

Barley Harvest

Revelation 11:11-14

By Phillip G. Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2017-04-02

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Text

11:1 I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who are worshiping there. 2 And leave out the outer court of the temple and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations; and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

3 And I will give authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees, even the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them fire comes out of their mouths and consumes their enemies. So if anyone wants to harm them he must be killed in this way. 6 They have authority to shut up the sky so that no rain falls during the days of their prophecy; and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they wish.

7 When they finish their witness, the Beast of prey that comes up out of the Abyss will make war with them, overcome them and kill them 8—and leave their corpses in the street of the great city! (which is called Sodom and Egypt, spiritually speaking), even where their Lord was crucified.

9 And those from the peoples, tribes, languages and ethnic nations look at their corpses three-and-a-half days, and will not allow their corpses to be buried. 10 And those who dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and they will enjoy themselves and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

11 And after three-and-a-half days the breath from God entered them and they stood on their feet, and a great fear fell on those who were watching them. 12 And I heard a loud voice from the heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And in that day there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city fell, and seven thousand individuals were killed in the earthquake. And the rest became fearful and gave glory to the God of heaven.)

14 The second woe is past. Look out, here comes the third woe!¹

Introduction

Last week I stumbled onto a very odd story² about the countess of Hanover, Germany. The story took place in the 1700's. She died at the age of thirty as an avowed atheist. And she especially mocked the idea that there could be a resurrection. Apparently she had a bee in her bonnet about that doctrine. Just before her death she got the brainy idea to use her grave as her testimony that there will be no resurrection. She made her heirs promise that they would seal up her tomb in stone, and then cover her tomb in huge blocks of granite tightly clasped together with heavy iron clamps. Then they put a sign

1 Translation of the Majority Text by Wilbur M. Pickering - [The Sovereign Creator Has Spoken](#).

2 Published in 1894 in the North Carolina Baptist magazine, The Biblical Recorder.

<http://fultonhistory.com/Newspapers%2021/Bibical%20Recorder%20NC/Bibical%20Recorder%20NC%201894-1895/Bibical%20Recorder%20NC%201894%201895%200072.pdf>

on the tomb, "This burial place, purchased to all eternity, must never be opened."

Well, God must have a sense of humor, because a birch tree seed sprouted and pushed its way between the side stone and the upper slab, slowly forcing the iron clamps apart until they broke. When the story was written, the granite slab was high up in the trunk of the large tree. At that point, the sign on that slab looked ridiculous. She sought to mock God, but it appears that God was mocking her.

And down through history there have been many people who have sought to debunk any resurrection. They deny the resurrection of Jesus and they deny any future resurrection of our bodies. But God has already punctuated history with resurrections that have been witnessed by many. God's power displayed in the resurrection of the body is historical fact. The book of Acts begins by saying,

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

So Luke is saying that hundreds of people had witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. Hundreds witnessed the resurrection of many others on the same day that Jesus was raised from the dead. Matthew 27 says, "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many." There were witnesses - they appeared to many.

And in this chapter we see thousands who witnessed the resurrection of the two prophets who had been killed three and a half days earlier. Now, we are going to be looking more at the AD 70 resurrection later on in the book. There were many who were raised on that same day. And even two Roman historians may be alluding to this period when they speak of seeing souls rising up out of the ground. One historian saw souls rising at mount Vesuvius and another saw it in Greece. But God made sure that these two rotting corpses were visibly raised in the sight of all so that this resurrection could not be denied. But since it is popular even in Christian circles to deny an AD 70 resurrection, I need to spend most of this sermon discussing this controversy.

I. How many resurrections are there in history? Answer: Theologically there are two, but they are divided into three parts.

Point number one asks, "How many resurrections are there in history?" Dispensationalists say there are four or five. Historic Premils say there are three. Amir's say there are two. But we will see this morning that the answer to that is not as straightforward as it might seem. There are three periods in history when groups of people were or will be raised from the dead (AD 30, AD 70, and the last day of history), but Scripture groups the first two resurrections into one harvest and treats them as being the one first century resurrection. And you might wonder why it would do that. After all, the resurrections in AD 30 and AD 70 are separated by forty years.

