

Resurrection

The Instantaneous Replay

Introduction:

There are a limited number of ways to develop a study about Easter, the term that refers to the transition of our Lord's human body into a resurrection body. There are 16 Easter specials posted on the Web sites that go back to 2001 and several more were taught between 1985 and 2000.

Today, I will visit our Lord's prototype resurrection and then follow it up with comparisons with prophesied future resurrections.

Resurrection: Definition and Description:

In the New Testament, the noun "resurrection" refers to the conversion of the human body of an individual into one that is permanently adaptable to the environment of the eternal state, and in the status quo of eternal life.

The Greek word for resurrection is the noun, **ἀνάστασις** (*anástasis*). It is initially used in Scripture to describe the transformation of Jesus Christ's human body into a resurrection body.

The apostle Paul uses figurative language to describe this event with the Old Testament term, **בִּכּוּרִים** (*bikkuriym*): "first fruits." This refers to the Jewish ceremony of thanksgiving for the first harvest which was presented as a gift from God and presented to Him as an offering.

In the New Testament, Paul uses this event to describe the resurrection of Christ as an offering to the Father as **ἀπαρχή** (*aparché*): "first fruits":

1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead and becomes the first fruits of them that slept.

1 Corinthians 15:23 Each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming [**the Rapture**].

This indicates that there are two resurrections in the two Christocentric dispensations: of Christ near the close of His Incarnation and believers at the end of the Church Age.

Before either could occur historically, there were preliminary details that each had to accomplish. Jesus had to take on true humanity minus the sin nature which was initiated at the virgin birth.



At birth He is classified as immaculate and impeccable, absolutely perfect in both mind and body. He maintained these attributes until He was placed on the cross for execution by the Roman system of capital punishment referred to by the verb, **σταυρόω (staurōō)**: “to crucify.”

Crucifixion was used by the Romans to “execute slaves and degraded persons.”¹ Jesus’ execution was ordered by Pontius Pilate’s decree resulting in the Lord’s substitutionary physical death. While on the cross, the Lord received divine punishment when the Father imputed to Him the totality of all human sins recorded in the divine decree, beginning with Ishah’s and Adam’s and ending with the last personal sin of the millennial kingdom.

Therefore, the sequence of the Lord’s two deaths was the substitutionary spiritual death for the punishment of our sins followed by his physical death which occurred when He personally dismissed His human spirit.

The Lord’s physical death resulted in three events transpiring simultaneously:

(1) Joseph of Arimathea is described as a “rich man” (Matthew 27:57), a **βουλευτής (bouleutēs)**: “councilor” of the **Συνέδριον (Sunédriōn)**: “Sanhedrin” (Luke 23:50). He “went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave the body to Joseph who took it down from the cross. Nicodemus embalmed the body and Joseph had the body wrapped in linen and deposited it in a new tomb (Luke 23:51–53).²

(2) The Lord’s human spirit went to be God the Father in heaven:

Luke 23:46 Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” Having said this, He breathed His last.

(3) The Lord’s soul was sent to the Paradise compartment of Hades, an event that is mentioned in both Testaments of the Bible. It was prophesied in one of David’s Messianic Psalms:

Psalms 16:10 You will not abandon My soul to **Sheol** [Heb.: **שְׁאוֹל (She’ol)** & Gk.: **ᾗδης (Hádēs)**]; nor will you allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”

David’s comments in Psalm 16 are repeated by Peter in:

¹ H. L. Drumwright, Jr., “Crucifixion,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 1:1041.

² Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. R. K. Harrison (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 710.



Acts 2:27 ‘Because You will not abandon my soul in Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.’

While in Hades the Holy Spirit accompanied the Lord’s soul on His visit to Paradise, the compartment where Old Testament believers were quarantined until the ascension of Christ.

Among the three men crucified, the one criminal who scolded the other by saying, “This man [Jesus] has done nothing wrong,” and then appealed to the Lord, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom (Luke 23:41b–42)!” The Lord’s response followed:

Luke 23:43 “Truly [ἀμήν (*amén*): “I am telling you the truth”] I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise [παράδεισος (*parádeisos*)].”

This word is was adopted by the Greeks from the Persians, among whom it meant a garden, park, or enclosure. Socrates said that the king of Persia took particular care wherever he was, to have gardens or enclosures full of every beautiful and good thing the earth could produce. These were called *paradises*.

