



1362 US Highway 395 N Ste 102-200

Gardnerville, NV 89410

E-mail: bill@liferesource.org

Website: www.liferesource.org

Presentation Transcript
Life After Death - Part 2 - The First Resurrection
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Here we are, working on a series called *Life After Death*. The first one we called *Our True Hope*. And we started that one with Job's question, "If a man die, will he live again?" We went from there to 1 Thessalonians 4, where we read that God does not want us to be uninformed on this important question. So He has filled the Bible with information about what happens to us after death. All we have to do is read it and believe it. And that's a sticking point for some people. If we can't believe it, we're in a state of ignorance about God's plan and in a state of no hope because we don't believe we're going to live any longer – or we don't know for sure what's going to happen. Maybe this is one reason why God says in Psalms 14:1, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

Now, if you don't believe in God, or don't know, don't think I'm insulting you. Those aren't *my* words. They're God's. I was in this state myself at one time in my life, so I have no rocks to throw. I'm only trying to help more people understand what God is doing – not putting people down because they don't. I think the reason God says this is partially because of what David said. God tells us that we can look at the night sky and know that the universe didn't just happen – that we can see the glory of God there. The more scientific evidence and facts we accumulate about it, the more true that statement becomes. There isn't much that's random about the universe. The whole thing is based on laws. Laws don't just evolve. There are the laws of physics, the laws of mathematics, the laws of biology, etc. Laws, I said, are discovered. They don't evolve. People sometimes refer to the big bang. I think that's probably a feasible explanation for how God did it, but where did the underlying necessities come from for that? If there was no matter, where did it come from? Time and space are a part of the physical universe that, we believe, has been created. At some point, the reasoning takes outside the universe to a place we can't know about by ourselves. *What* and *where* become terms that don't fit any longer. They're too small. That's where God shows up, explaining it to us in the book that He's written for us. There is a way to know, without having died, to find out what happens when we die.

So we learned last time that people do *not* go to heaven when they die, but they go to sleep to be resurrected later. We didn't talk about this too much last time, but I wanted to mention it to you.

It's not possible to fit those two ideas together – resurrection and going to heaven. You can't have it both ways. You can't have both going to heaven and a resurrection. If we go to heaven, there's no need for a resurrection. And, if we're not resurrected after we die, then there's no need to think that we go up to heaven upon death.

We also saw, in some places in the Bible, it tells us that people who are resurrected will be born with not physical, but spirit bodies, and then, in other places, it speaks of those resurrected to physical life. And I suggested to the listeners or readers that they might like to do a Bible search on the term *first resurrection*, which is a term you can find your Bible.

In this presentation, then – the second in the series – titled *The First Resurrection*, we're going past the fact that when we die we sleep and are then resurrected. Now we're going to understand how God will use resurrection in His plan to grant salvation to all – not just those who are committed Christians, but every human being that has ever and is now and ever will live. To do that, we're going to start with the term *the first resurrection*.

So let's look at it. We can find it in Revelation 20, verse 6 – actually, it's in verse 5 as well, but let's focus on what it says in verse 6.

Revelation 20:6 – *Blessed and holy is the one.... Who is holy? Well, God is, right? Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection, over such, the second death has no power. So some of those people that were resurrected – well all of them that were resurrected in the first resurrection – died – so that's their first death – and they're not going to die again. So what does that mean? Well, that means that they're immortal. Continuing on: ...over such, the second death has no power; but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

This is one of two verses that you would have found, if you'd done this search on the term first resurrection. Let's notice something else about this resurrection – another quality. In the ESV, Hebrews 11:35, we can read:

Hebrews 11:35 – *Women received back their dead by resurrection. That did happen in some cases, didn't it? Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. They remained faithful to God, no matter what kind of pressure was put on them, and some of them lost their lives for it. ...that they might rise again to a better life. That word life there, that term means resurrection. That's the way it's translated in the King James Bible. Context shows us that there is a difference between the first and what follows. Those early Christians were willing to give up their lives to attain that better resurrection, which is the first one.*

So why is the first one better? And why is there more than one? Well, let's keep going. Let's ask the question, "Who's going to come up in this resurrection?" Well, we've already talked about

that somewhat, but let's nail it down even more. We read some of these scriptures in the first part of the series, but we're going to go over some of them again. There's more to be seen there. Let's go to 1 Thessalonians 4:15.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 – *For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord – so there are going to be Christians alive when Christ returns – will not precede those who have fallen asleep – Christian believers who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. All those people who were faithful to God – all the way from righteous Abel, all the way to Christ's return, who died, they're going to rise first. And then we, who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

It sounds like Paul believed that he was going to one of those. You know, I think it's probably true that Christians in every age believed that they were going to be alive when Christ returned – at least, in the beginning. So this scripture details who will be resurrected in the first resurrection. The dead in Christ... Now, I mentioned righteous Abel. He was a son of Adam, so he lived way before Christ was born. So how could he be a Christian? Well, Christ was his Creator. Right? We can read that in John 1:1 – that the Word created everything. So that's how he can be a believer and a follower of Christ. All who have followed God in a committed way before Christ – before He came to this earth – are considered believers – all the patriarchs – David, Moses, Abel, and many other people who are unnamed in the Bible, who followed God faithfully – not just those who have committed to God in the past and have died, but also those who are alive at Christ's coming. The dead believers are resurrected and those believers who are alive will be changed. That's the first resurrection.

