

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

When Jesus returns the first thing He will do is to raise His saints -- those who have died and are now sleeping in their graves; *then* He will *change* His disciples who are alive at that time. This is clearly taught to us in 1 Thessalonians. 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 fallen 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."* This wonderful scene is also referred to in Revelation 20:6: *"Blessed and holy are those who have part in the **first** resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years."*

Since this is a "first" resurrection, we should expect to read about one to follow. The whole world of mankind will one day experience this *second* resurrection. Jesus referred to this in John 5:28-29: *"...the hour is coming in which **all** who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment."* Contrary to what many denominations teach, this will bring a time upon earth when *all* mankind will have an opportunity to learn righteousness. We read of this in Isaiah 26:9: *"For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."*

At that time Satan, who has blinded the minds of men (1 Corinthians 4:4), will not any longer be allowed to do so. Revelation 20:1-2 tells us, *"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years."*

This is not a fable! The Prophets of the Old Testament spoke of it. Jesus and His Apostles preached it. In fact, Jesus said in John 3:16-17, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* There will be a time, in the near future, when God will establish His Kingdom on this earth in which we live, and set up Jesus as its King and Ruler. We can be very confident that God's Word is sure, and it will accomplish what it promises. Isaiah 55:11 says, *"So is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."* Yes, God has a definite purpose for which Jesus died on Calvary's Cross to redeem *all* mankind from the penalty of sin and death that came upon us when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:5-6, *"For there is **one God** and **one mediator** between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**, who gave himself as a ransom for **all men** -- the testimony to be given in its proper time."* Yes, Jesus' death and resurrection leads to the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that *"in you and your seed (Jesus) all mankind will be blessed"* (Genesis 12:1-2). The following beautifully describes what will be accomplished in this glorious coming Kingdom.

A Preview Of The Finished Kingdom

“Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay -- not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth’s society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have all their tears wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete.”

If you would like to explore this subject more deeply, please send your request for the free booklet *“God’s Plan of the Ages”* to:

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