

VICTOR P. OLSZEWSKI

are
the
dead alive
now
?

Are the Dead Alive Now?

Other books by **VICTOR PAUL WIERWILLE**

Power For Abundant Living

Receiving the Holy Spirit Today

The Bible Tells Me So

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The Word's Way

*A*RE THE DEAD
ALIVE NOW?

Victor Paul Wierwille

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About Victor Paul Wierwille

Victor Paul Wierwille has spent many years searching and seeking enlightenment on God's Word from men of God scattered across the continent. His academic career after high school continued at the Mission House (Lakeland) College and Seminary where he received his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity degrees. Dr. Wierwille studied at the University of Chicago and at Princeton Theological Seminary where he was awarded the Master of Theology degree in Practical Theology. Later he completed his work for the Doctor of Theology degree.

For sixteen years Dr. Wierwille served as a pastor in northwestern Ohio. During these years he searched the Word of God for keys to powerful, victorious living. Dr. Wierwille visited E. Stanley Jones and studied his Ashram program. Such men as Glenn Clark, Rufus Mosley, Starr Daily, Albert Cliff, Bishop K. C. Pillai and others were guests of Dr. Wierwille's local congregation. Karl Barth of Switzerland was a friend and consultant, as is

George M. Lamsa, the Aramaic scholar, as well as other European and Far Eastern scholars. With these men Dr. Wierwille quested for Biblical enlightenment. In 1953 he began teaching classes on Power for Abundant Living. These concentrated sessions are specifically directed to unfold the Word of God as the Will of God and to answer crucial questions regarding the Holy Spirit and its present availability and efficacy in believers' lives. Leading men and women from all over the world into receiving the more abundant life quickly consumed Dr. Wierwille's full time, so it became necessary for him to resign his local pastorate. Since that time Dr. Wierwille has devoted his entire energy to establishing The Way Biblical Research Center in New Knoxville, Ohio. There, as elsewhere in the United States, India, Australia, Samoa, and England, he continues to study, write, and teach the Power for Abundant Living.

Foreword

Having for so many years personally investigated all fields directly and remotely associated with the subject "Are the Dead Alive Now?" the author presents this Biblical research work with logic, Biblical depth, and spiritual insight. This research may prove controversial but it is surely not untimely with the current teachings of many religious leaders and the experimentation in the psychic world which are finding so-called proofs of survival after death. Laymen and clergy alike are being cogently appealed to and convinced by these supernatural phenomena. Thus, lacking accurate Biblical knowledge, they fall prey to counterfeit phenomena which to the unknowing appear innocent and genuine.

That certain phenomena do occur is obvious to those who care to observe. But on this subject of phenomena the Bible states its case. The Word of God painstakingly divides all things into two realms: the physical and the spiritual. Science and the five-senses man (the Bible calls him the "natural man") can know and analyze the

physical or material world. But survival after death is a matter dealing exclusively with the spiritual realm and is legitimately not within the scope of science and the natural, scientific, senses-knowledge man. In contradiction to the Biblical teaching that natural man can know only the natural, physical world, a certain so-called scientific group is rising that tries to examine supernatural phenomena. This group calls its power of study extrasensory perception, the phrase itself expressing the quality of being outside the realm of the senses and thus, logically, outside the scope of science.

What does science know or believe about the existence of two gods? The Bible explicitly shows that supernatural phenomena must come from one of these two antithetical powers whose exclusive domain is the spiritual: (1) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God; or (2) Satan, the god of this world, the false god who would deceive the very elect of the true God if he could. Those who are involved in spiritualism and those who claim scientific controls for study of phenomena, are fooled by the god of this world with stealth and increasing frequency.

