



*"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"*

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## Mini Study

### Will You Live Again?

*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2)*

*Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, (John 5:28)*

*and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment (John 5:29)*

*The rest of the dead lived not ["again" KJV] until the thousand years should be finished... (Rev 20:5)*

*For as in Adam all die, even so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming (I Corinthians 15:22-23)*

To many it is inconceivable that death ends everything - forever. Surely there's more to life than our brief three score years and ten. The concept is almost universal. We like to think that our experiences count for something long-term. Indeed, this longing for life beyond the grave permeates the major faiths. Christians and Muslims, each in their own way, seek Heaven. Buddhism merges us into the Deity. The Hindu faith brings us back to a physical existence up or down the scale of life according to our deeds. And many New Age religions subscribe to this latter notion of re-incarnation.

In fact, there are elements of truth in all these views:

- all the major faiths promote their religious writings as divinely inspired and true. This ministry bases its beliefs firmly on the Christian Bible which we believe is the true and final Word of God
- if man is simply the work of blind chance and not the work of an all-powerful Divinity who has a plan for us, then this physical life is all there is
- that plan entails the creation of "clay models" who will be transformed by divine energy into spirit. (Man is made of "clay" - the elements of the earth)
- when our physical life ends, it's not the end. God's plan includes - for every one of us: Jew, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, animist, atheist - a return from the dead: a resurrection
- the harvest seasons are an analogy for God's plan for us. Jesus is the firstfruits (I Corinthians 15:20) - the first to be transformed from physical life to spirit life by resurrection from among the dead
- there follows "*a kind of firstfruits*" (James 1:18). These are those who, in this life, commit to follow the firstfruit - Jesus - and have received his Spirit: "*...These are the ones following the Lamb wherever He may go. These were redeemed from among men as a firstfruit to God and to the Lamb*" (Revelation 14:4pp)

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- this firstfruits harvest, relatively small, will be resurrected from their grave at the return of Jesus: *“In a moment, in a glance of an eye, at the last trumpet; for a trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed”* (I Corinthians 15:52 LITV). They will live again, never more to die
- what about the rest of mankind - all those since creation, dead and alive, of every race, of every religion (and none)? They, too, will live again, but in the flesh: *“But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were ended...”* (Revelation 20:5 LITV)
- the *“thousand years”* - the *“millennium”* - begins with the return of Jesus as *“King of kings and Lord of lords”*: the political and religious Head of mankind
- every one of us has to come before Christ’s judgment seat to answer for our conduct (II Corinthians 5:10). For Christians that time is *now* - an on-going assessment (I Peter 4:17)
- for all others it is the *“White Throne Judgment”* (Revelation 20:11-15) at which they will have opportunity to believe the Gospel - to have their names *“written in the Book of Life”*
- those who then continue to reject God’s plan in the Gospel are forever removed in an earth-enveloping conflagration (II Peter 3:7). Lacking God’s Spirit they will die and be burned - just like refuse in the Valley of Hinnom - Jerusalem’s refuse dump. Compare the fate of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10)

*(All Scripture references are ASV unless otherwise noted. [pp:paraphrased])*

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