

***The Resurrection of the Dead And Translation of Living Saints At Christ's Coming**

***The Resurrection Body**

***The Two Resurrections**

By Pastor Art Watkins

Concerning the resurrection of dead saints and the translation of living saints at the second coming of Christ Paul wrote: 1 Corinthians 15:50-55:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; 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. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

In these verses, the Lord gives us a full description of both the dead and living saints at his second coming:

The Time:

He will come at the last trumpet.

The Speed:

He will come in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

The Saints:

When he comes, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and the living saints will be changed and transformed without dying.

The Prophecies:

When this event takes place two prophecies in the Old Testament will come to pass according to verses 54-55. One is Isaiah 25:8-9 which says: ***He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away***

tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

The other prophecy is Hosea 13:14 which says: ***I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.***

These are the two prophecies Paul said will come to pass in verses 54-55 when Jesus comes again. When Paul quotes these two prophets this is how he interpreted them:

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. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Paul combines what Isaiah and Hosea wrote concerning the dead and living saints when Jesus comes again. When they wrote; *O grave where is thy victory?*, they wrote of the dead saints when Jesus comes again. They will be raised from the dead. This agrees with verse 52: ***The dead shall be raised incorruptible.*** It also agrees with 1 Thessalonians 4:16: ***For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:***

When they wrote, *O death, where is thy sting?*, they wrote of the living saints at Christ's coming. They will never experience the sting of death. They will be changed without dying. This agrees with verse 51: ***We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*** It also agrees with 1 Thessalonians 4:17: ***Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.***

The prophets Isaiah and Hosea prophesied that when Jesus comes again at the last trumpet, dead saints will be raised incorruptible and living saints will be changed without dying; they will never experience the sting of death.

The Word of the Lord

What Hosea and Isaiah wrote explains what Paul meant in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 about *the word of the Lord*. He said: ***For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.***

What Paul wrote about the dead saints being raised from the dead and the living saints changed without dying, he was referring to what Isaiah and Hosea the prophets wrote according to 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. The word of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 are the prophecies of Isaiah and Hosea made in the word of the Lord concerning the resurrection of dead saints and the translation of living saints at Christ's coming. This is why Paul calls this event the Hope of Israel in Acts 28:20. We share in their hope for in time past gentiles like us had no hope according to Ephesians 2:12.

The Mystery

In 1 Corinthians 15:51 he wrote: ***Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.***

This verse says there is something about Christ's coming that was a mystery in time past. In this chapter, he tells us exactly what it is. The mystery is: ***We shall not all sleep.*** The mystery is not Christ's coming. The mystery is not the resurrection of dead saints. The mystery concerns living saints when Christ comes again. They will not sleep or experience the sting of death. They will be changed without dying. When Christ comes again the dead saints will say; O grave, where is thy victory? and the living saints will say, O death where is thy sting?

In the days of Christ's earthly ministry and the days of the apostles, the general belief of most people was that by the time Christ came again all saints would be dead. But, Paul shows us a mystery about the resurrection; we shall not ALL sleep. Some will sleep, but not ALL. Some will be alive when he comes again and they will never die or experience the sting of death. But, even though it was a mystery it was one of those mysteries written down in the prophets. A mystery in the Bible is not a mystery or secret because it was not written down prior to its revelation. Many doctrines we believe today were written down in the prophets, but were hidden and concealed from the understanding of men until God chose the right time, place and man to reveal it to. And the mystery about living saints was one of them. It is found in Isaiah 25 and Hosea 13, but no one understood it until God revealed it to Paul in its fullness. Most people believed in the resurrection of dead saints, but they did not fully understand

the plight of living saints. Most believed all saints would be dead when Christ came and they would be raised, but God revealed to Paul there will be saints alive when Christ comes and they will never die. They will be changed and transformed without experiencing the sting of death. (I hope to be one of them.)

The Dead And Living Saints According To Jesus Christ

In the book of John, he records a conversation between Jesus and Martha and in his conversation he told her what Paul would later write in 1 Corinthians 15 concerning the living and dead saints at his coming. In John 11 is found the death of Lazarus. After he died, Martha his sister came to Christ and it says in verses 21-26:

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

The Lord told Martha that her brother would rise again. She answered by saying: ***I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*** This shows us what she knew about resurrection. She knew there would be a resurrection of the dead at the last day which all saints in that day believed. But, then the Lord told her something else about the resurrection in the last day; ***And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?***

