

IF YOU DIE . . . WILL YOU LIVE AGAIN?

You are going to be surprised by the NEW FACTS you will learn about life after death in this article — facts you may NEVER have been taught, but information your Bible has ALWAYS contained.

by Dr. C. Paul Meredith

IS DEATH the end of everything? Just what is the chance of YOUR coming back to life, of living again?

ANYONE in great physical danger fights for his life! He exerts almost *superhuman* energy to save himself — and he does not give up until all strength is gone!

WHY this fear of DEATH?

The answer is obvious — death is the *opposite of life!* It snuffs out this very *mortal life* that you would defend with all your strength!

All people down through the ages have had to die, but this is not a satisfying answer when you yourself have to face it.

Whether or not you realize it, your *only* hope of living again is by a *resurrection!* But what is your ASSURANCE, if any, of such an occurrence? *Where* can you look for such assurance?

You can look to the Bible! It will give you the answers to those *important life and death* questions that no human mind can give! It is the revealed WORD of GOD.

The *preachers* today DO NOT GRASP THE FACT that the WHOLE BIBLE deals with ONE SUBJECT ONLY: THE FORMATION — through a resurrection — OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD by GOD the FATHER!

It can also be called the *Family of God*. It will be a family of SPIRIT BEINGS with God the Father at the head; Christ will be the eldest Son, and those who are finally saved at the resurrection will be the other sons.

THE RESURRECTION TO IMMORTALITY represents THE VITAL TRANSITION FROM THIS MORTAL BODY — BY BEING BORN AGAIN — INTO THE SPIRIT FORM AND ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD! “Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). As we proceed to study the various RESURRECTIONS, let us keep in mind how the MASTER MIND, God the Father, reveals HIS PLAN to us. *It will build our FAITH in the resurrection!* We will KNOW that we are in a world that is running according to a PRECONCEIVED, DEFINITE PLAN!

Resurrection of Jesus Christ Foretold in Advance

From the time Adam and Eve sinned, God *foretold* the coming of ONE who would again give man an opportunity to immortal life, and foretold of His descent through Abraham. HE who was to give US the *opportunity* of a RESURRECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE — CHRIST!

David foretold Jesus’ resurrection about 1000 years B.C. (Psalm 16:10), and Isaiah about 700 years B.C. (Isaiah 7:14 and 26:19). Christ Himself foretold that His *resurrection* would occur the THIRD DAY — 72 hours (not in 1½ days — 36 hours, as the *churches today teach*) and IT HAPPENED IN 72 HOURS! (Read our free booklet, *The Resurrection Was NOT on Sunday*.)

The resurrection of Christ was an entirely *different* type of event than has ever happened on this earth before or since. The *pagans had taught about immortal souls* and that people returned to

life after death in various other forms (i.e. reincarnations), but they could never produce PROOF. Christ, before His crucifixion, *raised many of the dead* back to life to fill out their *natural life span* (Matt. 9:24, 25; Matt. 10:8; Luke 7:15; John 11:44).

These *resurrections were all, only* for a short return, to a PHYSICAL LIFE and were of no great importance except to the ones involved!

But on Christ’s resurrection depends the RESURRECTION and ETERNAL LIFE of ALL OF US; for I Cor. 15:17, 18 says, “If Christ be not raised, *your faith is vain*; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*.” Doomed to eternal death!

Do you understand it? Had Christ been an *ordinary* mortal man without the Spirit of God, He would have SINNED sometime during His life and *could not* have paid OUR DEBT for sin! “The wages of sin is DEATH” (Rom. 6:23) — ETERNAL DEATH! His sin would have taken *His own* life and God would not have *resurrected* Him! He would have had no life left to PAY FOR OUR SINS — WE COULD NOT EXPECT TO BE RESURRECTED TO ETERNAL LIFE!

Suppose Christ had died but *set no time* as to when He would be resurrected and suppose further, that after a year or so His body *disappeared*. YOU AND I WOULD HAVE NO EVIDENCE WHATEVER THAT WE WOULD EVER BE RESURRECTED and BECOME IMMORTAL! His body might only have been stolen.

But Christ *has given us* the evidence!

When the Scribes and Pharisees asked Christ for a SIGN (of His being the Messiah — or Saviour) He said He would be THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS in the grave (Matt. 12:40) — NOT one and a half days as the churches today believe, but THREE! By this teaching of a day and a half, the devil is trying to take our very evidence of a hope for salvation away from us.

Christ arose the *third* day! He was crucified late Wednesday afternoon and arose late Sabbath (Saturday) afternoon.

The thing that confuses people is that they mistake the Sabbath that is mentioned as drawing on in Luke 23:54 for a WEEKLY SABBATH, whereas it was actually an ANNUAL SABBATH — which happened to fall on *Thursday* in A.D. 31, the year of the crucifixion.

