

OUT ↑ ↑ The Resurrection From Among The Dead

What a wonderful hope Christians have: That these mortal bodies shall be brought back to life and made like the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Phil.3:21). Some religions offer some vague immortality. Some offer reincarnation; the vain belief that when a person dies his spirit is reborn into a newly born baby—if he is fortunate, or an animal—if he is unfortunate. Other religions have borrowed certain ideas from the Bible. But only the Bible teaches, and guarantees, the bodily resurrection of every person who has ever lived on this earth.

Jesus said, *"I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."* (Rev.1:18.) When Jesus returns to this earth he will raise up all who belong to Him. (1Thess 4:16,17). His Word promises that when we are raised, He *"will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body."* (Phil.3:21).

However, it is not only Christians who will be resurrected. Jesus said in John 5:28,29, that everyone—the saved and the lost—will be raised.

"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

The resurrection body of those who belong to the Lord will be equipped to enjoy the things of heaven for all eternity. Those who rise to be condemned will have bodies equipped to suffer eternally in the lake of fire *"where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."* (Mk9:48).

Many Christians look forward with great expectation to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our subsequent resurrection, but are often confused as to who will be raised at that time. If you, dear reader, wish to know more on this important subject, then this little tract is for you. We urge you to study carefully the Scriptures so that you might know the certainty of these things.

Some believe in what is called a "General Resurrection." It is the idea that everyone, good and bad, saved and unsaved, will all be raised at the same time and brought before the judgment seat of Christ who will separate the good from the bad. It is partly based on the misunderstanding that Matthew 25:31-46 describes the resurrection. But there is NO resurrection mentioned in that passage. It is a judgment of *living* nations.

John 5:28,29, (quoted opposite) is also misunderstood. At first glance it seems to say that everyone will be raised at the same time. If that were the only verse on this subject we would probably all agree. However, there are other verses to be considered before we jump to a conclusion. The sum total of God's word is truth. **Note:** The text says *"a time is coming."* It does not say it is the same time for everyone. Nor does it say it is not the same time. It is left open and can only be known for sure if there is more information elsewhere in the Scriptures.

But first, if we examine the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it will help our understanding of the resurrection of the believer.

Jesus Christ was raised *"from the dead."* That is repeated 34 times in the New Testament. What does *"from the dead"* mean? The New Testament was originally written in Greek. Many years later it was translated into other languages.

The word *"from"* is a translation of the Greek word *ek*, it means *out from, from out of, from among*. It is the opposite of the words *in* and *into*.

The word translated *dead* is the Greek word *nekron*, it is plural. It does not here mean the cemetery, or place of the dead, but it means *dead people*. It is clear then, that Christ was raised *out from among the dead people*. In other words, Jesus was not only raised from death, not only raised from the grave, but *out from among those who are dead*. When Jesus arose, he left behind other dead people who were not resurrected. He came out from among those dead people.

This clear indisputable fact is of tremendous importance to our understanding of the resurrection of the believer, *because this same expression is used to describe the resurrection of the Christian!*

Consider our Lord's statement in Luke 20:35. *"But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage."*

Jesus here named a certain kind of resurrection, calling it, *not* the *resurrection of the dead*, but the *"resurrection from the dead"*. Also, we notice that Jesus made it to be an exclusive resurrection. **It is only for those who are considered worthy!** When these are raised, they are raised out from among those who are dead. It is not a general resurrection of the dead. It means that the rest of the dead people, the unworthy, are not raised at that same time.

John 5:28,29 and Luke 20:35 are not in contradiction to each other. In the Luke passage Jesus is giving us additional information and explanation, He is telling us that the worthy and unworthy are NOT to be raised at the same time.

The Apostle Paul said that it was his ambition to attain to this resurrection, the resurrection *from* the dead (Phil.3:11). (The King James Authorized translation of 1611 is in error here because it uses the word *"of"* instead of *"from"*. The New KJV corrects this error and uses *"from"*). If Paul was speaking of a general resurrection in which all are raised at the same time, then Phil.3:11 becomes meaningless. How could Paul strive to attain unto a general resurrection in which everyone, good and bad, is to be raised? In other words, you cannot strive to achieve something that is yours automatically without striving. No, Paul wanted to be in that exclusive resurrection that Jesus spoke of in Luke 20:35. It is a select resurrection. It is the *resurrection out from among those who are dead*.

