

The Life Promised and Manifested

By William D. Ramey

Those Who Will Awake

The introduction to the study underscored that when Christ appears and inaugurates His Kingdom, those who are His will be resurrected with a spiritual, imperishable body in splendor and power,¹⁸ a transformation that transpires in an indivisible moment of time. The same imperishable body will subsequently be clothed with immortality at the consummation of His reign.

The Hebrew prophets wrote about the resurrection from the dead of God's people. Although they never prophesized about the special properties of the resurrected body, a very special kind of life was promised in the Hebrew Scriptures. In Daniel 12:2, God makes this promise for the first time:

“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but these to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence.”

The Hebrew Scriptures were written to the Hebrew people and for the most part in their Hebrew language. The oldest and most important translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is the Septuagint, a translation into Koiné Greek which was commonly quoted or paraphrased by New Testament authors.

That which Daniel prophesized concerning those who awake to “everlasting life” at the time of the resurrection, חַיֵּי עוֹלָם (*ḥayyê 'ōlām*), is translated in the Septuagint as ζῶην αἰώνιον (*zōēn aiōnion*). What is relevant to our study is that the expression used by Paul in his salutation to Titus (Titus 1:1-4) when he writes “[the] hope of everlasting life, is the identical expression translated in the Septuagint in Daniel 12:2.

“¹Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, [writes] for [the] faith of [the] chosen of God and [the] knowledge of truth that produces godliness, ²on the basis of [the] hope of everlasting life (*zōēn aiōnion*), which God, Who cannot lie, promised very long time ago, ³but now at the proper time manifested the message in the proclamation which I was

¹⁸Splendor and power relates to the means by which Christ will accomplish the resurrection. “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His splendor, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21). Contextually, “our” refers to Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus’ citizenship and anticipation of the Lord’s return.

entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior. ⁴To Titus, my genuine child in a common faith: grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”

Because the expression “everlasting life” is announced for the first time in Daniel 12:2, and furthermore, the only occurrence of the expression in all of the Hebrew Scriptures, it is the only conceivable promise concerning “everlasting life” from God that Paul could possibly be citing in Titus 1:2.

The apostle Paul is not alone who uses the expression “everlasting life” in the New Testament. It occurs forty-two times¹⁹ in various contexts with the assumption that the expression was so familiar to the hearers that it did not require further explanation. The reason is because God’s eschatological paradigm concerning the resurrection had not changed since revealed to Daniel. Thus, Paul could authoritatively declare the same “everlasting life” after many centuries later, that it was the same “everlasting life” that God had promised.

Let us return again to Daniel 12 and examine more closely God’s eschatological paradigm for the resurrection of His people.

“¹Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ²Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but these to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence. ³Those who have insight will shine brightly like the sheen of the heavens, and those who cause to lead the many to righteousness, like the stars into the ages.”

“Now at that time” may be paraphrased as, “At the time when the events of Daniel 11:40-45 take place.” Michael is the valiant, warrior archangel (Jude 9)

¹⁹All of the instances where “everlasting life” (*zōē aiōnion*) occurs in the New Testament are as follows: Matt. 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mk. 10:17, 30; Lk. 10:25; 18:18, 30; Jn. 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3; Acts 13:46, 48; Rom. 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1 Jn. 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 21. “Eternal life” is expressed many times in the New Testament simply as “[the] life” (Matt. 7:14; 18:8, 9; 19:17; Mk. 9:43, 45; Jn. 3:36; 5:24; 6:33, 35, 48, 51, 53, 63; 8:12; 10:10; 14:6; 20:31; Acts 2:28; 3:15; 5:20; 8:33; 11:18; 1 Tim. 4:8; 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; 1 Pet. 3:7, 10; 2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Jn. 3:14; 5:11, 12; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). It is furthermore expressed by the following descriptive phrases: “the resurrection of life” (Jn. 5:29, 40; 11:25), “the tree of life” (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14), “the word of life” (Phil. 2:16; 1 Jn. 1:1, 2), “the crown of life” (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10;) and “the water of life” (Rev. 7:17; 22:1) among others.

who comes to protect (“stands over”) God’s people from the fierce persecution of the king of the North. The “time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time” evidently comes from Jeremiah 30:7. The forces of evil will unleash themselves in desperate fury against God’s people like never before that time. This period of severe affliction probably occurs during the “time, times and half a time” as recorded in Daniel 7:25. As a result of Michael’s protection, “everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued.”

