

Study 0027

Scripture Text: Hebrews 6:2c; 1 Corinthians 15:12-54

In our last study, we began to consider the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. We saw that resurrection is not a myth, neither is it the same as resuscitation, nor is it revival. We also saw that there are two kinds of resurrection—temporary and permanent resurrection. We talked about temporary resurrection then; in this study, we shall be looking at permanent resurrection.

Permanent resurrection takes place after the matter of a person's earthly existence has been finalized, which means that he is not going to be resurrected temporarily again. Permanent resurrection is not to be confused with the believer's initial abode in heaven after death, because only the soul and the spirit return to God at death. Every true resurrection must include the raising up of the body, the soul, and the spirit. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the 'first-fruits'; after which all those who die in Christ will be resurrected unto eternal life; and then, at the end of the ages, all those who died apart from Christ will then be raised, but not unto eternal life. These are the three identifiable permanent resurrections in scripture, and we shall now consider each one.

- (1) **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ**. This is the first-fruits of all permanent resurrections, and the grounds for, or the basis of, our salvation; thus to be born again, a person must believe that Jesus Christ died and resurrected the third day from death (**Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11**). The resurrection of Jesus Christ declares that Jesus is the Son of God (**Romans 1:4**); that He is supreme over all created things (**Matthew 28:16; Ephesians 1:17-23**); that future judgment is certain (**Acts 17:11**); that death is defeated (**1 Corinthians 15:54-56**); and that, just as Christ was raised from death, so also will all those who believe in Him be raised from death unto eternal life (**Romans 6:5; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14**). The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us hope that if we live as He wants us to here on earth; we shall live eternally with Him and His Father in heaven, even as He is presently living.
- (2) **The Resurrection of the Believer in Christ**. This is also referred to as *the first resurrection*, and will take place at the Second Coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6**). At that time, Jesus Christ will come down from heaven, and the believers in Christ will be caught up to meet Him in the air with new bodies. This event is what is commonly referred to as the 'rapture', and will take place in a particular order—first those who have died in Christ before the event; and then those who are still alive and in Christ at that time. This resurrection will only concern those who either died as believers in Christ or those who are believers in Christ and still living on earth at the time of the rapture. For those believers who are alive when the rapture takes place, their death and resurrection will be more or less simultaneous, for it will happen in '*the twinkling of an eye*'. Those who have not repented of sin, and unrepentant backsliders, are not included in this category. This resurrection will herald the commencement of the Judgment of believers in Christ, at which time rewards will be given to those who have built their lives on Christ, using materials that cannot be destroyed by the fire of God's judgment of the believer (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Timothy 2:20-21**). Following this judgment of believers, will be the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. At the end of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the resurrected believers will return to the earth with their new resurrected bodies to reign for one thousand years with

Christ as Head (**Isaiah 11:6-8; Revelation 19:1-9; 20:6**). Please let us note that while these things are going on in heaven, there will be unbelievers still living on the earth that will be facing tribulations of all sorts. It is also important to note that once a person misses the rapture, there is no hope for him in the immediate future, except if he is one of the one hundred and forty-four souls of the nation of Israel, and of twelve of the fourteen tribes (**Revelation 7:1-8**). There will however, be an opportunity for those who miss the rapture, if they are still alive after the tribulation period. What this means is that such a person who misses the rapture would have survived the tribulation (a total of seven years), without the mark of the beast, and is still alive by the time Christ returns to the earth to save the nation of Israel (**Revelation 19:11-21**).

- (3) **The Resurrection of Unbelievers**. This is what we can call, *the final resurrection*. It will take place at the end of the one-thousand-year reign of peace under Jesus Christ. Those who are alive at this time, but who had not received Christ before His Second Coming will get an opportunity to receive Him as their Lord and Saviour; more so, having enjoyed His peaceful reign for one thousand years, where there are no deaths, and no evil occurrences. However, Satan, who would have been imprisoned at the start of the one-thousand-year reign of peace, would now be released, and he will deceive those who have enjoyed the peaceful reign of Christ into rejecting and refusing Christ (**Revelation 20:7-10**). All those who thus reject Christ, together with those who had died without Christ through the ages, will at this time be resurrected with new bodies with which to receive the punishment they deserve (**Revelation 21:12-13**). It is important to note that those who died without Christ before the resurrection of believers in Christ will still remain where they were after they died—hell. All those who will be resurrected at this time and those still living on earth and who have rejected Jesus Christ, will be given new bodies, and will stand before God to face the Judgment of God! This Judgment is distinct from the Judgment that believers in Christ had experienced earlier. In fact, no believer in Christ would be present at this Judgment of unbelievers.

The doctrine of or teaching about resurrection of the dead is a lesson which seeks to prepare the believer in Christ for the eventuality of death and the hope of eternal life thereafter, on one hand; and gives him understanding of the reality of the hopelessness of a life without Christ in this world, on the other hand. It is our prayer that as we receive this understanding, we will not only prepare ourselves for our own resurrection, but will also warn those who are still refusing and rejecting Christ's lordship over their lives, about the futility and folly of not accepting the salvation of God through Christ, while there is still time.

EXERCISE

Please answer true or false to the statements below.

1. Temporary resurrection is to resuscitation; what permanent resurrection is to revival.
2. A person can experience permanent resurrection without experiencing temporary resurrection.
3. Ghosts are those who have experienced permanent resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis of our salvation.
5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proved once and for all that He is the Son of God.
6. The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us assurance that if we live as He did on earth, we also shall be resurrected unto eternal life.

7. The resurrection of the believer in Christ is what takes place when a person becomes born again.
8. The resurrection of the believer in Christ will take place at the time Jesus establishes His one thousand years of peaceful reign on earth.
9. After the believer is resurrected permanently, he must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, where he is given an opportunity to explain himself.
10. During the tribulation, people who are born again, but who missed the first rapture, will get another opportunity to be saved and raptured.
11. The one-thousand-year reign of peace is one in which Jesus Christ will become the President of the United Nations.
12. All those who die without Christ will be kept in heaven until the final resurrection.
13. The first resurrection is to the believer who dies in Christ, what the final resurrection is to those who die without Christ.
14. Between the first and final resurrection, there will be a number of smaller resurrections.
15. Anybody who tastes of the one thousand peaceful reign of Christ can never be tempted by the devil to reject Jesus Christ.
16. As believers in Christ are judged, so will unbelievers be judged, but in a different way.
17. Three permanent resurrections identifiable in scripture are the first fruits of resurrections, the first resurrection, and the final resurrection.