There's some language here we want to clear up for you, too. There's a term used in Revelation 11 – the term *saints*. It's actually used through the Bible. But what is a saint? Well, let's look at some of the things it says about them. In Revelation 11:15, it says:

Revelation 11:15 – *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet – now that's the signal that Christ is coming back. That's the call of alarm – the announcement – and there were loud voices in heaven, saying – Here it comes! – “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever!” That's what's going to happen. Get used to it. And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God – they'd been waiting so long and so many questions were being answered right then. And they said, “We give thanks to You, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you haven taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but Your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for the rewarding of Your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear Your name, both small and great – so that's what a saint is – somebody who fears His name, and it doesn't matter whether they're famous or rich or*

intelligent. It's all about fearing God's name – following Him, believing Him, doing what He says – *and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.*” You can look in Deuteronomy 33, if you want to see it in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 33:3 – *Yes, He loved His people. All His holy ones are in His hand. So they followed in Your steps, receiving direction from You.* I think the term *holy one* could be translated *saint*.

So a saint is a person, from the very beginning of humanity to the very end of it, who follows God and receives direction from Him – who's committed, in other words. And we just read that those saints of every age will be resurrected at the seventh trump.

What will they be like? Let's read 1 Corinthians 15. For your information, when I was going to Bible school doing my degree in theology, I was taught that 1 Corinthians 15 could be called The Resurrection Chapter. So here's what Paul said.

1 Corinthians 15:35 – *But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”* Well, that's exactly the question we're answering. You see, the Bible really does explain itself. It's explaining God's plan. It's filling in a lot of the details. *“How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”* So he says in 1 Corinthians 15:42:

V-42-44 – *So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It's sown in dishonor, it's raised in glory. It's sown in weakness, it's raised in power. It's sown a natural body, it's raised a spiritual body. If there's a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* Did you know that your body is just a shadow of something that's coming later for you? It's true. The temple of the Holy Spirit, it's called. We're supposed to take care of that.

Okay, so much for the spiritual body. That's what we're going to be resurrected like and when it's going to happen – when we're going to be...well, we covered that a little bit, but let's read some more detail in 1 Corinthians 15:50.

V-50-53 – *I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed* – so like I said earlier, some people are going to be dead, and when they're resurrected, they're not like they were before, for they're changed. And some people who alive when Christ returns are going to change without having to die. I guess, in a way, it's dying, because they're losing their physical bodies. Maybe it's going to be like that. It doesn't say much about it. *We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.* Have you ever listened to *The Messiah*. Now that's one of the verse that Handel picked up on. The trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. *For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body*

must put on immortality. So, if a person comes up in the first resurrection, they will be immortal and perfect, like Jesus was. Think about that for a minute.

Let's look in Romans 8:29. This is talking about God the Father.

Romans 8:29 – *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.* Well, if a person has been called, and they answer the call, they justified – their past sins are washed away by the blood of Christ – and remains yet to be glorified. But that's a part of the process. If you are a saint, and you have made a commitment to God, and you're trying to follow Him with all your might, even though you make mistakes, you repent, and you're forgiven, and then you're clean. And, if you stay in that cycle, and you keep trying, you're going to be justified when you ask, and eventually, at the resurrection, you will be glorified.

Now, what does that mean? Well, what was Jesus like once He was resurrected? Well, it says that He had the same kind of body that the saints will have. He was an immortal being after He was resurrected. Remember, He told Mary not to touch Him because He had not yet ascended to His Father. Well, no human is going to ascend to the Father, because they wouldn't live through the experience.

Notice, also...let me ask you a fool's question. When a dog has pups, what kind of creatures are they? Are they cats? No! They're dogs. Everybody knows that. Same for cats. Same for humans. But what about God? When He has children, what are they? They're not angels, because Paul tells us that, when a person is glorified and has been resurrected, they are *over* the angels. So we're not going to be angels. You can get that out of your mind, if you had that. That's a *false* teaching. We don't want to believe stuff just because we hear other people say it. We want to read in the Bible

Here's another one to think about on this same topic – what will we be like? John 10:33 – Jesus is talking to the Jews:

John 10:33-34 – *And the Jews answered Him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone You, but for blasphemy, because You, being a man, make yourself God."* They thought that was blasphemous. And, in some cases, it certainly would be. So verse 34: *Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said you are gods?'"* It is! That is in the Old Testament. God said to the people, "You are gods." The Jewish leader said it was blasphemy to say He was God's Son.