I believe the reason is found in the first sub-point. Over and over when Scripture speaks of the resurrection of believers, it likens it to a harvest of grain. And so you might get the impression that there was only one resurrection. But in fact, there were two quite separate grain harvests connected to two quite separate Festivals. The barley harvest was the first harvest and 50 days later there was the beginning of the wheat harvest. Scripture consistently connects the barley harvest with the first century resurrection and consistently connects the wheat harvest with the resurrection at the end of history. And I've given you a diagram at the bottom of your outline so that you can see that.

A. Seen in the two grain harvest festivals: Firstfruits (beginning of barley)

The barley harvest was the first harvest (see Exod. 9:31-32; 2 Sam. 21:9; etc) and represented the first resurrection. This first harvest was divided into two parts: a) a premature firstfruits of unripe grain on Abib 16 (Lev. 23:4-14) and b) a general harvest of ripe Barley about a month later. Likewise there were two parts to the first resurrection: a) the firstfruits of "barley" in AD 30 (Acts 26:23; 1 Cor. 15:20, 22-24; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5; 20:4-6; Matt. 27:53-54; Hos. 6:2; Is. 26:19; John 5:25; Eph. 4:8-10; Heb. 12:23) and b) the general harvest of "barley" in AD 70 (Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:23; Rev. 20:4,5b,6)

And I've given a lot of other detail in your outlines so that I won't have to spend as much time talking about it. But Exodus 9:31-32 says that the Barley was ruined by hail, but the wheat wasn't because the wheat was a late

crop and was not even present. The wheat had not yet sprouted, so it wasn't ruined by the hail. And there are other Scriptures that show that there was quite a distinction between those two harvests.

One of the things that was unique about the barley harvest was that it was always divided up into two parts. That was not true of the wheat harvest, but the barley harvest officially had two stages. There was the festival of firstfruits when a small token harvest was always made, even if the barley was green - and usually it was green. That symbolically pointed to the resurrection of Jesus and some Old Testament saints with Him. Then there was the main barley harvest of the ripe grain about a month later.³ But it was still considered one harvest even though it was divided into two parts. It's not a wheat harvest; both parts constituted one barley harvest. And in the same way, we will see that even though the resurrection in AD 30 and the resurrection in AD 70 are separated in time, they are theologically considered to be the first resurrection. Jesus was said to be the firstfruits from the dead. He rose from the dead before the rest of the barley harvest. And others rose with Him.

But the wheat harvest didn't even start until 50 days later. It was planted later and harvested later. And the fifty days is a symbolic number that points to the end of time. It is seven sevens plus one extra back-to-back Sabbath. Seven times seven points to the fullness of time and the extra sabbath points to our entrance into the eternal sabbath when death, sin, and all curse will forever be removed from this universe. That is future, and that is called the second resurrection, because it is connected with the second harvest, or the wheat harvest.

So the barley harvest points to the resurrection of bodies that occurs at the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New. And the wheat harvest points to the resurrection of bodies that will occur at the end of the New Covenant era. So Christ's mediatorial kingdom has bookends - a resurrection at the beginning and a resurrection at the end when He hands the kingdom over to the Father.

Now, a lot of this may seem new to you, so I want to get you to flip through your Bibles to several Scriptures to lay a ground-work for this important doctrine. Turn first to Matthew 27. This passage describes the death of Jesus, and then inserts a quick forward look of what happened three days later

³ Most scholars see the planting of wheat as being much later. This is based upon a number of considerations internally, as well as external evidence of the agricultural calendar. Dale Manor cites the Gezer tablet as one indication that the barley harvest occurred over a period of a month (with lowlands being harvested earlier than highlands). The Gezer inscription says,

when Jesus came out of the grave. But in verse 52 it starts with a description of what happened the moment Jesus died. There was an earthquake in verse 51. And verse 52 says,

... and the graves were opened; [So the graves were opened the day Jesus died. Now, here comes the forward look:] and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

So there was clearly a resurrection of of many people along with Jesus. And the Bible identifies this as the firstfruits portion of the first resurrection. The word "first" occurs with this resurrection several times. For example, turn to Acts 26:23. Paul is telling Herod Agrippa what he had been preaching, and in verse 23 he says,

...that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

Now, you might object, "Wasn't Lazarus raised before Jesus was raised?"

