

## Revelation Chapter 20

Reader's Service: Lesson 44 on the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian, Chapter 20:1-10  
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Revelation 20:1** *And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss [bottomless pit] and a great chain upon his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent, the ancient one, who is (the) Devil and Satan, the (one) leading astray the inhabited world, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the abyss, and locked and closed (it) with a seal over him, in order that he may not lead astray the nations any longer, until the thousand years should be finished; after these things it is necessary for him to be loosed for a little time. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them; and judgment was given to them; and I (saw) the souls of those having been beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus and on account of the word of God, and who neither made obeisance to the beast nor his image, and did not receive the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 And the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years should be finished. This is the resurrection, the first (one). 6. Blessed and holy (is) the (one) having part in the resurrection, the first (one). Over these the second death hath no authority, but they shall be priests of God and of the Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

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Archbishop Averky: Andrew of Caesarea (chapter 60) interprets this passage in this way: by this “thousand years” one must understand the whole time “from the incarnation of Christ to the coming of Antichrist.” With the coming of the incarnate Son of God on earth -- and in particular from the moment of His redemption of mankind through His death on the Cross -- Satan was bound, paganism was cast down, and there came upon earth the thousand-year reign of Christ. The thousand-year Kingdom of Christ on earth is to be understood as the victory of Christianity over paganism and the establishment of the Church of Christ. The definite number 1000 is used here in place of an indefinite number signifying the long period of time until the Second Coming of Christ.

Archimandrite Athanasios: [Verse 3] is one of the most difficult verses of the Apocalypse. If we are not careful we may slip into the delusion of the chiliasts [including pre-tribulation rapturists among the Evangelical Protestants], or Jehovah’s Witnesses; and erroneously accept their false teaching that Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years. This is why I need to ask for your undivided attention here. The sacred Evangelist just described a temporary incarceration of Satan. In the tenth verse of the same chapter, the Evangelist will inform us about the endless judgment of Satan, sending him into the lake of fire (hell) escorted by the Antichrist and the False Prophet. Initially it may seem that the False Prophet and the beast (the Antichrist) will precede Satan and their final condemnation to hell. At the battle of Armageddon we witnessed the death of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, who are mere men, human beings, who will govern the world. They were defeated, they died, and they were condemned to hell.

In this chapter we see the devil bound for a thousand years and then released for a short time. Afterwards he will be cast into a lake of fire. What escapes the average reader is the fact that the Evangelist is seeing the drama in a vision and he attempts to describe the events unfolding in this visionary image without historical sequence. This will become more obvious as we cover more of the verses in this chapter.

When Christ appears to finally judge the world, He sends the (unrepentant) sinners to the eternal hell that was prepared for the devil and his angels. The devil and the Antichrist will also be condemned at that very moment, since we do not have hell before the resurrection of the dead. The final condemnation of all sinful people and demons will commence simultaneously. The initial reading of this chapter may make it seem that the condemnation to hell may take place in stages. This is a very important element and I do not know if I have made this clear. The Revelation expressed in visual images presents the past, the present and the future in relation to the time of its recording and in the same image so it is not always obvious what refers to the past, present, or the future. I will remind you of what the Lord asked of Saint John, *Now write what*

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*you see, what is and what is to take place hereafter* (Revelation 1:19). Accordingly, we have past, present and future in the same image, so we must be extremely careful when we interpret this book.

Saint Andrew of Caesarea speaks on this very point, aiming to show that there is no time lapse between the death of the beast, the False Prophet and the condemnation. “It is obvious therefore, that the Antichrist and the False Prophet will not experience the common death, but will be changed. They will become incorrupt in *the twinkling of an eye* and be condemned to the second death in the lake of fire. According to the Apostle Paul, *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet* (1 Corinthians 15:52). They will not die (at the very end of history) but will be changed *in the twinkling of an eye*. Thus, all will be judged, but these two, being impious God-haters, will be eternally condemned (PG 106, 405DD).” Accordingly, their earthly bodies will not undergo the common death known to all of us, but will be changed from corruption to incorruption *in the twinkling of an eye*. However, this transformation will only happen once in history, at the sound of the last trumpet that will ring in the Second Coming of Christ and the final Judgment.

