

## THREE

# Three Historical Points of Contention

*Supported by documentation*

As I present the truths about the resurrection of the just I will work first from this short list of topical points as my outline. The contentions will be addressed in this order:

1) A literal person referred to as Antichrist, makes war against, persecutes, causes tribulation, and does unlawful or unheard of things against us Christians, the Saints, the Church. In other words members of the Church will be alive at the time of Antichrist and will have to identify and reject him. If then the Church is persecuted and put to death by Antichrist, then the resurrection of the just and rapture of the Church MUST without any question happen chronologically AFTER the advent of Antichrist. This will be seen in the expository examination of II Thessalonians 2 as well.

2) There will be two physical resurrections, one for the Just and one for the un-just. Due to the fact that there will be only one resurrection for the just it must include all of those who are believers who will be resurrected at the coming of the Lord. Therefore, because the first resurrection is to include those who were “beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God, and had not worshiped the beast nor received his mark,” it MUST take place AFTER the advent of Antichrist.

3) I Thessalonians 4 and Revelation 20 are one and the same first resurrection. Because these two references are one and the same resurrection of the just it MUST (redundant truth) take place AFTER the advent of Antichrist.

Conclusion;

The resurrection of the just takes place AFTER the advent of Antichrist. This is an absolute truth woven through all of scripture and Ante-Nicene writings. It is not only a redundant theme throughout the patristic writings as referenced above, but can also be seen in the same writings stated directly and clearly this way; “The resurrection of the just happens after Antichrist.”<sup>6</sup>

As I proceed through the patristic citations I will occasionally point out what is clearly not stated as well. Sometimes during examination it needs to be made clear what is not being said. This helps to expose when an idea is brought into the text (eisegesis) and not taken out of the text (exegesis). If a point being taught as truth is not taken out of the text in context, then the desired meaning has been placed into the text and the idea’s point of origin is outside of scripture.

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<sup>6</sup> Irenaeus-Against Heresies book V, 35:1

## Contention One

### *Daniel 7*

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.

3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5 "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

6 "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the

eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;

10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

17 'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

18 But THE SAINTS of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

19 "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet;

20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against THE SAINTS, and prevailing against them,

22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of THE SAINTS of the Most High, and the time came for THE SAINTS to possess the kingdom.

23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute THE SAINTS of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then THE SAINTS shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

26 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, **THE SAINTS** of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

28 "This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart."

Daniel chapter seven is quoted by most of the Ante-Nicene writers and is the most common reference for their eschatological commentary on the Church and Antichrist. Two observations that are present in their commentaries of this chapter are; 1) The Little Horn always refers to a literal person called Antichrist and, 2) "The Saints", or, "The Saints of the Most High" refers to the Church, which is the body of Christ. Therefore we continually see ANF refer to Antichrist as "making war against", "persecuting", "assailing", "bringing tribulation against" the Church, or the Saints of the Most High God when alluding to this chapter. The reason Daniel refers to them as Saints and not as the Church like Hippolytus, Tertullian, Augustine and others do is because there was no Church at that time. At the time of Daniel those who were justified by faith were known as Saints not the Church.

This is an inconvenient truth for those who like to think the Church is absent at the advent of Antichrist because it has been raptured. Unfortunately for all of us this is not true (rapture and resurrection before Antichrist). In examining verses twenty one and twenty five of Daniel seven we see that Antichrist makes war against, and persecutes the Church and we shall be given over into his hands for three and a half years. In an effort to avoid this truth some employ the magic of the magician and add a word into the texts of Daniel and change the meaning of the word "Saints."

In this way the magician can show us that nothing means what it says and we can't possibly understand the true meaning of the text without their assistance.