The irony of Satan's deception is that although he is the author of sin and death, during seances and ESP experiences it is Satan's power that *counterfeits* the conjured-up dead and makes them *appear* alive and enjoying the Great Hereafter. Auditory and ectoplasmic phenomena of those who have died and now appear alive

elsewhere cannot be sponsored by the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God shows that new life to the dead comes with the return of Christ. Before Christ's coming, all those who have died remain in the grave in corruption and unconsciousness. Therefore, if a dead person appears to be present in any experience, the facsimile of the person is a counterfeit brought on by the deceitful god of this world. We will see more Biblical documentation on this subject as we study in Part II the experience of King Saul during his visit with the Woman of Endor.

Satan and satanic powers is a Biblical study all its own—an extensive topic timely to an age of flooding spiritualism. The laws of the spiritual world of God and Satan are authenticated in the Bible, and thus the author of this work approaches his topic from the most logical and sound of sources. In an age of questioning and questing, a return and a search of the Word of God seems not only reasonable, but in the end, most satisfying.

KAREN W. MARTIN

Somerset, N. J.

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Introduction

Most of us maintain certain beliefs which we unthinkingly accept as true without checking them against the truth of the Word of God. When we find ourselves acting in this mechanical fashion, we must slow down, take inventory of our mental patterns, and see if our beliefs are in agreement with The Word. We as Christians are called of God to study the Word of God to show ourselves approved unto God as workmen who need not to be ashamed of our workmanship, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. So that we may be able to give testimony of the faith of Jesus Christ that is in us, we accept the authority of The Word as the basis of our beliefs and actions.

Those who believe and understand the Bible, the Word of God, know that the Scriptures teach beyond a

shadow of a doubt that it is impossible to reproduce until or before the return of Christ persons who once lived and died. Therefore, only if a person denies the resurrection of Christ and His return can that person believe the dead are now alive. If, as the Bible teaches, the dead will not live again until they are raised some time in the future, then it is axiomatic that the dead cannot be alive now.

This research book is dedicated to the presentation of the accuracy of the Biblical text regarding those Scriptures which tell the timing and the significance of death and resurrection. Not the Scriptures, but man's interpretations and mistranslations, coupled with supernatural experiences contrary to God's Word, have muddied the lucidity of Biblical statements. We seek simplicity and clarity once more by returning to the fountainhead of truth and by letting God's Word express itself to us as we absorb it without defending our own preconceived ideas. In the end, God's Word will endure. So if we sincerely want answers and believe in God's authority, we must return to the revelation given in His Word.

Let me make a word of introduction before going into the ensuing study. We must be careful to note that the Word of God does not say of itself that any translation of the Bible is without error. The Word in II Timothy 3:16 proclaims that the original revelation was inspired of God and without mistakes; but in the meantime errors in translation have occurred. Many errors have

crept into the translations of The Word since its first writing. Thus the question becomes: how does one know when he is reading the True Word or error—and when an error, how to correct it?

First of all, when a passage of the Word of God is not clear or is contradictory with other Scriptures, a student of The Word should look at older, more nearly original texts (such as Estrangelo Aramaic, Hebrew, or Greek) to see if the translation is as clear in English as it was in the earlier texts. Look at the translations of older texts to see if they are more clear.

Secondly, carefully read the entire context of a Scripture. In the text of this work, I often have quoted long Scriptural passages; be sure to read with care and patience the complete context as the surrounding scope of the verse is essential for an understanding. Verses cannot be extracted from their contexts and still project the intended truth.

In the third place in studying unclear or apparently contradictory Scriptures, look for other Scriptures on the given topic. When other Scriptures are clear and agree with one another, we know that the many concurring passages must be correct and the unclear, contradictory passage has had error creep into it through the ages. We must adhere to the truth of the many clear passages and look for the translation errors in the apparently contradictory verse or verses.

Finally—and perhaps I should have noted this as the

first key—we should look into our minds to see if we are reading exactly what is stated or, perhaps, whether we are reading into the words or between the lines. This is a major source for our lack of understanding of the accuracy of the Word of God. Only when our minds understand The Word as it is written—with proper translation, seeing the verse in its context, and having all verses on a given topic concur—do we have what I constantly refer to as the *Word of God*. No version or translation approaches perfection in representing the inspired, original Word of God, and therefore we as students must be especially diligent in seeking the truth, errorless truth, of the original, God-breathed Word.