Hades in the New Testament was the world or abode of the dead in general. According to the notions of the Jews, Hades was a vast subterranean area where the souls of the spirits of the dead existed in separate states until the resurrection of their bodies. The region of the blessed during this interval, or the inferior paradise, was thought to be in the upper part of this receptacle. Beneath this was the abyss, Gehenna or Tartarus, in which the souls of the wicked were subjected to punishment.³

This is a fair synopsis of the compartment of Hades. It points out the area where Old Testament saints are retained until Jesus escorts them into heaven but incorrectly assigned the souls of unbelievers to Tartarus, however, Torments is the compartment containing these individuals.

³ “παράδεισος,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Spiros Zodhiates (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers. 1993), 1102.



This is commented on by Luke in Luke 16:19–31 about the rich man and Lazarus. In this passage, both the rich man and Lazarus died, the rich man to the Torments compartment and Lazarus to Paradise. Between the two compartments was a chasm referred to as “a great gulf fixed.” This chasm was so wide that no one could cross back and forth from one compartment to the other.

On the Paradise side were Old Testament believers while on the Torments side were Old Testament unbelievers. When the Lord was ready to ascend, residents of the Paradise compartment were organized to follow him into the third heaven, Jesus in His resurrection body, but those from the Theocentric dispensations in interim bodies. They must wait until the end of their dispensation which does not occur until the end of the Tribulation.

The Resurrection Bodies of Christ and the Royal Family

Do not assume that the attributes common to the Lord’s resurrection body are exclusive. God created the universe and Jesus Christ holds it together. The most miniscule unit that makes up all substances is the molecule:

Molecule, the smallest identifiable unit into which a pure substance can be divided and still retain the composition and chemical properties of that substance.⁴

This indicates that everything of substance is a collection of specifically arranged molecules. Some things are able to move through certain other substances and some are not, for example waves from radio, sonar, and television transmissions can do this.

It is clear from Scripture that the resurrection body can do this in examples we will present later in the study. Here is a passage that confirms our future, eternal occupancy of a resurrection body:

Philippians 3:20 For our *politeuma* keeps on existing in the sphere of heaven, from which we eagerly anticipate the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

⁴ “Molecule,” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia* (2010), 8:233.



Philippians 3:21a Who will transform the body of our humble station in conformity with the body of His glory ... (NASB)

Verse 21 refers to the transformation of the human body into a resurrection body. When this event occurs, it is often referred to as the Rapture. This word is not found in the Greek of the New Testament, but rather from the Latin *raptus* which means, “snatching or carrying off.”⁵

This single word is used to describe the event that will terminate the Church Age. All believers of the dispensation, dead or alive, will be instantly transformed into resurrection bodies and transported out of the universe into the Third Heaven. There are numerous passages that describe this future event.

The New Testament word is the noun, **ἀνάστασις** (*anástasis*): “resurrection.” This noun is used in various passages, but the one pertinent to our study is the resurrection of the church. To illustrate, there are passages that describe the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but that event is clearly distinguished from the resurrection of the church.

In an effort to distinguish the resurrection of the church from other such events, the Latin *raptus* was employed. The English translation of the word is “Rapture” which specifically refers to believers, dead and alive, who are removed from this planet into the Third Heaven in resurrection bodies.

The Rapture is found in Scripture in numerous passages, two of the more detailed were inspired by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:51–57 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I show you a mystery [the Rapture was never revealed in the Old Testament]; we shall be changed,

v. 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible [a resurrection body], and we [those who are alive at the Rapture] will be changed [for a resurrection body].

⁵ Oxford Latin Desk Dictionary, ed. James Morwood (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. “raptus.”



