

The Benefits the First Resurrection

The Feast of Trumpets pictures one of the most pivotal days of all eternity. It pictures the time of the return of Jesus Christ to this world and the time of the First Resurrection.

In this article, I would like to give you a brief outline of the benefits of having a place in the First Resurrection.

Is it really such a blessing?

**My Lord! What a morning!
When the stars begin to fall!
There will be a shout of victory
When the stars begin to fall!**

So goes the old spiritual song.

Yes! What a morning! Or whatever time of day it might actually be when we rise to meet Jesus Christ in the air. I think that, rather than being morning, it will probably commence at the *beginning* of the feast day, right at sunset. But that's another story altogether.

What a day and what an event to be blessed to be able to witness first hand, and to have a part in!

Blessed? Blessed to have a part in the First Resurrection? You bet! But surprisingly, there are some who don't seem to think so!

Not church members – surely? Yes, church members!

Haven't you ever heard a church member complain that he or she was called in this life?... wishing that he or she would have been called in the Second Resurrection rather than the First?... saying that he or she doubts that he or she could endure the trials and overcoming that come automatically as a part of membership of God's true church?... moaning that he or she would rather have been able to enjoy a trouble-free, stress-free life – a lifetime of relative ease – preferring, perhaps, the pleasures of sin?

I have! And I think you probably have too. And, sadly, what is worse is that some have succumbed to these feelings and desires, and have gone so far as to have given up their calling.

I'm not talking about people who have moved from one branch of the church of God to another. I'm talking about those who have given it *all* up, and have left God's church completely.

Of course, I am not the great Judge of these things. Neither are you. Our great, merciful God is; and only He can say what the future holds for those people.

However, I think that some – perhaps those who gave up very early in their calling – might be considered to be like the soil by the wayside, on the rock, or among thorns on which God's spiritual seed fell (Luke 8:11-15). Hopefully, these have not lost their salvation permanently. Again, only God knows.

But one thing is absolutely certain. These people – if they don't come back to the fold by some specific point in time as set by God – certainly *will have* lost something very special. They will have lost their part in the First Resurrection!

Job's possibly poor example

Believe it or not, Job seemed to harbour at least some of these very same feelings during the time when he was going through his major trials.

Job 14:10-15:

10. **But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?**
11. **As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up,**
12. **So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep.**
13. **"Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!**
14. **If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes.**
15. **You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands.**

Job was asking the same questions that virtually every thinking human being asks at least once in his life: What is death? And what happens to a man after death?

And He came up with at least some of the right answers: Man does not have an immortal soul. Once he dies, he would remain dead forever... if God did not have other plans.

The vast majority of the dead will remain in their graves until the time of the "Second Resurrection", which will take place at the *end* of Jesus Christ's thousand-year reign on earth – which we call “the Millennium.”

But for a group of people Jesus referred to as "the elect" (and, whether Job liked it or not, he will probably be among them!), their resurrection will come at the *beginning* of that Millennium. God will raise them from their resting-places to meet Jesus Christ as He returns to the earth to take over His rightful place as its King.

Although Job, when he wrote the above verses, seemed to harbour at least *some* preference for a place in the Second Resurrection, after the apparent flight of the heavens, and after the wrath of God has been expended, he, like others who remain obedient and loyal to God, will probably come up in the *First* Resurrection, and will witness both of these great events which, sadly, will be necessary to bring our rebellious peoples into subjection to His happy way of life.

What are the real benefits?

Again, you and I have occasionally heard church members undergoing trials expressing 'wishes' similar to those of Job: “I wish I hadn't been called in this life. I would have been better off if God hadn't called me until the Second Resurrection!”

Let me say at this point that non-membership in God's church does not automatically guarantee a trouble-free, stress-free life of ease. Just think about you friends and relatives who are not in the church. Be honest. Are they truly free of stress and troubles? I don't think so.

However, there *are* very real benefits to having a part in the First Resurrection. What are they? Is there really any reason to desire a place in it? The apostle John – inspired by God – seemed to think so:

Revelation 20:4

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Then comes the parenthetical statement – as though it were enclosed in brackets...

Verse 5: [But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.] This... {i.e. the living and reigning of those who do not have the Mark of the Beast}... is the first resurrection.

Verse 6: Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

So right here, God, through the apostle John, gives us part of our answer. Here is John's partial list of the benefits of having a part in the First Resurrection:

1. Death, specifically the second death, will no longer have any power over us; we will have "made it."
2. We will have the guarantee of being alive during that fabulous, transitional Millennium.
3. After being crowned as kings, priests and co-rulers with Jesus Christ, we will have a part in helping to rebuild this broken world. Please keep the vision of that crown, and value it highly!

So there it is. These are just a few of the wonderful blessings of having a part in the First Resurrection. In closing, let us review just two more verses from the book of Revelation:

Revelation 2:11:

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

Rather, as we have seen, he who overcomes will have a part in the wonderful First Resurrection. And, just across the page:

Revelation 3:11:

Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

And what a crown! It *will* be worth the effort! Please hold on to it! Please hold it fast!

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