

The First Resurrection

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INTRODUCTION

We find the basic “elementary principles” or foundational teachings of Christianity listed in Hebrews chapter six, with the resurrection of the dead being one of these teachings:

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1-2. All scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted).

In this article, we will examine the doctrine of the “resurrection of the dead.” Specifically, we will focus on the resurrection of the “dead in Christ” (1 Thessalonians 4:16), also known as the “resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14), or the “first resurrection” (Revelation 20:5-6).

Definitions

The Greek word translated in Hebrews 6:2 as “resurrection” is *anastasis* 386: “1) a raising up, rising (e.g. from a seat) 2) a rising from the dead 2a) that of Christ 2b) that of all men at the end of this present age 2c) the resurrection of certain ones history who were restored to life (Heb. 11:35).”¹

In the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the definition for the English word “resurrect” is: “1. To bring back to life; raise from the dead. 2. To bring back into practice, notice, or use.” The definition for the word *resurrection* is: “1. The act of rising from the dead or returning to life. 2. The state of one who has returned to life. 3. The act of bringing back to practice, notice, or use; revival. 4. Resurrection. Theology. a. The rising again of Jesus on the third day after the Crucifixion. b. The rising again of the dead at the Last Judgment.”

The State of the Dead

Humans don’t go to heaven when they die. According to John 3:13, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

¹ Thayer and Smith. “Greek Lexicon entry for Anastasis”. “The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon”. . . 1999 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/anastasis.html>).

At death, a person returns to the ground from which they came. This is the Bible's first description of death: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being ["soul" *King James Version*]" (Genesis 2:7); and "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). To understand the doctrine of the "resurrection of the dead" it's crucial to know that man doesn't have an immortal soul, but is a soul, a living being. The Hebrew word translated in Genesis 2:7 as "soul" in the *King James Version* is *nephesh* 5315: "1. soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion, passion a. that which breathes, the breathing substance or being, soul, the inner being of man, b. living being, c. living being (with life in the blood), d. the man himself, self, person or individual, e. seat of the appetites, f. seat of emotions and passions."²

The word *nephesh* can apply to either man or animal(creature). *Nephesh* has nothing to do with an immortal spirit in us that departs to heaven or hell at death. According to the Bible, a *nephesh* or soul can die, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). The Bible describes death as sleep, because the dead are not conscious while in the grave (Job 3:11-19). They know nothing, having no emotions and feelings; they don't work, or have any knowledge or wisdom. All human plans perish at death (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, 10; Psalm 146:3-4). The dead have no relationship with God. They can't praise God or even know Him (Psalm 6:4-5; 88:5, 10-12; 115:17; Isaiah 38:18-19). All men, good and bad, are together in death (Job 3:16-19; 30:23). The only hope for the dead is the resurrection (Job 14:7-15; 19:25-27; Acts 23:6; 24:15).

THE RESURRECTION AND THE COMING OF THE LORD

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

² Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius. "Hebrew Lexicon entry for Nephesh". "The NAS Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/nephesh.html>).

At Jesus', second coming "the dead in Christ" or "those who sleep in Jesus," deceased Christians, will rise from dead: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. . . . For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16). Christians still living when Jesus returns will rise into the air to meet Him, with the resurrected dead in Christ: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them [the dead in Christ] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (verse 17).

After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12). When He returns, He will come back to the Mount of Olives, and His saints will be with Him (Zechariah 14:1-5). After Jesus return, the resurrected Christians will reign as kings and priests on earth (Revelation 20:4-6; 5:9-10; Daniel 7:13-14, 18, 22, 27).

The Trumpet of God

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:29-31).

The resurrection takes place when the “last trumpet” sounds: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). This “last trumpet” is referring to the last of the seven trumpets of Revelation (Revelation 8:1-9:21, 11:15-18).

As Jesus returns to earth “with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. . . . the dead in Christ will rise first.” Then those Christians still living, will be “caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). According to Matthew, as Jesus comes with the “clouds of heaven.” He “will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:30-31; also see Mark 13:24-27 and Luke 21:27-28). After meeting Jesus in the atmosphere above the earth, the Saints will descend with Him to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4-5).