So when the Evangelist says that they, with their bodies, will be placed into the lake of fire while alive it clearly demonstrates that this will take place at the common resurrection, and their incorruption will occur in that *twinkling of the eye* of Saint Paul’s, in the final moments of history. Thus, there is no room whatsoever for a millennial kingdom on earth after the death of Christ. Please be aware that even Orthodox theologians misinterpret this verse and claim that after the death of the Antichrist a millennial kingdom will begin. Professor Panayiotis Bratsiotis posits that there are two school of thought among Orthodox theologians trying to accommodate both views. However, the view that Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years after the death of the Antichrist is unacceptable. It goes against the general spirit of the Scriptures, and the patristic consensus of the Orthodox Church. The Church accepts that the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and Satan will be condemned during the Final Judgment, on the same day as everyone else. There will be no human bodies left on earth to live for a thousand years. All people will be resurrected either to the Kingdom of God or to eternal hell.

Ecumenius writes regarding the difficulty of these verses and the method of Orthodox interpretation, “The actions of the lord against Satan are revealed to the Evangelist in the form of a painted canvas. The Evangelist then takes a section from the canvas and describes it; then he looks at a different section and tries to express its meaning in words and now he writes everything he sees in a book with chronological order.” The average reader however, will most likely ignore this key to Orthodox interpretation; he will most likely presume that the Evangelist is recording these event in chronological historical sequence. Father Haralambos Vasilopoulos who wrote a five-volume interpretation of Revelation in our century and Anthimos the Patriarch of Jerusalem, consider this as the most prevalent key of the Orthodox exegesis on this topic. If we fail to adhere to the patristic interpretation of the Church we are in danger of espousing the heresy of millennialism or chiliasm, either in the crude form of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, or in the spiritual form suggested by some early Church fathers before the formulation of the Creed. However, the Church does not accept those teachings.

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**Revelation 20:4** *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them; and judgment was given to them; and I (saw) the souls of those having been beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus and on account of the word of God, and who neither made obeisance to the beast nor his image, and did not receive the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

Archimandrite Athanasios: Now what is the meaning behind the thrones seen by the Evangelist? The throne is a symbolic expression of the seat of a teacher, a symbol of a judge, or the judgment seat. Christ said, *The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat* (Matthew 23:2). St. Andrew of Caesarea writes, "Already teaching thrones were granted to the holy Apostles through whom the Gentiles have been enlightened. Thus, the holy Apostles are the first category of Christians to be on the thrones that are seen by the Evangelist. Alongside the Apostles will be the saints, the martyrs and the confessors. Initially the Apostles were given the authority to sit on the teaching throne of Christ the Teacher, as the teachers of all nations, and after the end of the age they will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel ...

The celestial thrones of judgment and glory belong not only to the Apostles and saints, but also to those beheaded for their witness to Jesus Christ, as well as to the martyrs and confessors who had not worshipped the beast or his image ...

Christ promises *if anyone serves me, the Father will honor him* (John 12:26). This honor of the saints and martyrs pertains to this life, as we mentioned, but the miraculous power granted to them. The saints are honored when they exorcise demons and destroy the powers of Satan, when they heal people and implement all manner of miracles.

Archbishop Averky: This picture symbolically depicts the kingdom of the Christian faith after the overthrow of paganism. Those who have assumed judgment and sit on the thrones are all Christians who have attained salvation, for to them has been given the promise of the Kingdom and the glory of Christ (1 Thess 2:12). From this choir, the holy Seer of Mysteries singles out in particular "*those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God,*" that is, the holy martyrs. St. John says, "*I saw the souls of them that were beheaded.*" From this it is clear that these saints who participate in the 1000-year reign of Christ are reigning with Christ and performing judgment not on earth but in heaven, it speaks here only concerning their souls which are not yet united with their bodies. From these words it is evident that the saints take part in the governing of the Church of Christ on earth, and therefore it is natural and proper to appeal to them with prayers, asking their intercession before Christ with Whom they reign ... This reigning of the saints with Christ will continue until the final victory over the dark impious powers under the Antichrist. Then the resurrection of bodies will occur, and the last frightful Judgment will begin, when the souls of the saints will be reunited with their bodies and will reign with Christ forever.