In this text of “Are the Dead Alive Now,” I have begun by giving the many concurring Scriptures which tell that all who die before the return of Christ are dead until His second coming, otherwise there would be no need for His return. The Word of God shows that the return of Christ (called in Greek *parousia*) has two parts. The first part is His coming *for* His Church, the Body of Christ. This is called the gathering together. At that time the dead in Christ will be raised incorruptible and the living believers will “put on immortality.” The second part of the *parousia* is Christ’s coming *with* His Church of the Body upon the earth. During this period, which is also called *apokalupsis* (revelation, revealing, making manifest, unveiling), occurs the resurrections of

all believers (exclusive of the Body of Christ) and all unbelievers.

After observing the basic teaching of *The Word*, I then examine several unclear and seemingly contradictory Scriptures on death and resurrection. These passages include the following: (1) Paul's expression in *Philippians* 1, saying, "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain; (2) Paul's expression in *II Corinthians* 5 where he says, ". . . rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"; (3) the vision of what is commonly known as the *Transfiguration* from *Matthew* 17; (4) the translation of *Enoch* so that he should not see death as recorded in *Hebrews* 11; (5) the parable of *Lazarus* in *Abraham's bosom* from *Luke* 16; (6) the account of *Jesus* and the one malefactor on the day of crucifixion when *Jesus* said, as recorded in *Luke* 23, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise"; (7) the example in *Matthew* 22 about the woman who had seven husbands; (8) the account in *I Samuel* 28 of the prophetess of *Endor*. After these Scriptures are examined, an appendix is included for further study into the intricately accurate usage of other terms and topics related to "are the dead alive now?" The appendix includes a study of the whole man—body, soul, and spirit; a word study of the difference between "to kill" and "to destroy"; various translations of words concerning graves and burial; and an itemized list of

specific words on death, destruction, and hell with their meanings and various English translations.

After such an investigation and study, the Biblical revelation on the topic "Are the Dead Alive Now?" will stand forth in its clarity and consistency.

PART I

THE THESIS

CHAPTER ONE

Are the Dead Alive Now?

Most Christians hold the belief that upon death those who belong to Christ are immediately received up into glory, commonly called Heaven or paradise, to appear before the Father. There they are alive and conscious and have a joyous existence with Him and their loved ones. Such a belief is contrary to the teachings in the Word of God. For if a person immediately after expiring is taken to eternal bliss, why is the return of Christ and/or the resurrection necessary? If after death the Christian is already alive and with Him, why should Christ return to gather His Church?

If death is the entrance to eternal happiness with the Lord, then death is not an enemy but a welcomed friend. If death brings us into the immediate presence of Christ, then the Scriptures are void and our believing vain. But

death is *not* a friend, as I Corinthians 15:26 pointedly states: "The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death." The enemy death will some day be destroyed but obviously it is not yet, as witnessed by the fact that funeral directors are not lacking for business.

Since death has not been destroyed and since those who have died are not already alive and in Heaven, where are the dead? What is "death"?

The word *death* in the Bible is the Greek word *thanatos*, which is defined as "the natural end of earthly human existence." *Thanatos* is not merely an instantaneous occurrence when one expires but a continuing state. Release from this continuing state of death hinges upon the return of Christ.*

If release from death comes with the return of Christ, where are the dead until that time? The Bible says that they are in the "grave" (*hadēs* in Greek; *sheol* in Hebrew.) These words are interchangeably translated "hell," "grave," and "pit." *Hadēs* or *sheol* is never the place of destruction;† it is always the continuing state

* I Thessalonians 4:16, 17: "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."

I Corinthians 15:12, 13: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen."

