

4 “The Resurrections”

The blowing of the seventh trumpet at Jesus’ return will usher in a new age to the world! It will be the first time since Jesus’ coronation that new members will be accepted as full members of God’s family. One hundred forty-four thousand former humans will become Spirit beings in the Kingdom of God! We are told that the rest of the billions of mankind, who have died through-out the ages, will not be resurrected until a thousand years later (Rev. 20:4-5). What happens to those billions who are not of the group resurrected at the seventh trump? Do they find themselves rejected as candidates for the Kingdom of God? Is their hope gone forever? The unfolding of God’s merciful plan for all of humanity is the most exciting news anyone could imagine! This chapter will reveal the fate of the rest of the dead (Rev. 20:5).

An understanding of just how God intends to implement His plan for the whole of humanity is revealed through the marvelous miracle of the resurrections! An age old question put forth by “Job” of the Old Testament reflects the concern of most of humanity. He asked the question, “If a man dies, will he live again” (Job 14:14)? He immediately gave an affirmative answer to his own question. Is there really life after death, or will we exist for a moment in time and then disappear forever? I think most people would like to believe that something positive exists beyond the present. There is a deep yearning in each of us that there is a purpose to all the madness we go through on this earth. This desire to extend our lives causes us to seek for that important answer. This intense desire for an extended life has led many to pursue life-long searches for such

fantasies as the “fountain of youth” or some mythical “holy grail” to give them solutions to the secret of living forever. The same desire for extended life has led to many theories on the possibilities of a future existence. The book shelves of religious stores are full of men’s theories on an after life. Most pursuits are only theories of men without any legitimate proof. Some people have even rejected any hope of a resurrection or after-life and have adopted the philosophy of “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.” Most of these desires for attaining eternal life leave God out of the picture as the only path to eternity. One thing is for sure, we will surely die (Heb.9:27)!

The fear of death by mankind has led many individuals to use it as a powerful tool for their own greed. They have manufactured such concepts as an “ever-burning hell” to motivate fearful people to financially support their ministries. Instead of the love that permeates the plan of God, people are led to envision a God that seems to take pleasure in the torment of individuals for eternity. This concept of torture makes God look like a monster! Is it “Godly” to allow someone to suffer in “hell” for an eternity? Does this sound like a God of Mercy? Many preachers preach a God of love and then go on to describe a God void of mercy. Even the whole creation of heaven rejoices when someone is welcomed into the Kingdom of God (Rom. 8:22-23).

Most of mankind’s concerns and fears of death fall into one or more of the following categories:

1. Fear of the process of dying—the agony associated with the death process weighs heavy on the minds of many.

2. Fear of punishment after death—this a fear manufactured by those who preach an ever-burning hell with no hope of escaping.
3. Fear of the unknown—a fear associated with not knowing one way or the other about what lies beyond death.
4. Fear of annihilation—the fear of believing that when we die there will not be a resurrection for anyone back to life.

These fears are the result of not understanding the marvelous plan of salvation God has in store for all mankind. Death is a rendezvous we must all come to grips with and accept. Instead of fearing this point in life, we should embrace it! Death is the beginning step of our fantastic destiny into an eternity of serving in the Kingdom of God. We were created from the very beginning to die. Our birth started us on the journey to that inevitable conclusion. Even Jesus was born to die (John 18:37). The initial death of an individual isn't the end of the story. God will make sure that there is a complete "accounting" of everyone that has ever lived on this earth. No one will ever have to worry about slipping through His fingers by some error. All of humanity will live again in a future resurrection. Since it is not God's will that any should perish (II Pet. 3:9), everyone will be given the opportunity to make the transition from a carnal-like nature to a God-like nature. The choice will be theirs to make.

