

Dear Nick,

Thank you for your question to the New Haven Bible Students. You wanted to know if there would be one or two resurrections of the dead. You said that you observed conflicting scriptures; one saying that “All” would be resurrected and another saying that the elect would arise first to everlasting life. Later the non-elect would arise to judgment. You asked for clarification.

Jesus’ incredible sacrifice redeemed Adam and all his progeny. Although everyone has been redeemed, only those who have made a covenant of sacrifice and have proven worthy of immortality are with Jesus now and are part of the first resurrection. All others will be awakened from the sleep of death during the thousand-year Day of Judgment.

Although Jesus died for everyone, His blood was first applied for His Church (those who have chosen to follow Him and live a life of righteousness, while sacrificing their human wills in order to do the will of God). These are considered “the first born” and are on trial now for spiritual life. When these die, if faithful, they will be with Jesus in heaven. After this Church class is completed and is reigning with Him in heaven, Jesus’ blood will be applied for the vast majority of humanity during the Millennial age. At this time the dead shall come forth from their graves to a period of judgment, or decision, and, if after a period of trial, they willingly follow God’s laws of righteousness, they will be rewarded with everlasting human life on earth. The beauty of God’s plan is that he has a place for everyone in either his heavenly or earthly kingdoms and Jesus’ sacrifice included all of humankind. “This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given at its proper time [some now during this Gospel age who will receive spiritual life, if faithful, and others during the Day of Judgment]. (1 Timothy 2:3-6) “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22)

We believe that Jesus in the entire passage of John 5:24-30 is talking about the above two classes of people, those who are already judged during the Gospel age and have achieved a heavenly reward (verse 24) and those who have yet to be judged (verses 28-29). The second class will be awakened from their graves to a period of future on-going judgment where they will have an opportunity to learn righteousness and achieve life everlasting on earth.

The Apostle Paul speaks of those deemed worthy of the first resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:42-54. “So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 42-44) He continues in verses 51-52. “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Are there two resurrections? Yes, the first resurrection is for those who have made a covenant of sacrifice to do the will of God during this Gospel age. They are being judged now and, if proven faithful, they will be resurrected with spiritual bodies and reign with Jesus in heaven. The second resurrection will be for the world of humankind and will take place during the Day of Judgment. All who have ever lived will come forth from their graves with fleshly bodies and have an opportunity for ever-lasting life on earth.

We hope we have answered your question. Please write us again.

Sincerely,
The New Haven Bible Students