

Loris First Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #47 – The Resurrections

Note: Most information based on pages 338-343 of the book “Major Bible Themes” by Lewis Sperry Chaffer.

Introduction

1. Much confusion has been introduced in prophetic interpretation by the unsupported theory that all men will be raised at the same time.
2. This simplistic prophetic program ignores the details given in the prophetic Scripture concerning the various resurrections.
 - a. Instead of one general resurrection, Scripture presents as many as seven resurrections, some of which are past, others separated by long periods of time such as resurrections which precede or follow the thousand-year reign of Christ.
 - b. The Scripture clearly teaches that all will be raised in their time and place and that human existence goes on forever.
3. The study of the doctrine of resurrection provides an important outline in the prophetic program related to this central truth of Christian faith and hope.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

1. First in order of the resurrections is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, presented in prophecy in the Old Testament (as in Psalms 16:9-10), presented historically in the four gospels, and dealt with theologically in the New Testament beginning with the Book of Acts.

Psalm 16:9-10 *“Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; My body also will rest secure, BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON ME TO THE GRAVE, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.”*

2. Unquestionably the resurrection of Christ is a doctrine of central importance upon which all Christian faith and hope rest, as Paul argues at length in 1 Corinthians 15.

1Corinthians 15:20-23 *“BUT CHRIST HAS INDEED BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: CHRIST, THE FIRSTFRUITS; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him.”*

3. In consideration of the facts supporting the conclusion that there is more than one resurrection, it is important to note that all must agree that the resurrection of Christ is a distinct event which has already occurred.

The Resurrection of the Saints in Jerusalem

1. At the time of the death and resurrection of Christ, a token resurrection also took place.

Matthew 27:50-53 *“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of MANY HOLY PEOPLE WHO HAD DIED WERE RAISED TO LIFE. They came out of the tombs, and AFTER JESUS’ RESURRECTION they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.”*

2. No explanation is anywhere given concerning this unusual event.
 - a. While the graves were opened at the time of the death of Christ, it appears that the saints themselves were not raised until Christ Himself was raised, for Scripture makes plain that Christ is the firstfruits, the first to be raised from the dead in the resurrection body which would never be destroyed.
 - b. By contrast, others restored to life, as in the case of Lazarus, undoubtedly died again and were reburied, but Christ arose never to return to the tomb.
3. The probable meaning of the resurrection of saints at the time of Christ’s resurrection, which apparently included a relatively small number of individuals, may be found in the levitical offering which it fulfilled.
 - a. The third of the feasts of Jehovah (see Leviticus 23:9-14) involves the ceremony in which, at the beginning of the harvest, the Israelites would bring a handful of the unthreshed grain to wave it before the Lord and to offer appropriate sacrifices in recognition of their expectation of the coming harvest.

Leviticus 23:9-14 *“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. HE IS TO WAVE THE SHEAF BEFORE THE LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it ON THE DAY AFTER THE SABBATH. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the Lord A LAMB a year old WITHOUT DEFECT, together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil—an offering made to the Lord by fire, a pleasing aroma—and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.”*

- b. The resurrection of the saints in Jerusalem at the time of the resurrection of Christ constituted the firstfruits and demonstrated that Christ was not alone in His resurrection, but that He was the forerunner of the great harvest to come, of which these saints were the token resurrection.
- 4. Although some have interpreted the references in Luke as merely a restoration to life like that of Lazarus, the fact that it occurred at the time of the resurrection of Christ would indicate a permanent resurrection, and undoubtedly these saints were caught up to heaven after they had fulfilled their mission.
- 5. In any event, it is another historic resurrection which confirms the concept that all resurrections cannot be compressed into one great future event.

The Resurrection of the Church

- 1. As previously brought out in the studies of the coming of Christ for His saints and the doctrine of the Rapture, the dead in Christ will be raised at the time of the return of Christ for His own, and together with living Christians, who will be translated, will meet the Lord in the air and go to heaven.

1Thessalonians 4:13-18 *“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus THOSE WHO HAVE FALLED ASLEEP IN HIM. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, **AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST.** After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”*

- 2. Both the resurrected saints and the translated saints will receive resurrection bodies which will allow them to be like Christ in reference to their bodies being immortal, incorruptible, and imperishable.