The magician's trick is performed by adding one word and thus changing the entire thought that is being conveyed. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society gives us perfect examples of this form of dishonest trickery in their Bible translation. In John 1:1 we read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But because they have decided beforehand that Jesus isn't God, they add the word "A" in front of the word "God" which changes the text to say "The Word was [a] god" from what the text really says which is, "The Word was God." Again they do the same magic trick by adding a word to change the meaning of II Peter 1:1. In his Epistle Peter uses the phrase "Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pt. 1:11, and 3:18). In verse one of chapter one Peter replaces the noun "Lord" with the word "God." He therefore declares, "Our God and Savior Jesus Christ." But, because the Jehovah's witnesses have decided beforehand that Jesus is not God they add the word "The" in front of the word "Savior" and change the phrase to say, "Our God and [the] Savior Jesus Christ." In doing this they are able to change the meaning from Jesus is both God and Savior, to God and Jesus are different. They do the same exact thing with Titus 2:13. In Colossians 1:16 they have Jesus as creating ALL [other] things, and Acts 10:36 Jesus as being Lord of ALL [others]. The magician (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society) has successfully accomplished the trick of showing that nothing means what it says and we can't possibly understand the true meaning of the text without their assistance.

Now back to Daniel. The same trick is used in the interpretation of Daniel chapter seven to change the meaning to suit a pre-determined doctrine. The word "tribulation" is added in front of the word "Saints" in verses twenty one and twenty five of Daniel chapter seven so that it changes the passages to read, "He shall persecute the [tribulation] Saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the [tribulation] Saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time." The

addition of the word “tribulation” in front of the word “Saints” allows the magician to insert the meaning of “people who come to salvation AFTER the resurrection and rapture of the Church,” Tribulation Saints. However this meaning doesn’t exist anywhere else in the context of the paragraph, the chapter, or the book. This idea of Tribulation Saints is 100% out of context. But, the magician has done his job in making sure that people understand that nothing means what it says. What is in plain sight isn’t what you think and only the enlightened can communicate the true meaning of the text.

So what do the historical documents of the early Church tell us about the correct way to interpret Daniel chapter seven? Here are a few citations;

### **Ante-Nicene Fathers:**

Antichrist is a literal person who persecutes the Church

1) **Justin:** *Dialogue with Trypho, CX*

two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians.

2) **Apollinarius** (Hierapolis)

And then the Antichrist shall come, and according to the Apostle [reading apostolum for apostolorum] he is going to sit in the temple of God (II Thess. 2) and be slain by the breath of our Lord and Savior after he has waged war against the saints.

3) **Irenaeus:** *Against Heresies Book V 25:3,4*

*The fraud, pride, and tyrannical kingdom of Antichrist, as described by Daniel and Paul.*

...that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face. He says: "And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom." Then, fur-



ther on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise; and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time," that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth.

.....And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, DURING which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: "And in the midst of the week," he says, "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete." Now three years and six months constitute the half-week.

4) **Irenaeus:** *Against Heresies Book V 30:3,4*

We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision....But he indicates the number of the name now, that when this man comes we may avoid him, being aware who he is

5) **Hippolytus:** *Dogmatical and Historical-Treatise on Christ and Antichrist #47*

For this is meant by the little horn that grows up. He, being now elated in heart, begins to exalt himself, and to glorify himself as God, persecuting the saints and blaspheming Christ, even as Daniel says, "I considered the horn, and, behold, in the horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things; and he opened his mouth to blaspheme God. And that horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them until the beast was slain, and perished, and his body was given to be burned."

6) **Hippolytus:** *Dogmatical and Historical-Treatise on Christ and Antichrist #61*

"And the dragon," he says, "saw and persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church, which flees from city to city, and seeks concealment in the wilderness among the mountains,

7) **Hippolytus:** *On the End of the World, 16, 21, 26, 33, 34*

16-And by this offshoot horn none other is signified than the Antichrist that is to restore the kingdom of the Jews. And the three horns which are to be rooted out by it signify three kings, namely those of Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia, whom he will destroy in the array of war; and when he has vanquished them all, being a savage tyrant, he will raise tribulation and persecution against the saints, exalting himself against them.