A close examination of the Greek text of Phil.3:11, shows another important item. Paul did not use the ordinary word for resurrection. Instead, he joins the word *ek* (meaning *out*) to the word for resurrection thus making an *out-resurrection*. To give Philippians 3:11 literally and exactly we quote from the Weust translation, (Weust is a renowned Greek scholar).

"If by any means I might arrive at the goal namely, the out-resurrection from among those who are dead."

It should be obvious that the idea of only one resurrection for everybody, good and bad alike, all at the same time, cannot be correct because both Jesus and Paul spoke of a select resurrection *out from among the dead people*. Those dead ones left behind obviously must wait for a later resurrection.

According to the more literal translations (Such as KJV, ASV, NASV, NKJV), Christ speaks of two resurrections which he calls the *resurrection of life* and the *resurrection of judgment*, or *condemnation* (John 5:28,29). It should not be difficult to know which of these resurrections Paul was aiming for! Jesus also speaks of those who will be rewarded in the *"resurrection of the righteous."* (Luke 14:14 NIV). Or, *"resurrection of the just."* (KJV). When we put all these passages together we conclude that there are **two separate resurrections**.

1. the **RESURRECTION OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD**, *also called* :
the **RESURRECTION OF LIFE**
or, the **RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS**
or, the **RESURRECTION OF THE JUST**
or, the **FIRST RESURRECTION** — Rev. 20:4-6

Separate From

2. the **RESURRECTION OF JUDGMENT**. This is the **SECOND RESURRECTION** of Rev. 20:11-15, *also called*:
the **RESURRECTION OF CONDEMNATION**
or, the **RESURRECTION OF THE UNJUST**
or, the **RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED**.

THE SEQUENCE OF THE RESURRECTION

1Cor 15:20-28

The subject of this passage is the *resurrection*, NOT the end of the world. Paul is describing the order, or sequence of the resurrection. ALL will be raised (vs.22), but not all at the same time. It is **"each in his own turn"** (vs.23).

Verse 20: Christ has already been raised *out from among* the dead. He is, therefore, *"the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."*

Verse 21: Death came by man; the resurrection of the dead came also by man.

Verse 22: In Adam all die; so in Christ all will be made alive (resurrected).

Verse 23: *But each in his own turn* —

Thus:

1st **CHRIST** the firstfruits (already raised almost 2000 years ago).

THEN (Greek, *épeita* = *afterwards*)

2nd **THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST** will be raised *“when He comes.”*

(The word *‘then’* which divides the resurrection of Christ from the resurrection of the saints at His coming, has already lasted almost two thousand years. There is **no** resurrection of the wicked in vs. 23).

Verse 24: **THEN** (Greek, *eita*, = *next in turn*, does **not** mean “at that time”).

3rd **The END will come.** The end of what? The end of the resurrection of course! He is giving us the sequence of the resurrection. Verse 23 says nothing about the resurrection of the wicked, because they will not be raised at the second coming of Christ. Their turn to be raised will be at a later time, and their resurrection is the **‘end’** of the resurrection.

When will the end of the resurrection take place?

Verse 24 says it will be when Christ hands the kingdom over to the Father.

When will that take place? It is *“after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.”*

How and when does He do that?

Verse 25,26: *“For He must reign until He has put all his enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”*

This putting of *“all His enemies under His feet”* **begins** at His second coming with the resurrection of the saints, and **ends** with the Great White Throne Judgment and casting of death into the lake of fire. That is the scene of Rev. 19:11 to end of chapter 20.

It was prophesied in Psalms 8:4-6, that God would put everything under the feet of Christ. This is quoted and explained in Hebrews 2:5-9. There we are told that *“the world to come”* is to be subjected to Christ. We are also informed, *“Yet at present we do not see everything subject to Him.”* It is only at His second coming when He comes to rule the nations with a rod of iron (Psa. 2:6-9; Rev. 19:15) that the *world to come* and all things, will be subject to Him.

Notes on verse 20. *“Those who have fallen asleep.”* The death of believers is often referred to as sleeping, or falling asleep. This expression is never used for the death of unbelievers. (See Matt 27:52; John 11:11; Acts 7:60, 13:36; 1Cor 11:30, 15:6,18,20,51; 1Thess 4:13,14,15; 5:10).