**Revelation 20:5** *And the rest of the dead did not live [again] until the thousand years should be finished. This is the resurrection, the first (one).*

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Archbishop Averky: The expression “*lived not again*” means the dark and difficult condition of the souls of the impious sinners after bodily death [toll-houses]. It continues “*until the thousand years were finished.*” As in many other places in Sacred Scripture, this particle “*until*” (in Greek *εως*) does not signify the continuation of an action only to a certain boundary; on the contrary, it is a complete denial of any limit. ...it means that the impious dead are denied forever, the blessed life.

Archimandrite Athanasios: He [St. John] wants to reveal what happens to those who did not believe in Christ. They are considered dead in the language of Scripture. They are sent to Hades until the end of the thousand years. If I remain an unbeliever when I die I will go to Hades, which will cease to exist at the resurrection of the dead ... Hades will give up its dead, the common resurrection will take place; and the unbelievers will go to hell (along with their bodies). They remain dead in Hades, because Hades has no access to repentance. They do not have the ability to change condition in the absence of the body, so they will remain spiritually dead until the end of the thousand years.

***Revelation 20:6*** *Blessed and holy (is) the (one) having part in the resurrection, the first (one). Over these the second death hath no authority, but they shall be priests of God and of the Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years.*

St. Andrew of Caesarea: From the holy Scriptures we are taught that there are two lives and two types of dying or deaths. The first life, which is after the transgression of the commandment, is temporary and fleshly. The second life is eternal and is promised to the saints after obedience to the divine commandments of Christ. Likewise, there are two deaths. The first is that of the flesh and is temporary. The other is eternal and is the reward for sins. This occurs in the age to come and is the Gehenna of fire. We also know a distinction among the dead. There are the accursed of whom Isaiah wrote, *The dead shall not see life* (Isaiah 26:14). These are those persons who by their deeds bring on themselves both stench and death. There are, by contrast, the praiseworthy, who in Christ put to death the deeds of the body (*cf.* Rom. 8:13) and crucified themselves with Christ and died to the world. The dead who are rejected, who were not buried with Christ and did not rise with Him through baptism (*cf.* Rom. 6:4), but who remained in that death that comes through sins, they shall not live with Him until the completion of the thousand years, that is, that perfect number that extends from His first appearance until His second, glorious appearance, as was noted above. But having been born only from the earth and not from the Spirit, these return to the earth. Their death becomes the beginning of the punishment coming to them. However, those who have a portion in the first resurrection, that is, in the rising from thoughts that bring death and from dead words, these are blessed, for the second death, that is, the unending torment, shall have no power over them. These rather serve as priests and reign with Christ, as we see, for the thousand years as they are interpreted by us, until Satan is loosed and deceives the nations. Not that these will then be deprived of the kingdom. Rather, they will possess it more certainly and more manifestly with the passing of temporal reality and the arrival of things eternal. For the time between the loosing of the devil and the verdict against him and his punishment in Gehenna is short ... Therefore,



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since there are two deaths, it is necessary also to accept two resurrections. There is the first, physical death, given as a wage for human disobedience. The second death is eternal punishment. The first resurrection is the giving of life from dead works. The second resurrection is the transformation from the corruption of our bodies into incorruptibility.

Archbishop Averky: Consequently, it is understood that if here on earth one has lived in Christ Jesus and has come before Him after the first death (that is, bodily death) with fervent faith in Him and filled with His grace, then one has no need to fear the second death, that is, the fiery Gehenna .

