

MSB 214

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM
THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE ANOINTED FIRST FRUIT

by Howard W. White

The term "anointed first-fruit" refers to a resurrection order ignored by almost all translators and commentators. God's holy child, Jesus, was anointed (Gk. -krio) to proclaim the glad tidings, with the Holy Spirit and with power, and with the oil of gladness or exultation (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27 and 10:38; Heb. 1:9). But Jesus Christ was not the only one Scripture speaks of as being anointed. Using the New International Version, it says: "Now He who confirms us with you unto Christ, and anointed (krio) us, [is] God, Who also sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1 :21, 22; see also 1 John 2:20, 27). Paul and his laboring companions, along with the believing Corinthians, are said to be confirmed and anointed by God and sealed. Now let's take a look at what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:20-24: But now Christ has been raised from among [the] dead, He became first-fruit (aparche) of those fallen asleep. For since by man [is] death, also by man resurrection of [the] dead. For as in Adam all die (are dying), so also in the Christ shall all be made alive (be living). But each (every man, AV) in his own rank (tagma, order): anointed first-fruit (christos aparche), then those of Christ at His presence (parousia). Then the end (to telos), when He shall have given up the kingdom to Him Who [is] God and Father; when He shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power.

The question many men have asked (including the translators of the Authorized Version) is, why not let Christ be the first-fruit in verse 23, as He is said to be the "first-fruit of those fallen asleep" in verse 20? There are very good reasons why we should understand that this is not so, despite popular

opinion to the contrary. The reasons are given in the following 11 arguments:

1. Christ had already been raised from among the dead when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Christ indeed has "become (past tense) first-fruit of those fallen asleep." He was "the first of the first-fruit" as in Exodus 23: 19. To make Christ the anointed first-fruit of verse 23 would mean that He has not yet been raised from among the dead; that He is still subject to a future resurrection. "Shall all be living" . indicates future, 1 Cor. 15:22.

2. The subject of this chapter is the resurrection of all mankind (1 Cor. 15:4, 12-19,22). But this can only be accomplished in Christ and because Christ has been raised.

3. It is concerned with whether the dead, those men who have fallen asleep (in Christ), are perished (1 Cor. 15:18) which would be the death with no resurrection in view.

4. By the figure ellipsis all men are understood to be involved here: "As in Adam all (men) are dying, so also in the Christ shall all (men) be living." All men with the exception of Christ, therefore, are subject to a future resurrection. "A resurrection is about to be (or shall be) of [the] dead, both of the just and of the unjust" (Acts 24: 15).

5. All men are not to be raised from the dead at one and the same time. "All (men) shall be made alive: But each (man) in his own rank (tagma, order of succession):"

a. Rank one, "anointed first-fruit, then"

b. Rank two, "those of Christ at His presence (parousia)"

c. Rank three, "Then the end (to te/os)."

(The term "then" implies a succession in the orders or ranks of these future resurrections.)

6. All resurrections take place within the scope of the Kingdom of God except that there are no resurrections during the Parousia, that 1000 years of the personal presence of Christ on the earth. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5). They therefore occur either before or after the 1000 years.

"Happy and separate is he that hath part in the former resurrection: on such the second death hath no power...." (Rev. 20:6)

7. These three orders of resurrection may be visualized as the first-fruit of the harvest, the harvest itself and the gleanings. The first two ranks are included in the former resurrection, the happy one. These take place in what the Scriptures term "the resurrection," "times of refreshing," "the regeneration" and "the restitution of all things." That future time known as the pre-parousia government of God is to be characterized by resurrection.

8. Any anxious concern that those fallen asleep have perished is laid to rest by

1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14: "But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, that ye be not grieved, even as also the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also those who are fallen asleep through Jesus will God bring with Him." Why? Because they, too, are "anointed first-fruit." "And ye have [the] anointing (krisma) from the Holy [One], and ye know all things" (1 John 2:20). "And you the anointing which ye received from Him, in you abides, and ye have not need that anyone should teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie; and even as it taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John 2:27). To be asleep in Jesus Christ, then, is to be assured of an anointed first-fruit resurrection.

9. Paul was concerned about the order of his own resurrection. As a believer he already had assurance of resurrection among the just. But he sought to know Christ and the power of His resurrection "if by any means I may arrive at the out-resurrection [that one which is] out from among the dead." He sought the "prize of the highest calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:10-14). As believers, we should be of the same mind. Our greatest reward would be to have a prior resurrection. Paul has been dead for almost 2000 years, but he included himself in the remark, "that we the living who remain to the presence (parousia) of the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:15, 17). For this to be true he (Paul) has to be raised to life to be among those who remain until the parousia. He will be among those raised in the anointed first-fruit resurrection as many of us also hope to be.

10. To assume that the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52 is the same as the trumpet of God which sounds at the Parousia in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 or that it only sounds once is just an assumption. Paul revealed the secret (in association with these resurrections) that "we shall not all fall asleep, but all shall be changed, in an instant, in [the] twinkling of an eye, in the last

(eschatos, concluding, sequel) trumpet; for a trumpet shall sound (at each order of resurrection), and the dead (every man) shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For it behooves this corruption to put on incorruptibility, and this mortal to put on immortality." The trumpet at Mount Sinai sounded long and repeatedly (Heb. 12:19; Exo. 19:13, 19). Even as it does here in the sequel trumpet. I do not think that the seventh angel of Revelations 11: 15 is the last to sound a trumpet. A trumpet will blow at the telos resurrection as well.

11. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8 it says, "The lawless one will be consumed with the breath of His mouth, and annulled by the blazing forth (epiphaneia) of His presence (parousia)." It is a mistake to assume that because epiphaneia is found together here with parousia that it can refer to only one event. Christ was and shall be manifested in different ways at different times: to give light (epiphaino) as in Luke 1:79; to bring salvation (Tit. 3:4); at His manifestation, even His Kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1). He was manifested (phaneroo) in a different form (Mark 16:12); in a resurrected body (Mark 16:14); to Israel (John 1:31); in His glory (John 2:11); His deeds (John 3:21); the works of God (John 9:3); God's Name (John 17:6); the secret of the gospel (Rom. 16:26); the counsels of hearts (1 Cor. 4:5); to put away sin (Heb. 9:26). This word covers many events.

In conclusion, Titus 2:11-15 says we should live in the present eon "awaiting the blessed hope and blazing forth (epiphaneia) of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (in his manifest kingdom) . . . These things speak, and exhort, and convict with all command. Let no one despise thee." Our expectation is to be raised to life in the pre-parousia Kingdom of God, along with the people of faith named in Hebrews 11 and those of Ezekiel 37, when Israel is raised and repatriated. However, some think there are only two resurrections because of Revelation 20:4, 5, which presents one at His coming (the Parousia, also called "the resurrection of the just") and the other at the Great White Throne. But before the events of the "Day of the Lord" occur, there is the time of the epiphaneia of Jesus Christ, when the "Day of Christ" heralds His Kingdom here on earth, the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that in his seed would "all the nations of the world be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). May God speed the day.

END

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