

“IF A MAN DIE - SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN”?

Job 14:14

From the depths of despair, Job pondered this question and then answered it.

“...all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

“For I know that my redeemer lives, 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” (Job 19:25-26).

Who Is This Redeemer?

From the far reaches of the universe to the wonders of our own little planet, God states that He is the author and finisher of all the great mysteries of the universe, quasars, black holes, suns that are larger than our entire galaxy, antimatter - things that are so far beyond our understanding that it is hard for us to even imagine them. Surely, such a God has a plan that includes us!

As awesome as all that is, we then ponder life itself. How is it that life exists in so many forms, some of which existed millennia ago and the huge variety that still exists today? We are born, grow old and then die. Truly our God is a great God, but will we really see God in our flesh, even after we have died

IF A MAN DIE

and our body has decomposed? Yet, Job is obviously talking about a physical resurrection.

One wonders, is the God that claims to have created everything that exists, powerful enough to recreate that which has passed away? Can God bring back to *physical* life those that have lived before? If so, why? Aren't we taught that all Christians go immediately to heaven upon death? Why then, as Job proclaimed, will there be a physical resurrection in the latter days?

Where should we go to find the answer to this question? Science and human logic can tell us nothing. Many theologians will point to places like I Thessalonians 4:15-17 and tell us that yes, there will be a resurrection, but it will be of a spiritual nature. But will there be a physical resurrection of people who have died and come back to life as we know it now? Have there ever been people who have died, really died, completely dead, and been brought back to life?

Previous Resurrections

The Bible tells us of many that have died and were brought back to life. Stories abound in both the Old Testament and the New. They were brought back to a normal physical life and then died, as do any normal human being. Yes, they were really dead and in some cases decomposition had been far advanced. So, if we believe the Bible, the answer to our question is yes. However, those spoken of have all since died and are again in their graves just like David (Acts 2:29-34). So, we must conclude that the God who created life is certainly able to

IF A MAN DIE

recreate life back to its original state; including all those who have died and returned to dust. But why, haven't they already gone to their reward?

Are there other indications from the Bible that there will be a future physical resurrection of long dead people? People who are brought back to life to live and die a normal life here on earth again? If so, does it also tell us why?

A Future Physical Resurrection for Those That Were Blinded

(John 12:40; Rom. 11:7; II Cor. 3:14)

Is it conceivable that there could be another resurrection that is different than the one commonly spoken of? If so, would it have something to do with how *all* Israel is to be saved (Rom. 11:26, Isa. 59:20-21)? Wouldn't *all* Israel have to include those long dead?

Ezekiel 16:55 speaks of many people returning to their former state, would not there former state be physical?

Ezekiel 37 tells us a strange story. Described in minute detail, he foretells of a future physical resurrection of an exceeding great army of people, restored to a physical life and given their first chance for salvation. They thought (poetically speaking) it was all over for them, that they had lost their opportunity for eternal life (Ezek. 37:11).

But if this does not fit into your predetermined template of religion then you must come up with an explanation of your own. Many theologians have done that. Having no other way

IF A MAN DIE

to explain it, they tell us that this is simply a spiritual awakening to the truth of Christ by Israel in the last days, putting their own spin on it to protect their own predetermined concepts. But if so, how is *all* Israel to be saved? Certainly there is an awakening as verse 13 describes; however, it is also quite pointedly, describing a physical resurrection.

What is the meaning of this resurrection? When does it occur? Is this a different resurrection from the one Jesus was telling Nicodemus about in John 3 and the one mentioned in I Corinthians 15? Well, yes, both Jesus and Paul were plainly talking about a resurrection to a glorified spiritual body.

The Resurrection to Judgment

Jesus gave us additional information on the resurrection to judgment in Mathew 11:22-24 when He said: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades, for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom, which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment, than for you" (Matt. 11:21-24 RSV). Why more tolerable? Are there degrees of hell as Dante's *Divine Comedy* described? Oddly, he wrote it as a satire on the ridiculous teachings of the church (which were borrowed from paganism).

IF A MAN DIE

However now it seems to be adopted as a generally accepted understanding of hell in spite of the clear teachings of the Bible to the contrary.

A Question

Does the word judgment always mean sentencing, or can it also mean a period of time for testing?

If they were just being resurrected in order to be cast back into hell, why would it be more tolerable for one than the other? Aren't we taught that they are already there anyway? If they had gone to an ever-burning hell at death what's the point of a resurrection only to go back again? Is Jesus alerting us to something more that we should know?

Jesus is speaking of a time of judgment for these dry bones. So they certainly must be alive, therefore they must have been resurrected. But when would it occur, and what did He mean, "Day of Judgment"? Typically, when we think of judgment we think of a sentence given by a judge. But doesn't sentencing come after the judgment is made? The act of judging (as in evaluating) goes on while something is ongoing, as in sports. Let's keep that in mind while we consider some seemingly contradictory statements of Jesus and Peter.