After this came their WEEKLY SABBATH on Saturday. Between these days the women bought and prepared spices (Mark 16:1).

God has seen to it that these two IMPORTANT WORLD EVENTS — the crucifixion and the resurrection — have been well witnessed! Christ's healing and miracles had attracted a large following. People were interested in Him wherever He went. On the day of His crucifixion a large multitude was present (Matt. 27:24).

Mary (Jesus' mother) and the other two Marys and John were present also (John 19:25, 26).

As Christ said he would rise the third day the chief priests and Pharisees took great precautions to see that His body did not disappear by being stolen by the disciples, so a guard was set and a great stone was rolled over the sepulcher entrance (Matt. 27:63-66).

Christ's body did disappear though! Christ was resurrected as a divine spirit being! He had been RESURRECTED from the dead THE THIRD DAY and Mary Magdalene (John 20:1, 14), the disciples (John 20:19), and after that about 500 people *saw him at one time!* (I Cor. 15:6.) Fifty days later in Jerusalem a large number gathered from all over the world to observe Pentecost and await the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

From this point, the news "of the resurrection was spread by the apostles" (Acts 4:2), and their converts. Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, says that *the resurrection* is one of the best authenticated facts in all history. Also, Gibbon says "...it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer [resurrection and eternal life], should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion..."

THE WORLD WAS CONVINCED OF THIS RESURRECTION TO A DIFFERENT TYPE OF BEING — to immortal life in the family of God!

Resurrection Is Necessary

You have probably been *taught* that you have been born with an immortal soul which goes immediately to heaven, purgatory or hell when you die. This is NOT TRUE! YOUR BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH IT! "The first man is of the earth, earthy" (I Cor. 15:47).

The SAME word "NEPHESH" which means *fleshy life* — whether of animal or man — was translated "*creature*" in Gen. 1:24, where it was associated with animals, and "soul" in Gen. 2:7, where the Bible speaks of *man* becoming a LIVING SOUL!

In other words, *both animal and man* are composed of ONE THING — the SAME THING — MORTAL FLESH, and, as born into this world, one has no more an immortal soul inside him than the other! (Ecc. 3:19, 20.)

No one would contend that any beasts are *in purgatory* or *eternal torment*.

Another passage, that shows that ANYONE THAT DIES GOES TO HIS GRAVE AND IS THERE NOW, is Acts 2:29 which shows that David is *now* in his sepulcher, "...*David*... is both dead and *buried*, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day."

Now notice this: if people are in heaven, purgatory or hell where most preachers today say they are, then they are STILL ALIVE; THEREFORE THEY COULD NOT BE RESURRECTED — for the very word "RESURRECTION" itself implies that those resurrected were DEAD!

THEREFORE A RESURRECTION IS NEC-

ESSARY if a person who once died is *brought to life again!* How sadly and without reason have the Bible teachings been distorted! WE COULD NOT ATTAIN IMMORTALITY and GOD WOULD BE DEFEATED IN HIS MAIN PURPOSE OF CREATING MAN — the CREATION OF A SPIRIT BEING! BUT WE DO HAVE THIS HOPE OF A RESURRECTION!

Bible Teaches Resurrection for All

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, *both* the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). Paul said this when he was being tried before Felix. Do you grasp the *meaning* of this? EVERYONE is going to be resurrected!

"The hour is coming, in 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 judgment" (John 5:28, 29). Daniel 12:2 gives the same thought — A RESURRECTION FOR EVERYONE.

NOW YOU ARE GOING TO BE IN FOR A SURPRISE! Undoubtedly you are going to learn of *one* resurrection that you *never heard of before* and possibly *two* or *three!* Yet they are in YOUR BIBLE. The things that are in the BIBLE are just *not being taught today!*

The First Resurrection

The FIRST resurrection of man TO IMMORTALITY that has *ever* occurred in this world (except Christ's), will occur when Christ comes at the LAST TRUMP. I Thessalonians 4:16-17 describes this: "For the Eternal Himself shall descend from heaven with a [great] shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump [LAST TRUMP] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Eternal in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Eternal." But they will go *immediately* to Jerusalem to start their 1000-year rule. Read Zechariah 14.

This is the resurrection *just ahead now!* I Cor. 15:51 through 56 describes this same resurrection and Rev. 11:15 describes the blowing (sounding) of

the "last trump" which ushers this period in. Read these verses!

The JUST DEAD will be raised *by the power of God* exerted through Jesus Christ (John 6:44). These are they WHO HAVE REPENTED (i.e. turned from their former ways), been baptized, received the GIFT of the HOLY SPIRIT and were overcomers to the end (Acts 2:38 and Romans 8:11).