21-Daniel also says; for he foresaw that the beast that came up out of the abyss would make war with them, namely with Enoch, Elias, and John, and would overcome them, and kill them, because of their refusal to give glory to the accuser. that is the little horn that sprang up. And he, being lifted up in heart, begins in the end to, exalt himself and glorify himself as God, persecuting the saints and blaspheming Christ.

26-For if, while as yet he does not exhibit himself as the son of perdition, he raises and excites against us open war...

33-You see in what manner of fasting and prayer the saints will exercise themselves at that time. Observe, also, how hard the season and the times will be...

34-And the churches, too, will wail with a mighty lamentation, because neither "oblation nor incense" is attended to, nor a service acceptable to God; but the sanctuaries of the churches will become like a garden-watcher's hut, and the holy body and blood of Christ will not be shown in those days. The public service of God shall be extinguished, psalmody shall cease, the reading of the Scriptures shall not be heard...

8) **Dionysius Bar Salibi:** *quotes the comments of Hippolytus on: Matthew 24:15-22*

[Rev. xi. 2: And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months]

(On this): The city is the Church ; and these months they are to persecute her and kill, when the false Christ [St. Matth. xxiv] shall come, because she worships him not. Now of this said Daniel, He shall approve the covenant for many, one week; in the half of the week shall cease the sacrifice [Dan, ix.]. The half of the week: that is, three years and a-half; and these make the forty and two months which are mentioned. The sacrifice he speaks of is not that of sheep, but the prayers of the upright. And the holy city he speaks of is the righteous, i. e. [those] who are oppressed and trodden under foot by the horn that sprang up in the midst [Dan. vii. 8, 20, 21, 25], which is Antichrist, as Daniel said.

Hippolytus otherwise interprets that which is said in the Gospel, When indeed ye shall see the pollution of desolation [St. Matth. xxiv. 15] : for he says that it is not concerning the Jews, and the laying waste of Jerusalem, that these things are said, but concerning the end of Antichrist. The elect [ib. 22] he speaks of are the Christians who are in this conflict. And He says, Pray that ye fly not on the Sabbath or in winter [ib. 20] : i. e. He advises that we be not overtaken by those things that are coming on us, when we are unoccupied in righteousness, as the Jews [are unoccupied] on the Sabbath, or troubled with worldly cares and sins, as one that is in a winter storm. There shall be tribulation such as there was not like it since the beginning of the world, etc. [ib. 21 ; cp. Dan. xii. 1].

Also the Apostle has written that these things are concerning Antichrist, Except if there come first a falling away, and the Man of iniquity be revealed, so that he as God shall sit in the temple, whom our Lord Jesus shall consume, etc. [2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8]. From these [words] it is evident that Vespasian did not call himself God, nor did he sit in the temple, nor was he killed by the Spirit of the Lord. Accordingly it is manifest that in the end tribulation arises against the Church, such as was none like it.

9) **Tertullian:** *On the Resurrection of the Flesh XXV*

In the Revelation of John, again, the order of these times is spread out to view, which "the souls of the martyrs" are taught to

wait for beneath the altar, whilst they earnestly pray to be avenged and judged: (taught, I say, to wait), in order that the world may first drink to the dregs the plagues that await it out of the vials of the angels, and that the city of fornication may receive from the ten kings its deserved doom, and that the beast Antichrist with his false prophet may wage war on the Church of God; and that, after the casting of the devil into the bottomless pit for a while, the blessed prerogative of the first resurrection may be ordained from the thrones; and then again, after the consignment of him to the fire, that the judgment of the final and universal resurrection may be determined out of the books.

