

The Glory of the Resurrection: Jesus, the Firstborn from the Dead

I. JESUS THE FIRSTBORN FROM DEAD

- A. The *firstborn from the dead* is one of the primary titles of Jesus in the book of Revelation. It denotes His status, not His origin. In the realm of the resurrection, He is first in authority, prominence, timing, and source. The book of Revelation reveals the glory of Jesus (Rev. 1:1); Jesus as the firstborn from the dead who is the ruler over all other kings is elaborated on throughout the book.

⁵*Jesus, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.* (Rev. 1:5)

- B. Revelation 1:5 is based on Psalms 89; the descriptions—the *faithful witness*, *firstborn*, and *ruler of the kings*—all occur there and are dependent on one another (Ps. 89:27, 37). These terms describe promises God made to one of David's descendants—the Messiah. Jesus is *heir* of these promises.

²⁷*"I will make him [Messiah] My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth..."*³⁷*It [His throne] shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky."* (Ps. 89:27, 37)

- C. The *firstborn from the dead* refers to Jesus' destiny, power, and exaltation as a Man, emphasizing His *sovereignty* and *preeminence* over all. He is the first *purpose* and *cause* (source) of all of our blessings. He is supreme leader and heir over all blessings pertaining to realm of the resurrection.

¹⁵*He is...the firstborn over all creation.* ¹⁶*By Him all things were created...*¹⁸*He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.* (Col. 1:15-18)

- D. Jesus occupies the first place of beauty and honor over all creation. *Firstborn* speaks of majesty and sovereignty more than chronology. He was not the first one created, but the first in cause and authority. Power over creation *begins* with Him. As creator, Jesus existed before creation.

- E. The Father publicly declared Jesus to be the Son of God *with power* by the resurrection (Rom. 1:4). Paul does not say Jesus was only then *made* the Son of God, but that He was *declared* to be the Son of God *with power*. The resurrection made a public declaration of what was always true of Jesus. At the resurrection, Jesus was vindicated as God's Son, instead of being seen as a crucified criminal.

⁴*...declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead.* (Rom. 1:4)

⁴*...He rose again the third day...*⁵*He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve.* ⁶*After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once...* (1 Cor. 15:4-6)

- F. By virtue of his resurrection, Jesus was exalted to the position of firstborn Son at God's right hand.

²⁰*When He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand...*²¹*far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name...* (Eph. 1:20-22)

II. JESUS WAS THE FIRST HUMAN TO HAVE A RESURRECTED BODY

- A. ***Firstfruits:*** He was the first man to conquer all the enemies of the human race—including death. Jesus is the prototype and is the first member of a new order of people who triumphed over death. He is the *pledge or guarantee* that His people will receive a resurrected body like His (Phil. 3:21).

20Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [died]...²⁶The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (1 Cor. 15:20, 26)

²¹...transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body... (Phil. 3:21)

- B. All three Persons of the Godhead participated His resurrection. Jesus had power to take up His life or to raise Himself. The Father raised Him in partnership with the Spirit (Rom. 8:11; Eph. 1:20).

¹⁸I have power to lay it down [physical life], and I have power to take it again. (Jn. 10:18)

- C. Jesus is the source for all who receive a resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:21). The presence of a Man so exalted is a statement about God's plans for the human race. This is the greatest breakthrough in human history. This Man at pinnacle of all power beckons the human race to rule with Him.

²¹Since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead... (1 Cor. 15:21)

⁴⁰Everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him...I will raise him up at the last day...⁴⁴I will raise him up at the last day...⁵⁴and I will raise him up at the last day. (Jn. 6:40-54)

- D. Jesus has a resurrected, physical body that consists of “supernatural” flesh and bones.

³⁹Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. (Lk. 24:39)

⁴⁰God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly...⁴¹to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. (Acts 10:40-41)

- E. At the rapture, all of God's family will be resurrected to be *with Him forever*. The death and resurrection of Jesus made a way for us to be forgiven and delivered from hell and united to Him that we may be with Him and enjoy Him and His beauty forever.

¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout...and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air...we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thes. 4:16-17)

- F. Even our works will be transformed by the power of the resurrection—eternal rewards. All our labor is rewarded and all that is temporarily “lost” due to obedience or persecution is returned far beyond 100-fold in the resurrection.

G. A resurrected earth: the millennial earth and the New Earth will be transformed by the resurrection.

*²¹...creation itself also will be delivered...into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
(Rom. 8:21)*