1John 3:2 *“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see Him as He is.”*

1Corinthians 15:51-53 *“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED IMPERISHABLE, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”*

- 3. The resurrection of the church is the first massive resurrection and is the forerunner of others to follow.

The Resurrection of the Old Testament Saints

1. Although the Old Testament constantly assumes the doctrine of resurrection, as stated in Job 19:25-26, it is not the subject of extensive prophecy.

Job 19:25-27 *“I know that MY REDEEMER LIVES, and that in the end HE WILL STAND UPON THE EARTH. And after my skin has been destroyed, YET IN MY FLESH I WILL SEE GOD; I myself will see Him with my own eyes—I, and not another.”*

2. Such references as are found, however, seem to place the resurrection of the Old Testament saints at the time of the second coming of Christ to the earth, rather than His coming for His saints at the time of the Rapture.
3. Daniel 12 describes the Great Tribulation in verse 1 and the resurrection in verse 2 as a subsequent and climactic event in relation to it; in this case it would be clear that the Old Testament saints are not raised at the Rapture but rather at the time of the establishment of the kingdom.

Daniel 12:1-2 *“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. BUT AT THAT TIME your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—WILL BE DELIVERED. MULTITUDES WHO SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH WILL AWAKE: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”*

- a. The same implication is found in the Job passage, where resurrection is connected with the time when the Redeemer will stand on the earth.

Job 19:25-27 *“I know that MY REDEEMER LIVES, and that IN THE END HE WILL STAND UPON THE EARTH. And after my skin has been destroyed, YET IN MY FLESH I WILL SEE GOD; I myself will see Him with my own eyes—I, and not another.”*

- b. In a similar way, the doctrine of resurrection in Isaiah 26:19-21, the awaking of dead bodies from the earth, is related to the time when Christ comes to judge the world.

Isaiah 26:19-21 *“But your dead will live; THEIR BODIES WILL RISE. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; THE EARTH WILL GIVE BIRTH TO HER DEAD. Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while UNTIL HIS WRATH HAS PASSED BY. See, the Lord is coming out of His dwelling TO PUNISH THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH FOR THEIR SINS. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer.”*

4. It is also significant that the particular phrase, “the dead in Christ,” is used to describe those raised at the Rapture.

1Thessalonians 4:16 *“For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST.”*

- a. The expression “in Christ” describes the present believer’s position in Christ due to baptism of the Spirit, which occurred for the first time in Acts 2 and is not used of Old Testament saints.
 - b. While interpreters of Scripture will continue to differ, and some will include the Old Testament saints with the Rapture, the burden of evidence seems to relate it to the second coming of Christ to the earth.
5. In any event, all the saints of the Old Testament as well as the church are raised before the Millennium.

The Resurrection of Tribulation Saints

1. Special mention is made of the resurrection of those who died as martyrs in the Tribulation as being raised in connection with the second coming of Christ to establish His kingdom.

Revelation 20:4 *“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those WHO HAD BEEN BEHEADED because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. THEY CAME TO LIFE and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”*

- a. This statement is explicit that the “martyred” dead of the Tribulation will be raised when Christ comes to establish His kingdom.
- b. This clearly means that the “non-martyred” dead will be raised at a different time; which John also wrote about in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 20:5 *“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”*

2. A natural question follows as to how this resurrection could be first when there have been other resurrections preceding it, such as the resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of the church, and the resurrection of the Old Testament saints.
 - a. The answer is that the term “the first resurrection” refers to all resurrections of the righteous even though they are widely separated in time.
 - b. They all are “first,” that is, before the final resurrection of the wicked.

- c. Accordingly, the term “first resurrection” applies to all the resurrections of the saints regardless of when they occur, including the resurrection of Christ Himself.