10) **Cyprian:** *Epistle 55, 1:2,3*

I have written in the meantime this letter, to be to you in my stead. For as, by the condescension of the Lord instructing me, I am very often instigated and warned, I ought to bring unto your conscience also the anxiety of my warning. For you ought to know and to believe, and hold it for certain, that the day of affliction has begun to hang over our heads, and the end of the world and the time of Antichrist to draw near, so that we must all stand prepared for the battle; nor consider anything but the glory of life eternal, and the crown of the confession of the Lord; and not regard those things which are coming as being such as were those which have passed away. A severer and a fiercer fight is now threatening, for which the soldiers of Christ ought to prepare themselves with uncorrupted faith and robust courage, considering that they drink the cup of Christ's blood daily, for the reason that they themselves also may be able to shed their blood for Christ. For this is to wish to be found with Christ, to imitate that which Christ both taught and did

...Let us imitate the three children Ananias, Azarias, and Misael....calling out and attesting their faith by these words: "O king Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer you in this matter. For the God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of your hands, O king. But if not, be it known to you, that we do not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up."....What shall we say of the cruel tortures of the blessed martyrs in the Maccabees, and the multiform sufferings of the seven brethren, and the mother comforting her children in their ago-

nies, and herself dying also with her children? Do not they witness the proofs of great courage and faith, and exhort us by their sufferings to the triumphs of martyrdom? What of the prophets whom the Holy Spirit quickened to the foreknowledge of future events? What of the apostles whom the Lord chose? Since these righteous men were slain for righteousness' sake, have they not taught us also to die?

11) **Victorinus:** *On the Apocalypse of John 20:1-3*

The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself traitor Antichrist against the Church.

12) **Cyril:** *Catechetical Lectures XV, 12*

At first indeed he will put on a show of mildness (as though he were a learned and discreet person), and of soberness and benevolence : and by the lying signs and wonders of his magical deceit having beguiled the Jews, as though he were the expected Christ, he shall afterwards be characterized by all kinds of crimes of inhumanity and lawlessness, so as to outdo all unrighteous and ungodly men who have gone before him; displaying against all men, but especially against us Christians, a spirit murderous and most cruel, merciless and crafty. And after perpetrating such things for three years and six months he shall be destroyed by the glorious second advent from heaven of the only-begotten Son of God,

13) **Augustine:** *City of God, Book XX, 23*

Chapter 23.— What Daniel Predicted Regarding the Persecution of Antichrist, the Judgment of God, and the Kingdom of the Saints.

Daniel prophesies of the last judgment in such a way as to indicate that Antichrist shall first come, and to carry on his description to the eternal reign of the saints. For when in prophetic vision he had seen four beasts, signifying four kingdoms, and the fourth conquered by a certain king, who is recognized as Antichrist, and after this the eternal kingdom of the Son of man, that is to say, of Christ, he says, "My spirit was terrified, I Daniel in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me," etc.... But he who reads this passage, even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of Antichrist shall fiercely, though

for a short time, assail the Church before the last judgment of God shall introduce the eternal reign of the saints.

As Augustine says, from reading the Daniel chapter seven passages, “Even a person who is half asleep can see that Antichrist makes war against the Church.” This means there are no such people as tribulation saints, and that there can’t possibly be a resurrection and rapture before the advent of Antichrist. The concept is found to be impossible when examined in the light of Daniel chapter seven. The contention that a literal person Antichrist puts to death the Saints of the Church and that the resurrection of the just and rapture take place after that martyrdom should be easily seen not only from Daniel chapter seven, but from other examinations of scripture as well. Augustine implies; it is so obvious that, “Even a person who can’t see can see it!” [I address the false notion of people coming to salvation after a church rapture in the chapter “Proof texts examined” *Tribulation Saints*.]

All of these citations are clear and easy to understand. They either reference the Church being persecuted by Antichrist, the Church being present during the time of the reign of Antichrist, or that the Church should be ready to battle and shed her blood against Antichrist. Daniel chapter seven is clearly speaking of Antichrist making war against the Church when Daniel says, “This one was making war against the saints and prevailing against them.”

## Contention Two

There are Two Resurrections;  
*One for the just and one for the un-just*

This next point to contend is simply; scripture teaches that there are two resurrections of the dead. The one resurrection is the raising of the just, meaning those justified by faith, and the other is the raising of the un-just. The resurrection of the just is the one referred to in scripture as “The Resurrection” or “The Resurrection at the last day.” It is also referred to as “the first resurrection” in the Apocalypse. It is referred to as “the coming of the Lord and our gathering together to Him” in the epistles of Paul. In these next four passages we see the teaching of the two different resurrections and how they are mentioned in contrast to one another. Resurrections have happened in the past but here we are talking about two events in a specific place in time as Jesus said, “I will raise them at the last day.” These are four citations from scripture that clearly contrast the two resurrections.

