

# Death & Resurrection

**The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. (1 Samuel 2:6)**

**Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead. (Isaiah 26:19)**

**"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:25–29)**

## Immortality Of Spirit & Soul

Man is a tripart being comprised of a spirit, soul, and body. When the Bible discusses “death,” it is referring to the death of the physical body. The spirit and soul of a person never cease to exist. The two Bible passages that give us the most insight into this are Saul and the medium of En-dor and the true story of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Let us look at each.

Samuel was Saul’s spiritual advisor until the time that Saul disobeyed God’s command to destroy

Amalek (1 Samuel 15). Years later, after Samuel's death, God withheld guidance for fighting the Philistines from Saul so he resorted to breaking his own law in an attempt to have a medium call Samuel up for him from Sheol, the place of the dead (more on that later).

So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you." The woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?" But Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up Samuel for me." When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul." The king said to her, "Do not be afraid, What do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth." He said to her, "What is his appearance?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.

First, it must be stated that a person cannot communicate with the dead and, more importantly, the word of God plainly warns us not to (Deuteronomy 18:10–12). Anyone who thinks they are communicating with the dead is being deceived by a demon. A medium is a demon-possessed person that talks to demons who may provide him or her with information as part of a wider deception. This is why Saul said to her, "divine for me *by a spirit*." The medium of En-dor could not really bring up the spirit of a person from Sheol, demons would just use her to deceive people. *This is why she was shocked when she actually saw Samuel.* What happened here is that God overrode the fake process of the medium and actually brought the spirit of Samuel up from Sheol to speak with Saul. This notion is reaffirmed by the fact that Samuel also prophesied to Saul what was going to happen the next day. Let us continue with the account.

Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul answered, “I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do.” And Samuel said, “Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy? The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me, for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. Moreover, the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. The LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.” (1 Samuel 28:11–19)

This account reveals several things about life after death. The spirit and soul are eternal. (Hereafter I will refer to these as “spirit-soul” to emphasize the unifying connection.) After the death of the physical body the spirit-soul continues to live on. *When the Bible speaks about death it is always only in reference to the physical body.* After the death of the physical body, the spirit-soul of a man retains a physical appearance that makes him identifiable and he can still talk, wear clothing, and so on. Man essentially becomes something like a spirit being at this point which is why the medium said, “I see a god coming up out of the earth.” This is all prior to the resurrection of the body. Samuel still looked like “an old man,” because he had not yet received his new glorified body.

Sheol is the Old Testament term for the abode of the dead. Prior to the death of Jesus Christ, the spirit-souls of all people went to Sheol after the death of their physical bodies. The true story of Lazarus and the rich man provides more insight on this:

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’” (Luke 16:19–31)

Hades is the Greek term for the same place as the Hebrew Sheol which only appears in the Old Testament. In other words, the Old Testament Sheol is called Hades in the New Testament. This is confirmed by the fact that Acts 2:27 quotes Psalm 16:10 and replaces Sheol with Hades.

This true story makes it clear that Sheol or Hades had two sections to it—one for the righteous dead which was referred to as Abraham’s Bosom and one for the unrighteous dead which is called Hades proper. It gets confusing in the New Testament because the term Hades is used for the entirety of Sheol but also exclusively for the section for the unrighteous. The unbelievers side of Sheol or Hades is also called (1) Abaddon, a Hebrew word that means “destruction,” (2) *the pit*, and (3) Hell. Abaddon and the pit are primarily Old Testament terms while hell only appears in the New Testament. Hell is an English word not derived from any particular Hebrew or Greek word that appears in our English Bibles as a translation for the Greek *hades* or *geena* (“Gehenna”). In the Old Testament, Abaddon and the pit are often referenced alongside Sheol since they refer to the unrighteous section of Sheol. For example, Proverbs 15:11 declares: “Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD; how much more the

hearts of the children of man!” Concerning **Satan**, Isaiah declared: “But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit” (14:15). After God healed him from sickness, King Hezekiah wrote:

Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back. For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness. (Isaiah 38:17–18)

Those who go to the pit of *destruction* do not hope for God’s faithfulness because they are unrighteous. Hezekiah wrote that he was delivered from the pit because God cast all his sins behind His back. Hezekiah was a righteous king, he “did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God” (2 Chronicles 31:20b).