And the answer is that because Lazarus was not given a glorified body (and that can be seen by the fact that his raised body could be killed), it should be treated as a resuscitation rather than a true resurrection. Resuscitations had happened before Lazarus - for example, the body that touched Elisha's bones in 2 Kings 13:21. It says that his body revived. But this is clear that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. If He is the first, it implies there would be others to follow by being raised second or next.

Now turn to 1 Corinthians 15:20. The whole chapter is defending the importance of believing in a resurrection of our bodies. And in verse 20 Paul says,

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [Commentators point out that just as barley had a firstfruits reaping, Jesus was a firstfruits of other humans who had died. So you can see the connection to the festival of firstfruits and the firstfruits offering of barley. He goes on in the next verses:] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming [that would be AD 70]. Then [And the word "then" is the same word as afterward. It's not immediately then, but an afterward then that refers to the end of time. "Then"] comes the end, when ... (vv. 20-24)

And then he goes on to describe three things that happen at that time: He delivers the kingdom to the Father, He puts an end to all rule, authority, and power, and thirdly, He destroys death through the final resurrection at the end of history. People miss that conclusion because they assume that the word "then" means "at that time" - in other words, at the time of Christ's coming. But if he had meant that, he would have used the Greek word τότε rather than Εἶτα. Εἶτα does not mean "at that time" but refers to yet another point after that time.

So when Paul speaks of bodies being raised each in his own order, he is listing the AD 30 firstfruits resurrection, then the resurrection at Christ's coming in AD 70, then the resurrection at the end of time. The word for coming is παρουσία and refers to the visible appearance in the sky that we saw was recorded by first century historians, but this is not the Greek word for His Second Coming, which is a coming down to earth - a permanent coming. This is just an appearance in the sky. Strong's dictionary defines this Greek word as an appearing, not a permanent coming - "specially, of Christ to punish Jerusalem." So there are three stages of resurrection this passage: 1) firstfruits, 2) resurrection at His appearing in AD 70, and 3) a resurrection at His Second Coming at the end of history. Turn now to Colossians 1:18.

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Col. 1:18)

Again, the word "first" was connected with Christ's barley harvest resurrection. Turn to Revelation 1:5.

... and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

Now turn to Hosea 6. The New Testament says that the Old Testament Scriptures (plural) prophesied that Jesus would be raised on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4). There are only two Scriptures in the Old Testament that prophesy a third day resurrection of any kind; this is one of them. And interestingly, other Old Testament saints were raised with Jesus. Hosea 6:2

After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. (Hos. 6:2)

Now turn to Isaiah 26:19. This verse is describing Jesus' resurrection, and interestingly, it again shows others rising with Him. Prophetically putting words into Jesus mouth, Jesus says to Israel,

Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

And there are other Scriptures that indicate that there were many who were raised with Jesus in AD 30.

This is consistent with the "about to" (μέλλω) passages (Matt. 3:7; 12:32; 16:27; 24:6; Luke 3:7; 13:9; 21:7,36; 24:15,25; 1 Pet 5:1; Rom. 5:14; 8:18; Eph. 1:21; Col. 2:17; Heb. 1:14; 2:5; 6:5; 9:11; 10:1,27; 13:14; 1 Tim. 4:8; 6:19; 2 Tim. 4:1)

So where do we get the idea that there would be an imminent resurrection in AD 70? It's implied in the word firstfruits. If the AD 30 resurrection is a firstfruits resurrection, then the rest of the barley harvest should shortly happen.

Second, the next subpoint gives a boatload of Scriptures which speaks of an imminent judgment against Jerusalem, connected with an imminent resurrection that was about to happen, and an imminent age that was about to begin. Unfortunately the Greek word μέλλω in each of those verses is sometimes translated away. But that Greek word always refers to something that is about to happen. How do premils handle these verses? Well, they use them to prove that the Second Coming is about to happen and has been about to happen for the last 2000 years. Well, 2000 years after those Scriptures were written is not something that is about to happen. I won't take the time to go through the whole long list of Scriptures that have the Greek word μέλλω, but each of those references in your outline show some massive changes that would happen soon in AD 70. For now I want to focus on the verses that speak of a resurrection that was about to happen, since that is the one that so many people miss.

