

Easter 2018

The Power of His Resurrection

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:10–11, NASB)

A. Definition.

1. There are two returns from the dead:
 - (1) Resuscitation means a person returns from the dead in a body of corruption and eventually dies again.
 - (2) Examples include Lazarus (John 11:1–45), Paul (2 Corinthians 12:1–5), and Elijah and Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–3).
2. Resurrection refers to the doctrine that all believers who die will rise again from the dead in a perfect human body with the imputation of eternal life.
3. This event occurs at the Rapture of the church that is discussed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12; et. al.
4. Resurrection is implied in all gospel related passages which indicate that eternal life results from one's faith alone in Christ alone.
5. Thus resurrection is a basic doctrine upon which new believers may trust in order to pursue truth and grow in grace.

Hebrews 6:1 Leaving the elementary teaching about Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.

6. Church Age believers who die before the Rapture receive an interim body until the exit resurrection occurs. The “exit resurrection” is noted by the hapax legomenon, **ἐξανάστασις** (*exanástasis*): “exit resurrection,” in:

Philippians 3:11 ... that I may attain to the resurrection [ἐξανάστασις (*exanástasis*)] from the dead.

7. The prefix, **ἐξ-** (*ex-*), has the basic meaning, “to rise up,” or “the state or condition of coming up from among the dead noted in 1 Thessalonians 4:16c, “and the dead in Christ will rise first.”



8. The “rising up” therefore refers to the first phase of the Rapture which in the Thessalonians passage (vv. 13–18) refers to those who have died before the Rapture. They literally exit the grave with a resurrection body and ascend into the heavens to join Christ.
9. Those who are alive at the Rapture are in the second phase that occurs a yoctosecond later, noted in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, “Then we who are alive and remain¹ will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”
10. The time factor for the “twinkling of an eye,” or the “exit resurrection” may be translated by the word *yoctosecond* because of Paul’s description of the event in:

1 Corinthians 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye [ῥιπή (*rhipé*)²: yoctosecond³] at the last trumpet [that ends the Church Age]; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

11. God does not waste time. The two phases of raptured believers join the Lord and His angelic hoards in the air and they exit out of sight in a matter of a yoctosecond.
12. We will have a resurrection body like Christ’s, but not all resurrection bodies will be similarly adorned. There are different categories of rewards that will be imputed to winners’ resurrection bodies but not to those of losers. One’s advance in the spiritual life or failure to do so determines the transfer of escrow blessings at the evaluation tribunal of Christ.
13. Resurrection is a New Testament doctrine although mentioned in the Tanakh, it does not occur historically until the Christocentric dispensations of the Incarnation (Jesus’) and the Church Age (believers’ at the Rapture, yet future).

B. Divine Sovereignty and Physical Death.

¹ This phrase indicates the imminency of the Rapture.

² “ῥιπή, the focus on sudden speed readily becomes the major semantic component in reference to a variety of objects: *rapid movement*, e.g. of the eyes; the casting of a glance takes an extremely short time (1 Corinthians 15:52)” (Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev and ed. Frederick William Danker [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000], 906).

³ “One septillionth of a second. From the International System of Units (SI) prefix *yocto-*, “denoting a factor of 10^{-24} ,” and second. One septillionth, or 10^{-24} , of a second looks like this: 0.000000000000000000000001.” (Simon Hertnon, *Endangered Words: A Collection of Rare Gems for Word Lovers* [New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009], 206; 207).



1. The control of a believer's life is predicated on his consistent advance in the plan of God through the study, retention, and application of Bible doctrine. However, no believer has any control over the time and manner of his physical death.
2. Those who intervene through suicide preempt the Lord's plan and as a result seriously damage their prospects at the evaluation tribunal.
3. No one has any clue whatsoever of the timing of the Rapture. It is considered imminent because there is no prophecy applicable to the Church Age except for its inauguration (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8) and that of its termination which is the Rapture.
4. Apart from being alive at the Rapture of the Church, all believers will experience physical death.
5. The manner of one's physical death is known only to God in His divine decree. The death of the believer is always God's victory. Believers' spiritual status is not an issue, for all go to heaven when they die.
6. It is at the evaluation tribunal that distinctions are made as indicated in:

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

v. 13 each man's work [**divine good produced under the filling of the Holy Spirit and from application of biblical guidance**] will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

v. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

v. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

7. Regardless of any believer's works, whether illustrated by items with intrinsic value or not, the death of a believer means that God's grace plan resulted in that person's victory over death.
8. The believer's death means he is absent from his physical body and is present with the Lord:

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. (NASB)



9. This transfer occurs at God's appointed time. A believer who understands that death rids him of his fallen body with the instant transfer of his soul and human spirit in an interim body before the Lord has no fear of death.
10. The way you die is inconsequential. You may be young or old, in peak health or disease ridden, copacetic or morose, yet the situation and timing of your physical death is in the divine decree. There is an appointed time when the transfer is destined to occur.
11. The type of death a person experiences or the situation that accompanies it has nothing to do with his spiritual life. When people die, or how they die, is God's choice for reasons associated with His wisdom.
12. Believers are never to speculate why or how a believer's death occurred. It is not subject to either our judging or speculation. To do so puts survivors in the dangerous area of imputing circumstances, decisions, or behaviors that may or may not have had anything to do with the timing.
13. In the dispensations of Gentiles and Israel, every believer died physically and their soul and spirit became absent from the body and transferred to the Paradise compartment of Sheol in interim body.
14. Moses had a dramatic death, climbing Mt. Pisgah to view the Promised Land the Lord promised to his descendants after which the Lord buried him:
Deuteronomy 34:6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-péor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.
15. This did not prevent the Dark Side from wanting to exploit the body of Moses as is noted in:
Jude 9 Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"
16. Lucifer was not allowed to access the body of Moses whose soul and spirit were transferred to the Paradise compartment of Sheol where he remained until the ascension of Christ.
17. Jesus Christ is the first fruits of our resurrection which means His resurrection and ascension must precede all others. While His body was three days and three nights in the tomb, and His spirit was in the care of the Father, and the Holy Spirit accompanied His soul to Paradise.
18. There He informed all believers who died prior to His ascension that He would escort them into heaven in interim bodies about forty-plus days hence.