† *Gehenna* in Greek, which is *ghi-hinnom* in Hebrew, is also translated "hell" but is not the grave (*hadēs* or *sheol*.) *Gehenna* is the place of destruction, hell-fire. The word comes from the valley of Hinnom

of the dead. The most accurate translation of *hadēs* and *sheol* would be "gravedom." Gravedom is the state in which all dead dwell; it is not a *qeber*, a spot where the body is buried on land or sea. The Biblical description of gravedom (the kingdom of all those in the grave—the dead), *sheol* or *hadēs*, is a place where there is no consciousness and thus no remembrance.

PSALMS 6:⁶~~3~~:

For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee. . . .

PSALMS 146:4:

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

ECCLESIASTES 9:5, 6, 10:

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

Also, their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Because there is no consciousness in death, there is no awareness of time for the dead person. Thus the moment of a man's death becomes, *in a sense of time*

where carrion is forever burning. (See Joshua 15:8; Matthew 13:39, 40; Luke 17:29, 30; Matthew 25:41.)

for him, the moment of the return of Christ. But *within the dimension of time*, the moment of a man's death is *neither* his gathering together unto Christ *nor* his resurrection. In a sense of time he does not go immediately to Heaven, but descends into gravedom, *sheol*.

PSALMS 89:48:

What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave [*sheol*]?

PSALMS 16:10:

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [*sheol*]. . . .

PSALMS 49:15:

But God will redeem [to rescue by resurrection] my soul from the power of the grave [*sheol*]. . . .

JOB 21:13:

They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave [*sheol*].

In every one of these Scriptures the Hebrew word *sheol* is used. Interesting to note is that the beasts go to *sheol* too.

PSALMS 49:12, 14:

48, 13, 15

Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.

Like sheep that are laid in the grave [*sheol*]; death shall feed on them. . . .

Jesus Christ likewise descended into gravedom when He died. If anyone should have gone to Heaven imme-

diately after death, surely it should have been Jesus. But even He went to *sheol* or *hadēs*. For three days and three nights He had no consciousness, as Matthew 12 and Acts 2 state.

MATTHEW 12:40:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

ACTS 2:30, 31, 32:

. . . He [God] would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [*hades*], neither his flesh did see corruption.

This Jesus hath God raised up. . . .

Just as all men who die, Jesus also went to *hadēs*.

What then happens in *hadēs*? All is corruption and decay.

GENESIS 3:19:

. . . For of dust thou *art* and unto dust shalt thou return.

ACTS 13:36:

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

As all who go to the grave, Jesus too would have totally decayed if God had not raised Him from the dead.

ACTS 13:34, 35:

And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead *now* no more to return to corruption . . .

Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption [total decay].

God raised Jesus Christ from *hadēs* and its corruption. If He had not been raised, Jesus Christ would not be coming back again; and without His coming back, there would never be a release for *any* of mankind—Christian and non-Christian, saved and unsaved—from gravedom and corruption therein.

HEBREWS 9:27, 28:

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation [wholeness].

The time element between the word *die*, in verse 27, and the word *but* is the time span between a man's death and his being raised.

Salvation, meaning "wholeness," of verse 28 is the deliverance from corruption which will occur when Christ returns for the gathering together and the first resurrection of mankind. The dead are not alive to have wholeness now, for man does not have immortality now. We are yet subject to die and corrupt in the grave. When do we have immortality? With the second coming of Christ. Until that time, all who have died are not in Heaven; they are in *hadēs*, gravedom. Death is not a

friend bringing us into the presence of Christ and our loved ones; it is a blatant enemy, for in death all go to gravedom.

Not now, but some day, death shall be destroyed. Then the dead in Christ will have a new body—this time an incorruptible body and the living believers will have an immortal body.

I CORINTHIANS 15:53-57:

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [living at the time] *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?

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.

Death would end life forever for all humanity were it not for Christ's resurrection and thus His return to gather and resurrect mankind. It is then—with the return of Christ—that we have victory over death. Then we have immortality and incorruption. Until that time, the dead remain in gravedom in corruption and unconsciousness.

CHAPTER TWO

When Shall the Dead be Made Alive?