The First Resurrection

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. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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 (Revelation 20:4-6).

During Jesus second coming, He and “the armies in heaven” fight against, and defeat “the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies” (Revelation 19:11-21). Following Jesus’ victory, an angel from heaven, binds and imprisoned Satan for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3). In Revelation 20:4-6, we find another description of the resurrection occurring at Jesus’ return. It’s called the “first resurrection”: “And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. . . . 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.”

The Greek word translated “first” in Revelation 20, verses 5 and 6 is *protos* 4413: “1) first in time or place 1a) in any succession of things or persons 2) first in rank 2a) influence,

honour 2b) chief 2c) principal 3) first, at the first.”³ This word *protos* points to the resurrection taking place at Christ's return as the first in a succession of resurrections. The word also points to this resurrection as being first in rank, influence and honor, when compared to any resurrection following it.

This first resurrection is also “a better resurrection,” “Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35). The Greek word translated “better” is *kreitton* 2909: “1) more useful, more serviceable, more advantageous 2) more excellent.”⁴ The first resurrection is a more useful, serviceable and advantageous resurrection, because those in it will reign on earth with Jesus as kings and priests (Revelation 20:1-4, 1:5-6; 5:9-10; Daniel 7:18, 27).

THE RESURRECTION CHAPTER

If any section of the Bible provides us with the greatest information about the resurrection, it's First Corinthians 15, sometimes called the “resurrection chapter.” By examining this chapter, we learn several important facts about the first resurrection.

Jesus' Resurrection

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen (1 Corinthians 15:12-16).

The resurrection of the dead depends on the fact of Jesus' resurrection. If He hadn't risen from the dead, then no one else would ever rise from the dead. Additionally, this chapter shows the similarity between the first resurrection and Jesus' resurrection.

Jesus the Firstfruit

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the

³ Thayer and Smith. “Greek Lexicon entry for Protos”. “The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon”. . 1999 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/protos.html>).

⁴ Thayer and Smith. “Greek Lexicon entry for Kreitton”. “The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon”. . 1999 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/kreitton.html>).

dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:17-20).

Jesus as the first person in history resurrected from the dead, is the “firstfruits” of many more to come. The apostle Paul expresses the same idea in Acts 26:23: “that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” As we will see later in 1 Corinthians 15, this was not a resurrection of the physical body to a physical life. There are numerous examples in the Bible of this type of resurrection (1 Kings 17:22; 2 Kings 4:32-35; 13:20-21; Luke 7:11-17; 8:49-56; John 11:38-44; Acts 9:36-41; 20:9-12). Jesus is the first person resurrected with a spiritual body.

Time Order

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:21-26).

There is a time order to the resurrection of the dead. Jesus is the first person resurrected, followed by the dead in Christ at the second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-56; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27). As we saw earlier, this resurrection is also called the “first resurrection” (Revelation 20:5-6). Because it's the first in a succession of resurrections, as well as first in rank, influence and honor, when compared to any future resurrections.

How Are the Dead Raised

But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain. (1 Corinthians 15:35-37).

The resurrect body will not be like the body that existed before death. The physical body is comparable to a seed sown in the ground which sprouts and grows into a plant. The plant which comes up out of the ground, is different from the seed that went into the ground. The same with the resurrected body, which is as different from the pre-resurrected body as a seed is from the plant that grows from it.

Raised a Spiritual Body

But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial {"heavenly" margin} bodies and terrestrial {"earthly" margin} bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:38-44).

The resurrected Christian will have a spiritual body. He will no longer be flesh and blood.

The Image of the Heavenly Man

And so it is written, The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man (1 Corinthians 15:45-49).

Jesus is the "last Adam," the "heavenly Man." In 1 Corinthians 15:22 we have a comparison between Adam and Jesus, with Adam being a type of Jesus (Romans 5:14). In Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive. We now have physical bodies like Adam, but when resurrected we will have spiritual bodies like Jesus. When resurrected, God will transform our lowly physical bodies to be like Jesus' glorious spiritual body. According to Paul in his letter to Philippians, "our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20-21). The apostle John writes that when Jesus returns we will be like Him. Since Jesus will be spirit, so will we: "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

At the Last Trumpet

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where [is] your sting? O Hades, where is your victory (1 Corinthians 15:50-55)?

