

The Second Resurrection

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In Daniel 12:2, the Bible says:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.



Because of this verse, many believe that there is only one general resurrection where all, good and evil, are resurrected to face God.

However, this is not exactly true. While Daniel provides a generalized overview of the resurrection, Jesus gives us a bit more insight in John 5:28-29, where He says:

²⁸Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

In John 5, Jesus draws a distinction between the “resurrection of life” and the “resurrection of damnation.” While some may claim that Jesus is merely referring to the two outcomes of one general resurrection mentioned in Daniel 12, Revelation 20:4-6 makes it clear that there are, in fact, two resurrections:

⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

In this passage, John mentions the first resurrection directly a couple of times but infers a second resurrection with the reference to the “second death.” Consequently, we need to take a closer look at the first resurrection in order to see and understand the second.

To put it simply, the first resurrection is the resurrection of the righteous dead. It is what Jesus referred to as the “resurrection of life.” Although the term, “first resurrection,” is used in Revelation 20, a

closer examination of the Scriptures reveal that John is actually referring to the end stage of the first resurrection here. That indicates that the first resurrection is an event that occurs in stages over a period of time rather than all at once. If so, can we find evidence in the Bible to support that idea?

Actually, yes. In order to see what is going on here, we need to look at the Feast of First Fruits, or *Yom HaBikkurim*, which is the third in a series of seven feasts mandated by God in Leviticus 23. It was observed in the spring on the first day following the weekly Sabbath after the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread, coinciding with the beginning of the barley harvest in Israel. Before the feast, the Sanhedrin or designated representatives would inspect the barley fields and tie a red cord around heads of barley that were beginning to ripen. The ripening heads of barley were gathered in a sheaf to be brought to the Temple for the priest to wave before the altar on the Feast of First Fruits as representative of the harvest to come. Following the offering of the first fruits, the rest of the harvest came in stages as the first or early ripening barley was reaped, followed by the main harvest, and then the final harvest or gleanings.

Now this is where it gets interesting because Jesus Christ's resurrection took place on the Feast of First Fruits. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul writes:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Did you catch that? Jesus, who is the Passover Lamb of the Feast of Passover and the Unleavened Bread of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is the First Fruits of the Feast of First Fruits. He is the "firstfruits of them that slept" in that He was the first to experience the first resurrection. The fact that Jesus is the first of the first fruits is borne out by two similar references. In Colossians 1:18 He is called the "firstborn from the dead" and in Revelation 1:5 He is identified as the "first begotten of the dead."

Hopefully, you are starting to see the parallels between the first resurrection and the barley harvest. Just as the barley harvest began with the first fruits and proceeded through stages, so does the first resurrection. The first resurrection commenced with the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ after His death on the cross and burial in a borrowed tomb. And, just as more than one head of barley ripened early, around the time of the Feast of First Fruits, the Bible indicates that the Old Testament Saints were resurrected at the same time.

In Matthew 27:52-53, we read:

⁵²And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Paul, later in Ephesians 4:8-10, appears to be referring to the same event when he writes about what Jesus did after his death, burial, and resurrection:

⁸Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. ⁹(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower

parts of the earth? ¹⁰He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Following the first fruits, we see the main part of the barley harvest take place. This is the time of the main harvest when the bulk of the grain is ripe. This aspect of the harvest is seen in the resurrection of the New Testament Saints at the time of the Rapture, as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 15:23:

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Following the main harvest, late ripening barley may be gleaned from the fields. This final part of the harvest reflects the resurrection of those who embrace Jesus Christ after the Rapture. After Jesus catches away the New Testament Saints, the Antichrist appears on the scene, and the seven years of the Tribulation begin. During this time the Bible indicates that numbers of people will embrace Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, many of whom, according to Revelation 6:9-11, will be killed for their faith:

⁹And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? ¹¹And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Then, In the following chapter, Revelation 7, we learn of 144,000 Jewish men who embrace Jesus as their Messiah along with “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues (verse 9)” who “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (verse 14)” during the Tribulation.

We will also see the fulfillment of Romans 11:25-27:

²⁵For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. ²⁶And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: ²⁷For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah spoke of this in Zechariah 12:10 and 13:1:

^{12:10}And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. ...^{13:1}In that day there shall be a fountain

opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

Many of these Tribulation Saints will be martyred during the Tribulation. Those killed will be resurrected at the return of Christ and represent the final harvest or gleanings of the first resurrection, which we looked at earlier in Revelation 20:4-6. This passage also tells us that following the first resurrection there is a period of one thousand years where Jesus Christ reigns over the earth. This period is called the Millennial Reign or Kingdom. It is not until after this thousand-year Kingdom that “the rest of the dead,” meaning the unsaved or unrighteous dead of all the ages, are resurrected.

This second resurrection is detailed for us in Revelation 20:11-15, where John says:

¹¹And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

As you can see, those resurrected in the second resurrection will stand before God in the Great White Judgement where the unrighteous dead will be judged according to their works. Every evil deed, every sinful act, every wicked thought, every vile or profane word will be revealed as the books are opened. No one will be guiltless as the depth of their sin, depravity, and lawlessness is made evident as they stand before a holy God. Then, after a final check to verify that their names are not written in the Book of Life, the unrighteous dead are cast into the Lake of Fire, which according to Revelation 20:14, is “the second death.” This is the “resurrection of damnation” spoken of by Jesus in John 5:28-29 where the unrighteous dead of all the ages are resurrected “to shame and everlasting contempt” as mentioned in Daniel 12:2.

In fact, in Revelation 21:8 John further clarifies the fate of those in the second resurrection who stand before God in the Great White Throne Judgement:

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Fortunately, you can avoid the fate of those who are a part of the second resurrection. Instead, you can be one of those who have their part in the first resurrection, on whom the second death has no power by confessing your sin and putting your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour because:

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:36)

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