

DO YOU NEED A RESURRECTION?

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For a few weeks we've been looking at the topic of Hell and the fate of the wicked — those who refuse to accept Jesus' offer of salvation. The language of scripture points to total destruction.

On a related topic ... **most churches believe that when people die they go straight to Heaven (if they're good) — or straight to Hell (if they're bad). Occasionally you might hear of a "Resurrection" — but it's often a very minor reference.**

If you're in Heaven or Hell — who needs a Resurrection?

You occasionally hear of stories of people who died briefly and have visited heaven — and bring back descriptions of what a wonderful place it is.

The best-selling book "Heaven is For Real" (sold about 11 million copies) that tells the story of 4 year old from Nebraska ... Colton Burpo who had a near-death experience and "visited" heaven. He met Jesus (who was on a rainbow-coloured horse!) and Mary and met many of the saints — and some long-dead relatives.

Millions believe the story — they want to believe it. It was made into a movie. Why not? It fits into the narrative.

But the whole idea of going to heaven when you die completely obliterates the need for a resurrection.

The Bible talks of a Time of Harvest — when the dead in Christ are resurrected. Not individuals floating off to Heaven — spread over the last 2,000 years! No Harvest! No Resurrection!

Most churches have no need of a resurrection?

Let's review what the Bible teaches. TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY.

Hebrews 6:1-3

1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, **let us go on to perfection, (maturity) not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.**
3 And this we will do if God permits.

Paul lists **six key foundational doctrines** before we move on to maturity. **Number 5 is our resurrection!**

1 Corinthians 15:12-24

12 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?

13 But **if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.**

14 **And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.**

15 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.

16 **For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.**

17 **And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!**

18 **Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. (Died)**

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

20 **But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

21 For since by man came death, **by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.**

22 For as in Adam all die, **even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (Resurrected to life)**

23 But each one in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.**

24 Then comes the end, (*after the Millennium*) when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

The whole chapter is about our resurrection! IT IS KEY!

A main part of Paul's teaching. **If you are saying there is no resurrection — you are greatly mistaken.** It is a key part of God's plan. **The resurrection is front and centre.**

Acts 23:6-10

6 But when 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!**"

7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided.

8 For **Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.**

9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "**We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.**"

10 Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

"The hope of the resurrection of the dead".

The Resurrection is something Paul himself longed for.

Philippians 3:7-11

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 **Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ**
9 **and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;**

10 **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection,**
and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
11 **if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the**
dead. (Greek: “EK” = from ... among the dead — the First
Resurrection)

Paul wants to attain the resurrection from the dead (which comes 1,000 years prior to The Resurrection of the Dead).

Paul is not thinking of “floating off to heaven” immediately upon death. He knows he absolutely needs to be resurrected.

Most churches think all men have an immortal soul. When someone dies ... they merely “cast off” their physical bodies. They continue to be fully conscious. Their lives continue — either in heaven ... or hell.

That is not Biblical! The Bible teaches that when you die — you’re dead! No more existence! Terminated! The End!

The only hope any dead person has — is to be brought back to life by God’s intervention. A resurrection!

The necessity of a resurrection clearly implies the dead are dead.

Ecclesiastes 9:9-10

9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.

10 **Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.**

These verses certainly suggest that nothing is happening in the grave.

Yet the necessity and truth of the resurrection from the dead has been virtually eliminated from most churchianity — or reduced to a minor role? **If Peter ... Paul ... John ... various saints have been living in glory for thousands of years with Jesus ... Abraham ... Isaac and Jacob — why bother with a resurrection?**

Who needs a FIRSTFRUITS HARVEST?

There are a few brief references to a resurrection in the Old Testament — but most of the details are revealed in the New Testament.

Hebrews 11:32-35

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 **Women received their dead raised to life again.**

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

“Heroes of Faith” — looking for a better resurrection.

Certainly a title that can be applied to the First Resurrection —THE HARVEST OF THE FIRSTFRUITS.

John 11:1-3

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “**Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.**”

John 11:11-14

11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, “**Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.**”

12 Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.”

13 **However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.**

14 **Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."**

Death is like sleep — unconscious and unaware.

John 11:20-27

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.

21 Now Martha said to Jesus, "**Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.**"

22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

23 **Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."**

24 Martha said to Him, "**I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**"

25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.**"

26 **And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.** Do you believe this?"

27 She said to Him, "**Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.**"

It takes a resurrection to "awaken" the dead.

John 11:32-44

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "**Lord, if You had been here, my**

brother would not have died."

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

37 And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

40 **Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"**

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.**

42 **And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.**"

43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "**Lazarus, come forth!**"

44 **And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.** Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

A physical resurrection — a type of the Last Day Resurrection.

Matthew 22:23-33

23 **The same day the Sadducees,** who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,

24 saying: "**Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.**

25 Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh.

27 Last of all the woman died also.

28 **Therefore, in the resurrection,** whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "**You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.**

30 **For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.**

31 **But concerning the resurrection of the dead,** have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,

32 **I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**”

33 And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

God cannot be the God of Abraham ... Isaac ...Jacob — unless they will one day be resurrected!

Our resurrection is fundamental even to the title and description of God!

And there's a specific time (and it's not immediately at death) — not “drip-fed” into Heaven!

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

13 **But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, (they are dead) lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.**

14 **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.**

15 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.** (*Parousia — coming of the Lord*)

16 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.**

17 **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.

The saints who sleep will be resurrected AT THE PAROUSIA! NOT BEFORE!! They are still asleep — dead — today! Not dancing up and down the streets of gold in heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:50-55

50 **Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.**

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: **We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—**

52 **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.**

53 **For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.**

54 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."

55 "O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?"

Most will "sleep" ...till the Resurrection at the Last Trumpet.

This is the time of the HARVEST. **The Firstfruits are raised from the dead and "harvested" AT THE TIME OF JESUS' RETURN.**

Till then ... they're sleeping peacefully. At rest.

Not living with eternal banquets in heaven ... watching Jesus ride by on His rainbow-coloured horse.

And would remain asleep forever — unless there would be a resurrection.

Paul looked forward to that day. That is the hope that we also have.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

8 **Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

When? At His appearing!

Revelation 20:4-6

4 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.**

5 **(But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished). This is the first resurrection.**

6 **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.**

To be envied — if we're in the First Resurrection. The one at the **START OF THE MILLENNIUM — AT JESUS' RETURN IN POWER AND GLORY.**

This is the BETTER RESURRECTION — PRIESTS AND KINGS — JUST MARRIED TO JESUS CHRIST ... and with a 1,000 year "headstart" over everyone else!

THEN — WE GET TO LIVE FOREVER!

This is the FIRST HARVEST. All of the saints gathered up at the same time at **THE PAROUSIA!**

SUMMARY:

- **Believers don't get drip-fed into heaven as they die!**
- **There is a one-off Harvest at the end of the age.**
- **It's called THE FIRST RESURRECTION — THE BETTER RESURRECTION!**
- **It's our GREAT HOPE!" GOD SPEED THAT DAY!**