At the sound of the “last trumpet” lifeless Christians rise from the dead and receive incorruptible and immortal bodies. Those Christians still living at the time have their flesh and blood bodies changed into immortal and incorruptible spiritual bodies.

JESUS’ TEACHINGS

The resurrection of the dead in Christ, also known as the First Resurrection, was a part of the Gospel message proclaimed by Jesus. We have already looked a few of Jesus’ teachings about this resurrection. We will now examine what else Jesus has to teach us about this subject.

The Resurrection of the Just

Then He also said to him who invited Him, When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:12-14).

Who are the “just” that Jesus is referring to in Luke 14:14? The Greek word translated “just” is *dikaios* 1342: “1) righteous, observing divine laws 1a) in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God 1a1) of those who seem to themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves in their virtues, whether real or imagined 1a2) innocent, faultless, guiltless 1a3) used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life 1a3a) only Christ truly 1a4a) approved of or acceptable of God 1b) in a narrower sense, rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words

or shown by the manner of dealing with them.”⁵ The following are two examples of the uses of *dikaios* in regard to Christians:

Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just [dikaios] and the justifier [dikaios] of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:25-26).

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous [dikaios] (Romans 5:19).

The “just” are Christians, those who have faith in Jesus. An alternate translation of “the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14) is the “the resurrection of the righteous” as found in the *New International Version (NIV)*, *New American Standard Bible (NASB)* and the *New Revised Standard Version*).

The phrase “the resurrection of the just” is another term for the First Resurrection. It describes those raised from the dead at Jesus’ return. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Paul calls these people the “dead in Christ.” He refers to those still alive at the time of the resurrection, and are “caught up” with the “dead in Christ” as “we,” that is, Christians. In 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Paul writes of those resurrected or changed at the second coming as “we,” again Christians. Matthew 24:31 and Mark 13:27 refers to those resurrected as the “elect.”

In these verses, Jesus is also showing us that at the time of the resurrection of the just; He will repay or reward Christians for their works in this life. At the sound of the seventh or last trumpet when the resurrection happens (I Thessalonians 4:14-17), Jesus will return and will reward the servants, prophets and saints of God, “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! . . . The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:15, 18).

⁵ Thayer and Smith. “Greek Lexicon entry for Dikaios”. “The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon”. . 1999 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/dikaios.html>).

At His return Jesus will bring a reward, which He gives to the saints based on their works during this life, "Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (*Matthew 16:24-28*). At the close of the New Testament Jesus says, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work" (*Revelation 22:12*).

This reward is not eternal life, which is a gift of God (*Romans 6:23*). The apostle Paul wrote that "in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing" (*2 Timothy 4:8 NASB*). The apostle Peter wrote that "when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (*1 Peter 5:4*). Jesus will reward Christians with authority to rule as kings under Him after His return (*Revelation 1:5-6; 5:10; 2:25-27; 3:21; 20:1-6; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27*).

The Sadducees and the Resurrection

*Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife. And Jesus answered and said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him. Then some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, You have spoken well. But after that they dared not question Him anymore (*Luke 20:27-40*).*

Luke 20:27-40 has several things to say about the subject of the First Resurrection. We will examine these verses in detail. Matthew 22:23-33 and Mark 12:18-27 give parallel accounts of these verses.

In Luke 20:35 the Greek word translated “counted worthy” is *kataxioo* 2661: “(1) to account worthy, judge worthy.”⁶ This verse tells us that we must be counted or judged worthy to be in the resurrection. If we have to be counted worthy to attain the resurrection from the dead, then we could also be judged unworthy to be in this resurrection.

Paul also mentions being “counted worthy.” In this case, he is referring to the “kingdom of God,” “[S]o that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy [kataxioo] of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer” (2 Thessalonians 1:4-5).