This verse has given people a problem for years because we know many saints who have believed in Christ and yet they have died. But the Lord said, *whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* How do we explain this? The answer to the problem is by interpreting it by the context in which it appears. When the Lord said: *whosoever liveth and believeth in me*, he was speaking of the saints who will believe in him in the last day when the dead will be resurrected. He said, they shall never die. Martha understood the resurrection of the dead in the last day, but she did not answer his question about the living saints in the last day. Why? Because according to 1 Corinthians 15:51 it was a mystery to her as it was to most saints in that day. It is not until you read 1 Corinthians 15 that this mystery about living saints is fully revealed. But, even though it was mystery, Jesus

plainly said that in the last day, not only will dead saints be resurrected, but those who are alive and believe in him will never die. He said this years before God saved Paul, but Isaiah and Hosea the prophets wrote about it years before Christ said it, or before Paul wrote it.

The Resurrection Body

1 Corinthians 15

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

Someone rejected and others objected to the doctrine of resurrection because they could not understand *how* the dead are to rise and with *what kind of a body* they will have in resurrection. They said: Is it to be the same body? If so, how is this, since the resurrection bodies will not eat or drink, or beget children, as the natural bodies do? Also, these bodies will turn back to dust again. *How* then can they rise again? If it will be a different body, how can the personal identity of the person be preserved?

To the natural mind the resurrection of the dead seems impossible. If you look at it from the natural mind it seems impossible and even absurd. They say: How can dead bodies which have been buried in the earth for so many hundred, even thousands of years be raised? They have all been reduced to dust, and this dust has undergone a thousand forms. What about bodies that have been cremated or the bodies that have been destroyed and eaten and digested by wild animals? What about the bodies cast into the sea and eaten and digested by sharks and other fish. How could they possibly be raised again?

If their dust is scattered; how shall it be re-collected? Or if they were cremated or burned at the stake, how shall the particles which composed their bodies be recollected and re-organized? If they were devoured by wild animals and the birds of the air or the fishes of the sea, and if their flesh became the food of other animals to form their bodies; how can it be re-collected and re-organized? Or if their flesh became the food of plants and trees how can it be remolded into a human body?

And with what body do they come?

This is the second objection to resurrection. They asked: What will be the form, the shape, the size of the new body? Will it be composed of the same matter it is now composed? Will it have the same necessities, the same

needs as it now has? Are we to suppose that the aged will be raised as aged, and the young as young, and babies raised as babies and remain as such forever? Are we to suppose that the bodies will need support and nourishment?

All these and other questions have been asked in regard to the bodies at the resurrection. Paul answers these questions by saying that in one sense it will be the same body, but in another sense, a distinct body. It will be a body, but a spiritual body and not a natural body.

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

Paul uses an illustration from nature they were familiar with to show how foolish they were to reject the doctrine of resurrection. He reminds them of seed that is planted into the earth. When seed is planted into the earth it becomes corrupt, rots, decays and it dies, but then it is quickened and rises up in stalk, blade and then ear like wheat and corn.

Therefore, just because something dies and rots and becomes dust in the earth, does not mean it cannot be quickened and made alive. It happens all the time. If God is able to quicken a seed or grain that is decayed, rotten and dead and cause it to blossom and bear much fruit, then why should it seem incredible that God could quicken dead bodies? He quickens dead seeds and grains millions of times every day.

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

A farmer does not take a full grown stalk of wheat or a full grown stalk of corn and plant it in the earth. What is planted in the ground is the bare naked kernel of corn or wheat. In other words, what goes into the ground is not what comes up out of the ground. If you compare the bare kernel of corn planted in the earth with a full stock of corn it's hard to believe they are the same.

So is the resurrection of the dead. The body buried in the grave is not like the body that will come up out of grave. One is corruptible and other incorruptible.

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

God does not cause a stalk of wheat to grow from a kernel of corn or vice versa. If a kernel of corn is planted into the earth, it will come up as a stalk of corn, even though it will be more glorious than the bare kernel of grain

planted in the earth and it is God who does it and not nature. We see this happening all around us.