It is interesting that the righteous section of Sheol or Hades was referred to by the Jews as Abraham’s Bosom. The Jewish religious leaders taught a false view that they would all be saved because they were descendants of Abraham. John the baptist exposed this when he warned them:

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. **And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’** for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matthew 3:8–10)

Even though he was a descendant of Abraham, the rich man was “thrown into the fire” of Hades or Hell, the unrighteous section of Sheol or Hades, because he lacked the faith which leads to repentance and the bearing of good fruit. The rich man walked by Lazarus everyday right outside his house and did not help him because he was never converted and did not have the love of God in his heart.

The name “Abraham’s Bosom” for the righteous side of Sheol or Hades painted the picture of a place where Abraham, the father of faith, welcomed all those—Gentiles and Jews—who were righteous by faith. The Apostle Paul explained this thoroughly:

That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ... No unbelief made him [Abraham] waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. (Romans 4:16–17, 20–25)

The rich man called him “Father Abraham,” but he was not really his father, even though he was his descendant, because he lacked faith and lived his entire life for himself and not for God.

Abraham explained to the rich man in Hell that a “great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.” In other words, Abraham revealed that once a person dies (death of the body) his spirit-soul faces a permanent outcome. This points to the reality that our current life in the body is a proving ground for all eternity.

## Jesus Opened Heaven

As Jesus hung on the cross between two convicted criminals, we were given a preview of three spirit-souls closing in on Sheol. Here is the account:

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:39–43)

The second criminal feared God, was repentant for his sin, and had faith in Christ. Jesus told him that

he was going to Paradise with Him which at the time was Abraham's Bosom. The term "Paradise" only appears three times in the Bible, all in the New Testament, and is essentially a universal term for wherever the spirit-souls of the righteous are at a particular point in time.

When Jesus died on the cross, His spirit-soul descended into Abraham's Bosom—the righteous section of Sheol or Hades—where He remained for three days and three nights. This was something that He had prophesied to the scribes and Pharisees:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:39b–40)

Quoting Psalm 68, Paul provided further explanation:

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Ephesians 4:7–10)

Jesus descended into Abraham's Bosom where he stayed for three days and three nights after which He ascended with His "host of captives," the righteous saints, when God raised Him from the dead. Jesus went to heaven where He is now seated at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19, Acts 7:55) and the righteous dead went there with Him. Now, after the resurrection of Christ, the spirit-souls of the righteous dead all go directly to heaven. Abraham's Bosom now apparently lies empty.

The fact that the spirit-souls of believers now go directly to heaven was made clear by Paul in his second letter to the Corinthian church:

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed [death of the body], **we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.** For in this tent [physical body] we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:1–9; emphasis mine)

Believers are sojourners on the earth. Heaven with the Lord is now our real home. “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20).

## Resurrection

*Resurrection in the Bible always and only refers to the resurrection of the physical body since the spirit-soul is eternal.* It is important to remember that God did not design man to ever physically die. The framework of “life” that the world currently holds is a deception. The whole concept of even having to consider a physical death of the body is the result of sin. God created man with a body meant for eternal life. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ not only now enables our spirit to be regenerated and our soul to be filled with His Spirit, but our bodies will also one day be restored. Moreover, as Jesus made perfectly clear, the bodies of all people will eventually be resurrected:



"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for **an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.** (John 5:25–29)

God will eventually override death for all people—believers and unbelievers—by resurrecting our physical bodies to enter our eternal outcomes.

There are three different still-future resurrections that we need to understand: (1) the resurrection of the church saints at the rapture, (2) the resurrection of the non-church saints at the second coming of Christ (those who died before Jesus ascended to God and those who will be saved and die during the tribulation, and (3) the resurrection of all unbelievers at the end of Jesus' millennial kingdom. Let us look at each in turn.