Hard To Explain Statements

In Acts 4:12 (NASU) we read: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." That's a very specific statement. Isn't Peter telling us that we must know

IF A MAN DIE

Jesus, what He accomplished for us, and to call on Him only in order to be saved?

Do you think it's possible that there may be some in past history, or even today, that have never heard of Jesus? If that is true, (and it certainly is) then who is winning, Satan or Jesus?

An Often Ignored Passage

In John 6:44 and 65 (AMP) we read: "No one is able to come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me attracts and draws him and gives him the desire to come to Me, and [then] I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day."

Isn't this saying that it's the Father that chooses who is to be called and that some are ignored?

And yet in II Peter 3:9 (KJV) we read: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, *not willing* that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And of course, we have that well known verse John 3:16.

Let's consider something else Jesus said: "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink'" (John 7:37-38 NASU).

Now Hold On, What Did We Just Read?

No other name - no one comes unless drawn by the Father. Then Jesus invites all to come to him (with no prerequisites) and He will give them living water. Do these statements make

IF A MAN DIE

any sense at all if looked at in light of traditional Christian dogma?

Is there a contradiction here, or is there something else we need to know? Could it be that provisions have been made for those who, through no fault of their own, have never been called or even heard of Jesus? We must look deeper.

Could Something Have Been Overlooked?

It should be noted that the time frame of John 6 was during the spring harvest period, while John 7 was during the fall. The key lies in the first words of John 7:37. “Now on the *last day*, the *great day* of the feast” What is being referred to? It is something that was thrown out of traditional Christianity at about the same time they threw out the Lord’s Sabbath Day.

The Feasts of the Lord (not the Jews, as is commonly taught) explains God’s seven thousand year plan for the salvation of mankind (Lev. 23). But, because of the hatred of the Jews in early Christian history (coming to head with Constantine around 325 A.D.) anything that appeared Jewish was not only discarded but even forbidden, thus throwing out the good with the bad.

In John 7 Jesus was referring to the seventh annual Feast Day as commanded in Leviticus 23:36-39. The eighth day following the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles was known as the *Last Great Day*.

A Plan for All Mankind:

Christ is saying that there is coming a time “on the last great day,” (after the millennium when the rest of the dead are resurrected, Rev. 20:5) that all people will be invited to come to Christ, and know the name by which they may be saved. Isaiah 65:17-25 sheds more light on this subject and suggests that a life span may be as much as one hundred years.

But when does this happen? It is the same time that Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon, Capernaum, and Sodom, all meet along with the dry bones of Ezekiel 37 and a great number of others. Let’s go to Revelation 20:4-6 and find out when that is.

Reign of the First Fruits

“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 *“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.*

6 “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4:6 NASU).

Who are these that reign with Christ while the rest of the dead remain in their graves? They are the First Fruits of the (spring)

IF A MAN DIE

harvest of the earth (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4). The second death has no power over them as they are spirit beings and are not subject to death or the Great White Throne Judgment. They have already proven themselves and are resurrected at Christ's return.

The Rest of the Dead

This is the vast multitude, the majority of mankind, the babies who die before knowing Christ, those in the many places on earth where they have never heard the gospel.

Those Christ mentioned in Matthew 11 and Mark 4:11-12 and those whom the Father saw fit not to call in this present age (for their own good) will all rise together on the last day. Symbolized by the 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:36). Paul understood and counseled the Colossians not to let anyone judge them for honoring the feast days as they were a shadow of things to come (Col. 2:16-17 KJV).

Those throughout history who never had a fair opportunity or were never called, will now be offered what they never had before, their first opportunity for salvation. This is by no means a second chance. They never had an opportunity to really know God. This is the great fall harvest, or fruit harvest, the in-gathering of the earth (Ex. 34:22). Who are these people? God knows. It is not given to us to know who are called and who are not and we should never assume to know. Our job is to speak the good news to all, keeping in mind that He loved us while we were yet sinners.

But Don't All Know God And Are Without Excuse?

What about Romans 1:20 where it states, “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

Is this verse saying that all mankind knows God in spite of not being specifically called by the Father as stated in John 6:44 and 65? If so, then Paul is contradicting Jesus.

We must be careful not to isolate this verse from its context. Verse 19 plainly states, “That which may be known of God was *shown* to them by God.” Verse 21 points out that at one time they *knew* God, and in verse 28 we're told that they did not like to *retain* God in their knowledge. So we can assume that at one time they must have been drawn to God. They were *shown*, they *knew*, but they chose not to *retain* the knowledge of God.

God finally gave up on them and let them go their way. They would not change even though they *knew* about the coming judgment of God (verse 32). Certainly, “many are called but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14).

