

## CHAPTER 12

### "On the Millennium, and the Scriptural Testimonies to the Doctrine of It"

by  
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#### Part 1 Fourth Proposition

(Condensed and Paraphrased)

We may now proceed to the consideration of our fourth proposition: *a resurrection of part of the dead at the beginning of the millennium, called "the resurrection of the just," in contrast to the resurrection at the end of the millennium.*

There is one passage in the New Testament which, being literally construed according to the plain, obvious meaning of its terms, must at once establish such a resurrection in the future. I mean Revelation 20:4-6. But I shall reserve this passage for later consideration and go to other passages that appear to intimate a first and peculiar resurrection in the future.

First, Luke 14:1-24 records what our Savior said when asked by a certain Pharisee to come to his house for a meal:

*When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.*

A resurrection of the just is here recognized by name, and we may presume it would not be called such if there were not a resurrection of the unjust also. In other words, that resurrection is a resurrection in which none but the just and righteous are personally concerned.

The context of the passage in Luke shows that the purpose of our Lord's observation was not to prohibit the doing of good in the hope of some reward, nor even in the hope of a reward in kind; but it was to inform his hearers of the method and objects of their beneficence--those who, however grateful they may be, have not the means to repay them at all in this life. But God will repay men for their charity at the resurrection of the just. And if they are to be repaid in another life in any sense amounting to a return in kind, it

must be in some such state of society as will be found during the millennium. The resurrection of the just is a resurrection expressly intended for the reward of good deeds in kind, that the just may receive in the body the precise equivalent--and more than equivalent!--of those acts of charity and benevolence which they performed in the body during their earthly pilgrimage.

We look now at Philippians 3:10: "*That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*" Paul knew there was a resurrection of the dead to come which all men must experience as a matter of course--the general judgment before the commencement of the eternal state. Can this possibly be the resurrection in which he *hopes* to partake? Surely not. But if there were to be a *particular* resurrection before the millennium in which only the good and faithful would benefit, Paul might very well speak in terms of his hope in attaining to it.

Again, consider Romans 11:12-15: "*Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! . . . For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*" These words are from the same chapter that promised so plainly the future conversion of the Jews, and they are in reference to the same subject--the restoration of the people of God to their former favor with him and the consequence of that restoration to the world. This consequence shall be a life from the dead (ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν). But what sort of life? A spiritual life from the dead or a physical one?

Now a spiritual life from the dead in its effects upon the world must imply an extension of true religion both in the hearts and affections, and this must be among the societies of mankind to a degree that has never previously taken place. That is, it would imply a conversion of the Gentiles to faith in Christ not only in name but also in deeds. But no such effect can follow on the conversion of the Jews because the conversion of the Jews itself cannot take place until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and when the number of the Gentiles is full, what further addition to them can be expected?

Therefore the resurrection from the dead can be no such spiritual regeneration of the world; and if not, it must be a literal resurrection from the dead. And the millennarians look for just such a resurrection after the second advent of Christ and the conversion of the Jews before the beginning of the millennial economy. Nor is it without meaning that Paul speaks of this resurrection as "*from the dead*" (ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν) and not "*of the dead*," implying perhaps that part only of the dead are then to rise and not the whole.

Let it be remembered that the fall (παράπτωμα) of the Jews had been already the wealth of the world; the diminishing (ἥττημα) of the Jews had proved already the wealth (πλοῦτος) of

the Gentiles; and the casting off (*ἀποβολή*) of Israel had entailed upon it the reconciliation to God (*καταλλαγῆ*) of those who before were aliens from him. What, then, should the reverse of each of these things regarding the Jews produce for the world? Surely no repetition of the same effects over again, but something never before witnessed. The recovery of Israel's former standing must produce some more signal and characteristic impression on the circumstances of the world than his previous fall did. His enriching must work more marvelously than his impoverishing. His restoration to favor with God must bring about something far more glorious than his temporary rejection had done.

In 1 Corinthians 15:22,23 we read: "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order:*<sup>1</sup> *Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*" These words might raise the same difficulty as the passage quoted from Philippians if there were not a double resurrection, the former exclusively appropriated to those who are Christ's, the latter appropriated to those who are not. Otherwise, why should those that are Christ's be the only ones mentioned where all mankind were meant, among whom there must be many that in no sense are his?

The context confirms this construction. If *all* are to be made alive in Christ, each in his own order, then they that are Christ's must be made alive in their proper order of time and succession in distinction from those who are not Christ's. This follows from Christ being the firstfruit of those who belong to him. Those who do not belong to Christ will be made alive by Christ just as truly as those who are his, if all men shall be made alive in him as truly and as generally as all men have been made mortal in Adam. As the resurrection of the firstfruit, then, Christ himself necessarily preceded those who are his. Thus, on the principle of a similar analogy, the resurrection of those that are his should be expected to precede the rest of the world. Now if there is to be a distinction in the order and succession of those who are to be raised from the dead, then there is such a thing as a first resurrection and a second, with the first being, according to the doctrine of the millennialists, the resurrection of the just.

*An Exposition of the Parables and of Other Parts of the Gospels*, Vol. I. Oxford: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1834. Liberty taken for paraphrasing.

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1 The word which is rendered *order* means properly *division, body, company*. The intent of it here seems to be to imply that such and such a number of the dead will be raised together, not all of them at once. Everyone who is raised will belong to this order or body of the raised, or to some other, but not all to the same order. The first division of this description is that which is called immediately after *οἱ Χριστοῦ*.