

The Anomaly with ‘Beheaded’ and ‘Resurrection’ in Rev.20:4-6

Introduction

Revelation 20:4-6

1. *And I saw seats, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given to them*
2. *And the souls who were **pelekizo** (Martyred) for their testimony of Mashiach and for the Word of Elohim: and because these worshipped not the beast, neither its image nor received a mark between their eyes or on their hands they lived and reigned with Mashiach for a thousand years. And this is the first **anastasis**. Blessed is he and holy to him whoever has part in the first **anastasis** and over these the second death has no authority but they will be, priests of Elohim and of the Mashiach; and they will reign with Him one thousand years.*

I have separated the verses into two items because I believe John is describing two separate and unrelated images. If this was not the case it would have been more appropriate for item 2 to have continued with the conjunctive phrase ‘these were the souls *pelekizo*,’ whereas starting with the conjunctive ‘and’ portrays a new piece of information.

Our interest is confined to two instances of incorrect or poor translation. The first concerns the translation of the Greek ‘*pepelekismenon*’ (*pelekizo*) as beheaded and the second is the translation of ‘*anastasis*’ as resurrection.

Whilst there are certain prophetic overtures with this passage it is important to realise that the ‘mark of the beast’ is not a wholly prophetic event. The ‘mark of the beast’ is present today and has been with humanity for centuries. In short the mark is the apostate faith administered from the Vatican: all those who follow Rome are carrying the mark of the beast.¹ However, towards the end of this age, specifically during the tribulation period, the different religions will be united under a single authority – Rome. It is unlikely that this, let’s call it a ‘single religion’ for want of a term, will adopt a single title such as Christianity, it will be an apostate faith. At this time the Papacy together with the false prophet will force all of humanity to recognise this single religious authority, thereby forcing all to accept the mark of the beast.

The realisation that the phrase ‘mark of the beast’ is not in itself prophetic will require many to revise their understanding of this passage.

The Unsuitability of the Translation Beheaded

The Greek word translated beheaded is ‘*pepelekismenon*’ from which is derived ‘*pelekizo*.’ ‘*Pelekizo*’ is Strong’s 3990, for which the following definition is provided,

From a derivative of [G4141](#) (meaning an *axe*); to *chop* off (the head), that is, *truncate*: - behead.

Another misconception associated with this passage concerns those who have been martyred because of their faith. There is also a tendency to attach prophetic connotations to these executions. Whilst there can be little doubt that some of those who remain steadfast in observing the true Scriptures – not Rome’s scriptures, will be executed during the end times, there is no valid reason to restrict this reference to future martyrs only. There is nothing in these verses that demands we ignore history. It was not that long ago when Rome slaughtered large numbers of YHWH’s people, the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition are examples: these people were also martyred for not accepting the mark of the beast.

What is more, the martyrs executed by Rome in the past were killed in several different ways and not just beheaded: most were killed by the sword or crucifixion, no doubt in the future there will be those executed via a

¹ The ‘Mark of the Beast’ is dealt with in some detail in the writers book ‘A Bullet From Heaven.’

bullet. Thus it seems illogical for Revelation to single out only those who were beheaded as martyrs. In the pure context of this passage, surely all who have sacrificed their lives in preference to giving up Mashiach will be considered equally by YHWH. This being true beheaded would appear to be a poor choice and we have to ask what is it John is trying to portray with the word 'pelekizo'?

According to Strong 'pelekizo' portrays the use of an axe. An axe is used to chop off or cut down, that is to separate from or remove from. Is this what John was describing – the isolation or 'cutting off' from society those who refused to succumb to the religion of Rome? This concept aligns with what is said earlier in Revelation,

And that no one should be able to buy or sell except he that has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Rev.13:17)

This verse does indeed describe the separation/isolation from society of those who refuse to follow Papal Rome; they are 'cut off' (axed) from society. Some translations; the Aramaic Peshitta for example, use the phrase 'cut off' in place of beheaded and considering Revelation 13 this would appear to be a far better choice of words. But there is another string to this bow and that is, YHWH will also isolate or 'cut off' (axe) from the rest of humanity, those living at the end of the tribulation who have remained true to His Scriptures and refused to follow Rome and the false prophet. Scripture tells us that YHWH will protect these people from the outpouring of His wrath which follows the tribulation,

For in the day of evil He hides me in His booth; in the covering of His Tent He hides me; on a rock He raises me up. (Ps.27:5).