(THE RETURN OF CHRIST)

I Corinthians 15 is the basic Scripture in understanding the resurrections and the return of Christ. The chapter begins by telling of Christ's being raised by God after Christ was in *hadēs* for three days and three nights. The Word substantiates Christ's rising by pointing out the witnesses who saw the resurrected Christ. The Word then asks, after showing such proofs of the risen Christ, "How can we not believe in the resurrection since Christ did arise?"

I CORINTHIANS 15:3:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

VERSE 4:

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

VERSE 5:

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

VERSE 6:

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

VERSE 7:

After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

VERSE 8:

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

VERSE 12:

Now if Christ be preached that he rose [out] from [among] the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

VERSE 13:

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.

VERSE 14:

And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

VERSE 15:

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God [if we preach that He was raised and he was not;] because we have testified of God that he ~~was~~ raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

VERSE 16:

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised.

VERSE 17:

And if Christ be not raised, your faith [believing] is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

VERSE 18:

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

VERSE 19:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

Paul has carefully debated and proved his thesis: that the hope of mankind is the resurrection of Christ. In order for the ascended Christ to return, He has to have risen. Without this crucial event, our believing is in vain, our teaching is false, and we are most wretched for we have no hope for a future life. But fortunately, our believing is not vain, our teaching not false, and we are most hopeful because Christ did rise.

Since Christ did rise, when shall He return? Matthew 24:3 and 6 gives the record of the disciples asking Jesus Christ about His personal return and the end of time.

MATTHEW 24:3:

. . . Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end [*sunteleia*, moving towards the final point, *telos*] of the world [age]?

VERSE 6

. . . for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end [*telos*, final point] is not yet.

The word *coming* in Matthew 24:3 is the Greek word *parousia*, translated in the Bible as “coming” and “presence,” and always indicates the personal presence of the person spoken of.* To understand Christ’s second coming, we should look at His first coming. Micah 5:2 indicates Christ’s coming forth from Bethlehem (which event is recorded in Matthew 2:1) while Zechariah 9:9 indicates Christ’s coming unto Jerusalem (which event is recorded in Matthew 21:1–10). The events between and including Christ’s birth and His ascension is His *first* coming. And, just as Christ’s first coming spanned a period of time, so does his second coming, the *parousia*.

The events of the end (*sunteleia*) include: (1) Christ’s coming *for* His saints, (2) the events of the book of Revelation with Christ’s coming *with* His saints, (3) the first and second resurrections, and finally (4) the end (*telos*) when death is destroyed and all things are subdued to God.

Christ’s second coming has two basic phases. The two parts of the *parousia* must be clearly distinguished to avoid serious error. With these two phases all the dead shall be made alive and the living believers made immortal.

* The following Scriptures are all the places in the New Testament where the word *parousia* is used. Note that it is not only used of Christ’s coming for His Church; but it always shows the personal presence of the one spoken of: Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39; I Corinthians 15:23; 16:17; II Corinthians 7:6, 7; 10:10; Philippians 1:26; 2:12; I Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; II Thessalonians 2:1, 8, 9; James 5:7, 8; II Peter 1:16; 3:4, 12; I John 2:28.

1. Christ's Return for His Church, The Body The Gathering Together

The part of the *parousia*, return, of Christ for His Church is called in II Thessalonians 2:1 "our gathering together unto him." First of all, one must note that the gathering together affects only those who are born again of God* during the age of the Church of the Body, which age is the period between the day of Pentecost and the first part of the *parousia*. The unsaved of the Church of the Body period and all others before and after the Church Age will be resurrected when Christ comes with His saints. No unbelievers are affected by the part of the *parousia* of Christ for His Church, nor are the Old Testament saints, nor the Church of the Bride.

The order of events in the return of Christ for His Church of the Body was revealed to Paul and is recorded in I Thessalonians 4, and I Corinthians 15.

I THESSALONIANS 4:13-18:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

* Romans 10:9, 10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep.

