

PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION

“If by any means I might ATTAIN (Greek word “to meet; to arrive at”) unto the resurrection of the dead”; Philippians 3:11; John 5:28-29

1. When a sinner comes to faith in Jesus Christ, he is forgiven of his sins; but after the initial experience of salvation, he must choose to practice godly behavior and obedience to the Word of God. At that time he is given the opportunity to participate in the first resurrection from the dead, contingent upon true repentance, in being baptized in water, being led by the Spirit and practicing righteousness. If he continues in his worldly ways, he will be resurrected unto destruction; Romans 8:13-14; Hebrews 6:8; 2 Peter 2:20-21

2. A profession of faith in Jesus alone does not mean we will be raised as a royal priest or be clothed with a body like that of the Lord Jesus. We have been given a temporary body in which we are imprisoned, through which we are taught the righteous ways of the Lord; Deuteronomy 8:3. If we are successful in this instruction, if we overcome the obstacles that are placed before us, if we endure patiently in suffering and obedience unto the end, we will be given an eternal, body of glory when Jesus appears; 1 John 3:2.

3. There is an initial resurrection and ascension of our inner nature when we receive Christ; at that time we become a candidate to participate in the First Resurrection. A relationship with the Lord Jesus must be cultivated each day; we must learn to walk in His ways; Zech. 3:7. The whole purpose of receiving Christ is that we may be changed, be conformed into His image, becoming a new creation. Through a series of “deaths” and overcoming each obstacle, our soul is resurrected. The pattern is repeated over and over, until our entire inner nature has experienced crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.

4. King Self must be removed from the throne of the heart, so that King Jesus can take that place; Matt. 10:39. No person that is ruled by self can participate in the First Resurrection. Man was created to be the throne of God; Revelation 20:4-5. Necessary elements in attaining to the First Resurrection include that which is described to the churches in Revelation, chapters 2-3. These are steps in which the victorious saint participates. The spiritual body from heaven has a “weight of glory” it is created by our “light affliction”; 2 Corinthians 4:17. The spiritual robe being prepared for us is the product of a patient, cross-carrying journey of following the Lord in obedience.

5. The First Resurrection from the dead is the giving of eternal, glorious bodies to those who have been found worthy. Worldliness, sin and self love must be conquered before a believer is granted the body of Resurrection life; 1 John 3:6-7. The crown of life, the authority of eternal life is in an incorruptible, glorious body. We are only raised as a part of the Royal Priesthood by virtue of the fact that our inner man is ascending, being raised up. As Jesus is being formed in us, the resurrection is being formed in us.

6. Participating in the First Resurrection is not given to us on the basis of forgiveness or God’s mercy; the resurrection of God’s kings and priests must be attained to. It is the result of us allowing the Lord to crucify our Adamic nature and to form us into His own substance and image. There are different ranks and rewards in the Kingdom; Revelation 22:12. The bible speaks of a “better” resurrection; Hebrews 11:35. There will be varying degrees of glory (light) upon the garments worn by the conquering saints, which reflect their works and their sacrifice while they lived upon the Earth, resulting in different divine privileges and heavenly abilities; 1 Corinthians 15:35-54; Galatians 6:7.

7. Attaining to the First Resurrection is the climax of the redemption of the saints, the first fruits, the reward for those who are presently living in the victory of Jesus Christ; Philippians 3:10-12. Conquering saints cooperate with the Holy Spirit until Christ fully fills their personalities. The Adamic nature dies and the nature of Christ takes its place. The resurrected, mortal body will be clothed with a spiritual body from heaven; some that are wise will be gloriously clothed in brightness, shining like the stars forever; Daniel 12:2-3. The heavenly body we receive, along with its power and capabilities, depends directly upon the deeds and behavior of that which we have practiced while in the mortal body; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

8. We must feed continually on the flesh and blood of the Lamb; John 6:54. Prayer, fasting and obedience to God's Word will help us to turn from the appetites of the flesh. If we are careless and foolish, we could be "disqualified" from this calling; 1 Corinthians 9:27. The enemy of our souls will continually introduce distractions into our lives, to keep us focused upon the earthly realm: its cares, its values and pursuits. We can lose our crown; we must cling to Jesus and "hold fast" to the end; Hebrews 3:6,14; Rev. 3:11.

9. It is necessary that the saints experience the fiery presence of the Lord, which purifies and refines us; Malachi 3:2-3. Our body will be clothed with incorruptible life only if we have sown to the spirit during our earthly pilgrimage; Romans 2:7. The change from living in self-will to living the will of Christ is the key to transformation and it governs our eligibility to rule with Christ. Only the personal cross of the disciple can accomplish this. This is the patient, day-by-day denial of self, embracing God's will, sharing in His sufferings. Those who are allowed to participate in the First Resurrection have died to self, to sin and to all that which is in the world; 1 Corinthians 15:31.

10. The working of the Grace of God creates the life of Christ in us and transforms the inner man. As this takes place, a corresponding weight of glory is created before the throne of the Father. In the day of Resurrection, our flesh and bones will rise and be clothed with a heavenly garment; Revelation 19:8. We are told that there is an "order" in men being "made alive"; 1 Corinthians 15:22-23. It is possible that there are stages of the Rapture / Resurrection based upon the patterns seen in Acts 1:3 and Mark 13:35.

11. The "virgins" described in Rev. 14:4 are undefiled; not "married" to the world; these are a Remnant, the "choice ones" of Song of Sol. 6:9. Those who are walking in the spirit are ascending the mount of the Lord, Mount Zion; Hebrews 12:22-23. Zion means "the mountain of light"; it was the place in Jerusalem from where the kings ruled; it was where David brought the Ark of the Covenant: God's government, glory and presence; Revelation 21:9-10. This is the realm of God's ruling priesthood. All true believers will have a part in God's plan, but not all will attain to the First Resurrection.

12. The First Resurrection is the summoning of the bodies of the chosen so that the nations of the world may behold and be blessed by the glory of God in the saints; John 17:21; Romans 8:19. Those who participate in this high calling will be appointed to thrones, rulership and judgment upon Earth and the heavenly realm; Revelation 20:4-6. For this reason, all rebellion and disobedience must be removed from us now. There will be a transfer of the rulership from disobedient angels to the conquering saints. God's elect will be assigned to the high thrones which the fallen angels previously occupied. These thrones are vacated when the rebellious angels are forced from them and cast into the Earth; Revelation 12:9

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