In the secrecy of Your presence You shall hide them from the plots of man; You shelter them in a booth from the strife of tongues. (Ps.31:20)

For Elohim has not intended that we should experience His wrath but that we should gain deliverance through our Master Yahusha Mashiach. (1Thess.5:9)

Because you did obey My message about persevering, I will keep you from the time of trial coming upon the whole world to put the people living on earth to the test. (Rev.3:10).

I believe John in Rev.20:4-6, is referring to YHWH's remnant whom YHWH will protect by placing them in His end time 'Goshen,' where they will remain until YHWH has dealt with this unrighteous world but it is not a rapture there is no transformation from a physical body to a spiritual body because those taken to safety will be returned to live a blessed life in the Land throughout the millennium as explained in the following section. Just as Israel was protected/separated via Goshen so will His remnant be protected from the out pouring of YHWH's wrath at the end of this age.

The Unsuitability of the Translation Resurrection

Let us remind ourselves of the passage from Revelation amended to take account of what is said above,

*And the souls of YHWH's remnant who were cut off (separated/axed from society) for their testimony of Mashiach and for the Word of Elohim: and because these worshipped not the beast, neither its image nor received a mark between their eyes or on their hands they lived and reigned with Mashiach for a thousand years. And this is the first **anastasis**. Blessed is he and holy to him whoever has part in the first **anastasis** and over these the second death has no authority but they will be, priests of Elohim and of the Mashiach; and they will reign with Him one thousand years.*

Having established that John was not talking about the souls of people who had been killed, rather those who had been separated from society, we now need to examine the other Greek word 'anastasis'.

The Greek '*anastasis*,' is commonly translated resurrection. But resurrection can have several interpretations and need not mean resurrection of a dead body. If we construe '*anastasis*' in terms of raising the righteous dead we create conflict with Mashiach's teaching. Mashiach tells us that the unrighteous will be gathered before the righteous,

Another parable He put before them, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. And when the wheat sprouted and formed heads of grain, the weeds also appeared. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from? And he said to them, 'A man, an enemy did this.' And the servants said to him, 'Do you wish then, that we go and gather them up?' "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the weeds you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I shall say to the reapers,' First gather the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my granary.'" (Matt.13:24-30).

Here Mashiach stipulates for the weeds (unrighteous people) to be collected from the earth first.

A further problem with interpreting '*anastasis*' to mean the resurrection of the dead is that it results in two resurrections for the righteous – one at the end of the sixth Day and another at the end of the seventh Day, being the resurrection of the righteous who have died during the millennium. Nowhere within the Scriptures will you find support for two resurrections of either the righteous or unrighteous. So what is a more appropriate understanding for '*anastasis*'?

Before we look deeper into '*anastasis*' consider the following passage from Ezekiel,

*"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you from all the countries and return you to your own soil. **Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My spirit inside you and cause you to live by My laws, respect My rulings and obey them,**"* (Ezek36:24-27).

YHWH is not talking of a temporary cleansing here He is referring to a permanently changed person let us look at Isaiah,

*"I will greatly rejoice in YHWH, my soul shall be joyful in my Elohim; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, **he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,** as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels,"* (Isa.61:10).

Thirdly we can add a verse from Jeremiah,

*"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days," says YHWH, **"I will put my Torah in their inner parts,** and write it in their hearts; and will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people."* (Jer.31:33).

Note it is YHWH's water, it is YHWH's Spirit, it is YHWH's robe, and it is YHWH's Torah.

YHWH is going to put His spirit inside His remnant: a spirit that only knows righteousness, only knows His Torah. This rejuvenated spirit; His Spirit, will not be susceptible to the weaknesses of the flesh nor to the temptations of the world. Remember the adversary's unsuccessful testing of Yahusha (Matt.4:1-10) who was full of the Father's Spirit. It is an act of compassion by a caring Father, taking away the inner struggle we all endure today. In a sense it is a reward for not giving into the weaknesses of the flesh today or this world. The effect of this rejuvenated spirit annuls the need for the Ark of the Covenant containing the two tablets as YHWH confirms to His prophet,

And it shall come to pass, when they are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, says YHWH, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of YHWH: neither shall it come to mind:

neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.(Jer.3:16).

