

The First Resurrection

Rev. 20:4-6

2/24/17

In this passage we meet for the first time the expression—"The First Resurrection". If, as some claim, there is only one resurrection the language given here isn't needed. In. 5:28-29 Rd. Jesus is teaching here that all men who die will be raised again at some future time. His words are unmistakably clear: "All that are in the graves...shall come forth." Belief in the resurrection and life after death has characterized all men from the earliest dawn of history and it taught consistently from Genesis to Revelation. While all Christians believe in resurrection from the dead it is the nature and order that some differ on. Tradition, false doctrine, and failure to study the Scriptures carefully have resulted not only in untold confusion on the subject of life after death but have led also to serious error and resultant loss of joy and victory.

Many have been taught to believe in a "general" resurrection of all men at the end of the world. They believe that at the end of the world Christ will return to sit on the throne of judgment, and all the dead will arise. The saved will go into glory at that time and the wicked will be turned into hell. The belief is then that all our works will be brought forth and God will pronounce the verdict upon all before Him which will determine each ones eternal destiny.

Study of the Bible reveals that Jesus and all the New Testament writers teach two distinct resurrections separated by the Millennial Reign of Christ on this earth. Resurrection of saved will be before the Millennial while resurrection of lost after it. (The Second Death).

In the Jn. 5:28-29 passage Jesus distinguishes between the two resurrections calling the first a "resurrection of life" and the second a "resurrection of damnation". Again if there only one there would have been no need to mention these distinctions. There is no mention of the time between the two here. Jesus in Luke 14:14 makes mention of the first calling it the "resurrection of the just" without referring to the second one.

The Greek word being used of the 1st resurrection is Ektonnekron. The word means "out from among the dead". This word is never used for the 2nd resurrection. The description is clear that some remained dead and were not raised.

The Scriptures teach us the 1st resurrection is before the 1,000 year reign of Christ. The 1st resurrection consists of at least 3 distinct companies as concerning their time of resurrection. The first stage of the first resurrection, having occurred nineteen hundred years ago in history with the second stage of this blessed event being imminent (at any time) and the last stage occurring approximately seven years after the second.

Israel had seven annual feasts which are prophetic of the work of the coming Redeemer. In order they are 1) The Passover (the death of Christ); 2) The Feast of the Unleavened Bread (the burial of Christ); 3) Feasts of Firstfruits (the resurrection of Christ); 4) Pentecost (the coming of the Spirit); 5) The Feast of Trumpets (the second coming of Christ); 6) The Atonement (the tribulation period); and 7) The Feast of Tabernacles (the Millennial Age).

The Feast of Firstfruits was the third in order of these yearly feasts and was a day of solemn consecration. This feast, which occurred at the beginning of the harvest season, had three parts: the firstfruits, the harvest proper, and the gleaning. These three made up the full harvest. When the first ears of corn were ripe, the Israelite gathered a handful of ears from this coming crop and took it to the priest, who presented it before the Lord, and waved it before Jehovah in the Tabernacle as a promise that the entire harvest would be dedicated to the Lord. The firstfruits were an earnest of the coming harvest and a promise that all would be dedicated to God.

Note carefully that not the word "firstfruit" (singular) but "fruitfruits" (plural) is used. The firstfruits consisted not of one ear but a handful of several ears. These were presented to the Lord and then followed the full harvest when the reapers gathered the wheat into sheaves, the fulfillment of the promise of the firstfruits. However, there still remained the gleanings to be gathered, and so the gleaners followed the reapers and gathered the ears which had been left and trodden under the feet of men, and when these gleanings had been gathered with the harvest, the reaping time was done. With the firstfruits and the main harvest they constituted and completed the full harvest.

In the first resurrection we are studying we see the fulfillment of the type of the Feast of Firstfruits we find three stages or parts of the resurrection.

I Cor. 15:1-23 Rd. In verse 22 Paul states "in Christ shall all be made alive". He is speaking of the first resurrection and is not referring to the lost. Next he is giving the order in time of this event in verse 23.

"In his own order": The word translated "order" is the Greek word "tagma" which means troop. He is telling us that there will be three of these "troops" in the resurrection of the saints. The first is "Christ the firstfruits" which is plural meaning not merely one can be presented but a handful. When Jesus arose He did not arise alone, but with Him came forth from the grave a handful, a troop, of others who had been sleeping in the graves. When Jesus ascended into heaven to present the blood upon the mercy seat after His resurrection, He led with Him a troop of resurrected believers of the Old Testament who are in heaven today in resurrected bodies as the promise and earnest, the guarantee and the assurance that the remainder of the saints of God will also be raised when the harvest at Jesus' coming occurs.

Mat. 27:50-53 Rd. First the veil was rent, signifying that the blood had been shed for the last and final time, and now the veil which forbade the sinner to approach God was taken away and there was nothing to prevent man from coming directly, by the way of the altar, into the very presence of God. The price had been paid and nothing remained to separate man from God. Before Jesus's body, which is the veil, was broken, there could be no approach to God, for the veil of the temple was only a shadow and a type of the body of Christ. For this reason no one could go into the presence of God until Christ's blood had been shed. But when that was accomplished, the way was opened. Then there was an earthquake and as a result the rocks rent, the graves split open and the bodies of many saints arose after His resurrection. Christ and these were the firstfruits. Until Christ arose this could not happen, for He is the "firstborn from the dead". (Col. 1:18).

Nineteen hundred years ago the first troop went to heaven as the promise of the coming harvest when all the saints shall be raised.

The second troop of the first resurrection will follow according to Scriptures at Jesus' coming, and so Paul say, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." This event will occur at the rapture of the Church. One of these days the One who said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself", will shout from the air and the dead in Christ shall arise. This is the unfailing testimony of the Word. I Cor. 15:51-52, I Thess. 4:16, and Phil. 3:20-21 Rd.

The third troop will follow the first two before the "first resurrection" is complete. This will be the gleaning. The Rapture of the Church will precede the Tribulation Period. During this period 144,000 of the twelve tribes of Israel will be saved and become Christ's missionaries, and as a result of their preaching, a great multitude of every tribe, tongue, and nation will believe and be saved, but be martyred for their faith because they would not receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads and hands. These saved ones of the Tribulation Period will be raised at the end of the Tribulation and just before the coming again of the Lord to earth to set up His millennial kingdom. They are gleanings after the harvest. First Christ will come for His Church. Then the Tribulation will occur, followed by His second coming to the earth but before He comes, the martyred Tribulation saints, the gleanings, must first be added to the harvest. Rev. 20:4-5. This again is the first mention of "first resurrection" in the Bible. It is not mentioned before because the first resurrection is not complete until these gleanings, these Tribulation martyrs, have also been raised and added to the firstfruits to complete the harvest, the first resurrection.

Please take part with this first resurrection. Receive Him today before it is too late.

Jesus came in the flesh. He became truly man and is truly God. When He came forth from the grave He was still in that body. He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He ate with His disciples. This same Jesus, with this body, will come again for us. We will receive a body liken to His glorified body. The wounds will forever be there. The lost will, I understand, be viewing those wounds He received from His "friends". Jesus said we would set down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The rich man knew Abraham. Abraham knew Moses and the prophets. We will be known as we are known. What a blessed time will we have in that day of the completed resurrection. Seeing our families, neighbors, brothers and sisters in the Lord, and those to whom we had never meet all rejoicing in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Our spirits will have a body. We will be active in that day. What a day that will be.