### **Daniel 12:1, 2 (Old Testament)**

1-“At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.  
2-And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

### **John 5:28, 29**

28-Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice  
29-and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who

have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

**Revelation 20:4-6**

4-And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5-But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6-Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

**Acts 24:14, 15**

14-But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.

15-I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

These passages make it clear that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. Acts 24 also makes clear the fact that this is not some new doctrine being introduced by Paul but is something held as sacred truth by their Jewish ancestors founded in scripture. If the Revelation 20 passage is interpreted by what is in plain sight then a thousand years exists between the two



resurrections or at least a long period of time. Also in the same passage we see that ones being resurrected include those who were put to death for refusing to take the mark of the beast. This means that the resurrection of the just must happen after the advent of Antichrist because it includes people who are put to death by him. The Acts 24 passage makes it clear by the simplicity in the language; “A resurrection” is singular, and “both” means one of each. How could Acts 24:15 be saying anything other than Paul’s hope resided in one event, the resurrection of the just?

In an effort to avoid this inconvenient truth some have moved outside the realm of sound exegetical interpretation and have gotten creative. They create more than one resurrection of the just. They create a resurrection/ rapture of I Thessalonians 4 before the coming of Antichrist, a second resurrection for those put to death by Antichrist, and some have a third resurrection for old testament saints. None of this is true. First, there isn’t one instance in scripture or otherwise that portrays a resurrection of the just before Antichrist. Second, just as Acts 24:15 doesn’t allow for two, three, or four resurrections of the *unjust* (wicked) at different periods of time, it doesn’t allow for multiple resurrections of the just at different times either. If no one dares to say there are many resurrections for the wicked why then make the claim of multiple resurrections of the just? Jesus used the same language to make a similar point; “He causes the sun to rise and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust”<sup>7</sup> contrasting the two groups. The resurrection of the just happens at the last trumpet, at the last day, in the blink of an eye, takes place after the advent of Antichrist, and is distinctly different from the resurrection of the unjust. Here are historical citations that contrast the two different resurrections.

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:45

### **Ante-Nicene Fathers;**

Two Resurrections; One for the Just and one for the un-just

1) **Irenaeus:** *Against Heresies V, 13:1*

the Lord, who prefigures eternal things by temporal, and shows that it is He who is Himself able to extend both healing and life to His handiwork, that His words concerning its [future] resurrection may also be believed; so also at the end, when the Lord utters His voice "by the last trumpet," the dead shall be raised, as He Himself declares: "The hour shall come, in which all the dead which are in the tombs shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth; those that have done good to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."

2) **Hippolytus:** *On the End of the World, 36*

As these things, therefore, of which we have spoken before are in the future, beloved, when the one week is divided into parts, and the abomination of desolation has arisen then, and the fore-runners of the Lord have finished their proper course, and the whole world, in fine, comes to the consummation, what remains but the manifestation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from heaven, for whom we have hoped..... For concerning the general resurrection and the kingdom of the saints, Daniel says: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And Isaiah says: "The dead shall rise, and those in the tombs shall awake, and those in the earth shall rejoice." And our Lord says: "Many in that day shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."