Acts 17:31 speaks about a resurrection. It says, "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge [And the Greek word is μέλλω - "is about to judge" the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." Why would Christ's resurrection be a guarantee of imminent judgment? Because Daniel connects judgment against Israel with resurrection. And we will look at the Daniel passage in a moment.

So Christ's resurrection was a downpayment or an assurance (a firstfruits, so to speak) that guaranteed that there was about to be a judgment day with another resurrection. In terms of the barley harvest imagery that the Jews were familiar with, that would make sense because Christ's firstfruits resurrection was the assurance of the rest of the barley harvest. Look next at Acts 24:15. This is Paul speaking. He says,

I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. (Acts 24:15)

The word "will be" is the Greek word μέλλω which refers to something very near. It is more literally translated "that there is about to be a resurrection of the dead." Well, he said that about ten years before the AD 70 resurrection, so it was literally true. Look down at verse 25 where μέλλω occurs again.

Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come [literally, the judgment about to come], Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." (v. 25)

It was the very imminence of this judgment that made Felix afraid. Turn next to Romans 8:18. The whole context is the reversal of every facet of the curse, including the resurrection of our bodies, which in verse 23 Paul calls

the "redemption of our bodies." But I want you to notice the use of the word μέλλω in verse 18.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be [literally, "which is about to be"] revealed in us. (v. 18)

In context Paul is saying that this glory is the redemption of our bodies. That glory is about to be revealed in us. Paul had already revealed that he would die prior to Christ's coming in AD 70, so he was about to be raised in AD 70. So what would happen to those who were still alive after AD 70? The Thessalonians were worried about that. And Paul told them not to worry. He told them that those who are alive and remain (alive and remain after what? those who are alive and remain after the AD 70 resurrection) will be raised on the last day. Everyone will partake of a resurrection. Maybe one more verse. 2 Timothy 4:1.

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge [literally, who is about to judge"] the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: (2 Tim. 4:1)

The problem with full preterists is that they lump the barley and the wheat harvests together and they deny that we are going to have a future resurrection. The problem with the other extreme - the futurists, is that they fail to see the general barley harvest. All they see is the firstfruits - Jesus' resurrection and the wheat harvest. They do not recognize a resurrection that was about to happen. They too fail to adequately distinguish between the barley and wheat harvests.

But if you see a resurrection in AD 70 and another one at the end of history, all tension is removed from numerous passages that are otherwise tough to explain to apostates. Apostates frequently cite the imminency passages and say that they didn't happen and so the Bible is false. We say that they happened to a "t."

There are many symbolic pictures in Scripture based on this paradigm. For example, the book of Ruth opens up beautifully.

And once you see that, there are numerous other thematic elements of Scripture that fall together that I may at some point put into my technical notes on the revelationstructure.com website. But for now, let me just mention one symbolic picture. The book of Ruth is a type of the marriage of Jesus to the church. Boaz is the kinsman redeemer who foreshadows Christ, our kinsman redeemer. And there is a lot of cool stuff in that book. But let me just give you one hint of why the book of Revelation puts the marriage supper of the lamb at AD 70 rather than at AD 30 or at the end of time. Ruth arrives in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (Ruth 1:22) and

gets betrothed and married at the end of the barley harvest (Ruth 3:15-18).⁴ She does not get married at the end of the wheat harvest. If the barley harvest firstfruits points to AD 30 and the end of the barley harvest points to AD 70, you can see why Revelation puts the marriage supper of the Lamb at AD 70. The book of Ruth prefigured that the marriage supper is at the beginning of the kingdom, not the end of the kingdom. And that makes perfect sense of His bride reigning with Him throughout His mediatorial kingdom.