1 Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible [**physical body**] must put on incorruption [**immortal body**], and this mortal [**subject to death**] shall put on immortality [**exempt from death**].

v. 54 Now when corruption will have put on incorruption and the mortal has put on immortality, then the doctrine that stands written will occur, “He will swallow up death as a result of victory (Isaiah 25:8).

v. 55 “O, death [Heb.: לְיָאֵשׁ (She’ol); Gk.: ἄδης (Hádēs) Torments], where is your sting? O death, where is your victory?

v. 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law;

v. 57 but thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 I do not wish that you would be ignorant, fellow believers, about those who are asleep [**present middle participle of κοιμάω (koimáō): all believers whose bodies are dead**], so that you will not experience the sorrow [**present passive subjunctive of λυπέω (lupéō): despondency**] as do those who have no hope [**the hopelessness of the survivors**].

v. 14 For if [εἰ (ei): first-class condition: and it is true] we believe [**present active indicative of πιστεύω (pisteúō): and we do**] that Jesus died and rose again [**these two verbs linked together by “and” indicate the uniqueness of this event⁶**], even so, God will bring with Him those [**in interim bodies**] who have fallen asleep [**whose bodies are buried on or within the earth**] in Jesus.

⁶ The conjunction “and” between the two verbs, “died and rose,” fuses the two together. This establishes the principle that the death of Christ cannot be separated from the resurrection of Christ. It is the resurrection of Christ that establishes the doctrine that the death of Christ is unique.



1 Thessalonians 4:15 This we keep on saying to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord [**because of the doctrine of the imminency of the Rapture, Paul expected the event to occur in his lifetime**], will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

NOTE: Verses 15 and 16 present the two stages of the Rapture. The first includes several participants: **(1)** Jesus Christ leads the entourage by shouting a command to an archangel (There are only two elect archangels identified by name in Scripture, Michael and Gabriel, each with the six-wing designation of rank), **(2)** the archangel will shout commands to the angelic hoards, **(3)** then with the blast of his trumpet **(4)** deploy believers in interim bodies to their earthly burial sites,⁷ and **(5)** the dead in Christ will rise first. This completes Stage 1. It occurred in a yoctosecond.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven by shouting a command to the archangel, who will relay these orders to the angelic hoards; with the blast of his trumpet he deploys believers in interim bodies to their earthly burial sites and the dead in Christ will be resurrected first.

NOTE: This concludes the first stage of the Rapture. It is followed in a yoctosecond by Stage 2 which includes all believers who are alive on the earth at that moment. It is in this next verse that we learn of Paul's expectance of the Rapture to occur in his lifetime thus emphasizing the doctrine of the imminency of the Rapture.

Thessalonians 4:17 Then [ἔπειτα (épeita)⁸] we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

The entire Church Age congregation is now with the Lord. They will follow Jesus into the Third Heaven and be organized for the Great Genuflection before the Lord at which point He will welcome the Royal Family.

⁷ Believers who have died physical death before the Rapture have been "absent from the body and face-to-face with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). These believers return with Christ and are part of Stage 1 of the Rapture.

⁸ "The word denotes the speedy following of the event specified upon what has gone before" (Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998], 479).



This will be followed by the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ where Nike Awards will be distributed to winners. These events will take place in heaven while the seven-year Tribulation takes place on the earth. (See **2 Corinthians 5:10**)

The Characteristics of the Resurrection Body

Easter is the day that Christendom chooses to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Following the resurrection, the Lord remained in the area of Palestine for around forty days and on several occasions, the characteristics of His resurrection body give insight to the ones we will possess beginning at the Rapture of the church.

Although we have noted briefly the eight characteristics of His resurrection body, we have not noted in detail the passages that support them. We will conclude our study by doing so now.

1. The resurrection body does not appear unusual.

Luke 24:13–29 records a conversation Jesus had while walking to Emmaus with two men, one of whom was named Cleopas. The two men were discussing the events surrounding the Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, but neither of them recognized Him.

Jesus asked them what they were discussing. In verses 18 through 24, they gave an account of going to the tomb but others who were at the tomb insisted they had seen no one.

Jesus then began to instruct them in the teachings of the prophets about the coming Messiah, but His commentary did not cause them to recognize Him as that Person. Upon arrival at one of the men's home, they invited him in for a meal. (See also **John 20:11–16**)

2. The resurrection body can vanish from sight.

Jesus broke bread and gave it to them. They suddenly recognized Who He was, but He then vanished from sight. **Luke 24:30–31**.

3. Jesus' resurrection body could move through barriers.

After Joseph from Arimathea placed Jesus's human body in the tomb, he then rolled a large stone against the entrance (Matthew 27:59–60). The next day, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and reminded him when Jesus was alive, He said, "After three days I am to rise again." The chief priests and the Pharisees requested Pilate to secure the entrance to the tomb with a seal which he did.