The Resurrection of the Millennial Saints

1. Scripture in no passage clearly predicts the resurrection of the millennial saints, and some have concluded that saints who enter the Millennium will never die.
 - a. Scripture, of course, is also silent about a rapture of living saints at the end of the millennial kingdom.
 - b. Both these items of prophecy are of no immediate concern to saints living today, and truth relating to it can be disclosed after Christ’s return to set up His kingdom.
2. The presumption is, however, that some saints who survive the tribulation time will be already advanced in age, and in any case it is doubtful whether anyone will survive for the entire thousand-year reign.
 - a. Even Adam and the early Christians did not live to attain the age of one thousand years.
 - b. Accordingly, it may be assumed that even those who are saved will die in the Millennium even though their life may be greatly prolonged.
 - c. The prophet Isaiah revealed that “death” will occur to humans that are living during the 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth.

Isaiah 65:20 *“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; HE WHO DIES AT A HUNDRED will be thought a mere youth; HE WHO FAILS TO REACH A HUNDRED will be considered accursed.”*

- 1) This statement, on the one hand, indicates that life will be greatly lengthened, that is, that at the age of 100 a person is still in his youth.
- 2) In the Millennium, believers who are old men will fill out their days, meaning that they will live to a ripe old age. On the other hand, this does not state that they will not die.
- 3) By contrast, a person dying at the age of 100 will do so because of sin, and death will come as a form of judgment.

3. 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.

NOTE: This doctrine, however, is not built upon explicit Scripture, but is probably the best explanation.

4. At the same time millennial saints are raised, undoubtedly living millennial saints will be raptured or taken from the earth without dying in the same fashion as the church is raptured.
5. This will be in preparation for the destruction of the present earth and heavens.

The Resurrection of the Wicked

1. The final resurrection is a resurrection apparently related only to those who are wicked.
2. According to Revelation 20:11-15, in connection with the judgment at the great white throne, all the dead not previously raised are resurrected and stand before God to be judged.

Revelation 20:11-15 *“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. AND I SAW THE DEAD, GREAT AND SMALL, STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD IN IT, and death and Hades GAVE UP THE DEAD THAT WERE IN THEM, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

- a. This is the final resurrection before the creation of the new heavens and the new earth.
 - b. The details of this judgment will be considered in a later chapter.
3. Taken as a whole, Scripture is plain that all men who die are destined to be raised, but the resurrections will not be the same for all that are raised.

Daniel 12:2 *“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth SHALL AWAKE, SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE AND SOME TO EVERLASTING CONTEMPT.”*

4. The resurrection of life is a glorious resurrection in which the bodies of believers will be patterned after the resurrection body of Christ.

1John 3:2 *“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see Him as He is.”*

5. The resurrection of damnation, however, is an awful spectacle.

- a. Men will be given bodies that will last forever, but bodies that are sinful and subject to pain and suffering.

Luke 16:22-24 *“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man ALSO DIED and was buried. IN HELL, WHERE HE WAS IN TORMENT, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and COOL MY TONGUE, BECAUSE I AM IN AGONY IN THIS FIRE.’”*

- b. Like the devil and his angels, they will exist forever in the lake of fire.

Matthew 25:41 *“Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, INTO THE ETERNAL FIRE PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS.’”*

6. This compelling fact has driven men to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth so as many as possible may be snatched as brands from this “lake of fire” and delivered from the wrath of God which is sure to come upon the ungodly.

Jude 22-23 *“Be merciful to those who doubt; SNATCH OTHERS FROM THE FIRE and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.”*

7. For the righteous, however, the doctrine of resurrection is the basis of our hope and, although the last generation of the church will be raptured without dying, for the great majority of the world a believer’s resurrection from the grave has been God’s method of transforming a believer’s body suited for earth to a body that is suited for His glorious presence.

1Corinthians 15:42-44, 50 *“SO IT WILL BE WITH THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY, IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY... I declare to you, brothers, THAT FLESH AND BLOOD CAN NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”*

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2. Answer the following Questions about “The Resurrections” as you read:

a. Introduction

- 1) True or False. Much confusion has occurred in prophetic interpretation by the “unsupported” theory that all men will be raised from the dead at the same time. (page 1, top)

- 2) Instead of “one” general resurrection, Scripture presents how many possible resurrections of the dead? (page 1, top)

- 3) What is the “first” in order of all the resurrections of the dead that is presented in Scripture? (page 1, bottom; Psalm 16:9-10; 1Corinthians 15:20-23)

b. The Resurrection of the Saints in Jerusalem

- 1) True or False. Before Jesus was raised from the dead, there is Scriptural proof that there was a “token” resurrection that took place first. (page 2, top-middle; Matthew 27:50-53)