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.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This first part of the *parousia* is never technically called a resurrection, not even in verse 16 which says, “. . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” The reason it is not referred to as a resurrection is that some believers will be alive at the time of this portion of His coming and naturally will not then need to be raised from the dead. Those who are alive will be caught up in the clouds along with those believers who have just previously been raised from the dead to meet the Lord in the air. With this coming of Christ *for* His Church, He will not come *on* the earth; He will simply gather the dead and living of the Church of the Body. I Corinthians 15 corroborates these events.

I CORINTHIANS 15:51-54:

Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [not all will be dead at Christ's return] but we [the members of the Church] shall all be changed.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [which are alive at His return] shall be changed.

For this corruptible [the dead of the Church of the Body] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [the living of the Church of the Body] *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.

When the mortals have put on immortality and the dead and corrupted ones have been raised incorruptible, all shall have a new body, as is set forth earlier in chapter 15 of I Corinthians. The natural body, the body a person has before the return of Christ, has its limitations; but the spiritual body that He gives at His return is like His resurrected body—unlimited in scope and activity.

I CORINTHIANS 15:44:

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

VERSE 45:

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Jesus Christ] *was made* a quickening spirit.

VERSE 46:

Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

VERSE 47:

The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

VERSE 48:

As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy; and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

VERSE 49:

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

VERSE 50:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Our fleshly body is a natural body. But with the gathering together, we shall have a new look, a new type of body—a spiritual body. Until Christ comes, the dead remain in *hadēs* with corrupted physical bodies and unconsciousness.

2. Christ's Return *With* His Church

The Resurrections

The coming of Christ *with* His saints to the earth is also part of the *parousia* but is solely related to "the Lord's Day." * This part of the *parousia* must definitely

* The "day of the Lord" or the "Lord's Day" is not a day of the

be distinguished from the first part of the *parousia* when Christ comes for His Church. The coming of Christ with His saints, called in Greek *apokalupsis*, is the "appearing," "revelation," "the advent," and "the day of the Lord." The day of the Lord includes the period of God's judgments. The Church of the Body will never have to endure this experience for it shall already have been gathered together. It would be no comfort if we had to pass through the tribulation of the revelation period. Furthermore if the gathering together is confused with the resurrection, then the whole Church of the Body would have to go through the tribulation. Because Church of the Body will not be on earth during the tribulation period, I Thessalonians says, ". . . comfort one another with these words."

That believers of the Church of the Body will be spared the tribulation, spoken of in Revelation, is disclosed several times in the Epistles. II Thessalonians 2 is one example.

II THESSALONIANS 2:1-3:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him.

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

week but the day when the Lord from heaven does the judging. It is set in opposition to "Man's Day" (I Corinthians 4:3) which is during the age of the Church of the Body which is now when men do the judging.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first [properly translated, "a falling away first" is "the gathering together"],* and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

The Church will be departed and *with* Christ before the wrath of the day of God's judgment comes to pass. The following passages also substantiate this truth.

ROMANS 8:1:

There is therefore now no condemnation [*katakrima*, judgment] to them which are in Christ Jesus. . . .

I THESSALONIANS 1:10:

And to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

ROMANS 5:9:

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

* The Geneva Bible and the Cranmer Bible, first published in 1537, and the Tyndale Bible published in 1539 preceding the King James translation, all translate "a falling away first," "a departure first."

Before the "day of the Lord," there must be a departure of the born-again believers from this world to be with Christ. After this will come to pass that the "man of sin be revealed" which will then be followed by "the day of wrath."

In II Thessalonians 2:3, the Greek words are *hē apostasia*.

The word *hē* is the article "the." The prefix *apo* means "away from." Having a circle, *apo* would be illustrated as a line in motion from the exterior of the circle to some distant point. *Stasia* means "to separate," or "draw out." *Hē apostasia* is a separation away from, or a drawing out from among; it is the departure.

At this part of the *parousia* of Christ, the Church will already have been judged, not for punishment but for rewards. II Corinthians 5:10, in reference to the *parousia* for the Church, says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. . . ." This judgment seat is the *bēma*, the *place*, from which prizes and rewards are given for "the things done. . . ."

