

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.**
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

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Exanastasis, The Out-Resurrection

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In order that I might come to know Him in an experiential way, and to come to know experientially the power of His resurrection and a joint-participation in His sufferings, being brought to the place where my life will radiate His likeness to His death, if by any means I might arrive at the goal, namely, the out-resurrection from among those who are dead. (Philippians 3:10-11 WAET)

Much could be said about the life of Paul, but one thing for sure is that Paul desired above all things to live as if he were radiating the very life of Christ in his body, even in suffering and death. Paul's desire was based on a goal set before him; it was to arrive at what he called the *out-resurrection*, which comes from the Greek word *exanastasis*. This is the only place in Greek Scripture that this particular word is discovered. Unfortunately, practically all versions of Scripture simply translate it as *resurrection*.

Before looking at this word, it is important to see that Scripture uses two expressions in relation to resurrection. The first expression is *the resurrection of the dead* (e.g., Matthew 22:31; Acts 17:32; 23:6; 24:21; Hebrews 6:2), which is what most Jews understood to be a general resurrection of the good (just) and the bad (unjust). According to their understanding, a day would come when all would be resurrected and judged.

This same understanding is seen in the three disciples' response to Jesus' order as He came down the mountain after being transfigured. Jesus introduced a phrase to them that was foreign to their understanding; it was the expression—***rising from the dead*** or ***resurrection from the dead***.

As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. (Mark 9:9-10 NASB)

As Jews, the disciples knew that all the dead would be resurrected as expressed in *the resurrection of the dead*, but they did not understand that there would be a *resurrection from the dead*. In other words, not only did they not understand that Jesus, as the Son of Man, was to die on the cross, but that He would also be raised from the dead.

There is only one other place in the Gospels that this expression is used; it is used in reference to Jesus raising his friend Lazarus from the dead (John 12:1, 9). Thus, the expression *the resurrection from the dead* refers to a select group that is resurrected out from among all the dead while the rest remain dead. Notice how Paul used both expressions in his defense of resurrection.

Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? (1 Corinthians 15:12 NASB)

Out of twenty-two references in Greek Scripture to being *raised from the dead*, nineteen of them refer to Jesus (John 2:22; 21:14; Acts 3:15; 4:10, 13:30, 34; Romans 4:24; 6:4, 9; 7:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:12, 20; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Peter 1:21), and three refer to Lazarus (John 12:1, 9, 17).

Out of seven references in Greek Scripture to *the resurrection from the dead*, five refer to Jesus (Acts 4:2; 26:23; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:12; 1 Peter 1:3) and two refer to man (Luke 20:35; Philippians 3:11). The Luke reference is particularly telling.

Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age [eon] marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age [eon] and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. (Luke 20:34-36 NASB [CV])

The point in all this is that there are only two main expressions in Scripture related to the resurrection, one of which almost exclusively is used in reference to Jesus being raised or resurrected **from** the dead. The CV adds the word *among* to this expression—*raised* or *resurrected from among the dead*—to make it more emphatic. This expression lays the foundation for the fact that some will also be resurrected from among the dead at some future time.

Now, returning to the goal that Paul sought to attain; he did not merely use the expression *resurrection from the dead*, but he added something to it.

If by any means I might arrive at the goal, namely, the out-resurrection [exanastasis] from among those who are dead. (Philippians 3:11 WAET)

Other translations use the expression *resurrection from the dead* (NASB), *resurrection of the dead* (KJV), and *resurrection out of the dead* (LITV).

Exanastasis is made up of two words. It is comprised of *anastasis*, which means “standing up again.” This is the most commonly used word in Greek Scripture to refer to the resurrection. However, Paul added the prefix *ex*, which “denotes origin or the point from whence motion or action proceeds, or out of a place, time or cause.” It can mean “out among,” which seems to be the most appropriate meaning to Paul’s goal. The Concordant Greek Text, English Sublinear, translates this expression as “out-up-standing of the out-of-dead-ones.”

Thus, Paul sought to stand up again from among the dead. In other words, Paul saw a resurrection in which only some will stand up; others will remain dead. Obviously, this cannot refer to the general resurrection of the just and the unjust, for they all will stand up at the same time, in the same hour.

Having been a devout Pharisee, Paul knew that all the dead will be resurrected one day. As we have seen, he knew of the second resurrection, but this was not Paul’s goal. He sought to arrive at or to attain to a very special goal. *Attain* (Greek *katantao*) means “to arrive at.” In other words, Paul’s goal was to one day arrive at the resurrection *from* the dead, the same resurrection that his Lord had attained. In desiring to die as his Lord died, Paul was seeking to rise from among the dead just as the Lord rose as the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20).

However, Paul was not alone in his understanding, for John was also given revelation of the resurrection from the dead in which a select company will rise up from the grave to reign with Christ for 1,000 years.

(5) The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed 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. (Revelation 20:5-6 NASB)

Notice that this is the first resurrection, which is the same as Paul’s out-resurrection, and that this states the rest of the dead do not come to life, for they await the second resurrection (Great White Throne). Let us be like Paul and seek to attain the first and better resurrection, the exanastasis.