- 2) The third feast of Jehovah (Leviticus 23:9-14) involved a ceremony in which the Israelites would wave “what” before the Lord which is the probable foreshadow of the resurrection of a small group of saints at the time of Christ’s resurrection? (page 2, bottom)

3) The resurrection of saints in Jerusalem at the time of the resurrection of Christ constituted the “firstfruits”

and demonstrated that Christ was not alone in His resurrection, but that He was “what”? (page 3, top)

c. The Resurrection of the Church

1) Another “resurrection” event is revealed in Scripture at the time that Christ comes for His saints before the seven year tribulation period begins. What is the name of this event in which “the dead in Christ” will rise first to meet the Lord “in the air”? (page 3, middle; 1Thessalonians 4:13-18)

2) What will both the resurrected and the translated saints’ bodies be like which will allow them to be “like Christ” when they “meet Him in the air”? (page 3, bottom; 1Cor 15:51-53; 1Jn 3:2; 1Thess 4:13-18)

3) What is the first “massive” resurrection of the dead revealed in Scripture? (page 3, bottom)

d. The Resurrection of the Old Testament Saints

1) What does Job say he will see with his “own eyes” even after he is dead (i.e. his “skin is destroyed”? (Job 19:25-27)

2) Scriptural references to the “resurrection” of Old Testament saints seem to place this event as occurring at what time? (page 4, top)

3) What event does Daniel 12:1-2 refer to as happening “before” the resurrection of Old Testament saints which makes it clear that they are not raised at the “rapture” of the church? (page 4, middle)

4) According to Isaiah 26:19-21, the “awaking” of Old Testament saints from the earth is related to the time when Christ has returned to the earth to do what? (page 4, bottom)

5) What is a phrase revealed in 1Thessalonians 4:16 referring to those who are raised from the dead at the rapture of the church which would seem to not apply to Old Testament saints? (page 5, top)

6) True or False. All the saints of the Old Testament as well as the church are raised “before” the Millennial Reign of Christ begins upon the earth. (page 5, top)

e. The Resurrection of Tribulation Saints

1) The resurrection of “whom” in connection with the second coming of Christ is given special mention in Revelation 20:4? (page 5, middle)

2) True or False. Both “saved” and “unsaved” people will die during the seven year Tribulation Period that will occur on this earth right before Christ returns. At Christ’s second coming to this earth, both groups are raised from the dead at the same time and judged according to “their works”. (page 5, bottom; Revelation 20:4-5, 11-15)

3) What does the term “first resurrection” mean as it is introduced in Revelation 20:5? (page 6, top)

f. The Resurrection of the Millennial Saints

1) True or False. Based on all the Scriptural revelation predicting the resurrection of the millennial saints who “die” during Christ’s reign on the earth, it is evident that even “saved” people will die during this time period. (page 6, top-middle; Isaiah 65:20)

2) According to Isaiah 65:20, a person who dies during the Millennial Reign of Christ “before” he reaches the age of 100 will be considered “what”?

3) What “probably” will happen to millennial saints who have NOT died by the end of Christ’s 1000 year reign just before the current earth and heaven is “destroyed”? (page 7, top)

g. The Resurrection of the Wicked

1) The final resurrection recorded in Scripture is apparently related only to “whom”?
(page 7, middle; Revelation 20:11-15)

2) True or False. Taken as a whole, Scripture is plain that all men who “die” are destined to be raised, but the resurrections will not be at the same for all that is raised.
(page 7, bottom; Daniel 12:1-2)

3) What type of bodies will the “unsaved” people get when they are raised from the dead?
(page 8, top; Luke 16:22-24; Matthew 25:41)

4) The resurrection of damnation is such an awful spectacle that this compelling fact alone should drive men to do “what” and “why”? (page 8, middle-bottom; Jude 22-23)

5) According to Jude 22-23, our “sharing the gospel” as Christ commands us to do in His Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) requires us to be “merciful” to those who “doubt” so that perhaps we can “snatch others” from “what”?

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