Christ is, therefore, the firstfruits of the resurrection of the faithful. We could speak of Christ as being the *“Firstfruits of the Resurrection of Life,”* or the *“Firstfruits of the Resurrection of the Just,”* But it would be blasphemy to call Him the *“Firstfruits of the Resurrection of Judgment,”* or the *“First-fruits of the Resurrection of the Wicked.”*

Notes on verse 23. It is only the faithful who are raised in this verse. *“Those who belong to Him”* will be raised *“When He comes.”* There are no unbelievers raised in verse 23, because their resurrection is separate and apart from the resurrection of the Christian.

In every instance where the resurrection is connected with the second coming of Christ, **only** the faithful are spoken of as being raised. The reverse is also true —the resurrection of the wicked is **never** connected with the second coming of Christ.

Notes on verse 24. *“Then the end will come.”* The word **then** is the Greek word *epeita*, it does **not** mean *at that time*, it means **next in turn**. It allows a space of time—either short or long before the next action.

The word **end** is the Greek word *telos* which is never used to speak of the end of a period of time. I quote from **Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.** *“Always of the end of some act or state, but not of the end of a period of time.”* (emphasis mine). As Paul is giving us the sequence of the resurrection, the word **end** can only refer to the last act of the resurrection — the raising of those not included among *“those who belong to Him”* of verse 23.

There has already been a long period of time separating the resurrection of *“Christ, the first fruits,”* from the resurrection of *“those who belong to Him.”* The word **then** which separates those two events has lasted almost 2,000 years.

There can, therefore, also be a period of time separating the resurrection of *“those who belong to Him”* and the *“end”* of the resurrection because the second then does **not** mean *“at that moment.”* It means *“next, after that.”* It therefore allows a period of time to intervene between the resurrection of *“those who belong to Him”* and the resurrection of the rest of the dead who constitute the *“end”* of the resurrection.

The text does not reveal how long the time gap is to be, but there must be a time gap, because, as we have already seen, believers are raised *“out from among the dead.”* The last book of the Bible reveals that there will be a period of 1000 years between the First Resurrection and the resurrection of the rest of the dead. See Revelation 20 beginning with the last part of verse 4:

“... They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.” (Rev. 20: 4- 6).

Concerning John 5:25,28,29: It is generally believed that Jesus is speaking of conversion in verse 25. Those who hear the gospel of Christ and believe shall live, they shall have eternal life. That *“time”* in which people can hear the Gospel has lasted now for almost 2 000 years. It is, therefore, wrong to insist that the *“time”* of verse 28 is an instantaneous moment at which *everybody* is raised at the same moment.

The instantaneous moment of 1Cor. 15:50-55 refers **only to the resurrection of the saved.** The lost are **not** included there. The *“imperishable”* go to heaven, not to hell .

*“If by any means I might arrive at the goal, namely, the **out-resurrection** from among those who are dead”*

(Philippians 3:11, Weust).

R.L. Garrett

<p style="text-align: center;">FIRST RESURRECTION</p> <p>R. of LIFE — John 5:29, KJV R. of the JUST — Acts 24:15 KJV, NIV R. of the RIGHTEOUS — Luke 14:14 R. FROM THE DEAD — Luke 20:36; R. FROM THE DEAD — Acts 4:2, KJV, NIV "the Out-Resurrection from among those who are dead." — Phil 3:11, Weust. Those Who Belong To Christ are Raised At His Coming — 1Thess 4:13-18; 1Cor 15:22-23.</p>	<p>SEPARATED BY ONE THOUSAND YEARS ✚ THE REIGN OF CHRIST Rev 20:4-6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SECOND RESURRECTION</p> <p>R. of Damnation — John 5:29, KJV R. of the Unjust — Acts 24:15, KJV R. of the Wicked — Acts 24:15, NIV RESURRECTION OF THOSE LEFT BEHIND AFTER the Resurrection which was "out from among the dead." The "END" of THE RESURRECTION 1Cor.15:24 R. at the GREAT WHITE THRONE Rev. 20:11-15</p>
<p>Think on it seriously. Which Resurrection are YOU aiming for?</p>		<p>Scripture quotations from the NIV unless otherwise indicated</p>