3) **Origen:** *Against Celsus III, 11*

Nay, even in the Epistles of Paul, who was contemporary with those who had seen Jesus, certain particulars are found mentioned as having been the subject of dispute—viz., respecting the resurrection, and whether it were already past, and the day of the Lord, whether it were near at hand or not. ["The resurrection" of believers and, "it" are singular]

4) **Victorinus:** *On the Apocalypse of John 20:4,5*

4, 5. "And I saw thrones, and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were slain on account of the testimony of Jesus, and for the word

of God, and which had not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor have received his writing on their forehead or in their hand; and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years: the rest of them lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." There are two resurrections. But the first resurrection is now of the souls that are by the faith, which does not permit men to pass over to the second death. Of this resurrection the apostle says: "If you have risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

5) **Jerome: Commentary on Daniel 12**

And so after the Antichrist is crushed and destroyed by the breath of the Savior's mouth, the people written in God's book shall be saved; and in accordance with the merits of each, some shall rise up unto eternal life and others unto eternal shame

6) **Athanasion Creed: 37-44 AD451**

(37) For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ; (38) Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; (39) He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; (40) From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. (41) At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; (42) And shall give account of their own works. (43) And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.(44) This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

Just as in our four texts there are contrasted in these patristic citations two resurrections; one for the just and one for the unjust. The resurrection of the just is sometimes spoken of as "The resurrection" (see Origen above). "The resurrection" is as singular in meaning as "The Passover" or "The Messiah" or "The Savior," "The God" or "The Antichrist." The resurrection is an event that all those justified by faith look forward to; The resurrection of the just-a single event.

Notice also that Victorinus says, "Those put to death by Antichrist are the first resurrection." He then says, "Of THIS RESURRECTION the apostle says 'If you be raised with Christ

seek.....” By citing Colossians 3:1 Victorinus clearly puts those beheaded by Antichrist and those Colossians, the dead in Christ of I Thessalonians 4:16,17, and the rest who are justified by faith into one resurrection! See it? If you don't look again, its sitting in plain view. There is only one resurrection (and rapture, caught up together with them) of the just and it happens after the advent of Antichrist.

## Contention Three

I Thessalonians 4 and Revelation 20

*One and the same Resurrection*

This third point to contend is simply; The “Dead in Christ” resurrection of I Thessalonians 4:13-17 is the same resurrection as “The First Resurrection” of Revelation 20:4-6. This is important to understand because the first resurrection described in Revelation 20 clearly happens after the martyrdom of the Church at the hands of Antichrist. And because the resurrection and rapture described in I Thessalonians is one and the same that resurrection and rapture has to, with no other option, happen after the advent of Antichrist.

When I studied these two passages on my own, long before I ever read any patristic literature, I had a curious suspicion that these two passages were speaking of the same event. As I studied the historical commentary of the early fathers it removed any doubt that these two passages spoke of one and the same event. Here are citations from the earliest Christian writers who saw the same thing.

1) **Irenaeus:** *Against Heresies Book V, 34:2*

That the whole creation shall, according to God's will, obtain a vast increase, that it may bring forth and sustain fruits such [as we have mentioned], Isaiah declares: "And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every prominent hill, water running everywhere in that day, when many shall perish, when walls shall fall. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, seven times that of the day, when He shall heal the anguish of His people, and do away with the pain of His stroke." Now "the pain of the stroke" means that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient man in Adam, that is, death; which [stroke] the Lord will heal when He raises us from the dead, and restores the inheritance of the fathers, as Isaiah again says:

"And you shall be confident in the Lord, and He will cause you to pass over the whole earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father." This is what the Lord declared: "Happy are those servants whom the Lord when He comes shall find watch-

ing. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down [to meat], and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the evening watch, and find them so, blessed are they, because He shall make them sit down, and minister to them; or if this be in the second, or it be in the third, blessed are they." Again John also says the very same in the Apocalypse: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection." Then, too, Isaiah has declared the time when these events shall occur; he says: "And I said, Lord, how long? Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses be without men, and the earth be left a desert. And after these things the Lord shall remove us men far away (longe nos faciet Deus homines), and those who shall remain shall multiply upon the earth." Then Daniel also says this very thing: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of those under the heaven, is given to the saints of the Most High God, whose kingdom is everlasting, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." And lest the promise named should be understood as referring to this time, it was declared to the prophet: "And come, and stand in your lot at the consummation of the days."