Servants of God in the early New Testament church didn't fear death as we do in our age. They knew the power of the resurrection and the mercy of God. Those that were about their Father's business (Luke 2:49) anticipated an after life (Phil. 3:21). They were fully aware that death was only the beginning step of attaining real life (I Cor. 15:52). If we

can only envision the awesome potential we have in being a part of the Kingdom of God, we too would have that same excitement for the future! The seventh trumpet (Rev. 20:4-5) will be a trumpet of victory for the 144,000 individuals who have taken their calling seriously. This event is described as the first resurrection and that the rest of the dead would not live again until the end of the thousand year period (Rev. 20:4-5). It does not say in the book of Revelation how many more resurrections there would be in the future. It only informs us that this is the first and that there will be a future period when the rest will live again at the end of one thousand years following the seventh trumpet.

This promised resurrection of all that have lived means that humans are “indestructible” at this time (Mat. 10:28). God made us that way so we would have the opportunity to make mistakes along the path to perfection. There are several recorded cases where God brought people back to a physical existence. An example of some of those resurrections back to a physical life are the resurrections of Lazarus (John 12:17), individuals immediately following Jesus’ crucifixion (Mat. 27:50-52), and a future resurrection of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:11). Past physical resurrections proves that God has and can bring people back to a physical life. God alone has the power of life and death (Rev. 1:18). Because of this power, it is within His ability to bring people back to life as many times as he chooses in a physical resurrection (Mat. 19:26).

Let’s back up at this point and look at the time-line of events leading up to the resurrection of the rest of the dead. This earth and its inhabitants are prophesied to reach a point in history where we would actually annihilate ourselves if time was allowed to

continue (Mat 24:22). Jesus will at that time intervene to prevent this destruction from happening to mankind. He will return with power and glory at the seventh trumpet as promised (Rev. 14:1). One hundred and forty-four thousand individuals will be changed into Spirit beings and join Jesus as co-heirs of the Kingdom of God at the blowing of the seventh trumpet (Rom. 8:17). After Jesus subdues the corrupt governments and religions of the world, a clean up crew will begin their work at the beginning of the 1,000 years. This clean-up crew will have to clean up the mess that was caused by man's rebellion to God's law. For seven months they will bury the dead as part of their job description. They will also be required to destroy all weapons of warfare over a period of seven years (Ezek. 39:1-17, Isa. 2:4, Joel 3:10, and Micah 4:3). Once they have finished their clean-up work they will live out their lives on this earth looking forward to their future resurrection at the end of the thousand year period. The earth will be void of people for the remainder of the thousand years of the earth's healing. It will be a time of rest and cleansing in preparing the earth for the masses that will be resurrected. This will be the promised resurrection of the rest of the dead at the end of a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-5).

It is God's will that no one miss out in the resurrection process (II Pet.3:9). God says that everyone will be resurrected in His plan in their own order (I Cor. 15:23). Jesus was resurrected approximately two thousand years ago to become the first born of many brethren (Rom. 8:29). The 144,000 will be resurrected in the near future at the seventh trumpet as the first fruits and the rest of humanity in their order at the end of the 1,000 years of atoning of the earth. We can not determine in the book of Revelation how many resurrections will exist in the future. However, Jesus did reveal this bit of information to

His disciples and to us today who choose to pursue and act upon the wonderful truth of the plan of God. Jesus gathered His disciples around Him and revealed in a special parable the future hope of the masses that have lived on this earth since creation (Mat. 20:1-16). The spiritual aspect of this parable was describing workers of character development not physical labor. As you read this parable you will notice that it is broken into what is described as eleven hours or eleven segments. Some rolled up their sleeves (spiritually speaking) and went to work in the first hour. Others got serious at different times during this eleven hour work period. When this period of physical work was all over, any who finally got serious with the work program were allowed into the Kingdom of God.

All of humanity that was not changed to Spirit beings at the seventh trumpet will be brought back to life in a physical resurrection. God created Adam and Eve as adults with the ability to immediately function in their environment. They were told to take care of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). When the masses of humanity are resurrected they will also be able to function in the same way. During the one thousand years the earth will become like the original Garden of Eden. God will tell those resurrected to take care of the earth. Many who have died on this earth were in many different stages of life. Some were aborted babies, and others were elderly and diseased. Yet all of them will be resurrected in perfect health and ready to function in their work of character development. We are told in scripture that during this time these individuals who are resurrected as physical beings will be allotted one hundred years to accept the mark of God (fruit of the Spirit) instead of the mark of Satan (works of the flesh) (Isa. 65:20).

