

## *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 coming back as the firstborn from the dead and the ruler over all other kings, is presented throughout the book.

<sup>5</sup>*Jesus, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth...* <sup>7</sup>*Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him...* (Rev. 1:5-7)

- B. The descriptions in Revelation 1:5 are based on Psalm 89 and are dependent on one another—*faithful witness, firstborn, and ruler of the kings* (Ps. 89:27, 37). These titles were promised by God to one of David’s descendants—the Messiah. Jesus is the *heir* of these promises.

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

- C. *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 our blessings. He is supreme leader and heir over all blessings pertaining to the realm of the resurrection. Jesus will bring the supernatural realm of the resurrection together with the natural realm (Eph. 1:10).

<sup>15</sup>*He is...the firstborn over all creation.* <sup>16</sup>*By Him all things were created...* <sup>18</sup>*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 that Jesus was only then *made* the Son of God, but that He was *declared* to be the Son of God *with power*. The resurrection was a public declaration of what had always been true. At the resurrection, Jesus was vindicated as God’s Son, rather than being seen as a crucified criminal.

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

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

- F. Jesus was exalted to the position of firstborn Son at God’s right hand. 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 the pinnacle of all power beckons the human race to rule with Him.

<sup>20</sup>*...when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand...* <sup>21</sup>*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 the first member of a new order of people who triumph over death. He is the *pledge*, or *guarantee*, that His people will receive a resurrected body like His (Phil. 3:21).  
<sup>20</sup>*Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [died]...*<sup>26</sup>*The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (1 Cor. 15:20, 26)*  
<sup>21</sup>*...transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body. (Phil. 3:21)*
- B. All three Persons of the Godhead participated in His resurrection. Jesus had power to take up His life, to raise Himself; the Father raised Him in partnership with the Spirit (Rom. 8:11; Eph. 1:20).  
<sup>18</sup>*“I 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).  
<sup>21</sup>*Since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:21)*  
<sup>40</sup>*Everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him...I will raise him up at the last day...<sup>44</sup>I will raise him up at the last day...<sup>54</sup>and 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.  
<sup>39</sup>*“Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have”...<sup>42</sup>So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish...<sup>43</sup>And He took it and ate in their presence. (Lk. 24:39-43)*  
<sup>40</sup>*“Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly<sup>41</sup>...to 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 resurrection of Jesus made a way for us to be with Him and enjoy Him and His beauty now and forever (Jn. 17:24).  
<sup>16</sup>*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout...And the dead in Christ will rise first.<sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thes. 4:16-17)*  
<sup>28</sup>*...the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice<sup>29</sup>and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Jn. 5:28-29)*
- F. **Eternal rewards:** Even our works will be transformed by the power of the resurrection, when we receive eternal rewards. All our labor will be rewarded, and all that is temporarily “lost” due to obedience or persecution will be returned far beyond 100-fold in the resurrection.
- G. The millennial earth and the new earth will both be transformed by the power of the resurrection.  
<sup>21</sup>*Creation itself also will be delivered ...into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Rom. 8:21)*