

The Thousand Years, Part 6: The First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4–6)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (5/8/2016)

Introduction

1. The premillennial position on the first resurrection—the literal raising of the body of church saints from death to life
2. The premillennial assumption: because God has a separate program for Israel, the millennium exists to fulfill kingdom promises to Israel (throne and land).
3. Paul argues for *one* body in Christ (Eph. 2:15, 16; 18–21)

The one household of God destroys all distinctions (Gal. 3:28).

This fact is integral in understanding the first resurrection and what that means for all believers in the Jesus Christ.

4. The church's embryonic state

The believing remnant faithfully holding the covenants and trusting God's merciful lovingkindness

These are promised a Messiah-King to bring in an everlasting kingdom of righteousness and peace with God present among them.

I. Fulfilling the Expectation

Pharisees and Sadducees demanded a sign (a miraculous event to prove Christ's Messianic claims; Matt. 16:1). Jesus responded: "*An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah*" (Matt. 16:4). That sign was His resurrection from the dead (see Matt. 12:40).

1. The resurrection of Christ as the sign and seal of the new creation (1 Cor. 15:20–24; John 11:25; John 14:18)
2. Resurrection, the hope of OT saints (1 Sam. 2:6; Job 19:25–27; Psa. 17:15; Ezek. 37:5)
3. For the NT saint, resurrection life begins at *regeneration* (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:4–6; Col. 2:12, 13; Col. 3:1, 2).

II. Jesus' Testimony

1. Sin's curse and the Father's working

The Pharisees demanded to know why Jesus healed the paralytic on the Sabbath. Jesus explained that He was taking His cue from the Father who was also working because sin had wrecked His perfect creation. The Lord was working to redeem and restore that ruined creation.

2. Jesus' coming and the new creation

Jesus answered by declaring that He was there to begin this work of restoration, and the healing of the lame man was a sign to authenticate that work. He went a step further and declared, "*Greater works than these will he show him*" (vv. 20, 21). The greater work is raising the dead, which ties into the final judgment that the Father had also committed to the Son (v. 22).

3. The two stages of the resurrection

a. Stage one—the resurrection of the elect to *spiritual* life (vv. 24–27)

Note the reference to the *Son of Man*, pointing to Daniel 7 and His receiving the everlasting kingdom from the Ancient of Days. This is a new kingdom that “*shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*” (v. 27). This is the message of Revelation 20.

b. Stage two—the resurrection of the body to judgment

Jesus warned the Pharisees that their rejection of Him would bring them into judgment. He was going to raise all the dead on the last day (vv. 28, 29; Dan. 12:1–3; 9, 10).

Application

1. What does this mean to you (Luke 20:34–38)?

How does this truth affect your life today?

How does it rule your choices, your time, and your priorities?

2. Paul contrasts people as those who live after the flesh (*sarx*) and those who live after the Spirit (*pneuma*) (Rom. 7:18–8:25).

The latter group are regenerate persons, having experienced stage one resurrection, and so they live for the age to come. The former are those who are tied to this age only.

To be a stage-one Christian is to live free from the bondage of the flesh—free to obey Christ and serve His kingdom here.