

“From The Agony of Defeat To the Thrill of Victory”

Easter Sunday Special - 2026

By

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Text: John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

I. “Hope Sprang Eternal - The Messiah Had Come” (Matthew 21: 5-9)

It was Saturday morning, the 10th day of the month of Abib. This was the day the paschal lambs were to be selected. For three and a half years the disciples had followed Jesus, they had watched Him heal the sick, make the lame walk, give sight to the blind, cause the dumb to speak and even raise Lazarus from the dead. And now it appeared the time had come. It was a day of triumph! Excitement filled the air as the crowd gathered along the streets of Jerusalem - Hope Sprang Eternal.... The Messiah had come....

Matthew records it in Chapter 21: 5-9

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set [him] thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed [them] in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed [is] he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

On the day each family was to select their paschal lamb - Jesus, the lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world, was welcome by the crowd in Jerusalem as they cried, Hosanna to the son of David - Hosanna in the highest. In fulfillment of the selecting of the paschal lamb - No! It was not Palm Sunday. It was not Sunday, it was Saturday. It was on the tenth day of the month of Abib in fulfillment of all the prophets had declared. The cheering crowd anticipated His overthrow of the Roman government and His claim of the Throne of David. They followed Him to the mount of Olives and listened to His discourse about the kingdom. Anticipation ran through the streets like static electricity infecting everyone in the crowd....

II. “But The Cross Brought the Agony of Defeat” (Matthew 27:33-40)

But just four days later, the crowd, disenchanted because Jesus had not proclaimed Himself as the Messiah or attempted to restore the Kingdom to Israel, stood before the hall of Pilate and cried out, Crucify Him...Crucify Him! The disciples were horror stricken as they watched the events. It was the day of the preparation for the Passover and God was providing His own Son. The kingship of Jesus would be placed on hold - the cross and the resurrection must occur for His kingdom to be an everlasting kingdom and for all people in every generation to have opportunity to be a part of that eternal kingdom. Remembering back to Saturday, when the woman anointed the feet of Jesus with that costly fragrance, did He not say, she was anointing Him for His burial. Was that not the very night that Judas had struck his dastardly bargain with the religious leaders for the betrayal. Yes! That was the tenth day of Abib and Jesus had been set aside as the paschal lamb. Now, it was Wednesday, the day of the preparation for the Passover, and Jesus was about to be slain as the paschal lamb. Pilate declared him guiltless yet turned Him over to the soldiers for crucifixion - The guiltless lamb of God was about to take upon Himself the sins of the world in order that we who have sinned might go free. A graphic image of that had just been displayed at the Hall of Pilate when he turned that murder Barabbas free and handed Jesus over for execution. The crowd did not know, they did not understand that they were a part the plan of God in providing a means of salvation for all who would call upon His name.... They did not know and the disciples did not understand. But Matthew records it.....

Matthew 27:33-40 says,

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted [thereof], he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest [it] in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

III. “Then There Was The Bewilderment of The Grave” (Matthew 27:59-61)

The horror of the disciples turned to bewilderment as the spikes were driven through His hands and His feet. Why did he not stop this madness? Could He not call ten-thousand angels to deliver Him? Why was He content to let this occur? And, oh, the suffering as evidenced by His despairing cry, *Eloi, Eloi, Lamma Sabachthini - My God, My God, Why has Thou forsaken Me?* Darkness swallowed up the horrible scene. Then after three hours of midday darkness and the echoing cry Eloi Eloi Lamma Sabachthini - a deafening hush fell on the hill called the place of the skull. Then from the silence, Christ cried out It is finished - the debt is paid - Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit - and He died! The earth shook, the veil in the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, graves were opened, the people stood in astonishment - the centurion in charge of the execution - cried out - Surely this must have been the Son of God. The crowd dissipated! Some of them fled in fright. Others of them wandered off in bewilderment.

The narrative of Matthew 27:59-61 continues,

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

The disciples had been so confident that He was the Messiah and was about to re-establish Israel - Now they were bewildered as His body was placed in the grave. They had gone from the thrill of victory to the agony of defeat!

IV. “But Sunday Brought The Thrill of Victory” (Matthew 28:1-7)

Yes! With the dawning of a new week came the dawning of a new beginning and a new and lasting hope....