And I won't get into that topic till we get to that passage, but the point is that Scripture is such a perfectly inter-woven document that your interpretation of one part affects every other part. Some of you may wonder why we have to bother settling these kinds of questions, but the implications of not settling them is enormous. The inerrancy of Scripture is at stake. When people deny a first century resurrection (like most futurist Christians do), they play into the hands of atheists who claim that Christ and the apostles were mistaken when they said it was about to happen. On the other hand, when people deny a future resurrection (as full preterists do) then they play into the hands of atheists who claim that Christ and the apostles contradicted themselves when some passages point to a resurrection on the last day that is a long time off. Some atheist websites claim that was a later addition into Scripture by the church by Christians who were embarrassed by the failed prophecies. But we say, "No, there was an imminent resurrection and there will be a far off resurrection." Both are critically important to the doctrine of the kingdom.

The wheat harvest was the last grain harvest and the first slice of the scythe began 50 days after Barley (Lev. 23:15-22; Numb. 28:26; Deut. 16:9 - note the symbolic Jubilee numbers of seven weeks plus a final Sabbath). This second grain harvest symbolically represents the second resurrection at the end of history (Rev. 20:5; John 5:25a; 11:24)

Another benefit of holding to an AD 70 resurrection is that it perfectly answers the strongest objections that full preterists raise. Every imminence passage that Full Preterists appeal to, we agree with. Those passages were fulfilled imminently - every one of them. But full preterists ignore the other passages that deny an imminent fulfillment. For example, they say that all of

⁴ The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery places the marriage at the end of the wheat harvest, based on 2:22. "Ruth arrives in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (Ruth 1:22) and is betrothed to Boaz at the end of the barley and wheat harvests (Ruth 2:22)" "Real Harvests and Moral Implications," Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, 366. [accord://read/IVP-Biblical_Imagery#4954](http://read/IVP-Biblical_Imagery#4954). However, that verse deals with a conversation showing a willingness to wait till the end of the wheat harvest, but it is clear from the barley given to her in chapter 3 that this didn't happen. Wheat harvest was a month later

Matthew 24-25 was fulfilled in AD 70. That's wrong. Only the first 34 verses of Matthew 24 were fulfilled. But the second half of chapter 24 all the way through to the end of Matthew 25 is utterly different on numerous levels. It talks about the ending of heaven and earth. That didn't happen in AD 70, like full preterists claim it did.

They have their numerous objections and I have my numerous answers. But I am only going to mention the issue of time indicators that both the Full Preterists and the Futurists mess up on. Futurists ignore the references in the first half of Matthew 24 to events being near (24:32,33), at the doors (24:33), within one generation (24:34), and being "about to" happen - our favorite word μέλλω (see the parallel in Luke 21:7). On the other hand, Full Preterists ignore the references in the second half of the Olivet Discourse which indicate that Christ's Second Coming will be delayed (repeated twice in 24:48; 25:5), "far" (25:14), and "after a long time" (25:19).

So it is ironic that both extremes (both Futurists and Full Preterists) have the exact same contradiction - they make the word "near" in the first half to mean the same thing as "far" in the second half, and they make the phrases "at the doors," "within one generation," "at hand," and "about to" as being equivalent to "delayed" and "after a long time." That destroys language and makes atheists mock us. The fact of the matter is that there are two comings mentioned in the Olivet discourse - one is a coming in the clouds of heaven (that's AD 70) and the other is a coming to the earth to end history. There are two resurrections mentioned in the Olivet Discourse. One is about to happen immediately after the Great Tribulation (that's chapter 24:30-31) and the other resurrection happens after a long time and follows a period of peace with no tribulation. I think this is the only answer that reconciles the strongest arguments of both the Futurists and the Full Preterists.

B. Seen in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. "But each in his own order: 1) Christ the first fruits, 2) afterward those who are Christ's at his coming, 3) then (Εἶτα - a later time) comes the end, when He" does three things, ones of which is to destroy death (v. 26) through the final resurrection (vv. 50-55).

C. Seen in Revelation 20:4-6

And if you turn to Revelation 20, I want to have you look at the two resurrections there.