Is This the Only Day of Salvation?

But doesn't the Bible say, “This is *the* day of salvation”? Yes, it does and it is for those who are called, don't miss it. In II Corinthians 6:2 Paul is quoting what God told Isaiah (Isa. 49:8). But what God actually said was, “*a day*” not *the day*, and He also said, “...in an acceptable time.” The time He is referring to is described in the entire chapter. See if you can figure out

IF A MAN DIE

what time God is talking about (Hint, millennium). All mankind will have their day to choose salvation but in God's chosen time.

The Age of Accountability

It is commonly taught that should one die before the age of accountability (what ever that is) he goes straight to heaven or some similar place. But the Bible doesn't say that. If so, it poses the ridiculous question, "Why not kill all the babies at birth so that there would be no chance of them going to the lake of fire?"

What the Bible Does Say

The Bible does say that God is merciful, fair and just. Can you picture Him sending anyone to the lake of fire that has not had a fair chance to know Him and accept the salvation He offers?

The Bible does say that there will be a second resurrection.

The Bible does say that there have been and will be physical as well as spiritual resurrections.

The Bible does say that our Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).

The Bible also says that there will be a time when every man will know the Lord (Isa. 9:11; Jer. 31:34). Has there ever been a time since the fall that every man knew the Lord?

Do We Worship A Cruel, Unfair God?

If those, who through no fault of their own, have not come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ must burn in hell forever, then God is terribly cruel and unfair. Yet that is the group that makes up the majority of mankind. Does that describe the God we worship? I think not, for the Lord we worship is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, just in all His ways and will not do inequity (deal unfairly) (Ps. 103:8; Zeph. 3:5). His opportunity for salvation includes all mankind.

Job knew something that modern Christianity does not know, because they have refused to recognize God's appointed times. Study the appointed times of God (Lev. 23). They are shadows of things to come (Col. 2:17 KJV).

There is a time coming when the entire world will know the only name by which man may be saved (Jer. 24:7, 31:34; Acts 4:12).

There is a time coming when every man, woman and child who ever lived will have an opportunity to know His name (Isa. 52:6-10).

There is a time coming when all the world will keep the Sabbaths and holy days of the Lord (Zech. 14:16; Isa. 66:23).

There is a day of salvation for all mankind, but each in his own order, starting with Christ, the first fruit, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming (I Cor. 15:23).

There Is a True Source of Infinite Wisdom

Psalms 111:10

“A good understanding have all they that do His commandments.”

Psalms 119:97-100 (AMP)

97 “Oh, how love I Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies, for [Your words] are ever before me.

99 I have better understanding and deeper insight than all my teachers, because your testimonies are my meditation (II Tim. 3:15, wisdom).

100 I understand more than the aged, because I keep your precepts (hearing, receiving, loving, and obeying them).”

Do You Sometimes Think That God Has Forgotten You?

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet I will not forget you.

Behold, I have indelibly imprinted (tattooed a picture of) you on the palm of each of My hands; O Zion your walls are continually before Me” (Isa. 49:15-16).

The Millennial Kingdom of God

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. And the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

IF A MAN DIE

“But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a rejoicing and her people a joy.

“And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; and the sound of weeping will no more be heard in it, nor the cry of distress.

“There shall no more be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who dies prematurely; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner who dies when only a hundred years old shall be [thought only a child, cut off because he is] accursed.

“They shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.

“They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat [the fruit]. For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My chosen and elect shall long make use of and enjoy the work of their hands.

“They shall not labor in vain or bring forth [children] for sudden terror or calamity; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.

“And it shall be that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear (Isa 30:19; 58:9; Matt 6:8).

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They

IF A MAN DIE

shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy Mount [Zion], says the Lord” (Isa. 65:17-25 AMP, also see Isa. 66:22; II Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

Wondrous Plans for Man

“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waits for him” (Isa. 64:4). His preparations include a time for all mankind to have their own personal opportunity to know Him and make their own choice.

Wisdom from God’s Holy Spirit

“... your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught.

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

“For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God know no man, but the Spirit of God.

IF A MAN DIE

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

“But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ which is revealed in His word” (1Cor. 2:5-17 KJV).

**“... and his name is called
The Word of God”** (Rev. 19:13)



The three stages of truth:

First- ridiculed

Second - violently opposed

Third - accepted as being self-evident

Del Leger, Christian Church of God, Grand Junction, Co. www.ccofgod.org,
dlleger@nontrose.net, (970) 249-6857, ©10/9/07

Other booklets on related topics:

BEINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD

GOD'S INTRIGUING CYCLE OF SEVENS

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

UNDERSTANDING HELL

THE BEGININGNOF ERROR

LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN

HAS TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY LOST ITS WAY?

THE AWARDS CEREMONY AT THE THRONE OF GOD

Revised 12/31/13