2) **Hippolytus:** *Dogmatical and Historical-Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* #65, 66

65. Moreover, concerning the resurrection and the kingdom of the saints, Daniel says, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, (and some to shame and everlasting contempt)." Esaias says, "The dead men shall arise, and they that are in their tombs shall awake; for the dew from thee is healing to them." The Lord says, "Many in that day shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." And the prophet says, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And John says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." For the second death is the lake of fire that burneth. And again the Lord says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun shineth in his glory." And to the saints He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But what saith He to the wicked? "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his

angels, which my Father hath prepared." And John says, "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever maketh and loveth a lie; for your part is in the hell of fire." And in like manner also Esaias: "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me. And their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be for a spectacle to all flesh."

66. Concerning the resurrection of the righteous, Paul also speaks thus in writing to the Thessalonians: "We would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive (and) remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice and trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive (and) remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

3) **Tertullian:** *On the Resurrection of the Flesh XXV*

In the Revelation of John, again, the order of these times is spread out to view, which "the souls of the martyrs" are taught to wait for beneath the altar, whilst they earnestly pray to be avenged and judged: (taught, I say, to wait), in order that the world may first drink to the dregs the plagues that await it out of the vials of the angels, and that the city of fornication may receive from the ten kings its deserved doom, and that the beast Antichrist with his false prophet may wage war on the Church of God; and that, after the casting of the devil into the bottomless pit for a while, the blessed prerogative of the first resurrection may be ordained from the thrones; and then again, after the consignment of him to the fire, that the judgment of the final and universal resurrection may be determined out of the books.

4) **Tertullian:** *On the Resurrection of the Flesh XLI*

Now the privilege of this favour awaits those who shall at the coming of the Lord be found in the flesh, and who shall, owing to the oppressions of the time of Antichrist, deserve by an instan-

taneous death, which is accomplished by a sudden change, to become qualified to join the rising saints

5) **Cyprian:** *Treatise XI, 12*

In the Apocalypse also He says the same thing: "And I saw," says he, "the souls of them that were slain for the name of Jesus and the word of God." And when he had placed those who were slain in the first place, he added, saying: "And whosoever had not worshipped the image of the beast, neither had received his mark upon their forehead or in their hand; "all these he joins together, as seen by him at one time in the same place, and says, "And they lived and reigned with Christ." He says that all live and reign with Christ, not only who have been slain; but even whosoever, standing in firmness of the faith and in the fear of God, have not worshipped the image of the beast, and have not consented to his deadly and sacrilegious edicts.

6) **Methodius:** *Discourse on the Resurrection, Part 3, II: VII*

Now the passage, "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive," St. Methodius thus explains: Those are our bodies; for the souls are we ourselves, who, rising, resume that which is dead from the earth; so that being caught up with them to meet the Lord, we may gloriously celebrate the splendid festival of the resurrection, because we have received our everlasting tabernacles, which shall no longer die nor be dissolved.

7) **Methodius:** *The Banquet of the ten Virgins, Discourse 9, Tusaine, Chapter 3; How Each One Ought to Prepare Himself for the Future Resurrection.*

Such fruit it is necessary that we bring when we come to the judgment-seat of Christ, on the first day of the feast; for if we are without it we shall not be able to feast with God, nor to have part, according to John, in the first resurrection.

8) **Victorinus:** *On the Apocalypse of John 20:4,5*

4, 5. "And I saw thrones, and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were slain on account of the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor have received his writing on their forehead or in their hand; and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years: the rest of them lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." There are two resurrections. But the first



resurrection is now of the souls that are by the faith, which does not permit men to pass over to the second death. Of this resurrection the apostle says: "If you have risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

Not much commentary is needed here. It is evident that all of these writers viewed the first resurrection spoken of by John where those put to death by Antichrist are raised, as the same resurrection spoken of by Jesus, Daniel, Isaiah, and Paul where he says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air... and we shall be changed." The only person who held a view different than these about the meaning of Revelation 20 is Augustine. In the chapter titled Matthew 24 I will show that Matthew 24:31 is also speaking of this same resurrection.