The tribulation (v. 4a) happens before the resurrection of 4b ("they lived") since martyrs who had not received the mark of the beast were raised (v. 4)

Let's start reading in verse 4, which describes the martyrs who lost their heads in Nero's Great Tribulation.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them; also, I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus and on account of the Word of God, even 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 lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

So there is a resurrection that is being described. "...they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." That resurrection happens in AD 70, and the text indicates that it comes immediately after the Great Tribulation. Then in verse 5 he wants to assure his readers that those who missed out on the AD 70 resurrection won't be left out. They just have to wait. So in a parenthetical statement he says,

5 (Now the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were finished.)

That parenthetical statement refers to the second resurrection at the end of history - at the end of the thousand years. The New King James doesn't have a parenthesis around the first sentence of verse 5, but it should. Every school of prophecy agrees that the first sentence of verse 5 is a parenthetical statement, and that the last sentence of verse 5 goes back to interpret the resurrection of verse 4.

After a parenthetical statement about the second resurrection (v. 5a) the resurrection of verse 4b is called the "first resurrection" (v. 5b). Therefore it must be considered as part of the barley harvest.

The last sentence in verse 5 says,

This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one having a part in the first resurrection; upon such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years.

So the first resurrection happens in AD 70 and the rest of the dead do not rise till the thousand years is finished - in other words, they rise at the end of history.

The rest of the dead do not get raised till the thousand years is finished (v. 5a). This would equal the wheat harvest.

So the first resurrection is the barley harvest and the second resurrection at the end of time is the wheat harvest. Turn with me to one more passage (Daniel 12) before we start applying Revelation 11:11-14.

D. Seen in Daniel 12:1-3

Notice that the great tribulation (v. 1) immediately precedes a resurrection (vv. 2-3)

Let's read Daniel 12:1-3. The context in chapter 11 ends with Herod the Great hearing news from the east, being troubled by the news that the wise men bring him, killing many, and then ending up dying himself. So it is a first century context. Chapter 12:1 begins,

At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.

The book of Revelation has been talking about Daniel's Great Tribulation. But notice what happens right during that time. Verse 2:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Notice that "many" are raised, not all (v. 2). This implies another resurrection. Yet Daniel will be raised at the end of the time period being discussed (end of Old Covenant - or AD 70).

Notice that it says "many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." It doesn't say "all." The word "many" implies that there are others who will be raised at yet another different time. So hopefully you can see that it is crystal clear that there is a resurrection in AD 70, but it is not the last one. Now with that as a background, let's whiz through Revelation 11:11-14.

II. Exposition of these verses

A. The number of days

Let's look first at the number of days. It says, "And after three-and-a-half days the breath from God entered them and they stood on their feet." Why does it say after three and a half days rather than saying on the fourth day? It was the fourth day, right? But it is worded this way because it gives an impression of being similar to Christ's three days in the grave and by doing that it connects this resurrection thematically with the resurrection of Christ. In other words, it is yet another clue that this is part of the first resurrection - something that Revelation will make much more clear later on. But it is

three and a half days to also make it crystal clear that this is not literally Christ's resurrection (as some commentaries try to claim), since He was raised on the third day, not the fourth day.

B. The breath from God

Notice too the reference to the breath from God entering them. Commentators point out that this immediately reminds us of God breathing into Adam and making Him a living soul. All believers are part of a new Adam; a new humanity connected to Jesus, and even our resurrection is connected to Jesus, as 1 Corinthians 15 makes so clear. Well, here, it is clear that apart from God giving life there could be no life. This was a miracle just as much as Adam's creation was a miracle. Their bodies had been rotting by this time, yet God reconstituted them just as easily as He made Adam from the dust. Some have worried about whether we will get resurrected if we get drowned in the sea, eaten by sharks, and dissipated. Yes we can. God knows our DNA blueprints, and He can remake us from whatever state or non-state our bodies are in.

C. Standing

It then says, "they stood on their feet." God could have caught them up to heaven in a split second so that no one would see where they went to, but He left them standing on the earth as a remarkable witness. The crowds saw two deteriorating bodies stand up. And it was such a remarkable transformation that it produced fear in all those who were watching them.

D. The summons to heaven

Verse 12 says, "And I heard a loud voice from the heaven saying to them, 'Come up here!'" When God speaks, creation responds. A resurrection is not a difficult thing for God. After all, He is the God who spoke and light, waters, dry land, plants, stars, fish, birds, and animals appeared. Here He commands and there is a resurrection. At some point our bodies will be summoned by the Lord. And what a glorious day that will be.

