

Just One Resurrection?

How many resurrections does the Bible teach?

The general message of the churches is that a big battle is taking place for control of the minds of mankind. The churches are striving to teach the Bible and trying to save humankind, but Satan is busy leading them astray. If such a struggle be the true situation of what is going on today, Satan is the big winner. It appears he is gaining ground as the growing population outstrips the converts to churchianity. The ratio of “unsaved” continues to grow faster than those being “saved!” Is Satan really outwitting and outmaneuvering Yahweh today?

Lacking a proper understanding of Yahweh’s plan for redeeming mankind, the churches insist they must convert everyone now! This means even a last-ditch effort to save those about to die who have not publicly confessed they believe in the Bible’s promise and accept the Savior. If one has stated even on the deathbed that he or she accepts the salvation extended by “J-sus,” churchianity believes this person will be taken to heaven immediately upon death. Is this really true? Is everyone to accept the Savior before dying, and if he/she does not, is he/she doomed to eternal torment in the place called “hell,” as they say? Among those just starting to comprehend deeper truth, a nagging uncertainty arises. What is to happen to them?

The question concerns the many truths which were not understood nor practiced by parents, relatives or loved ones during their lifetime. What is going to happen to them? Their parents or uncle Joe and aunt Tess were good people. They lived exemplary lives, obediently keeping Yahweh's commandments and were pillars of good to all but were unaware that the Sabbath is the sign that we might know Him (Ezek. 20:12, 20). Nor did they know Yahweh’s Name which is the seal that we are His (Rev. 14:1). Neither did they observe the Feast days. What is going to happen to them? Are they forever lost because of their ignorance?

What about those living in the bush countries who have never so much as heard of a Bible, not to mention the Sabbaths or the Sacred Name of Yahweh or Yahshua? Are they cut off from salvation because of their ignorance? Just because no one ever made the effort to visit these bush people, are they forever committed to an eternity in flaming vengeance? Please see our booklet called, *Understanding Hellfire*.

More Than One Resurrection

Yahweh is not slack concerning His promises. He is just, and because of His tender mercies everyone will be given their opportunity for salvation. At the times of their ignorance Yahweh winks at (Acts 17:30). The Bible teaches more than one resurrection. The first is by far the preferred resurrection which will be those who have been faithful and obedient: *Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of Yahweh and of Messiah, and shall reign with him a thousand years*, Revelation 20:6. The **Authorized Version** (AV) 1769 edition, translated from the 1611 version, is used throughout, unless otherwise noted.

That wonderful first resurrection will be the saints who faithfully obey Yahweh and follow in the footsteps of the Savior. Right now, Yahweh is calling a people that once they understand the high calling, will cling to the truth and never let go.

They will persevere and stand fast until the end. These overcomers comprise the first resurrection. *But every man in his own order: Messiah the firstfruits; afterward they that are Messiah's at His coming*, 1 Corinthians 15:23.

Yahshua Himself promised an eventual resurrection of all the dead, and spoke of more than one resurrection. He called the first resurrection as one “of life” (John 5:29). He was referring to those who would be raised or changed from flesh to the spirit realm, no longer flesh and blood. They would come forth to the **resurrection of LIFE**, to a never-ending life; to immortality! Those in the first resurrection will be changed to spirit beings. *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 damnation (judgment) [for this comes a thousand years later],* John 5:28-29.

Paul, in his defense before Felix, stated there would be a resurrection of two groups. Notice the just are resurrected before the unjust. Those who strive to obey the commandments, statutes and judgments are preparing themselves to be a kingdom of priests under Yahshua, *And have hope toward Yahweh, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,* Acts 24:15.

The Psalmist emphasizes the same concept, calling those in the first resurrection “upright” (Ps. 20:8). The upright shall fulfill their role as teachers and guides (i.e., have dominion) in the kingdom.

Yahshua promised that in the first resurrection, those who were obedient would then be blessed. He also urged His hearers to be a generous, helpful, loving people doing good wherever possible, with no expectations of being repaid. Yahshua stated one would be given their reward or repaid at the first resurrection. *And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,* Luke 14:14.