The Church of the Body appears before the *bēma* of Christ to receive the "crown of righteousness," "rewards" for deeds done for the faithfulness of our stewardship for Him. We appear before the *bēma* of Christ not to receive God's sentences of wrath of condemnation, but to "have praise of God." None of God's born-again children in Christ will ever be judged as to their standing or anything else for they have already been judged in the Person of their substitute and mediator, Christ Jesus. (John 5:24; 3:17, 18; I Corinthians 11:32; Romans 8:33, 34; I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9.)

In the day of the Lord's judgment when all people have been resurrected,* everyone (except the Church of the Body) will appear before the judgment seat, the bench from which God's judgment sentences will be pronounced.

II Thessalonians 1:7-10 tells some of the events which will occur when Christ comes *with* His Church.

* "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Corinthians 15:22).

And to you who are [were] troubled rest [are at rest] with us, when [at the time] the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [*apokalupsis*] from heaven with his mighty angels [*angelon dunameos*, meaning "messengers of His power," both angels and Church saints].

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

When [after] he shall [have] come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

These words could not be more plain. They definitely do not deal with the *parousia* of Christ for His Church, but with the appearing of Christ later at the revelation appearing, *apokalupsis*, of Himself on the earth. If we read the Scriptures relating to the coming of Christ for His Church and interpret them of the coming of Christ with His Church to the earth, we remain ignorant of the blessed hope* and find ourselves fearful and frustrated.

When Christ returns with His gathered saints, there will be two resurrections, one for the just and another for the unjust.

JOHN 5:28, 29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

* Titus 2:13: "Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

ACTS 24:15:

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

LUKE 14:14:

. . . For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

HEBREWS 11:35:

. . . That they might obtain a better [the first resurrection of the just] resurrection.

The first resurrection is for the just; the second for the unjust. A period of time intervenes between these two. Revelation 20, a vision to John about the latter days, tells about the time gap and explains many other events of the *sunteleia*, the last times near the very end.

VERSE 1:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

VERSE 2:

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

VERSE 3:

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the na-

tions no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

VERSE 4:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

VERSE 5:

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

VERSE 6:

Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priest of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

VERSE 7:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

VERSE 8:

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.

VERSE 9:

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.

VERSE 10:

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.

VERSE 11:

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.

VERSE 12:

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.

VERSE 13:

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [*hadēs*] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

VERSE 14:

And death and hell [*hadēs*] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

VERSE 15:

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

By verse 13 of Revelation 20 all the dead shall have been resurrected. Once again looking at I Corinthians 15, the condensed verses about the return of Christ with its various phases are more clearly understood.

I CORINTHIANS 15:22:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

When shall *all* be made alive? Those who have died during the administration of the Church of the Body shall be made alive when Christ comes *for* His Church. All others will be made alive when Christ comes *with* His Church. Between the first resurrection and the second one is a time lapse. Some Bible scholars say 1,000 years. But the first and second resurrections will make "all alive" and all will be judged.

VERSE 24:

Then *cometh* the end [*telos*, the final-most point], when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

When this time comes, all shall have been judged—sentences passed, rewards given—and there will be a new Heaven and a new earth where there is no more

* Verse 22 is sometimes wrongly used to prove that all people are ultimately going to be saved and everyone will be with Christ. *All without exception* shall "be made alive," but not *all* will have the reward of going to Heaven.

sin, sickness, or dying. At that time He shall be King of kings and Lord of lords.

VERSE 25:

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

VERSE 26:

The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

When death is destroyed, we can ask, "O, death where is thy sting?" When the prophecy of Revelation 20:14 comes to pass which says, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire," then death will have been destroyed and thus have no sting.

VERSE 27:

For he hath put all things under his feet. . . .

VERSE 28:

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

By the time that God is all in all, the Church will have been gathered and rewarded; the just and the unjust shall have been resurrected and judged for rewards and punishments; and, finally, death destroyed. Only on these three occasions—the gathering together, the first and the second resurrections—will the dead be made alive.