Being counted worthy of the resurrection as well as being counted worthy of the kingdom of God are one in the same. In 1 Corinthians 15:50-53, Paul writes that it’s at the time of the resurrection when we will inherit the kingdom of God, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

In Luke 20:35-36, the term “that age” means the time of the First Resurrection, as opposed to “this age,” the world and society of today. Those in the first resurrection cannot “die anymore” because God has given them immortality (1 Corinthians 15:52-55).

In the resurrection we are not going to be angels, but like angels we will not marry or be able to die (Luke 20:35-36). The Greek word translated “equal to the angels” is *isaggelos* 2465: “(1) like the angels.”⁷ Spiros Zodhiates in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*, defines *isaggelos* as: “. . . adj. from *isos* (2470), similar or equal, and *aggelos* (32) angel. Angle-like (Luke 20:36, which, if taken in connection with Mark 12:25, would be better translated ‘like’ instead of ‘equal’ [see Matt. 22:30]). According to these passages,

⁶ Thayer and Smith. “Greek Lexicon entry for Kataxioo”. “The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon”. . . 1999 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/kataxioo.html>).

⁷ Thayer and Smith. “Greek Lexicon entry for Isaggelos”. “The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon”. . . 1999 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/isaggelos.html>).

neither mortality nor sexual union pertains to either the sons of the resurrection or to the angels.)”

Because of the resurrection we will be the “*sons of God, being sons of the resurrection*” (Luke 20:36). We find something similar said of Jesus. Jesus was the Son of God by physical birth, the only person so conceived and born, making Him God’s “only begotten Son” (John 1:18). But, Jesus also became a Son of God by and through the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3-4). He is the first one born from the dead to become a born son of God, the first of many more to come (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5). Jesus is the captain of our salvation, bringing “many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:9-13).

In Luke 20:37-38 Jesus refers to the Old Testament account of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:5-6, 15) to prove the fact of the resurrection. Everyone knew that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead. But, because of the hope of their future resurrection (Acts 23:6), God “is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

Born Again at the Resurrection

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him. Jesus answered and said to him, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born? Jesus answered, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:1-8).

When a person is “born again” they are born of the spirit, they will be spirit. A person born of the spirit will be like the wind. In verse 8 the Greek word translated “wind” is *pneuma* 4151: “related to *pneo* (4154), to breathe, blow; primarily denotes the wind. Breath; the spirit which, like the wind, is invisible, immaterial, and powerful” *The Complete Word Study New Testament*. In verse 8 the same Greek word *pneuma*, is translated as “Spirit.”

This description in John 3 of someone who is “born again” or “born of the spirit,” is similar to Paul’s description of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:35-55, “But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies So also is the resurrection of the dead.

The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. . . . And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? (1 Corinthians 15:35-55). John 3 is a description of the resurrection occurring at Jesus' return. When those who are physical are born again of the spirit. They will be able to see and inherit the Kingdom of God.

The Part Played by the Father and Jesus in the Resurrection

But Jesus answered them, My Father has been working until now, and I have been working. Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. . . . For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves 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 condemnation [“Judgment” NASB]. I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me (John 5:17-22, 26-30).

Both the Father and the Son have a role in resurrecting the dead. In the following verses we see the role of the Father in raising the dead:

And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Romans 8:10-11).

And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power (1 Corinthians 6:14).

Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you (2 Corinthians 4:14).

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead (Acts 26:6-8)?

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations) in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did (Romans 4:16-17).

Besides the Father's role, Jesus also has a part in resurrecting the dead, "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will" (John 5:21). Does this mean the Father will resurrect some people, and Jesus will resurrect another group of people? No, what this is saying is the Father and Son act in harmony. The Son carries out the will of the Father. Just as the Father created all things through the Son (John 1:1-3, 14; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2), so the Father resurrects the dead through the Son.

Everlasting Life

[T]hat all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live (John 5:23-25).

Job eagerly awaited the time when the dead would “hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who” heard would live. Job spoke of this future resurrection, “If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands” (Job 14:14-15).

John 5:23-25 has a double meaning. On the one hand these verses refer to the resurrection, on the other hand, they refer to the Christian life now. Before the forgiveness of our sins we are spiritual dead, but now we are spiritually alive:

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:1-7).