NOTE! This HOLY SPIRIT is a GIFT that is given ONLY TO THOSE WHO QUALIFY TO RECEIVE IT!

Of this resurrection, Rev. 20:6 says, "Blessed is he that hath part in the FIRST RESURRECTION: on such the SECOND DEATH [i.e. the eternal death] hath no power . . ."

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . ." (Rev. 20:4). This is the resurrection to the SPIRIT FORM (I Cor. 15:44) just described. Now notice verse 5, ". . . but the REST OF THE DEAD LIVED NOT AGAIN UNTIL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED" — all *but* the GOOD DEAD stay dead through the 1000 years! There *are* no resurrections in the millennium of those long dead!

A *thousand-year* period follows Christ's second coming and during this time Christ RULES THIS EARTH (Isaiah 11; Jeremiah 31:1-18; Ezekiel 36). This one thousand years is the time represented by the *Feast of Tabernacles* (Lev. 23:34 and Exodus 23:16) in GOD'S HOLY DAYS. It is a time when God REALLY BEGINS IN EARNEST TO SAVE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE END OF THIS AGE AND INTO THE WORLD TOMORROW!

Another Resurrection

At the *end* of the thousand years, during which time Christ has been ruling the world and the earth has been full of the knowledge of the Eternal (a condition that *certainly has not been present* up to now), there will be *another* resurrection!

Matthew 13:24 through 30 and verses 36 through 42 (the parable of the tares), describe this HARVEST! Note verse 30: "Let both grow together until the harvest."

Also note verse 39 ". . . the *harvest* is the end of the world" — or consumma-

tion of the *age* — the one thousand-year age and the time of RESURRECTION *which will follow*. Matthew 25:31 to 34 describes the salvation of the world during the millennium and this RESURRECTION also!

Now you are REALLY GOING TO GET A SURPRISE! Yet it is only WHAT YOUR OWN BIBLE TELLS YOU *if* YOU WILL READ IT!

Most of you have been told by the churches ever since you could remember that if anyone is NOT SAVED IN THE PRESENT LIFE then he is ETERNALLY LOST!

But what about all those MILLIONS AND MILLIONS of PEOPLE back there who were BORN BEFORE CHRIST'S TIME WHO NEVER HAD THE CHANCE OF SALVATION because CHRIST had not yet come to MAKE IT AVAILABLE?

REMEMBER that the BIBLE says "If *the Spirit* [the Holy Spirit] of Him [God the Father] that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ . . . shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *His Spirit* [the Holy Spirit] that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). BUT — THE HOLY SPIRIT from the Father WAS NOT AVAILABLE to people on the earth *until after* Christ ascended!

Christ *had* to ascend unto heaven *first*! Christ said in John 16:7 "For if I go not away the Comforter [the Holy Spirit] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." The *Holy Spirit* FIRST CAME TO THIS EARTH TO BE AVAILABLE TO ALL MEN *fifty-four days after* Christ was crucified! It came on the day of PENTECOST (Acts 2:1-4).

These MILLIONS are NOT LOST FOREVER! They NEVER were called to be saved! God is a JUST GOD and He has PROVIDED A WAY whereby they CAN BE SAVED!

Also, what about the great number since Christ's day who have shown very little interest in religion and have died? ARE THEY LOST FOREVER? No, because *they have never had a chance* of salvation. *They are blinded*. God is NOT trying to save many *now*. He has BLINDED them! Read Romans 11:5, 7, 8, 25. Also Acts 7:42, Isaiah 28:13, Matthew 13:10, 11, 13.

NO SECOND CHANCE!

Now notice WHEN GOD IS GOING TO GIVE THESE PEOPLE THEIR FIRST CHANCE for SALVATION! *Note this carefully!* You have probably NEVER heard it explained before in its TRUE meaning!

"Ye shall know I am the Eternal, when I have opened your graves . . . and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land . . ." (Ezekiel 37:13-14). This is speaking of *ancient Israel* — a people who had been scattered among the nations almost 150 years before this was written!

WHEN does this take place? It cannot take place before Christ returns to the earth at His second coming because that will bring about the FIRST RESURRECTION. It WILL NOT take place then but only after *one thousand years have elapsed* from the time of the *first resurrection*, because as we have already seen only the GOOD will be RESURRECTED then! (Also Rev. 20:5.)

Therefore THERE ARE ONLY TWO CLASSES THIS RESURRECTION CAN POSSIBLY REFER TO — the *evil* dead who have knowingly rejected the truth or the dead who *never had a chance!* The *evil dead* are those who DELIBERATELY DECIDED they did not want to be *ruled by God*. There is NO REASON to give them a *second chance* to attain immortality! *They had their chance and turned it down!*

Therefore IT IS THE VAST BLINDED MAJORITY, WHO NEVER REALLY HAD A CHANCE TO ACCEPT GOD'S WAY OF LIFE, WHO ARE RESURRECTED!