## The Church Saints

A future resurrection is implied in the many New Testament references to believers having only fallen asleep when their physical bodies died. For example, Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church:

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or **asleep** we might live with him. (1 Thessalonians 5:9–10)

The Bible's core passage teaching about the resurrection of the body comes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church. He wrote:

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but

there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differs from star in glory.

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

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 all be changed, in a moment, in the 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. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:35–57)

Christ’s victory over sin will eventually restore eternal life to the body.

Not all believers will sleep or experience a physical death of their bodies. This is because Jesus is going

to rapture or take His church up to heaven at the last trumpet before the tribulation. At the same time those believers who have died will have their bodies resurrected from the dead and we will all receive imperishable, immortal, spiritual bodies. We will then return with Jesus after the tribulation and live and reign with Him in His kingdom in our glorified bodies.

## The Church — A Distinct Entity

How do we know that the resurrection spelled out here in 1 Corinthians only concerns the church saints and happens at the rapture, before the tribulation period and not during or after the tribulation period? We know this because of the “word from the Lord” that Paul wrote to the church at Thessaloniki:

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 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, will not precede those 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. 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. Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18)

Paul explained that the “dead *in Christ* will rise first” and the living believers “will be caught up together with them” at the rapture. I emphasized “in Christ” to make it clear that this resurrection is specific to only the church saints—those believers who the Holy Spirit has and will baptize into the name of Jesus Christ. As we shall see, believers before and after the church age of history will be resurrected later. When it comes to the history of how God deals with believers the church is handled as a distinct entity. Note that Paul wrote, “Behold! I tell you a mystery” with respect to the rapture of the church. “Mystery,” the Greek word *mystērion*, which means hidden or secret thing, was a term used by Paul in his letters to describe how the church was hidden in the Old Testament:

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, **you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations** as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (Ephesians 3:1–6)

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this **mystery**, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**. (Romans 11:25)

In the prophetic timetable of God the church is a distinct entity hidden between two periods of time where God’s primary vehicle to impact the world is Israel. It is the rapture of the church, including the resurrection of the bodies of the church saints, that will close out the church age.

## The Resurrection of Life

At some point after the rapture of the church, possibly immediately, the seven year tribulation period will begin. An angel revealing aspects of the tribulation to Daniel told him the following:

“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people [Israel]. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. **And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” (Daniel 12:1–3)

The angel’s description provides insight into the fact that both righteous and unrighteous people will be bodily resurrected which, as referenced earlier, is what Jesus foretold.

In his masterpiece, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Messianic Jewish believer, dissected the Hebrew in these verses in Daniel further:

A more literal rendering of this passage would read as follows: “And [at that time] **many** [of your people] shall awake or be separated **out from among** the sleepers in the earth’s dust. These who awake shall be unto life everlasting, but **those** [the rest of the sleepers who do not awake at this time] shall be unto shame and contempt everlasting.”

Dr. Fruchtenbaum’s translation here is helpful for understanding that (1) there will be two different resurrections outside of the church era that will not happen at the same time. Fruchtenbaum’s translation is supported by what the apostle John saw coming:

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. **They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!** 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. (Revelation 20:4–6)

After the return of Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:11–21), those who will become believers during the tribulation and die during that period will be resurrected and enter the millennial kingdom of Christ. John focuses on these martyrs, seemingly to affirm the justice of God toward them, but a wholistic study of the Scriptures as we are undertaking here points to the fact that *almost* all other believers outside of the church era will also be resurrected at this time. These tribulation saints will be joined by the Old Testament saints who will also be resurrected at that time to enter the millennial kingdom.

John called this the “first resurrection,” although this is a chronological classification and not really the actual *first* resurrection because at this time the deceased church saints will already have been resurrected. This comes back to the church being a distinct separate entity in God’s prophetic timeline. The first resurrection is essentially for all believers throughout history outside of the church era. Jesus

called this “the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14). Because they are all resurrected to enter the kingdom of Christ, the “second death” has no power over them. As we will see, the second resurrection is for judgement.