Those that accept God's way will be accepted into the Kingdom. Those who reject that opportunity will be accursed. The word "accursed" means they will not be esteemed (#7043 in Strong's Concordance). There will be some during this time that will not live their allotted one hundred years that God promised (Rev. 20:7-9). Through their rebellion to God's way of life, they will be cut short of the one hundred years they were allotted. Will they live again to complete their one hundred years? Let's go back to the parable of the eleven hours of labor to get the answer (Mat. 20:1-16).

Now, what does this parable tell us about the resurrections of God? The First resurrection was at the seventh trumpet. The masses will be resurrected at the end of the thousand years in a second resurrection which was the first hour of the parable. Each hour of the parable represents a resurrection to work. The second hour represents a third resurrection for those who failed in the first hour. The third hour represents a fourth resurrection for those who failed in the second hour. The process continues until we get to the eleventh hour which represents the twelfth resurrection for those who failed in the tenth hour. This is a total of eleven resurrections for the masses plus one resurrection at the seventh trumpet for the 144,000, making a total of twelve resurrections! The Holy Day described in Leviticus the 23rd chapter known as the "Feast of Tabernacles" represents these series of eleven resurrections. It was to be kept physically for a period of seven days. This number of "seven" associated with the "Feast of Tabernacles" in scripture represents a period of mankind reaching perfection. It is a special time for mankind to make the transformation from a carnal mind to a Spiritual mind (Eph. 4:13). The number "twelve"

in scripture represents completion. When this process of twelve resurrections are over, God's plan for mankind will be complete.

We concluded earlier that God has the power to resurrect someone as many times as He chooses. God is the potter and we are merely the clay (Isa. 64:8). The clay can be formed to start again. That is exactly what God will do during the course of these resurrections. Each resurrection begins with a clean slate for everyone. Nothing in the past will be held against them, just as true repentance today eliminates our past sins. God's plan is designed to give everyone the opportunity and the help necessary for success in completing His plan of salvation.

God put together a perfect plan for mankind's salvation. It was a plan that would allow a conversion of the mind to be completed. The twelve resurrections represent that process of conversion. As candidates for the 144,000, it should be our full-time job to make the conversion now! The first resurrection is described as the better resurrection (Heb. 11:35). None of us will become Spirit beings until the job is finished, even if it takes twelve resurrections to accomplish the task. Therefore, there are no short cuts into God's Kingdom. We must all bring every thought unto the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5). Jesus set the "bar" of achievement for entrance into the Kingdom. In the beginning God put together a plan for success (John 1:1). He is working with you right now in that conversion process! We could be a lot closer to making the conversion God desires than we think (Rom. 13:11). If we work closely with God, He will help us to cast off all fear

of failure (I John 4:18). God is putting us through this process of conversion because He has great hope for our future in His Kingdom (Rom. 8:20).

The Bible is full of names of individuals that God says made the right choice between good and evil. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews names several who will be Kings in the future. Several individuals like Paul, Stephen, and others are mentioned throughout the New Testament as future Priests in the first resurrection. The Bible does not list any individuals by name that is doomed for eternity! Their process of transformation is not over. Jesus said, "You will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). He said those words to a man that will come up in a resurrection of the masses in the future. He will be given the opportunity of salvation. The mercy of God is truly without limit (Mat. 18:22).

Don't procrastinate in your conversion process. You have the opportunity to be in that first resurrection right now. You can be there to help those who come up a thousand years later. They will need your help in achieving perfection! God is calling you to make the transition now for the good of the masses. There is no doubt that it can be done now.

What God begins He will finish (Phil. 1:16). If you take your calling lightly, you will be a part of the final eleven resurrections. Those eleven resurrections will be wonderful, but not on the same level as the first! When God's plan is completed, death will be destroyed (I Cor. 15:26). It will be a new and exciting age. We will finally be able to see the full scope of God's greatness and mercy. It would truly be a shame if you decided to reject such a great invitation from the Father (Heb. 2:3)!