scripture where it is clearer. Generally in scripture interpretation it's best to work from the clear stuff to the less clear.

I think this at least this begins to make sense when you put it like that. But I would like to try and show you another place in scripture as well. Thank you for the question.

[31:39] Please ask questions if I have not been clear or if I've left holes in the argument or if you think it doesn't make sense. Right.

What I have left unsaid is about this short time here and I propose to leave that to another time. But oh yeah I didn't say this bit about the nations about deception.

So Satan is said to deceive and my suggestion is that he deceived the nations so they worshipped idols and in this long period in this thousand year period the nations are undeceived so they can believe the gospel.

And of course that is a huge thing isn't it because up to let's assume that this is something to do with Christ's victory up to that point the nations walk their own way in blindness and ignorance and worshipped idols but now is the gospel age when the gospel is going to go out and all sorts of nationalities and ethnicities are going to believe the gospel because whereas Satan previously blinded their eyes such as the apostle Paul goes out to be a light to the Gentiles and as it were to give sight to them so that would fit with that wouldn't it this period where Satan no longer holds the whole world in his grasp but a time in which nations I mean not every single member of every single nation but in a significant way the nations are undeceived and people from people who are Welsh believe the gospel and people who are German believe the gospel and people who are from Nigeria believe the gospel and people who are from even England believe the gospel so that would fit with that idea of the notions no longer being deceived and while we're on the subject Satan does deceive he deceives people like in chapter 20 verse 10 who make war and that's what's going to happen in the short time there's going to be a making war isn't there and here's a thought to conjure with see whether you agree with this maybe the deception that Satan gives to the nations is you can win maybe he says it's worth fighting because you can win this you can beat God you can be like the nations the kings of the earth and the rulers conspired together against the Lord and his anointed and said let us cast our chains aside let us cast aside his fetters or something they thought we can win this maybe that's

[34:42] Satan's deception to the nations so that they think we can go to battle and we can win and of course they couldn't and of course the the the undeception of the Christian is to say no way can we fight against God we

would be totally stupid if that's how we lived our lives we need to make peace with God we need to fall at his feet we need to ask him for mercy we need to align ourselves with him so okay I'm going to rub that out in a moment anybody want to ask any other questions about it yes Pete I don't know whether it's so much a question but since the thousand years is a symbolic period this first resurrection would you see that as a continuing continuation for the thousand year period and the second if you like judgment second death would you see that as a point in time or a continuation thank you that's a very good point isn't it that's a very good point

I'll tell you the answer I'm going to see this as a point as a point in time the final end I suppose he depicts this in terms of the situation to which he was writing and they're saying some of our number have been killed and some of our number perhaps face martyrdom in the sense that we use it now what's going to happen to them have they been defeated are they lost and John says no far from being defeated judgment is given for them in their favour they're not lost they are not ruled out of God's purposes they live and reign with him even now and I suppose by extension that would mean people who are beheaded later on in history but I think the point he's making is for that particular context is that fair enough answer yeah right let's go to John chapter 5 and we'll do a scripture reading again we'll go

John chapter 5 from verse 19 to verse 30 so whoever's got the microphone could they start us off and we can read round on this John 5 from verse 19 let me just give you the context of it and the context is that Jesus has said to the man at the pool arise and I need to draw that it would be helpful if I drew that so Jesus spoke and the man the paralyzed man got up and he got up because Jesus said arise and he got up and he moved from being prone and powerless to being alive and well that's the context of this okay please could we have then read chapter 5 verse what did I say 19 thank you then Jesus answered and said to them most assuredly I say to you the son of man can do nothing of himself but what he sees the father do for whatever he does the son also does in like manner for the father loveth the son and showeth him all things that himself doeth and he will show him greater works and deeds that ye may love marvel for just as the father raises the dead and gives them life even so the son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it moreover the father judges no one but has entrusted all judgment to the son that all may honour the son just to say honour the father he who does not honour the son does not honour the father who sent him very truly

I tell you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life very truly I tell you a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live for as the father has life in himself so he has granted the son also to have life in himself and he has given him authority to judge because he is the son of man do not be amazed at this for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice!

[40:58] and come out those who have done what is evil sorry what is good will rise to live and those who have done what is evil rise to be condemned the dead coming to life and reigning and those were the saints the believers if you like could put it out very gently generally and then after this period we have the rest of the dead coming to life this was the first death and the first resurrection and that was the second death and the second resurrection and it leads to judgment which

I should have said the books were opened I saw a great white throne and people were judged whether they had done good or evil that's what it said in that's the revelation one you happy with that right so let's come to make myself a little bit say this is the resurrection two and the second death right this talks about people who are dead getting life doesn't it in verse 21 the father raises the dead and gives them life and the son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it yes that's what it says and there's quite a bit of discussion about the way this relates to the father and to the son so in verse 24 very truly I tell you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life very truly