So it will be in the resurrection. Everyone will have his own proper body, a body which will belong to him and is suited to him. The lost will not rise with the body of the saved, or with a body adapted to heaven. The saints will not rise with a body like the lost adapted to hell. (See Rev. 20:11-15) There will be fitness in the new body to the character of him who is raised. The saints will have bodies suited to saints and to where they will spend eternity, in the kingdom of God.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

The point Paul makes in this verse is; as there are many kinds of flesh, the flesh of our resurrected body will be a different kind of flesh than the flesh of these mortal bodies. In the resurrection our corruptible bodies of flesh and blood must be changed into incorruptible bodies of flesh so we can inherit the kingdom of God according to verse 50. Christ's resurrection body was a body of flesh, but a different kind of flesh than he had before he died. (Luke 24:39) What is true of him will be true of us in the resurrection. God will give us bodies of flesh and bones, but they will be incorruptible bodies so we can live in and inherit the kingdom of God.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

There is a great variety of bodies. Look at the heavens, and see the splendor of the sun, the moon and the stars. And then look upon the earth and see the bodies here - the human body and bodies of animals and insects. This is two entire classes of bodies. Heavenly and earthly. We can see how they differ. Why should it sound strange to say there will be a difference between our bodies on earth from what they will be like in heaven? We see a vast difference between earthly and heavenly bodies every day. And why should it seem strange to say that there will be a difference between bodies adapted to live here on earth and bodies adapted to live in heaven?

The glory of the celestial is one

The splendor, beauty, dignity, magnificence of the heavenly bodies differs from those on earth. There is beauty in the terrestrial things of the earth: the human body; the plumage and feathers of birds; beautiful flowers, beautiful minerals and diamonds. But as beautiful as they are, they differ

from the heavenly bodies. The heavenly bodies are more glorious and beautiful. If so, why should it seem strange to say that there will be a difference between our body as it is adapted to its residence here on earth from what it will be when it is adapted to its residence in heaven?

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

The sun has one degree of splendor and the moon another and so also the stars. They differ from each other in magnitude, brightness and beauty. See a map of the heavens and note the magnitude numbers of the stars. The idea in this verse differs from that in verse 40. In verse 40 Paul says that there was a difference between the different classes of bodies; between those in heaven and those on earth. But in this verse he says that in the heavenly bodies themselves, there is a difference. They not only differ from those on earth, but they differ from each other. The sun is more splendid than the moon and one star more beautiful than another. The idea here is that the bodies of the saints in heaven will not only differ from those on earth, but that they shall differ among themselves, like the difference of the splendor of the sun, the moon, and the different stars. Even though all saints will be unlike what they were on earth, yet there may be a difference in their splendor and glory as God made a difference between the splendor and glory of the sun, moon and stars.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

This verse continues the idea of the previous verse; as there is a difference between the glory of the heavenly bodies, so is the resurrection of the dead. There is strong indication in these verses that there will be differences in the glory of the bodies of the saints in the resurrection, as there is difference in the glory of the sun, moon and stars. Read the following verses and see why: Daniel 12:2-3, Matthew 13:41-43, Romans 8:17-18

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

These physical bodies are natural bodies being made from the dust of the earth and they are subject to the same necessities and inconveniences as the bodies of animals. These natural bodies are kept alive by breath, food,

water and sleep. It is subject to disease, sickness, weakness and death. But the resurrection body will not require the things the natural body requires to sustain itself.

A *spiritual body* is not a spirit which does not have flesh and bones. Christ's resurrection body was a spiritual body, but it had flesh and bones. (Luke 24:39) It's spiritual in that it will not have the same necessities and needs as the natural body. It will be the opposite of the natural body. It will not require food, water and breath to keep it alive as the natural body. It will not be subject to sickness, disease and death as the natural body. It will not have an old nature of sin as the natural body. It will be an eternal body and not a temporal body as the natural body. It will not be created out of dust as the natural body but a special creation of God. (See 2 Corinthians 5:1-2)

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Christ is called the second Adam because he stands in contrast from the first Adam. As we receive our temporal life and bodies from the first Adam, we receive our immortal and undying bodies from the second Adam. As we receive our natural body from the first Adam, we receive our spiritual body from the second Adam. As we receive our mortal, corruptible body from the first Adam, we receive our immortal, incorruptible body from the second Adam.

Jesus is called a quickening spirit not because he is a spirit, for he has a flesh and bone body. He is called a quickening spirit because he is the one who quickens us from the dead. He is the one who raises the dead and the one who gives us the resurrection body. The first Adam was a living soul, but not a quickening spirit. The first Adam had no power to quicken anyone from the dead, but the last Adam does. See John 5:21-29

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

The order is this; The decaying, dying, weak and corruptible body comes first. The imperfect body is succeeded by the perfect; the impure body by the pure; and the vile and degraded body by the glorious.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Adam's origin was from the dust of the earth and to dust he returned and so will we. This body is not capable of living with God in heaven or in the coming kingdom of God. The first man had an earthly origin; he was made out of the earth with a body adapted to live on earth. See Genesis 2:7, 3:19 The second man is from heaven. He has a heavenly origin with a body adapted to live in heaven. The idea is that, for you to live with him in heaven or the kingdom of God you must have a body like his.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

If you want to know what Adam was like or looked like take a look at yourself. We are all his descendants; We all derive our nature from him. We are all frail, corruptible, and mortal and we are subject to corruption and decay like him.

