

The Resurrection(s)

Wilmore, Kentucky

April 9, 2009

Israel failed to see in the Prophets that Christ would come not once, but twice ... first as a child, and then later as the Messiah/King Who would reign. Israel's failure to distinguish between these two events caused confusion in their ability to understand God's plan. Believers today often make a similar mistake when considering the resurrection. By thinking all references to a resurrection in the Scriptures are referring to the same event, we misunderstand God's plan for what lies ahead.

But the Scriptures clearly say there is a progressive **order** to the resurrection .. this is not just a single event.

***For even as, in Adam, all are dying,
Thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified [made alive].
Yet each in his own class [order].
The Firstfruit, Christ;
Thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence,
Thereafter the consummation...
(1 Corinthians 15:22-24)***

Let us consider what the Scriptures say about the "order" as ordained by God concerning the resurrection.

#1. THE SNATCHING AWAY, OR "RAPTURE" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

The dead in Christ will be raised, along with those in Christ who are alive, when "the rapture" occurs. This event is not told elsewhere in the Scriptures, but only by Paul who was given the gospel of the Uncircumcision (Galatians 2:7-9). Paul writes that those in Christ will be "snatched away" to meet the Lord in the air. This is a different event from when Christ returns to the earth to reign. Israel awaits His return to the earth, to restore the kingdom unto Israel (see Acts 1:6-7). But the body of Christ awaits Him to snatch us away to meet Him in the air. Israel's expectation is to serve God upon the earth when Christ reigns. Our expectation is to serve Him in the celestials (the heavens), where we will be a display of His grace in the oncoming eons (Ephesians 2:6-7).

[The Great Tribulation]

After this resurrection of the body of Christ, the time of God's indignation (The Great Tribulation) as foretold in the book of Revelation will occur. Note that the body of Christ is to be rescued out of the coming indignation (1 Thessalonians 1:10). God did not appoint us to indignation (1 Thessalonians 5:8-9).

[Christ's Return to the Earth]

At the conclusion of this time of Tribulation, Christ will return to the earth (Revelation 19:11 and following). Thrones will be setup and there will be a judgment of those living at the time of Christ's return (Revelation 20:4 and Matthew 25:31). We note in the Matthew 25 passage, referring to "The Sheep and Goats judgment," speaks not of any resurrection unto judgment, but only pertains to those living upon the earth at the time of Christ's return. And this evaluation will be based not upon one's faith (believer or unbeliever), but upon works. Some will be granted eonian life (life in the eon or age that follows), while others will experience eonian chastening (not "eternal torment" as many Bible translation erroneously state.)

#2. THE FORMER RESURRECTION (Revelation 20:4-5)

The passage refers to this event as “the former resurrection” Those who have been executed because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and who do not worship the wild beast or its image, and who did not take the emblem (mark) of the beast will be resurrected. These will live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:5).

[End of 1000 Year Reign]

After the thousand year reign, Satan will be loosed (Revelation 20:7) and will deceive the nations, mobilizing them for battle. The Adversary (Satan) will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented for the eons of the eons (at least two eons, out of all the eons).

#3. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD (Revelation 20:11-15)

The sea and Hades give up their dead. They are resurrected and stand before the throne and are judged in accord with their acts. Those not found in the scroll of life are cast into the lake of fire. (Note that the duration of their time in the lake of fire is not mentioned as it was for the Adversary.)

[New Heaven & Earth]

Then we see this present heaven and earth coming to an end, and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).

[THE CONSUMMATION]

At some point after this, when all are subjected to God, there will come the “consummation” (1 Corinthians 15:20-28). If the lake of fire, referred to as the second death, is the same as the first death ... there would be a resurrection of those dead at “The Consummation” whereupon all will be reconciled to God. If the lake of fire is a figurative death, where the subjects are living as they are being “chastised” or refined, there would not be a literal resurrection ... but once the second death has accomplished its objective all inhabitants would ultimately be reconciled to God.

The Consummation is the climax of history. It is described in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 as a time when:

- Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father (v 24)
- He nullifies all sovereignty, authority and power (v 24)
- All enemies are placed under His feet (v 25)
- The last enemy ... death ... is abolished (v 26)
- [Remember that the lake of fire is the second death, and will therefore be abolished]
- God will be All in all (v 28)

We see none of these conditions completed even at the very end of Revelation. Paul is talking about something that will occur after the conclusion of Revelation. The climax of human history is when all things and persons are subjected and reconciled to God the Father. Let us remember that Christ is God’s instrument for accomplishing this objective. Christ is “the One completing the all in all” (Ephesians 1:23). In Christ is all created (Colossians 1:16), and through Him will all be reconciled to Him (Colossians 1:20).

The body of Christ is “the complement of the One completing the all in all” (Ephesians 1:23) ... the “complement of the Christ” (Ephesians 4:14). That being the case, let us be sure we study the Scriptures and understand God’s plan for mankind, that we proclaim the correct message as Christ’s ambassadors; as opposed to the horrendous and inaccurate doctrine of eternal torment as proclaimed by most within “the church.”

***Yet all is of God,
Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ,
And is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation,***

***How that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself,
Not reckoning their offenses to them,
And placing in us the word of the conciliation.***

***For Christ, then, are we ambassadors,
As of God entreating through us.
We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated to God!"
(2 Corinthians 5:18-21***

Bob Evely
Independent Minister, Wilmore KY
bob@GraceEvangel.org



"Recognizing Christ as the Ultimate Saviour of All!"

Visit us at www.GraceEvangel.org