What is germane to our present study is that God reveals to Daniel that on the eschatological horizon, only a single resurrection is in view. This resurrection includes only a portion of the dead, for he records “many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake”. Those who are raised are then separated into two different groups that experience very dissimilar outcomes in the resurrection: “to everlasting life” or “to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence”.

It is evident by the Hebrew adjective “many” (רַבִּים/*rabbîm*), that those who participate in this resurrection constitute not all who are dead, but only a portion of them. Since all the dead are not raised in this resurrection, it indicates that there is yet another resurrection that was not revealed to Daniel by God at this time.

The “many” who do participate in this resurrection are awoken out of their “sleep” (i.e., “the sleep of death”; Job 14:12). The euphony “sleep” for “death” is commonly used in the Scriptures (Jn. 11:11; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-16; 5:10). From the perspective of the dead, it denotes the non-existence of time between death and their resurrection; from the omnipotent Divine viewpoint, the euphony denotes the ease of rousing the dead out of their sleep.

All of those who are resurrected are not differentiated whether they will awake or not, but by the outcome of their resurrection: “these to everlasting life, but these to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence.” As noted earlier, the expression “everlasting life” occurs only here in the Hebrew Scriptures. Therefore, how the expression is understood in this context determines the manner in which those in the New Testament understood it. It is without question that the expression “everlasting life” in this context relates only to the time of the resurrection and forms the antithesis of those who also will awake out of their sleep in the same resurrection “to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence.” What is especially to be noted at this juncture is that the adjective “everlasting” in the second half of the

verse only modifies the noun “abhorrence”, and not “disgrace”. The importance of this will become evident at a later time.

Verse 3 describes the responsibility that those who awake “to everlasting life”: they will cause to make “the many to righteousness”. Those who have insight will instruct the “many” by their own righteousness and will lead the way of righteousness and they will shine like the celestial stars of the heavens into the ages. However, this is not the case for those who are resurrected “to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence”.

It is evident that Daniel prophesizes about only one resurrection when he looks toward the eschatological horizon. Those who awake at this resurrection are the “many” who are Christ’s at the inauguration of His Kingdom (1 Cor. 15:23). In the context of the inauguration of Christ’s Kingdom (Rev. 19:1-21), the resurrection that Daniel prophesized is the same as the one recorded in Revelation 20:1-6. Although both groups have been resurrected as outlined in Daniel’s prophecy, only those who are righteous receive exaltation. Notably, those who are also raised at the same resurrection “to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence” are not mentioned here.

“¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he threw him into the abyss, and shut [it] and sealed [it] over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. ⁴Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I [saw] the living ones of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and 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 came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

It is only after the one thousand years are completed that another resurrection is brought to the foreground in the eschatological horizon for the first time in Scripture. This resurrection is recorded in Revelation 20:11-15.

“¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is [the scroll] of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one [of them] according to their deeds. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

It is evident that the resurrection prophesized in Daniel 12:2 and the resurrection that the apostle John prophesized in Revelation 20:11-15 are mutually exclusive. Daniel 12:2 includes the “many” who will be raised at the beginning of the one thousand years, whether “to everlasting life” or “to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence”; however, that resurrection leaves a large portion of those who “sleep in the dust of the ground” until the apostle John records the fate of the remaining dead in Revelation 20:11-15.

Due to God’s progressive revelation to His people, those raised and standing before the Great White Throne judgment after the thousand years was not revealed by God until the end of the Apostolic Era (ca. 90 A. D.). This resurrection was not revealed to the prophets of old or to any of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament until the apostle John as recorded in *The Revelation*, the last epistle of the New Testament. Because the entire scriptural eschatological scheme is set before us since *The Revelation*, it is easy to assume that those beforehand knew and wrote of this resurrection; they did not.