Matthew 27:65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go make it as secure as you know how."



Matthew 27:66 And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a **seal**⁹ [σφραγίζω (*sphragízō*): to secure not against entry but of escape] on the stone.

We are told on the day of the resurrection that the tomb was open and attended by an angel who invited Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to enter the open tomb. He said:

Matthew 28:6 “He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

Later that evening, the disciples were gathered in a room with the door shut:

John 20:19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were **shut** [κλείω (*kleíō*): “shut, locked, barred”¹⁰] where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” (Also see John 20:26)

4. His Resurrection body retains stigmata.

At the two meetings in this room, Jesus Christ also revealed His stigmata, the places on his hands and his side where the nails and spear had penetrated His body. He displayed these areas first to the disciples and later to Thomas in John 20:20 and John 20:27:

John 20:20 He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

John 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

See also Luke 24:39–40. The Lord’s stigmata may be unique to Him because of the need to certify His identity. Whether or not such things will be evident on believer’s resurrection bodies is impossible to know.

⁹ “A door was sealed by stretching a cord over the stone which blocked the entrance, spreading clay or wax on the cord, and then impressing it with a seal.” (D. Miall Edwards. “seal,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. James Orr [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], 4:2709).

¹⁰ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v., “κλείω.”



5. **The Lord's resurrection body is made of flesh and bones according to:**

Luke 24:39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for the spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

6. **His Resurrection body is capable of taking food.**

Luke 24:41 While they, the disciples, could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

v. 42 They gave Him a piece of broiled fish;

v. 43 and He took it and ate it before them.

7. **The Lord's Resurrection body is able to move through interstellar space at warp speed.¹¹**

In our study of the Rapture passages above we noted how quickly we exit the earth to meet the Lord in the air and then move rapidly into the Third Heaven. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Paul uses the verb, **ἁρπάζω (harpázō)**: "caught up," to describe how rapidly those who are alive and remain join the Lord and others "in the air." In fact, all four of the major English translation of the Bible use the term, "caught up," in this verse.

In Greek dictionaries the definitions for the verb, *harpázō*, include, "to snatch away," "to seize suddenly," and "to take away forcefully."

Luke 24:51 While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up [ἁρπάζω (*harpázō*)] into heaven.

Acts 1:9 After He has said these things, He was lifted up [ἐπαίρω (*epaíro*): "taken up"] while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

8. **The resurrection body is imperishable and immortal.**

The word "imperishable" is the Greek noun, **ἀφθαρσία (aphtharsía)**. The Lord's resurrection body endures forever and so will ours. It is also said to be immortal meaning it is exempt from death.

The word "immortal" **ἀθανασία (athanasía)** refers to our resurrection bodies not being subject to death.

¹¹ "warp: denoting space travel by means of distorting space-time: *warp speed*," in *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, ed. Elizabeth J. Jewell and Frank Abate (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1903.



1 Corinthians 15:53 For this perishable [body] must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:54 But when the perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Paul summarizes these attributes where he refers to the Lord transforming our bodies into conformity with His body in:

Philippians 3:21 The Lord Jesus Christ will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory [**resurrection body**], by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Conclusion:

The Lord substitutionary sacrifice on the cross required Him to receive the imputation of all the personal sins of mankind and be judged for them. When that judgment was over, He said from the cross, “It is finished.”

What was potentially finished was the divine removal of the barrier between God and man. It was potential since each person must use his own free will to place his personal faith in Jesus Christ to appropriate what He provided.

He provided a way by which what we have studied can become a reality in the life of any person. The personal, positive response to the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross is how one takes advantage of what He did for each individual.

The thing He did was take care of the sin problem. All human sin was judged. However, each individual must place his personal faith in the Person and work of Christ to appropriate forgiveness of sins and receive eternal life.

Acts 16:31 Believe [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): **transitive verb**] in the Lord Jesus [**the working object**], and you will be saved.

Simple faith in Christ results in salvation and eternal life. You must do nothing but simply believe. This verb is transitive and must have a working object which is Jesus Christ. Therefore,

Acts 16:31 Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.

(End ES20-01: The Instantaneous Replay)