If you want to know what you will be like and look like in the resurrection take a look at Christ for as Christ IS NOW in heaven, such will be all those in Christ when he comes again. He will change our vile bodies to be fashioned like unto his glorious body. See Philippians 3:20-21

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

The point he is making is this: The connection which is formed between the believer and Christ is as close as that which he had between him and Adam. And as that connection with Adam caused us to be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ assures us that we will like him be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal. And the next verse tells us why this is important.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption

Simply put; these flesh and blood bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God for they are corrupt and corruption shall not inherit incorruption. We must be changed and transformed. We must have a new and glorified body like Christ's to live with him in the kingdom of God. In resurrection we will receive such a body.

The Two Resurrections

In John 5:28-29 Jesus said: ***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.***

The Lord plainly said there will be two resurrections in the future. Not three or four, just two and he ought to know, for he is the one who will raise the dead. (John 5:21) He said there will be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of life is the resurrection of all saints from all ages at Christ's coming. The resurrection of damnation is the resurrection of the lost. What John does not mention is that there will be at least 1000 years between these two resurrections. Later in Revelation he reveals this fact to us.

What Jesus said about the two resurrections in the future is what the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament wrote. Daniel the prophet wrote about the same two resurrections that Christ preached. In Daniel 12:2 he said: ***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 prophesied of two resurrections in the future. According to him the saints will be raised to everlasting life and the lost to everlasting contempt. These are the same two resurrections found in John 5 and like Christ he also does mention the fact that there are at least 1000 years between these two resurrections.

Concerning the saints who will be raised to everlasting life he said in the next verse: ***And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*** He does not mention the plight of the lost after they are raised, but Isaiah the prophet does. In Isaiah 66:24 he wrote: ***And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.*** The Hebrew word translated abhorring in this verse is the same word for contempt in Daniel 12:2 and you can see why. It says, *their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched.*

Paul the apostle in the New Testament also preached and wrote about the same two resurrections. In Acts 24:14-15 he said: ***But this I confess unto***

thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: 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.

The resurrection of the just is the same as the resurrection of life in John 5 and the resurrection into everlasting life in Daniel 12:2.

The resurrection of the unjust is the same as the resurrection of damnation in John 5 and the resurrection of contempt in Daniel 12:2. This shows us the influence that Daniel and Jesus had on Paul when it came to the doctrine of resurrection. He preached the same two resurrections as they did.

The resurrection of the just and of everlasting life is the resurrection of all saints at Christ's coming. The resurrection of the unjust and damnation and contempt, is the resurrection of the lost after the resurrection of life. There are not two resurrections of the lost and there are not two resurrections of the saints. There is one resurrection of the saints and one resurrection of the lost. There is a first resurrection and not a first before the first. Moreover this first resurrection was prophesied by Isaiah and Hosea. See 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.

In Revelation 20 John also wrote of these same two resurrections, as he did in John, but here he gives us additional information about them. He had a vision and he saw the martyrs of Christ in the future and he wrote:

And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed 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.

The resurrection of life and the just is called the first resurrection here in Revelation and notice he said FIRST. Not the second or third, but the first and nothing comes before first. If you are first in the dinner line then no one is ahead of you in the dinner line. If your name is called out first then nobody's name is called out before yours. If this is the first resurrection, then there is no resurrection before this one. If there is a resurrection before this resurrection, then this resurrection is not first. This resurrection is called first because no resurrection precedes it.

The first resurrection is the resurrection of life and of the just. It's when all saints from all ages will be raised from the dead. The second resurrection is the resurrection of damnation and the unjust and of contempt. It's the resurrection of the lost from all ages 1000 years after the resurrection of the saints. John describes the second resurrection in verses 11-15 and when you read these verses, you see why it is called the resurrection of damnation and contempt.

And 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. 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. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

No matter where the lost dead are now, they will all be resurrected and brought to this judgment. God will judge their works to prove beyond any doubt that they are guilty of every sin his law outlaws and deserve to be punished in the lake of fire forever. This shows us that the lost dead do not cease to exist at death for it says, ***death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.***

If you are not saved and have no intention of getting saved and you think you will cease to exist when you die, you better think again and read these verses again.

The prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament and Jesus in the four gospels all said, there are two resurrections. They are future separated by 1000 years. The resurrection of all saints at Christ's coming and the resurrection of the lost 1000 years later.

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