Based upon the study thus far concerning the resurrection, the salient points may be summed up in the following six statements:

1. Daniel prophesizes a resurrection that only includes the “many” who will be raised either “to everlasting life” or “to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence.”

2. Paul taught that the resurrection will constitute an imperishable, spiritual, bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42-57). It will include all those who are Christ's up to that time, whether dead or still living at His coming. It is only at the end of the Kingdom Period (and not only after the thousand years) that death is abolished, which is the last enemy, will the same ones who were raised with an imperishable body will also receive immortality.
3. According to the apostle John, this resurrection will transpire at the beginning of the one thousand years that inaugurates Christ's Kingdom, as does Paul. The fate of the rest who are not raised at the inauguration of Christ's Kingdom will be raised at the Great White Throne judgment.
4. Because there is only one resurrection for God's people on the eschatological horizon as prophesized by Daniel until the apostle John revealed yet another resurrection, all the New Testament apostles and prophets drew their paradigm concerning the resurrection from Daniel.

For instance, when Jesus announces the resurrection in John 5:28-29, His frame of reference is the resurrection paradigm as set forth in Daniel.

“²⁸Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His [the Son of Man's] voice, ²⁹and will come forth; those who did the good [deeds] to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil [deeds] to a resurrection of judgment.”

The apostle Paul also refers to this same resurrection paradigm when he testifies before Governor Felix in Acts 24:14-16.

“¹⁴But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; ¹⁵having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. ¹⁶In view of this (*i.e.*, that there are two possible outcomes of this same resurrection), I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience [both] before God and before men.”

5. Whether one is alive or dead but not raised when Jesus inaugurates His Kingdom, the only alternative is being raised at the Great White Throne

judgment, which is a fearful prospect to say the least if someone's name is not found in the Book of Life.

6. The battle line that has been drawn throughout the centuries as to whether those who belong to Christ can lose their salvation is mute, for it is never hinted in Scripture. What is at stake is whether those who belong to Him are raised "to everlasting life" or "to disgrace, to everlasting abhorrence". As the prophets of old and the New Testament apostles and prophets proclaim time after time, when the Messiah comes and raises the "many" from the dust of the ground, His judgment will not be whether they are His, but He will judge according to their deeds, whether good or evil. A few scriptural passages that testify to this follows.

Psalm 62:11-12

"¹¹Once God has spoken; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God; ¹²and lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, for you recompense a man according to his deeds."

Matthew 7:1-2

"¹Do not judge so that you will not be judged. ²For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."

Matthew 16:27

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds."

Luke 14:12-14

"¹²And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and [that] will be your repayment. ¹³But when you give a reception, invite [the] poor, [the] crippled, [the] lame, [the] blind, ¹⁴and you will be blessed, since they do not have [the means] to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Romans 2:5-8

“⁵But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶Who will render to each person according to his deeds: ⁷to those who by perseverance in doing good seeking for glory and honor and imperishability, everlasting life; ⁸but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

“⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor [the] covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

“¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or evil. ¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.”

Galatians 5:19-21

“¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Galatians 6:7-8

“⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap everlasting life (*zōēn aiōnion*).”

Ephesians 5:3-5

“³But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴and [there must be no] filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Ephesians 6:7-8

“⁷With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.”

Hebrews 9:27

“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this [comes] judgment.”

Hebrews 10:26-31

“²⁶For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witness. ²⁹How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ ³¹It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

James 2:12-13

“¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by [the] law of liberty. ¹³For judgment [will be] merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.”

1 Peter 1:17

“If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay [on earth].”

3 John 8

“Watch yourselves that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.”

Revelation 2:7

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”

Revelation 2:25-28

“²⁵Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. ²⁶He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; ²⁷and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received [authority] from My Father; ²⁸and I will give him the morning star.”

Revelation 3:11-12

“¹¹I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹²He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”

Revelation 3:21

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Revelation 22:12

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”