E. Ascending in a cloud

The next clause says, "And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them." This is reminiscent of the ascension of Jesus to heaven. It again thematically connects their resurrection with the barley harvest.

F. The impact on their enemies

But I want to spend a bit of time on the impact that this had upon their enemies.

Earthquake (v. 13)

Just as there was an earthquake connected with the death of Christ and another earthquake connected with His resurrection, there was an earthquake connected with this amazing spectacle.

and their enemies watched them. 13 And in that day there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city fell, and seven thousand individuals were killed in the earthquake.

Because my books were all packed up for our office move I wasn't able to pull out the quotes, but one Roman historian spoke of a tidal wave that covered Lycia and receded from Egypt. That would have required a massive earthquake. There was a lot of seismic activity from AD 66 to AD 70. This earthquake is one more thematic element that gives the impression of some connection with the barley harvest resurrection.

Tenth dying = 7000 (v. 13)

It does not say where they were watching from. Were they inside of buildings? We don't know. But this earthquake either destroyed a tenth of the city's buildings or it destroyed one tenth of the city's population. Most commentators take it that it is a tenth of the population. Beasley-Murray says, "The number seven thousand would suitably indicate a tenth of the population of Jerusalem in the first century AD."^[5] Craig Keener says, "If "seven thousand" is understood as one tenth of the population, the description fits Jerusalem better than Rome..."^[6] And because the parallelism seems to indentify the tenth with the 7000, several other commentaries say the same thing.^[7] Well, if this was the case, it narrows down the time table to the last week before the temple was burned. Even a couple of weeks earlier there was over one hundred thousand, but they had dying like flies during that period. Last week we looked at several other time indicators and showed how this resurrection happened on Ab 9 of the Hebrew calendar and August 3 of the Gregorian calendar. So Christ produces death on the day of His coming. But He produces something else as well.

fear (vv. 11,13) and giving glory to God (v. 13). Is this conversions?

The text goes on to say, "And the rest became fearful and gave glory to the God of heaven." First, who are the rest? Is it the rest of the citizens of

Jerusalem? Or does it include the Romans? Opinion varies in commentaries - especially since verse 11 indicates that great fear came on all those who watched them, and we have already seen that both the Jews and the Romans had been watching these bodies and could not take their eyes off the corpses. In any case, I think it at least has to include the Jews. The most straightforward reading of the words "rest of" is the rest of the same category as had died, which appears to have been the regular inhabitants of the city, or the Jews.

And then the question comes, was this a conversion of those Jews or were they simply terrified with no salvation implied? Commentators are divided on this question. A few are skeptical that that this many could be saved in one moment of time. But that is no difficulty for a sovereign God. He finds it as easy to change a human heart as it was for Him to govern the universe. In any case, most of my commentaries are convinced by five stubborn facts that this does indeed refer to genuine repentance. No matter how difficult that is to reconcile with the history we have in Josephus, I have been forced to the same conclusion. Let me give you those five reasons why this has to refer to salvation.

First, Caird and others point out that in Revelation's vocabulary, the language of fearing God, glorifying God, worshiping God, and repenting before God are used interchangeably to refer to that which flows from the regenerate.⁵ Second, this exact phrase is used three times elsewhere in the book to distinguish those who are saved from those who are not saved (see 14:7; 15:4; 16:9). Those who are not saved do not fear or glorify God. That

5 Caird, G. B. *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*. Black's New Testament Commentaries, edited by Henry Chadwick. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966. Alford, Henry. *Alford's Greek Testament, an Exegetical and Critical Commentary*. Vol. 4. 1875. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. Thomas, Robert L. *Revelation 1-7. Revelation 8-22. An Exegetical Commentary*. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1992, 1995. Charles, R. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Revelation of St. John*. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920. Ladd, George Eldon. *A Commentary of the Revelation of John*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972. Bruce, F. F. *The Revelation to John*. A New Testament Commentary, edited by G. C. D. Howley. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969. Swete, Henry Barclay. *Commentary on Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977. Aune, David E. *Revelation*. Word Biblical Commentary, Vols. 52a and 52b, edited by Ralph p. Martin. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997 and 1998. George R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation, New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*; ed. D. A Carson et al.; Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 1439. Robert Tuck, I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude, *Revelation, The Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary* (New York; London; Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1892), 528. Robert James Utley, *Hope in Hard Times - The Final Curtain: Revelation*, vol. Volume 12, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2001), 83. David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament*, electronic ed. (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1996), Re 11:13. John R. Yeatts, *Revelation, Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2003), 199. Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation, EBC 12*; ed. Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas; Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), paragraph 61186.