I tell you a time is coming and has now come when the dead now then that's a statement about hearing the voice of the son of God and coming to life now let me read you what it says later on in

the text in verse 28 it says do not be amazed at this for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out those who have done what is good will rise to live those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned so that talks about dead people coming to life yes are they talking about the same thing okay I've got a no well I'm asking you what does David think you think it means two separate things could we have the microphone I think it means two separate things because yours says some will rise to and shall come forth they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation yes okay so I think the question is is that the same as in verse 24 whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but is crossed from death to life is it the same occasion same people because you said no just explain a bit more what you're thinking you think it's two separate resurrections okay well let's let's set this up for two resurrections so here's one there's some dead people and they come to life and here's some dead people and they come to life so I've done that twice because you said it's two separate events so can we tease out a little bit who were the people concerned let's take this one first which presumably is earlier in time who who are the people who hear the voice of the son of God and live in this case yeah Ray I think we need to think of it in terms of John 3 carry on you know starting from God so loved the world that he sent gave his one and only son God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world but saved the world whoever believes in him verse 18 in him is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the one and only son this is the verdict light has come into the world but men love darkness rather instead of light because their deeds are evil I think that's the sense that the Bible speaks of us being dead in our trespasses and sins and the gospel brings us life life eternal as we say in the gospel so in the sense we're thinking in terms of the believers you know we've gone through the resurrection sort of spiritually although the sort of death comes afterwards yeah whereas everybody else they're dead in sin and their death comes afterwards but there is no first resurrection for them okay steve wanted to say something i mean it actually says that doesn't it carry on you don't have to infer that it says in verse 24 very truly i tell you that whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life has crossed over from death to life yeah time is coming and now has come when the dead will hear the voice of the son of god and then he goes on later to talk about the i can't remember it goes on but later he talks about the time is coming yeah when those in the grave shall there is a difference between the time is coming and he's now here which is one thing he says and the time is coming in nt wright's book he fails to notice this distinction so nt wright famous theologian does actually get things wrong that you and i can easily see are not right so there are two two things here this one is who are these people that are described here it does tell us exactly they're believers they have faith and if they believe they are niv says not judged when you read it it said in john 3 it says not condemned let's take let's go with condemned so these these people are not condemned there is no condemnation for these people so they've moved from death to life so all those things are said about these these people they believe in jesus christ and in believing they move from death to life there is no condemnation for them and that's you know it's a brilliant wonderful statement i mean you could say it's a statement about regeneration you could say it's a statement about justification it's a statement about what it happens when you believe in the lord jesus which is pretty good isn't it now then let's look at this this second statement so there is a second statement which david was telling us about so let's just tease this out a little bit verse 28 do not be amazed at this for even something even more amazing is going to happen for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out those who have done good will rise to live those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned so who are these people on this second one yeah well um yes those who haven't believed all who are in their graves so in a sense this one we're going to talk about a different sort of resurrection but this is everybody this is just believers

[49:53] so this is everybody and it does actually include believers because what happens next yeah so there's a there are two outcomes there's a rise to live and there's another rise to what yeah be condemned i think condemned is the right is the right understanding of it so there's eternal life and there's eternal condemnation and this is everybody faces this now if you think about it you will say well hold on how can that be right because this is a judgment by works this is what you've done which is completely the opposite of what daniel said this

morning so that must be wrong or perhaps daniel was wrong how do you fit these together because this one says there is no condemnation to those who believe and this says that there is so it is believing that made the difference but here it's works what they did makes the difference how do you square that what is good will rise those who have done what is good yes is those who have believed so the good thing that they've done is believe yeah i think there is that is there is a connection isn't there if you said you believed and it made no difference and nothing changed in your life you just carried on doing the things you did before that would sort of indicate that you weren't you didn't belong to the lord jesus christ this is what it says in james isn't it you say you have faith but if faith without works is dead if there's no good change in your life then you have no faith this judgment is not a meritorious judgment it's a diagnostic judgment it's not saying you're saved because of the huge amount of good works you've done it's saying what your life looks like shows what's gone on in your heart and if what's gone on in your heart is faith that's bound to show if you are a galatians says this actually doesn't it it says so important to believe the gospel the gospel of justification by faith because it's that that by which the spirit works and that by which the fruit of the spirit comes into someone's life and there's a connection between the first bit of galatians and the second the fruit of the spirit and the works of the flesh if you're not believing the gospel of justification by faith and you're resting your life on the flesh you'll produce the works of the flesh but if you're resting your life on the promises of

God through faith you will produce the fruit of the spirit and that's what this judgment is saying was this a person who who had learnt some selflessness from Christ was this a person who had learnt some kindness from Christ is this a person who had some testimony to Christ none of those things deserve salvation but they are the sure marks that something had changed and I think that's the way to understand this judgment otherwise John must have been stupid to write this mustn't he because he's already said there's no condemnation to believers and then later just a few sentences later he says that we will be judged by our lives does that make sense yeah no not quite it is what it says I can go back and clarify that but my point is

I think this picture in John's gospel is not quite the same but it's very very similar to this picture in Revelation do you follow me we've got a first sort of resurrection coming to life for believers and we've got a second general resurrection which leads to judgment for everybody and that's what we had in chapter 20 isn't it we had a first resurrection by which the believers same believers live and reign with Christ and then the rest come to life and are judged and go into eternal blessing or eternal condemnation are you happy with that sort of okay let me finish by taking us to Daniel chapter seven and there isn't time to do any sort of justice to this but I will what shall I say in Daniel chapter seven this is a vision there are four great beasts that churn everything up there are those kingdoms and there is by contrast the kingdom of the ancient of days days and in this conflict there is a resolution in verse nine where thrones were set in place the ancient of days took his seat so thrones were set in place and we have the significant verses from verse 13 where the son of man comes with the clouds of heaven approaches the ancient of days and was led into his presence he was given authority glory and sovereign power all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him his dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and his kingdom is one that can never be destroyed and there is a request for clarification of this and in verse 21 it says the horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them until the ancient of days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the most high and the time came when they possessed the kingdom in verse 26 it says the court will sit and his power will be taken away and just doing that very quickly

I think that's what John was referring to the conflict the enemies of God versus the kingdom of the ancient of days and the kingdom of the son of man and at this crucial point thrones are set up and judgment is pronounced in favor of the holy people of the most high and that's where we started off and I think that's a good place to finish this is saying since this significant event when Christ died