The first six verses of the 20th chapter of the Apocalypse have served as a pretext for the development of a false teaching concerning the “1000-year reign of Christ on earth” which has received the name of Chiliasm. In essence it teaches that not long before the end of the world, Christ the Saviour will come again to earth, defeat Antichrist, resurrect the righteous, and make a new kingdom on earth. As a reward for their struggles and sufferings, the righteous will reign together with Christ for the course of 1000 years, and will enjoy all the good things of temporal life. Only then will there follow the second, universal resurrection of the dead, the universal judgment, and the general giving of eternal rewards. This teaching is known in two forms. Some say that Christ will restore Jerusalem in all its beauty and reinitiate the fulfillment of Moses’ ritual law with all its sacrifices; and that the blessedness of the righteous will consist in all manner of sensual enjoyments [This view is held by many of today’s Evangelicals & Protestants, and especially Messianic (Jewish) Christians.]. In the first century this teaching was held by the heretic Cerinthus and other Judaizing heretics: the Ebionites, the Montanists, and in the 4th century by the Apollinarians. Others, on the contrary, have affirmed that this blessedness will consist in purely spiritual delights. In this latter form, chiliastic ideas were expressed first by Papias of Hieropolis; later they are to be found in the Holy Martyr Justin, in St. Irenaeus, in Hippolytus, Methodius, and Lactantius. In recent times it has been revived with certain peculiarities by the Anabaptists, the followers of Swedenborg, the Illuminati and the Adventists. One must be aware, however, that neither in its first nor in its second form can the teachings of Chiliasm be accepted as an Orthodox Christian for the following reasons:

1. According to the chiliast teaching, the resurrection of the dead will take place twice: the first, 1000 years before the end of the world -- when only the righteous will be resurrected, and the second, at the very end of the world, when sinners will also be resurrected. However, Christ the Saviour clearly taught only one universal resurrection of the dead, when both the righteous and the sinners will be resurrected and all will receive their final recompense (Jn 6:39-40, Matt 13:37-43).

2. The Word of God speaks of only 2 comings of Christ in the world: the first in lowliness, when He came to redeem us; and the 2nd in glory, when He will appear to judge the living and the dead. Chiliasm introduces one more -- a 3rd coming of Christ 1000 years before the end of the world. The Word of God knows no such thing.

3. The Word of God teaches only two kingdoms of Christ: The Kingdom of Grace which will continue until the end of the world (1 Cor 15:23-26), and the Kingdom of Glory which will begin after the Last Judgment and will have no end (Luke 1:33). Chiliasm, however, allows yet a third, as it were, a middle kingdom of Christ, which will last only 1000 years.

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4. The teaching of a sensual kingdom of Christ clearly contradicts the Word of God, according to which the Kingdom of God is not “food and drink” (Rom 14:17); in the resurrection of the dead they do not marry or are given in marriage (Matt 22:30); the rites of the law of Moses had only a prefiguring significance and were forever done away with by the more perfect New Testament law (Acts 15:23-30, Rom 6:14; Gal 5:6, Heb 10:1).

Certain ancient teachers of the Church -- [Sts.] Justin, Irenaeus, and Methodius -- held Chiliasm only as a personal opinion. At the same time there were those who decidedly rose up against it such as Caius the Presbyter of Rome, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Epiphanius, Blessed Jerome, and Blessed Augustine. To hold Chiliasm even as a private opinion was no longer permissible after the Church, at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381, condemned the teaching of the heretic Apollinarius concerning the 1000 year reign of Christ. At the same time this was confirmed by the introduction into the Symbol of Faith of the words “of His Kingdom there will be no end.”

Archimandrite Athanasios: Saint Andrew of Caesarea writes regarding these thousand years... “A thousand years, therefore, are the time span from the Lord’s Incarnation until the coming of the Antichrist” ... Saint Anthimos ... further comments, “A thousand years does not refer to ten centuries but the perfection of the number needed for the preaching of the gospel and the number of those willing to be saved ... The number one thousand expresses the salvific plan of God’s economy. Within these thousand years (the time of the gospel) everything will be fulfilled in terms of the people’s salvation.”