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Colossians 2:13).

The Resurrection of Life

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves 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 condemnation [“Judgment” NASB]. I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me (John 5:26-30).

The Resurrection of Life is a reference to the First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), which happens at Jesus’ second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). Those in this resurrection cannot die again because they have immortality (Luke 20:34-36; 1 Corinthians 15:52-55). The Resurrection of Condemnation or Judgment does not deal with the dead in Christ and is beyond the scope of this article.

I Will Raise Him Up at the Last Day

This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:39-40, 44, 54).

As we saw in the earlier verses, God the Father resurrects the dead through Jesus. In other words, Jesus resurrects the dead by the authority and approval of Father. The term “raise him up” is a reference to the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-16, 42-44).

When Jesus’ speaks of raising people up on the “last day,” He is referring to His second coming. As we have already seen this is when the first resurrection happens (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Matthew 24:29-31).

From these verses in John 6, we see there are some conditions concerning whom Jesus resurrects and gives everlasting life. One condition is believing in, or having faith in the body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin, and expressing this faith by partaking of the Passover symbols of bread and wine (verses 40, 54; Matthew 26:19-20, 26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 11:23-26). Another condition is that God the Father must draw or call a person to Jesus (verses 44, 65). Humans of their own initiative cannot come to God; He must first draw them.

Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life

Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? She said to Him, Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world (John 11:23-27).

Those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God are resurrected at His return. Remember those in this resurrection will never die again (Luke 20:36). Jesus can claim He is “the resurrection and the life” because through Him we are resurrected and receive eternal life. Jesus’ resurrection makes possible the future resurrection of Christians at His second coming, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the

resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

THE EARLY CHURCH PREACHED ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

We have seen the First Resurrection is a part of the gospel message preached by Jesus. Earlier we examined what some of the New Testament writers taught about this resurrection. We will now look at what else these writers have to teach about this subject.

The book of Acts shows us that the resurrection was part of the message preached by the early Church, "Now as they [the apostles Peter and John, Acts 3:1, 11] spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:1-2). Peter and John taught that this resurrection comes through Jesus. This is what we found in John 6:39-40; 11:23-27.

The apostle Paul preached about the resurrection when he was in Athens, "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What does this babblers want to say? Others said, he seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: . . . Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, We will hear you again on this matter. So Paul departed from among them" (Acts 17:16-19, 22-23, 30-32).

Paul, in defending himself before the Sanhedrin after his arrest in the Temple (Acts 21:26-22:30). Uses the truth of the future resurrection to sow confusion among his accusers, ". . . Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged! And when he had said this, a dissension

arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection--and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both" (Acts 23:6-8)

The resurrection offers us the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:50-55). This hope should give us comfort as we endure the trials of this life. In writing the Thessalonians, Paul tells them to "comfort one another" with the knowledge of the future resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

After his appearance before the Sanhedrin, Paul later appears before the Roman governor Felix (Acts 24:1-22). He again talks about the resurrection, "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. 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. . . . Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrong doing in me while I stood before the council, unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day" (Acts 24:14-15, 20-21).

Paul spoke of the "resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." We have already seen the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14) is referring to the those raised from the dead at the second coming of Jesus. The resurrection of the unjust is the same as the "resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29) and is outside the limits of this article.

Two years later, Paul in defending himself before King Agrippa (Acts 24:25-27; 25:13-32), again states that God will resurrect the dead, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?" (Acts 26:6-8).

Future Glory and Redemption

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,

eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance (Romans 8:18-25).

Paul is encouraging the Roman Christians not to focus on the trials and problems of this life, but to focus on the future “glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). He further encourages them to eagerly wait for the redemption of their bodies (verse 23). This redemption happens at the resurrection when our natural body is changed into a glorious spiritual body. Paul wrote of this future glory in his letter to the Corinthians, “But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body . . . Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’” (1 Corinthians 15:38-44, 50-55).