Matthew 28:1-7 says,

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead [men]. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee;

there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

With the breaking of Dawn on Sunday the agony of defeat was turned into the thrill of victory! Not just a victory of Christ over death - but, a victory for all mankind - because He lives - we too can live,

V. “There Is Victory In Jesus” (II Timothy 2:11-13)

Yes! There was victory that day! Not only to Jesus Christ the Son of God to all who will call upon His name.

II Timothy 2:11-13 says,

[It is] a faithful saying: For if we be dead with [him], we shall also live with [him]: If we suffer, we shall also reign with [him]: if we deny [him], he also will deny us: If we believe not, [yet] he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

VI. The Doctrine of Resurrection

The Doctrine of Resurrection is not new. The Jews were divided concerning it. The Pharisees (conservativies) believed in the resurrection but the Sadducees did not, (That’s why they were sad u see.)

Job spoke of resurrection (Job 19:25-27)

For I know [that] my redeemer liveth, and [that] he shall stand at the latter [day] upon the earth: And [though] after my skin [worms] destroy this [body], yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; [though] my reins be consumed within me.

Isaiah spoke of resurrection (Isaiah 25:8; 26:19)

25:8 *He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken [it].*

26:19 *Thy dead [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*

Daniel spoke of resurrection (Daniel (12:2, 13)

2 *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [and] everlasting contempt. But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*

Hosea spoke of resurrection (Hosea 13:14)

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from

death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

There are a multitude of other Scriptures: Psalms 16:9-10; 17:15; 49:15; Ezekiel 37:1-14 are but a few.

The Jews were divided over the Issue with the fundamental Pharisees believing in resurrection and the liberal Saducees not believing in resurrection.

There are examples of others being restored to life before Christ:

II Kings 4:32-35 - The Son of the Widow of Zerah

II Kings 13:20-21 - Man whose body touched the bones of Elisha

Matthew 9:25 - Ruler's daughter

Luke 7:12-15 - The Widows Son

John 11:41-44 - Lazarus

There are examples of restoration of others after Christ's resurrection:

Matthew 27:52-53 - following the resurrection of Christ - at the earthquake

Acts 9:36-41 - Dorcas or Tabitha from Joppa

Acts 20:9-12 - Eutychus who fell from the third loft during Paul's preaching

However, I Corinthians 15:29 says:

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept."

If Christ is the *'first fruits of them that slept'* what about those others?

There is a distinction between the resurrection of Jesus and the restoration to life of the others - theirs were resuscitations His was a resurrection.

A *Resuscitation* is the result of life being restored to the natural body.

Resurrection is the result of life being restored to a glorified body.

VII. What about The Resurrection Body:

I Corinthians 15:35-5

But some [man] will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? [Thou] fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other [grain]: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh [is] not the same flesh: but [there is] one [kind of] flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, [and] another of birds. There are] also celestial

bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial [is] one, and the [glory] of the terrestrial [is] another. There is] one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for [one] star differeth from [another] star in glory. So also [is] the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit. Howbeit that [was] not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man [is] of the earth, earthy: the second man [is] the Lord from heaven. As [is] the earthy, such [are] they also that are earthy: and as [is] the heavenly, such [are] they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory? {grave: or, hell} The sting of death [is] sin; and the strength of sin [is] the law. But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Body of Jesus:

1. **His body was flesh and bones (Luke 24:39-40) No mention of blood in which is the source of life in the natural body - the source of life in the resurrection body is the spirit.**
2. **It was recognized as a human body (John 20:26-29)**
3. **He breathed (John 20:22)**
4. **He ate (Luke 24:30, 43)**
5. **He had a voice that was recognized (John 20:19, 26)**
6. **Yet, His body was different than ours:**
 - (1). **He was able to enter room which was locked (John 20:19, 26; Luke 24:36)**
 - (2). **He could appear and disappear (Luke 24:17)**
 - (3). **He could move vertically or horizontally (Matthew 28:10; Acts 1:9-10)**

All those who were resuscitated died again because they had not put on immortality. *So, Christ is the first fruits of them which slept. But, we are all going to be resurrected too!*

VIII. The Bible Speaks of two Resurrections:

- (1). Acts 24:15 speaks of the resurrection of the *“Just and Unjust”*
- (2). John 5:24-29 speaks of the resurrections of those who have done *“the good”* and those who have done *“the evil”*.
- (3). Daniel speaks of resurrections to *“eternal life”* and *“eternal shame”*

Revelation 20:6-15 is a key passage:

Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom [is] as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

A. The First Resurrection Occurs In Various Periods of Time:

I Corinthians 15:20-24 says,

But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then [cometh] the end,

when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;

Each Is Raised In His Own Battalion:

Verse 23 says, "*Each in his own order*" (idiom)(Tagmati) - his own battalion

There are two Greek words which are translated into English by the word - **Order**. The word "**taxies**" and the word "**tagma.**"

- (1). **Taxies** (a general term for organization)
- (2). **Tagma** (a military term for a battalion in a campaign or in review)

The word used here is *tagma* and indicates that the first resurrection is divided into battalions. Each believer will be resurrected with the battalion in which he has served.