Saint Anthimos also mentions that a certain number of believers are needed for the criteria to be completed. While discussing Revelation in previous lessons we commented on the cry of the martyrs, *O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth? Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete* (Revelation 6:10). This number, which is known only to God, must be completed before the time of the gospel comes to an end.

**Revelation 20:7** *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

Archbishop Averky: By the *loosing of Satan out of his prison* is to be understood the appearance of Antichrist before the end of the world. The liberated Satan will strive in the person of Antichrist to deceive all the nations of the earth, and will raise up Gog and Magog in battle against the Christian Church. St. Andrew says: “Some people think that Gog and Magog are the northern and most remote Scythian peoples, or as we call them, Huns [in St. Andrew’s time, not our present world, the most militant and numerous peoples of the earth and we keep them from seizing the whole earth until the loosing of the devil by the hand of God alone.] Others, translating from the Hebrew say that Gog signifies ”one who gathers” or “a gathering” and that Magog signifies “one who is exalted, or ”exultation.” And so, these names signify either a gathering of peoples or their “exultation. (St. Andrew, chapter 63. One must suppose



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that these names are used in a metaphorical sense to denote those fierce hordes who, at the end of the world, will arm themselves under the leadership of the Antichrist against the Church of Christ.

Archimandrite Athanasios: St. Paul writes, *the coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (2 Thes. 2:9-12). The energy of delusion is a terrible thing and will cause these people to believe the lie, which has a broader meaning in the language of Scriptures, especially in the New Testament. The lie here refers to alienation and fallen state. They will go away from the true God and believe another. The Lord prophesied this as follows: *I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name him you will receive* (John 5:43). This in ancient Greek is not necessarily hypothetical, but factual. The Lord spoke about false christs, so it will happen in time. In this adage of the Lord's, the Church fathers do not only see false christs but the final false messiah, the Antichrist.

**Revelation 20:9** *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Archbishop Averky: This means that the enemies of Christ will spread over the whole earth and will begin everywhere the persecution of Christianity.

The holy prophet Ezekiel drew a similar picture of the defeat of the wild hordes of Gog (Ezek. 38:18-22, 39:1-6). This is a depiction of God's wrath which will be poured out upon the enemies of God at the second coming of Christ.

St. Andrew of Caesarea: This will be either a physical fire such as that which burned the two groups of fifty at the time of Elijah (4 Kingdoms 1:9-13), or the passage refers to the glorious coming of Christ, who will slay them *by the breath of His mouth* (2 Thes. 2:8) and consume the aforementioned nations and their leader, the devil. And Christ will hand them, along with the Antichrist and the False Prophet, over to the lake of fire, where they will be tormented forever and ever.

**Revelation 20:11** *And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

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Archbishop Averky: This is a picture of the universal judgment of God upon the human race. The whiteness of the throne upon which the Chief Judge of the universe sits signifies the sanctity and righteousness of this Judge.

Here is depicted the great and frightful changes in the universe, which will occur before the final and Dread Judgment (*cf.* 2 Pet. 3:10).

**Revelation 20:12** *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

St. Andrew of Caesarea: The great and the small are either those who are older or younger, or more likely those who have done the works of death and will appropriately be punished for these acts. Or the great are the righteous and the small are those sinners who are worthless because of the baseness of their soul.

Archbishop Averky: The opened books symbolically signify the omniscience of God Who knows all the works of men. That there is only one book of life is a sign of the small number of the chosen ones of God, who are to inherit salvation. St. Andrew says, The opened books represent the acts and conscience of each person. One of them is the book of life in which are written the names of the saints.”

Archimandrite Athanasios: The final universal resurrection is now revealed to Saint John the Evangelist, in Patmos, where he writes, *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened* (Revelation 20:12). Great and small refers to all possible variations of age, social status, education, social position, ethical, immoral, righteous, and sinful states. In previous chapters Saint John includes all categories of people as they journeyed through history: kings, archons, rich, poor, slaves, free men, and all, regardless of economic status or position, will stand before God. Christ spoke about the small ones, *whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea* (Matthew 18:6) ... Little ones also refers to the simple people, such as villagers ...