A House Not Made with Hands

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well

pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

Paul is comparing this physical life to an earthly house or tent. He contrasts this mortal life, with the habitation, house or tent which is from heaven. This mortal habitation is swallowed up by one giving life. The life Paul is referring to is the immortal life which Christians receive at the time of the resurrection. These verses sound similar to what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

While still in this physical body, Christians are in a sense absent from being in the real presence of the Lord. When Christians become absent from the body at the time of the resurrection, they will be present with Lord. When their physical bodies change into spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:38-54), they "shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

False Teachings about the Resurrection

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some (2 Timothy 2:15-18).

During the first century there were some in the Church who didn't understand the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (Hebrews 5:12-6:2). Paul in writing to Timothy, warns him about two men who were teaching that "the resurrection is already past." Paul had written earlier in 1 Corinthians 15:12 about some in Corinth who were saying there was "no resurrection of the dead." This is why he wrote so much about the importance of the resurrection in his letter to the Corinthian church.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

We have examined in great detail what the New Testament has to teach about the First Resurrection. We will now see what the Old Testament teaches us about this subject. The

Old Testament doesn't provide as much detail about the resurrection of the righteous as the New Testament, but it still gives us a reasonable amount of information.

If A Man Dies, Shall He Live Again?

We begin our study in the book of Job. Which is a series of dialogues between Job and his friends, about why Job is suffering, concluding with God's declaration of sovereignty. Early in this discussion, Job lamenting the mortality of man's short life in chapter 14 speaks of a coming resurrection. He knew the dead were unconscious and would "not awake nor be roused from their sleep" until "the heavens are no more" (verses 10-12). In His Olivet prophecy Jesus speaks about a time when the "heavens are no more," although He uses different words to express this idea, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29-31). After the stars fall from heaven, and the darkening of the sun and moon, Jesus will return to earth and resurrect the elect. This will be the "set time" when God will "remember" Job (Job 14:13).

Job asked the question, "if a man dies, shall he live again?" He answers his own question by saying, "All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands" (Job 14:14-15). Many centuries later, Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. . . . Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves 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 condemnation" (John 5:25, 28-29). Jesus will call Job to come forth "to the resurrection of life." He will come out of the grave with an incorruptible and immortal spiritual body (see 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-54)

When I Awake in Your Likeness

Psalm 17 is a prayer of lament, with David asking for deliverance from, and God's judgment upon, his enemies. The Psalm ends in hope with David proclaiming, "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Psalm 17:15). In the Bible, sleep can be a metaphor for death (Psalm 13:3; John 11:11-14; 1 Corinthians 15:18, 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16), and waking up a metaphor for the resurrection of the dead (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; John 11:38-44). David expects to wake from the sleep of death having the likeness of God, while viewing the glorified

LORD. The apostle John writes about a similar time, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed [Jesus’ second coming], we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). The apostle Paul also writes about the same future event: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:20-21). It’s important to remember that Jesus is also God (John 1:1-3, 14).

God Will Redeem My Soul from The Power of The Grave

In Psalm 49, the psalmist discusses the fact that in this life the unrighteous prosper, while the righteous experiences difficulties. Verses 1-4 are an introduction where the writer encourages “both low and high, rich and poor together” to “hear” and “give ear” to the “wisdom” and “meditation” of his heart. In verses, 5 thru 12 the psalmists explains that death awaits both unrighteous and the righteous. Verses 13-20 deal with the final destiny of the righteous and the unrighteous. In verse 15, the psalmist, appears to be speaking of a future resurrection when he writes, “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, For He shall receive me.” The psalmist looks forward to God redeeming him, and other faithful followers of God, from the power of the grave. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Roman believers, similarly encourages them to look forward to their future glory (Romans 8:18), and the redemption of their bodies (verse 23). This redemption happens at the resurrection when the physical body becomes a glories spiritual body, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

Your Dead Shall Live

Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead. (Isaiah 26:19 English Standard Version).

Isaiah, chapters 24 thru 27, “deal with [the] judgment and blessing [of] the last days, the time of God’s final victory over the forces of evil.”⁸ Toward the end of this section of scripture, God speaks of the future hope of the dead living again, and their bodies rising from the dust of the grave, with songs of joy (Isaiah 26:19). As we have seen from the examination of other scriptures, especially in 1 Corinthians 15, this body is a spirit body.