But we will not only be changed spiritually we will also be changed physically: in the millennium we will have new physical bodies,

“For look, I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to heart. (Isa.65:17)

“No more is an infant from there going to live but a few days, nor an old man who does not complete his days, for the youth dies one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be lightly esteemed. (Isa.65:20).

“They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat. For the days of My people are going to be as the days of a tree, and My chosen ones outlive the work of their hands.(Isa.65:22).

From verse 17 it is evident that once the tribulation and YHWH’s wrath are past, those surviving will have no memory of their previous life, a truth Elohim repeats when in dialogue with the prophet Baruk,

“Because whatsoever is now is nothing but that which shall be is very great. For everything that is corruptible shall pass away and everything that dies shall depart and all the present time shall be forgotten. Nor shall there be any remembrance of the present time, which is defiled with evils.” (2Bar.44:8-9).

Returning to Isaiah, verse 20 indicates that a person 100 years old will be considered a youth and to die at 100 years old will be a punishment. Then we have verse 22 stating a person’s longevity will be comparable with that of a tree. What is described here is a completely new person replacing the earlier body and spirit. I believe we will be back to the times of Abraham possibly Adam, living a similar lifestyle and enjoying the same longevity as the ancients. But it is clear from Ezekiel that this spiritual/physical change is only for those who qualify for His robe of righteousness, only those He will take into the Land.

Returning to the verse in Revelation the question is, is ‘*anastasis*’ capable of meaning a rejuvenation of this kind? Strong provides the following definition for ‘*anastasis*,’

A *standing up* again, that is, (literally) a *resurrection* from death (individual, general or by implication (its author), or (figuratively) a (moral) *recovery (of spiritual truth)*: - raised to life again, resurrection, rise from the dead, that should rise, rising again

It is important to consider the definition of ‘*anastasis*’ in terms that agree with what is said elsewhere in the Scriptures about this event. The Scriptures make no mention of a resurrection from the dead (righteous or unrighteous) at the end of the sixth Day and it is this passage from Revelation that is the foundation of this erroneous teaching. The Cambridge dictionary defines resurrection as ‘*The act of bringing something that had disappeared or ended back into use or existence:*’ in other words bringing back exactly that which existed before. This does not align with what is described in the Scriptures; the Scriptures refer to a new spirit and a new physical body. The translators would have done better had they examined the root of ‘*anastasis*;’ being ‘*anistemi*’ before deciding on resurrection. Strong defines ‘*anistemi*’ as,

To *stand up* (literally or figuratively, transitively or intransitively): - arise, lift up, raise up (again), rise (again), stand up (-right).

‘*Anistemi*’ does not so easily align with resurrection it more readily infers a transition or a change in circumstances, which more accurately describes the event we are discussing. Had the translators considered ‘*anastasis*’ in terms of its root ‘*anistemi*’ and taken cognizance of what is said elsewhere in the Scriptures they would have realised that what is described is not resurrection of what was but a complete renewal.

Considering what is said above there is no reason or relevance for the additional sentence, *'The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over'* as inserted in most translations at the end of Rev.20:5 because none of the dead come to life at this time. This sentence is borne of the misconception that the righteous dead will be raised to life when Mashiach returns at the end of this age.

Conclusion

We are now able to provide a more correct presentation for Revelation 20,

And the souls of those who were cut off (separated/isolated) for their testimony of Mashiach and for the Word of Elohim: and because these worshipped not the beast, neither its image nor received a mark between their eyes or on their hands, they are YHWH's remnant whom He took to a safe place during the out pouring of His wrath, after which they lived and reigned with Mashiach for a thousand years. And this is the first renewal/rejuvenation. Blessed is he and holy to him whoever has part in the first renewal/rejuvenation and over these the second death (judgement) has no authority but they will be, priests of Elohim and of the Mashiach; and they will reign with Him one thousand years.

There will however be two renewals; the first at the end of this age when YHWH's remnant will receive a rejuvenated physical, not spiritual, body together with a rejuvenated spirit and will be supernaturally taken to the Land to live with Mashiach. After which there will be a second renewal when all the righteous including His surviving remnant will receive a new spiritual body and a rejuvenated spirit at the end of the seventh Day: what the Church call the rapture.

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