**Revelation 20:13** *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

St. Andrew of Caesarea: It says that each body is returned to those elements from which it was constituted and given up, whether it had been given over to the earth or to the sea. Death and hades are not ensouled living creatures, as some have written. Rather, death is the separation of the soul and the body, and hades is that place that is to us formless and unseen and that receives the souls that travel there. Those souls are dead that carry death-bearing deeds. As a

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wise man said, *The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them* (Wis. 3:1).

Archbishop Averky: The meaning here is that all men, without exception, will be resurrected and stand before God's Judgment ... Death expresses the separation of the soul from the body, and Hades refers to the "place" where the souls are held. Accordingly, with the words sea, Death, and Hades we are fully informed that the resurrection will be universal.

Daniel, who lived during the sixth century (BC) describes the general resurrection in vivid colors: *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake* (stand up -- ἐξεγερθήσονται), *some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt* (or shame) (Daniel 12:2). With the expression *many* he does not mean some will and others will not. This is a typical Hebraic expression meaning *all*. It is the same thing that Christ said, *For this is My blood, shed for you and for many*. *For many* means for all, for everyone. It would be inconceivable to even think that the Blood of Christ was only shed for a few people and not others. This *many* of Daniel means that *all*, will stand up (ἐξεγερθήσονται) on their two feet; they will arise. The amazing thing is that Daniel does not use the word *dead*, those *dead* in their graves, but of those that *sleep*, because death is a sleep, since we will have a resurrection of the dead. This word by itself adequately reveals the future resurrection, for someone asleep is expected to wake up.

Daniel does not stop here, but uses a great deal of specificity. He could have said they that sleep in the earth, yet he goes one-step further, to express the reality of things. He writes, *those that sleep in the dust of the earth*. Those whose bodies are decomposed and are one with the dust of the earth will resurrect, they will arise, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. This is remarkable. He uses the word everlasting in both states: everlasting shame and everlasting life.

Daniel continues, *And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever* (Daniel 12:3). This prophecy echoes the words of Christ, six centuries before the Incarnation. Christ "borrowed" these words from Daniel [more specifically the words of the Holy Spirit], but He made them come alive on Mount Tabor, where His disciples saw Him transfigured, and more brilliant than the sun.

So Daniel's words are not some philosophical myth; our faith is not a philosophical myth, but reality and truth. Our salvation is not a ploy to be used like the myths of some philosophical system in its feeble attempt to give some kind of consolation to today's man, who is seeking the meaning of his existence in the face of the impasse of death. Christianity is solely based on facts ... The words of the Christian faith and the gospel have been confirmed, proven, revealed and cemented by a plethora of prophecies. Nine out of ten prophecies have been fulfilled. One remains unfulfilled, the resurrection of the dead ...

In the words of Christ, *the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment* (condemnation) (John 5:28-29) ...

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**Revelation 20:14** *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*  
**15** *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Archbishop Averky: This is said in the sense that those people who are glorified and saved will no longer fear either hell or death; for them, death and hell will cease to exist forever. By the *lake of fire* and the *second death* are to be understood the eternal condemnation of sinners whose names did not appear to be written in the Lord's book of life.

Archimandrite Athanasios: In this verse Death and Hades are personified to show their total inactivation and abolishment. They entered hell and they will never be able to come out again. Here we need to understand that God did not create Death and Hades, or they would not be nullified or abolished. Everything created by God will never cease to exist. The ideas of Death and Hades are outside of God's scope of creation. According to the wise Solomon, *God did not make death* (Wisdom of Solomon 1:13), and St. Andrew comes to offer a great explanation, "All the works of God are very good. Everything and anything that is not a work of God will be abolished by the fire of Gehenna ...

*He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces* (Isaiah 25:8). St. Paul adds, *The last enemy to be destroyed is death* (1 Corinthians 15:26).