

Resurrections

12 April 2020 PM – Revelation 20:5-6 – Resurrection – Scott Childs

Welcome: Welcome to our **Sunday evening** online church service. This evening we will begin with hymn, **Standing on the Promises**, p. 175. The words are also in the sermon notes online. Please sing along.

Prayer

Introduction: Being resurrection Sunday, this morning we examined the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This evening, I want us to broaden the topic and consider future resurrections. What does God tell us about the resurrection of believers and unbelievers? (**Read text**)

Transition: As we look at this subject, I want us to answer two important questions about the resurrections.

1. What Resurrections are Mentioned in Scripture?

Before we can answer that question, we must define the type of resurrection we have in view. Tonight, we are not talking about the restoration of physical life. Several people in the Bible were brought back to life. These include the widow of Zarephath's son; the Shunamite's son; the man tossed into Elisha's tomb; the widow of Nain's son; Jairus' daughter; Lazarus; Tabitha (Dorcas) or Eutychus. Each of these died again. The type of resurrection we are examining is the resurrection unto immortal everlasting life.

a. Jesus was the first

- 1) Jesus was the first to resurrect with an immortal body.
- 2) He is thus called the firstfruit of those who have died. (1 Corinthians 15:20) "*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*"

b. Others believers have or will resurrect

- 1) Saints resurrected in Jerusalem at the time Jesus resurrected (Mt 27:52-53). Since nothing more is said about them, we assume that they went to heaven with immortal bodies.
- 2) At the Rapture of the church, all dead Christians will be raised and given immortal bodies on their way to heaven (1Th 4:13-18; 1Co 15:51-53).
- 3) During the Tribulation, God's two witnesses will resurrect and return to heaven (Rev 11:11-12).

c) In **both** resurrections, mortals will receive immortal bodies. This will enable the first to enjoy eternal life in God's presence, and the second to live eternally in torments separated from God in the Lake of Fire. (2 Thessalonians 1:8) "*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*" (Matthew 25:41) "*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*"

4) The destiny of the unbeliever cannot possibly be annihilation as cults and sceptics claim.

a) The Greek word translated 45x *everlasting* or *eternal* describing *life* is the same word used for *everlasting fire*, *everlasting punishment*, *everlasting damnation*, and *eternal judgment*. If **life** is **eternal** then **torment** must be **eternal** as well.

b) We read in (Revelation 19:20) "*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*" One thousand years later, the devil is cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10) "*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*" They were still alive and in torment after 1,000 years.

Conclusion: (2 Peter 3:9) "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"

If you have trusted Christ, praise God, one day you will be resurrected to eternal, immortal life. **That is the Christian's blessed hope!** If you have **not** yet trusted Christ, do so today. For help, see "Resources" on our website or contact me (bottom of each web page).

Prayer

- 4) Just before the 1,000-year Millennium begins, Tribulation martyrs will resurrect. They will live and reign with Christ on earth for 1,000 years (Rev 20:4-6).
- 5) Old Testament saints will resurrect (Dan 12:2). The exact timing of this event is not clear.
- 6) What about the saints at the end of the Millennium? Of this Chafer/Walvoord in *Major Bible Themes*, p. 341 state, "Scripture in no passage clearly predicts the resurrection of the millennial saints ... The evidence remains that there will probably be saints who die in the Millennium and that they will be raised at the end of the millennial kingdom. This doctrine, however, is not built upon explicit Scripture, but is probably the best explanation."

2. To what does the First Resurrection Refer?

a. Distinctions mentioned in the Bible

- 1) Our text speaks of the "*first resurrection*". It then makes it clear that those partaking in the first resurrection are Christians. This passage specifically refers to the Tribulation saints who will die for their faith. The term "first resurrection" clearly implies that there will be a second resurrection as well.
- 2) Daniel spoke of two resurrections. (Daniel 12:2) "*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.*"
- 3) John wrote of two resurrections. (John 5:28) "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*"
- 4) Paul too spoke of two resurrections. (Acts 24:15) "*And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*"
- 5) From these passages, we clearly learn that God will resurrect both believers and unbelievers, the just and the unjust. The former will enjoy everlasting life. The later will

receive everlasting contempt or damnation.

b. Difficulties of the timing of resurrections

- 1) As we noted earlier, the Lord resurrected some believers in Jerusalem when Christ arose, Christians will resurrect at the Rapture when Christ takes us to heaven, Tribulation saints will resurrect after the Tribulation, and we assume other saints will resurrect after the Millennium. God will resurrect unbelievers just before the final judgment (Rev 20:11-15).
- 2) Why didn't God say that there would be seven resurrections? How can there be just two resurrections?

c. Definitions that clarify

- 1) John Walvoord in *Major Bible Prophecies*, p.379, gives an excellent rendering of the first resurrection where he concludes, "The doctrine of resurrection falls into place when one recognizes that there is a series of resurrections in Scripture, beginning with the resurrection of Christ and ending with the resurrection of the wicked."
- 2) Dwight Pentecost in *Things to Come*, p. 397, speaking of the first resurrection states, "It includes within it all who, at any time, are raised to eternal life. The destiny, not the time, determines to which part of the resurrection program any event is to be assigned."
- 3) In other words, the first and second resurrections identify the destiny of those resurrected, not the timing.
 - a) The first resurrection leads to eternal life. The second to eternal damnation.
 - b) The first includes all, who at any time, God resurrects to eternal life. The second includes all who God will raise to eternal destruction. (Revelation 20:12-13) "*And 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. And 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.*"