Read what Revelation 20:11-12 says about this RESURRECTION: "And I saw a great white throne . . . and I saw the *dead*, small and great *stand* before God . . ." these people are STANDING — A RESURRECTION — ". . . and another book was opened, which is the book of *life* . . ." they are given LIFE — "and the *dead* were *judged* out of those things."

IT IS THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT!

Even the WORST of the sinners who *never had a chance* will be in this RESURRECTION, for even the inhabitants

of SODOM will be there! "When thy sisters Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou [Jerusalem, refer to Ezekiel 37] . . . shall return to your former estate" (Ezekiel 16:55).

Isaiah 65:20 indicates ALL will live for a hundred years in this age at this time.

God is indeed a just God (Deut. 32:4) and ALL WILL HAVE THEIR CHANCE TO BE SAVED!

The Final Resurrection

Revelation 20:13-15 describes the FINAL RESURRECTION in which the sea, death, and hell ("Hades" — the grave) give up *their dead* to be judged. These are they who, after being begotten by God, rebelled, and those who have lived contrary to God's way of life and have refused to repent, be baptized, and thus receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are cast into the lake of fire which is described in verse 14 as the SECOND DEATH.

It is the EVERLASTING DEATH!

Why So Many Resurrections?

At first glance it seems strange that there are so many resurrections, but let us examine. God the Father is forming a *spirit family* of His very own from us mortals here on this earth, but He is also seeing to it that we develop into BEINGS OF CHARACTER — beings that can ULTIMATELY BE TRUSTED WITH the GREAT POWER THAT GOD WILL GIVE US!

This will take TIME in order that man may learn that HIS (MAN'S) OWN WAYS of doing things, *guided by his own natural tendencies*, ARE WRONG and that he MUST be guided by God's laws in ALL

his activities or only WRETCHEDNESS and DEATH will result! We are *just starting* to see the terrible end results now of man's *own way* of running this earth!

God is going to enlarge His KINGDOM gradually. An increasing number will be given immortality at each resurrection. Only those who *qualify* to become a spirit being and are changed into spirit can enter into this kingdom; for I Cor. 15:50 says "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."

Matthew 13:31-32 describes the manner of growth of this kingdom: "The kingdom of heaven [or Kingdom of God] is like to a grain of mustard seed . . . which is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the *greatest* among the herbs, and becometh a tree."

Only ONE person has been *born* into this Kingdom *so far* — this is Jesus Christ. This was done by His *resurrection* to immortality (Romans 8:29; Col. 1:18).

These resurrections to immortality which are to GIVE BIRTH to the rest of the citizens of this spirit kingdom have not started yet, but will start at Christ's *second* coming! When these do start, there will be a shorter space between each succeeding resurrection.

These people who are transformed into spirit beings, will be used to *govern* the mortal beings here on this earth. These spirit beings of the KINGDOM will be rulers, priests, and judges (Rev. 1:6; 20:4; I Cor. 6:2). Ultimately ALL mortal men MUST be in this SPIRIT KINGDOM or CEASE TO EXIST! ALL of the Bible does start to MAKE SENSE once GOD'S PLAN is UNDERSTOOD!

No wonder the apostles who were all witnesses to the *resurrection of Christ* to

immortality (Acts 2:32; 3:15) were so joyous that they went diligently up and down the land preaching this *hope*.

It CAN Happen to You!

The apostles had the Old Testament Scriptures to read — they *knew* that David had said there would be a resurrection. They *knew* that Isaiah had later said the same thing. They also *knew* that Job had spoken of a resurrection from the dead to immortality. Christ had told them time and again "He must . . . be killed and be raised again the third day" to immortality (Matt. 16:21). It was too great a thing for them to *comprehend*. For even when told He had been resurrected, "they [still] *knew* [the Greek word for "knew" means "*comprehend*"] NOT the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9).

BUT when the *resurrected* Christ soon afterward came back to these *same* apostles who had witnessed closely His terrible death and remained among them for some time — "Being seen of them *forty days*" (Acts 1:3) — and when they, at the end of this time, saw Him ascend into heaven (verse 9), they became *convinced* a resurrection of themselves and all people to immortality is possible!

No wonder they were so joyous that they went diligently up and down the land preaching the Good News — the Gospel — of a resurrection into the Kingdom of God! *Your* belief in a resurrection to eternal life is based on FACT! It is *true*! Men like yourself *witnessed* and *recorded* for *you* the resurrection of another man *of the same flesh as yourself* — Christ (Heb. 2:14). A RESURRECTION CAN HAPPEN TO YOU!