⁸ *The NIV Study Bible, Revised, Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), paragraph 13978.*

Awake to Everlasting Life

“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. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:1-3).

There will come a time in the future when the dead, “those who sleep in the dust of the earth,” awake from their sleep of death. Some of those resurrected will receive everlasting life. Others will receive “shame and everlasting contempt.” This sounds similar to Jesus’ statement in John 5:28-29, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves 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 condemnation.” Awaking to “everlasting life” is a reference to the First Resurrection. Those in this resurrection cannot die again because they have immortality (Luke 20:34-36; 1 Corinthians 15:52-55). Like those in the “resurrection of condemnation,” those who awake to “shame and everlasting contempt” are not the dead in Christ and are beyond the scope of this article.

The Gospel of Matthew also deals with the theme of the resurrected righteous shining like the stars of heaven. In explaining the meaning of the “Parable of the Tares” (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), Jesus gives a description of the end of the age when the wicked, separated from the righteous are “burned in the fire” (verse 40). Jesus then says the righteous who the angels have gathered into His barn (verse 30) “will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (verse 43).

You Will Rise to Your Inheritance

“But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.” (Daniel 12:13).

Following the description of the resurrection of “to everlasting life,” and the resurrection “to shame and everlasting contempt,” in Daniel 12:1-3. Daniel is commanded to “shut up the words, and seal the book [the prophecies of the Book of Daniel] until the time of the end” (verse 4). Following this command, Daniel receives one final vision of two men, and the “man clothed in linen.” One of the men asks the man clothed in linen, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” Meaning how long until the prophecies of

Book of Daniel are fulfilled? (verse 6). The man clothed in linen said, “that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished” (verse 7). Daniel’s response to the man clothed in linen was a lack of understanding, “Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, ‘My lord, what shall be the end of these things?’” (verse 8). The man clothed in linen says to Daniel “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (verse 9). To make things even more frustrating for Daniel, the man clothed in linen goes on to give even more cryptic information about events leading up to the time of the end (verses 10-12). Lastly, Daniel is told, “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest [die], and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days” (verse 13). Daniel is told to quit worrying about the future and get on with his life. He is given the hope of the resurrection “to everlasting life,” mentioned earlier in verses 1-3.

This promise to Daniel of a future “inheritance” sounds similar to what the apostle Paul will write many years later to Corinthian Christians about inheriting the Kingdom of God, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53).

Ransomed from the Power of the Grave

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes.” (Hosea 13:14).

The prophet Hosea ministered to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the mid to late 700s BC, during the reigns of “Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel” (Hose 1:1). The book of Hosea “depicts Israel’s unfaithfulness with a number of images from family and nature. Israel is like: a promiscuous wife, an indifferent mother, an illegitimate child, an ungrateful son, a stubborn heifer, a silly dove, a luxuriant vine, and grapes in the wilderness. Yet Israel’s unfaithfulness and obstinacy are not enough to exhaust God’s redeeming love that outstrips the human capacity to comprehend.”⁹

Towards the end of the book, God speaks of a future time when the dead of Israel are ransomed from the “power of the grave,” and redeemed from death. This future

⁹ *The ESV Study Bible*, Accordance electronic ed. (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), paragraph 14544.

resurrection may be a metaphor for a later time when Israel repents of their sins and returns to God. This resurrection also looks forward to a literal resurrection. The apostle Paul uses this verse to support his teachings on the resurrection record in 1 Corinthians 15:51-55: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”¹⁰

Conclusion

In our study of the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection, specifically the resurrection of the dead in Christ; we have seen that this resurrection will occur at Jesus’ second coming. Then the dead in Christ will rise from their graves with new spiritual bodies, and the bodies of those Christians still living change from physical to spiritual. We saw what Jesus taught about this coming resurrection, and how important this resurrection was to the message preached by the New Testament Church. Finally, we examined what the Old Testament had to teach us about the coming resurrection.

¹⁰ “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” comes from the Greek or Septuagint translation of Hosea 13:14, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* by Robert G. Bratcher, The United Bible Society, Third Revised Edition, 1984, page 51.