19. Principle: God decides the time and manner of every person's death.
20. As Job said when he heard of the death of his children in a terrible storm: "The Lord gave; the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21b).

Romans 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

v. 39 nor height nor depth nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ps 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones [**saints**].

Philippians 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

v. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
(NASB)

C. The Resurrection of Christ: the Pattern for the First Resurrection.

1. The First Resurrection is pictured as a battalion pass-in-review, and therefore, is divided into four echelons, 1 Corinthians 15:23.
 - (1) **Alpha Company:** The resurrection of Christ at the end of Incarnation, for He is "the first fruits of those who are asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:20). See also, Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 2:31-34.
 - (2) **Bravo Company:** The resurrection of the royal family of God at the end of the Church Age. (John 14:1-3; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 John 3:1-2)
 - (3) **Charlie Company:** The resurrection of the Old Testament believers and tribulational martyrs at the end of the Tribulation after the Second Advent. (Daniel 12:13; Isaiah 26:19-21; Matthew 24:31; Revelation 20:4)
 - (4) **Delta Company:** The resurrection of the millennial saints at the end of the Millennium.
2. There are two general resurrections:



- (1) Believers who are among the First Resurrection whose bodies are eternal, permanent, and enhanced. (Daniel 12:2; John 5:24–29; 1 Corinthians 15:20–23, 52)
 - (2) For unbelievers only: Following the destruction of the universe (2 Peter 3:10–13) all unbelievers will be assembled in heaven at the Great White Throne in resurrection bodies, found guilty of pursuing salvation by means of works, and sentenced for eternity to the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 20:5–11). This is the called “second death” or the last judgment.
3. There are two destinations for the two resurrections.
- (1) The direction for the first resurrection: eternal life in heaven.
 - (2) The direction for the second resurrection is the lake of fire in:
Matthew 25:30 “... the outer darkness ... in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
4. The difference between the two is one’s attitude toward Christ.
- John 3:36** “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
- Principle:** As long as anyone is alive, he has the opportunity of entering into the first resurrection simply by believing in Christ by faith alone in Him alone.
5. Each one of the Christocentric dispensations terminates with resurrection indicating the preeminence of both.
- (1) The first Christocentric dispensation is the Incarnation of Christ. It terminates with the resurrection (Matthew 28:1–6, the ascension (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9), and session (Psalm 110:1 cf., Acts 2:34–35; Hebrews 12:2) of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) The second is Church Age believers. This dispensation terminates with the resurrection of the royal family of God.



- (3) The term often used to describe it is the Latin noun, *raptus*, “snatching or dragging away; carrying off.”⁴ The term in English is, “rapture,” and is employed because it characterizes the disappearance of people who are suddenly transported off the earth. (1 Corinthians 15:51–54; 1 Thessalonians 2:13–18).
6. While in the Old Testament dispensations of Gentiles and Israel there was an occasional miracle of resuscitation, but no resurrections occurred.
7. Until Jesus Christ died on the cross, there could be no resurrection. His resurrection is indicated as the first fruits of our resurrection noted in:

1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

v. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

v. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

v. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming [**the Rapture of the church**].

8. Physical death is the prerequisite for resurrection. There are two exceptions:
- (1) The Rapture generation of the Church Age.
 - (2) Millennial believers alive at the end of time and human history.

D. Physical Death as a Prerequisite for Resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:50–52.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

1. Paul says we cannot live in eternity in the body we now possess. It is a body of “flesh and blood,” which cannot function away from planet earth. Only a resurrection body is designed to do that as Jesus Christ has demonstrated.
- (1) Although the angelic population is able to function throughout the universe, the physical body of Homo sapiens is not capable of doing so.

Principle: For example, we cannot *colonize* Mars. We may send people there, but human life cannot be continuously sustained there through procreation.

⁴ Oxford Latin Desk Dictionary, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. “*raptus*.”



- (2) Perishable, mentioned in verse 50, refers to the human body which is subject to physical death.
- (3) Imperishable refers to the resurrection body, which is a durable, permanent body which can never die physically. It is designed for the eternal state where death doesn't even exist.

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

- (4) Eternal life can only exist permanently in an eternal resurrection body.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I teach you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed [**predictive future passive, indicative of the verb ἀλλάσσω (*allássō*)**],

NOTE: The predictive future tense refers to something that “will happen.” The passive voice means that every believer will be recipient of this change. The indicative mood certifies it as a fact.

The verb *allássō* refers to a thing that changes its form or nature and does so for the better. A resurrection body is infinitely better than a physical body.

2. The mystery doctrines apply to the Church Age believer only. The only prophecies that apply to this dispensation are its inception and its termination. The Lord prophesied its inception in Acts 1:8 and Paul gives details about its termination in 1 Thessalonians 2:13–18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51–54.
 - (1) In 1 Corinthians 15:51, “sleep” applies only to the physical body (not to the soul). The body “sleeps” because the soul and spirit are absent from that body in an interim body waiting for the resurrection.
 - (2) “Changed” means we receive a resurrection body in exchange for the former physical body.
 - (3) Paul is saying here that we will not all die physically. One generation will receive its resurrection body apart from physical death.

