

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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Out-Resurrection From Among the Dead

In my February 18, 2015 issue on Paul's 3:11 verses, I explained a little about the out-resurrection, a topic I have covered in several other writings, one of which was posted six years ago. Over the years, I have noticed that among believers there seems to be a lack of understanding of Paul's revelation of the *out-resurrection*, or outright ignorance of it, or lack of any interest to learn of it. I heard a very well-known pastor state from the pulpit on several occasions that the resurrection is very important, but he never explained what he meant. So, one day, I asked several of his people what his teaching was on resurrection. Not a single person could answer me. Not one! Even worse, no one could clearly explain what the resurrection was all about, of course, other than Jesus' resurrection. I thought this phenomenon might be limited to this one large group until one day I mentioned the out-resurrection to an entirely different group and they admitted they did not know what I was talking about.

Why is this so? I can't say for sure, but there are at least two related possibilities. First, resurrection is seen *solely* as a present, spiritual reality, that is, believers experience a spiritual resurrection while in mortal bodies. Some claim it occurs when one believes and is baptized into newness of life; others see it as a progressive experience. Second, a present, spiritual resurrection fits in with one dying and going to heaven and receiving a new body, as many are taught. Given this, why care about a future resurrection or what Paul calls the redemption of the body (Romans 8:23)? We should care, for it mattered to Paul.

Why, in his last personal letter to his beloved Timothy, did Paul warn Timothy to beware of those who had gone astray from the truth and were upsetting the faith of some by saying the resurrection had already taken place (2 Timothy 2:17-18)? Obviously, Paul expected a future resurrection, not some pretentious spiritual one while he remained in a mortal body. The time of his departure had come; he had finished his course, and the crown of righteousness was laid up for him on that DAY in the future (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Earlier in his course, Paul wrote: **He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you** (2 Corinthians 4:14). This sure sounds like something off in the future, which leads to Paul's goal of the *out-resurrection*.

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 Wuest)

The Wuest *New Testament – An Expanded Translation* is a paraphrase translation, which I generally do not use, but in this case, it does a good job of capturing Paul's thought, especially with the word *out-resurrection*.

It is very clear that Paul desired above all else to live as if he were radiating the very life of Christ in his body, even in suffering and death. Notice that he sought to know the power of Jesus' resurrection through suffering and death. In his flesh, Paul died daily, and, in this death, he sought to know through experience the power of His resurrection. This is the death to life cycle about which I previously wrote. If you want to call this a type of spiritual resurrection or a cycle of death leading to spiritual life, I have no argument, but note that, according to Paul, this is not the endpoint; it is the way to attain something else that Paul called a *goal* to press on toward.

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on.... I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12, 14 NASB)

There was no pretense in Paul as there is in some today who are claiming with near giddiness that they have arrived. This great apostle was nearing the end of his life and he had no pretense in him. The reality to Paul was that he had not arrived at a goal or mark set before him, namely, to arrive at what he called the *out-resurrection*, which comes from the Greek word *exanastasis*. This is the only place in the New Testament that this particular word is discovered, and yet, practically all translations translate it simply as *resurrection*. It is as if Paul wanted to catch our attention to a truth that he knew would be lost or distorted. After all, it was happening in his day.

Exanastasis is made up of two words. The root word is *anastasis*, which means "standing up again." This is the most commonly used word in Greek scripture to refer to the resurrection or being raised up. 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." The *Concordant Greek Text, English Sublinear*, translates this expression as "out-up-standing of the out-of-dead-ones." In other words, Paul saw a future resurrection in which some would be raised up from the dead while others remained dead. Wuest makes this distinction quite clear, to the point of redundancy, in the phrase *out-resurrection from among those who are dead*.

Scripture refers to resurrection in two ways, the difference being in the preposition – resurrection *of* the dead and resurrection *from* (among) the dead or raised *from* the dead. Clearly, Paul was given revelation of this distinction, for he 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)? In Jesus' day, the Jews understood the resurrection *of* the dead to mean that in the last day all the dead would be simultaneously raised up, some to a resurrection of life and others to a resurrection of judgment (John 5:29). This is generally called the **second resurrection** when all the dead appear before the **Great White Throne Judgment** (Revelation 20:11-15). Thus, Martha told Jesus in regard to Lazarus' death: **"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day"** (John 11:24).

However, the expression *resurrection from the dead*, which was introduced by Jesus Himself, was an entirely new concept to the Jews, which is seen in the disciples' response as they came down the mountain after witnessing Jesus' transfiguration. **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). Not only did they not understand that the Son of Man was to die on the cross, but that He would also be raised *from* the dead.

Of twenty-two references in the New Testament to being *raised from the dead*, nineteen 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). Of seven references 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). Luke is particularly telling, for here Jesus answered a question from the Sadducees who did not believe in resurrection: **"The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age 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).

This is Paul's *out-resurrection*, which is also the *first resurrection* (Revelation 20:5-6) and the *better resurrection* (Hebrews 11:35) that is reserved for the called and chosen company of believers called the sons of God, the sons of the resurrection. Paul pressed on toward this goal. It was an upward call, meaning Paul sought to be in the company of those who would rise up or stand up from among the dead. Paul saw a resurrection in which only some will stand up; others (the majority) will remain dead for 1,000 years.

Dear brethren, this was Paul's expectation, his longing. **We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption [deliverance] of our body. For in hope [expectation] we have been saved, but hope [expectation] that is seen is not hope [expectation]; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it** (Romans 8:23-25 NASB [CLV]). Do you long for the redemption or deliverance of your body? Do you long for immortality, being changed into the likeness of the Son of God? Let us not pretend we have arrived. Let us wait eagerly for it; it won't be long!