would seem like very odd usage if God did not intend for us to understand this as referring to their salvation. Third, several commentators point out that this a deliberate contrast with earlier portions of this war when the citizens did not yet fear God or give glory to God. That contrast is only explainable if this refers to their salvation. Fourth, other parts of the Bible use this exact same phrase to describe people being saved (See Josh. 7:19; Isa. 42:12; Jer. 13:16; 1 Pet. 2:12; Rev. 14:6–7; 15:4; 16:9; 19:7–8; 21:24). And fifth, we have already seen earlier in the book that God's judgments were intended to be redemptive judgments. As Robert Utley points out, Revelation has three times stated that God's purpose in bringing these judgments was to bring men to repentance. Did God's purpose get thwarted? No. So lean heavily in the direction of saying that God orchestrated a massive conversion of Jews in this twelfth hour. If that is true, then it highlights how amazing God's grace is - it reaches to the uttermost. Despite their steadfast hostility to God previously, like Saul of Tarsus, God instantly converted them.

And this in turn shows that the witness of the prophets was not in vain. Sometimes missionaries die thinking they have had no results, yet we know from hindsight that many came to Christ as a result of their work. Our job is not to get results. That is in God's hand. Our job is to be faithful like these witnesses of Christ were faithful. But it is an encouraging thing that in the New Covenant, God's judgments are usually redemptive judgments that lead to salvation. We can pray that the same would be true of any future judgments that America faces.

G. Judgments move beyond Jerusalem to Jews and Gentiles (vv. 14-19)

One possible objection is given by Moses Stuart: that the next verse indicates one more judgment. It says, "The second woe is past. Look out, here comes the third woe!" If the Jews here were saved, why yet another judgment? And the answer is quite simple. The judgments of verses 14-19 move beyond Jerusalem to Jews throughout the empire and to Gentiles as well. We'll look at those verses next time.

But this morning let's rejoice in three things: 1) First, God's grace is tough enough to crack the hardest heart. As Paul worded it in Romans 5:20, "where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." 2) Second, let's rejoice that our labors in the Lord are not in vain. Though we may not live to see the fruit of all of our labors, Paul guarantees that our labors in the Lord are not in vain. 3) Third, let's rejoice that Christ's redemption reaches to every facet of creation, including our bodies. Can we pray for healing? Yes. The

resurrection is the ultimate healing, right? And God has encased both ends of the kingdom in resurrections to show us that even our bodies are important to Him. These three facts ought to bring us joy. Our God is a great God who is worthy of great worship. Let's pray.

His two months are (olive) harvest, His two months are planting (grain), His two months are late planting; His month is hoeing up of flax, His month is harvest of barley, His month is harvest and feasting; His two months are vine-tending, His month is summer fruit.

Dale W. Manor, "Ruth," in Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, vol. 2 of ZIBBCOT, ed. John H. Walton; Accordance electronic ed. 5 vols.; (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 251. [accord://read/ZIBBCOT#10965](#) [⁵]; George R. Beasley-Murray, Revelation, New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition; ed. D. A. Carson et al., p. 1439 [⁶]; Craig S. Keener, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 792. [⁷]: Beale is a bit more cautious, saying simply, "'A tenth of the city' could, in fact, be calculated as seven thousand if Jerusalem were in mind, since Jerusalem might have had a population of about 70,000 in the first century..." G. K. Beale, The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC; Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 602-603. Others say, "The number here mentioned—seven thousand—seems to have been suggested because it would bear some proportion to the tenth part of the city which fell." Albert Barnes, Barnes' Notes on the New Testament, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2006), paragraph 35124.