Raised from [Among] the Dead

Paul was hopeful of being in that first resurrection. Writing to the Philippians he referred to resurrection, *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,* Philippians 3:11. Commenting on this verse, W. J. Erdman states “It is clear...that believers in [Messiah], by virtue of their union with Him, share with Him a resurrection peculiar as to kind and as to time. It is the resurrection from among the dead, the rest of the dead waiting until their call to judgment comes.

It is not a simultaneous raising of good and evil, nor a judgment of all in one brief period of time” *The Unseen World; A Concordance with Notes*, p. 40.

Yahshua emphasized the same concept when speaking of the righteous as being worthy of that first resurrection. *But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of Elohim, being the children of the resurrection,* Luke 20:35-36. Note that He states those in that first resurrection cannot die any more, but like the angels will be spirit and are immortal. Another resurrection takes place a thousand years later. These will be made flesh and bone to live on a physical earth and have children. It will be a renewed earth where everyone keeps Yahweh's law.

The Firstfruit Resurrection

In the Old Testament, Daniel acknowledged there would be more than one resurrection. *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,* Daniel 12:2. The first resurrection is the one we should strive for. It is the resurrection to life, to the spirit realm where one will never die. The first resurrection is of the saints who will be priests in the prophesied kingdom of Messiah, of which there shall be no end (Luke 1:33).

We are now tested for our sincerity. We may have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. But do not despair, we are given the promise we will not be alone and Yahweh will see us through. Strive to stay on that narrow way, do not fall by the wayside! We must always have the Kingdom goal before us and pray that our faith fails not.

In a sense we join those pioneers and ancient worthies who continued steadfast in the word of truth and are an encouragement and a lesson to us. *Begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures*, James 1:18.

It will be a great day when Yahshua returns and sets up His kingdom. However, much will occur before He puts down all rule and authority. The saints will be tested and tried as no one has before. Prophecy tells of the torture and martyrdom yet to take place (Heb.11:35-38). We have not seen anything yet! Read in the Bible's "Who's Who" in Hebrews chapter eleven of the ancient worthies who suffered and died for the truth: *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection*, Hebrews 11:35.

Many Are Called, Few Chosen

Yahweh is calling a few to be in the first resurrection: "Many be called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 20:16 and 22:14). The Greek *kletos* for "chosen" has the sense of invited, that is, invited or chosen to be in the first resurrection. Many are called, but only a few answer the call, and fewer are chosen. (Note John 6:70, 13:18, 15:16, 19; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2 in which, Yahshua states He has chosen His disciples).

Moreover, Yahshua affirmed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me... No man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him..." (John 14:6, 6:44).

Judgment of the Saints

Peter wrote that it will be the believers who will come under His judgment and are chastised through afflictions and persecutions. His loving correction is needed from time to time lest we fall into the ways of the wicked. Even the righteous scarcely will be saved: *For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of Elohim: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the good news of Yahweh? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?* (1 Peter 4:17-18)

The Savior will return to this earth to judge His people, "for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Messiah ... that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad" (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). He will bring His reward with Him to give to everyone his part of the inheritance: "...and My reward [is] with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

In his second letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul expressed his own expectation of receiving a good reward: *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which Yahweh, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing*, 2 Timothy 4:8.

The Wife Makes Herself Ready

Those in the first resurrection will have glorified spirit bodies just as the Savior now has. We will be like Him: *Beloved, now are we the sons of Yahweh, and it doth not yet appear what we*

shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is, 1 John 3:2.

Paul goes into detail clearly showing that those in the first resurrection shall be made spirit, no longer flesh and blood: *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Elohim; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory," 1 Corinthians 15:50-54.* Not only are we promised hope beyond the grave, but we will achieve immortality!

Paul reveals that we should be Israelites in every sense of the word. We should obey the laws given to Israel. Keep the days given to Israel. We should worship the Mighty One of Israel. We should call upon Yahweh's Name, which He Himself has revealed to us as He anciently revealed to Israel through Moses. When we accept the salvation given us through His Son, we should rejoice that we are placed into the Abrahamic tree of promise (Rom. 11:24). Determine now to measure up to the high calling we have in Messiah and be a part of the Israel of Yahweh (Gal. 6:16). May you be included in the phrase, "His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

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