## The Resurrection Of Judgement

God has promised throughout the Bible that *all* will appear before the judgment seat of Christ and every knee will bow to Him:

“Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’” (Isaiah 45:22–23)

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9–11)

This promise will be fulfilled in what is referred to as the “Great White Throne Judgement” which John saw in the revelation that God gave him of the coming day of the Lord:

Then I saw a great white throne and him [Jesus Christ] who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11–15)

This final resurrection is that of *all* dead unbelievers. The Holy Spirit included, “the sea gave up the dead,” as if to make it clear that no one will escape the judgement seat of Christ. The unrighteous side

of Sheol or Hades (Hell) gets emptied out at this point. Because they will be resurrected from the dead, unbelievers will also suffer bodily in the lake of fire.

*Righteous* believers will only be judged to determine who will be rewarded for what they did, by faith, in service to the Lord (or rather, what the Lord did through them as they were empowered by His Spirit). However, these unbelievers will be judged “according to what they had done” instead of what Jesus Christ did for them. They trusted in themselves and lacked *saving* faith in Christ. Paul wrote about this here:

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, **in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith**—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:8–11)

We *do not* want to be judged by God based on our works. We want to be judged by God based on the works of Jesus Christ. This is not just for salvation either. As Christians serving our King, we will only be rewarded for the works that the Spirit of Christ has done through us. Consider what Paul wrote:

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, **for the Day will disclose it**, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:10–15)

Paul noted that “the Day will disclose it.” This is the “Day of the Lord” which is an Old Testament term for the period of time when Jesus Christ will return, judge the world, and establish His kingdom as

previewed for us in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In the Revelation John noted, “I was in the Spirit **on the Lord’s day** ... ” (1:10a). The return of Jesus will reveal the intentions of the hearts of all.

## A Curious Event

I would be remiss in my analysis of resurrection if I did not mention the curious event that transpired in Jerusalem after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. An anomaly in the classifications of bodily resurrections which I have outlined in this teaching, *all* which are still yet to come, is the following record:

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And **many** bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. (Matthew 27:51–53)

Matthew specified that “many” of the Old Testament saints who had been buried in Jerusalem were bodily resurrected *after* Jesus was resurrected. His specification makes it clear that all the Old Testament saints were not resurrected at this point, only some in Jerusalem. In other words, this was a localized, one-off resurrection event related to the resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem and not a broad global resurrection of a certain age or classification of believers at this time.

This unique resurrection event in Jerusalem apparently transpired because of the proximity of the bodies of these saints to the resurrection power of God that was unleashed when Jesus was raised from the dead. Moreover, God used this miraculous event as a witness to the those in Jerusalem of what had just happened and a first fruits confirmation of what He had told Martha:

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.” (John 11:25–26a)

This event leads me to conclude that there must already be some believers in heaven with resurrected bodies.



# Summary

To conclude, I will summarize the key points from this Essentials teaching:

- The spirit & soul of an individual is immortal. It never “dies.”
- When the Bible speaks of “death,” it is only referring to the physical death of the body. Resurrection is thus when the physical body is brought back to life.
- Sheol (Old Testament) and Hades (New Testament) are the same place. Sheol or Hades has two locations within it—one for the spirit-souls of the righteous dead that the Jews called “Abraham’s Bosom” and one for the spirit-souls of the unrighteous also called Hades and commonly referred to today as Hell.
- When Jesus was resurrected he took the spirit-souls of all believers in Abraham’s Bosom to heaven. The spirit-souls of all believers now go directly to heaven when they die.
- There are three primary resurrections: (1) the resurrection of the deceased church saints at the rapture, (2) the resurrection of life prior to the establishment of Jesus’ millennial kingdom which will include almost all of the believers who were not part of the church, and (3) the resurrection of judgement at the end of the millennial kingdom which will include all unbelievers.

I hope you found this teaching instructive. Please comment and leave your questions below.