- (a). The First Battalion is identified as: "***Christ, the first fruits***"
This was fulfilled in 30 AD on the Feast of First Fruits.

Luke 24:1-9 says,

Now upon the first [day] of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain [others] with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down [their] faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

Some Post Resurrection Appearances of Christ are documented in Scripture"

1. **Mary Magdalene** (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18)
2. **The Women Returning from the Tomb** (Matthew 28:8-10)
3. **Peter** - probably in afternoon (Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5)
4. **Two Men On Road To Emmaus** - toward evening (Matthew 16:12; Luke 24:13-32)
5. **The Ten Disciples** -That evening with Thomas being absent (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25)

6. **The Eleven Disciples** - the next Sunday evening (John 20:26-31)
7. **The Seven Beside the Sea of Galilee** (John 21)
8. **The Disciples and More Than 500 Brethren at one time** (Matthew 28:16-20; I Corinthians 15:6)
9. **James The Lord's Half-Brother** (I Corinthians 15:7)
10. **On The Mount of Olives At His Visible Ascension** (Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12)

The Scriptures also document Post Resurrection Appearances After His Visible Ascension:

1. **Stephen At His Stoning** (Acts 7:55-60)
 2. **Paul:**
 - (a). **At his conversion** (Acts 9:3-8, 17; 22:6-11, 14-15; 26:12-19; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:8)
 - (b). **In Arabia** (Galatians 1:11-17)
 - (c). **At Corinth** (Acts 18:9-10)
 - (d). **In The Temple At Jerusalem** (Acts 22:17-21)
 - (e). **Later At Jerusalem** (Acts 23:11)
 - (f). **In Another Vision** (II Corinthians 12:1-4)
 3. **John On The Isle of Patmos** (Revelation 1:10-19)
- (b). **The Second Battalion is identified as - *“They that are Christ’s at His coming”***

This will be fulfilled at the Rapture of Church Age Believers.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17 says,

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the 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 Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This is the Rapture not the Second Advent.

- (1). **At the Rapture He comes in the air** (I Thessalonians 4:16-17)
- (2). **At the Second Advent He lands on the Mount of Olives** (Zechariah 14:4)

Church Age believers are to be the Bride of Christ and have a special dispensation and will be removed before the Tribulation, which is the end of the Jewish Dispensation.

- (3). **The Third Battalion is identified by the phrase - *“then the end”***

This is a reference to the Old Testament Saints –

Daniel 12:13 says, *But go thou thy way till the end [be]: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*

The Old Testament Saints will be raised following the end of the Tribulation - which is *“the end of the days.”*

Isaiah 26:19 says,

Thy dead [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

The translation of this Verse needs to be corrected. You will notice the word *“men”*, the phrase *“together with”*, and the phrase *“is as”* are not in the original Hebrew text. They are incorrectly supplied by the translators. The word *“body”* is plural in the Hebrew - thus this verse should read, *Thy dead shall live: my dead bodies shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew, the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*

B. The Second Resurrection Is The Resurrection of Unbelievers: (Revelation 20:11-15)

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

1. Unbelievers Are Resurrected For Their Final Day In Court:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God” (verse 11)

2. They will be judged by the books of works:

“the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (verse 12)

3. Their appeal will be evaluated on basis of the Lamb’s Book of Life:

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (15)

Conclusion:

You can determine the time of your resurrection right now!

You can be part of the Second Battalion and receive your resurrection body at the Rapture of the Church by Calling upon the name of Jesus for salvation.

Or, you will be part of the Second Resurrection and will be cast into the lake of Fire and Brimstone prepared for the Devil and his angels.

The Choice is yours!!!

John 11:25 *Jesus said..., I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

It all begins at Salvation:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,
acceptable unto God, which
is your reasonable service.*

(Romans 12:1)