So what is blasphemy? Well, the Bible tells us that to slander the Holy Spirit – God's power – is blasphemy. To attribute to the devil what God has done is blasphemy. To think that God is weak

and can't do what He says He's going to do is blasphemy. Blasphemy is slandering the Holy Spirit. Now, legally, it's only slander if it's not true. Some people will say, like the Pharisees of old, that it's blasphemy to believe we will be god as God is God. But, if we can read the Bible, and understand what this is all about – God being our Father and we're His children and Christ is our older Brother – if we can read the Bible and understand that, then it's blasphemy *not* to believe it. God *is* going to do that. To think that God can't reproduce Himself is to believe in a God who is too small.

There was a man – Phillips Translation – years ago – Bible translation written by a man named Phillips, he also wrote a book by that title, *Your God Is Too Small*. It's a great book. God is procreating. He's building a family. And that's why He tells us He's our Father and Jesus is our Brother and we're His children. And when God has children, they're like Him. David said he was going to love it when he awakes with God's likeness. So he didn't think he was going to go to heaven. Paul said at that time – when he's resurrected – he is going to know God like God knows him. Well, how could he do that unless He was God? Jesus said He was God's Son. And we know what that meant. And, when we're born into God's Kingdom at the resurrection with a spirit body, we will be immortal and perfect like Jesus. We'll be a part of that Family.

We understand that we will not be over God or Jesus, but like Jesus is submissive to the Father, so will we be. Jesus isn't mortal, and He's God, and He's still submissive to the Father. So there's a place for that for us, too.

All right. There's one more thing we need to look at and see. And that's *when* this is all going to happen. Paul said that the first resurrection is the better one. And part of that is because it's a resurrection to God-life, but that's not the only reason. You know, the Kingdom of God was once on earth. During the time of Adam, God ruled. But Adam and Eve gave it away to the devil, and he has ruled here ever since. For thousands of years, God the Father, and Jesus the Son, and all the saints of every age have longed for the day when Jesus would come and take it back. And, if you're resurrected to be with God, you will be resurrected on the very day that Jesus' foot touches down on the Mount of Olives. Let's read about that a little bit.

A picture is laid out for us of end-time events by John. He was the disciple, by the way, that Jesus was fond of in the book of Revelation. It's a ghastly picture of a world that has come to the end of its rope. Just before Christ's return, a huge battle is forming up between two superpowers. We're told that, if God does not step in, it will mean death for everyone on earth – not that everyone will be in the battle and be killed in it, but the effects of the battle, with the weapons unleashed, will ruin the planet, making it incapable of sustaining human life. Prior to this battle, there are cataclysmic events that will take place in the environment – a toxic sea, I suspect maybe nerve agents unleashed – although, I can't prove that, but some of the symptoms they talk about, with people gnawing their tongues with pain – earthquakes, famine, and all sorts of

plagues are going to come on people. There is also a power struggle going on between the two globalist powers who seek to enslave the entire world that are going to meet for this battle.

Revelation tells us that one of these powers has a leader that is called in the Bible the *beast*, and he is allied with a religious leader called the *false prophet*. And between the two of them, this unholy union will intimidate people with incredible military and monetary power, along with religious deception, producing miracles that deceive many people. This false prophet will actually sit in the temple of God, stop the temple sacrifices, and claim he *is* God. Jesus called this the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24. And everybody, apparently, is going to be bewitched by this amalgam of power and religious double-talk. At that time, God is going to send two emissaries, who like Elijah the prophet of old, will call down fire from heaven and have the power to do many other amazing miracles from God as proof that the beast and the false prophet are, in fact, not of God at all. And these two men that God brings to Jerusalem are going to prophesy for 3 ½ years before the beast kills them. And Revelation tells us that, at that time, in the sight of everyone – after they’ve been lying dead in the streets – they will be resurrected and drawn up to God. And then, something even more unexpected and fearsome happens. In Revelation 11, we read that:

Revelation 11:15 – *the seventh angel blew his trumpet. So we know what’s going to happen now, don’t we? And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.”* So that’s when those who are alive are going to be changed and those who have been dead in Christ are going to rise. That is the first resurrection. It is a resurrection to spirit God-life. And that’s going to happen to all of God’s committed followers through the ages.

Now, if a person can find a way to believe God, the scriptures we showed, which are just a scant few of all we could have read, explain that there is a resurrection to life for all humans that have committed to God across all time. But how could that happen if a person does not have an immortal soul? I mean, how’s that going to work? And what about all the people who have talked to and channeled dead loved ones, they think? Doesn’t that prove that there’s an immortal soul? And what about all the billions – billions – of people who will still be in the grave after Christ’s return, because some of them never even heard Christ’s name? Or, some of them were totally contrary to Christ. Are they all going to be in hell? Would it be fair for God to do that to people that never even had a chance to understand Him? Well, hang in there with me. We will get to it all before we’re done. And once we do, you will have seen out of your own Bible what God tells about what He’s doing down here with us. No need to be uninformed or ignorant about this most important question of all: If a man die, will he live again?

Please check out our Website, liferesource.org. If you go there and search on the term *Feast of Trumpets*, you will find a lot more about this resurrection.

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Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.