

# **Bible Accounts of People Raised From the Dead**

## **Old Testament Times:**

1. Elijah raised the son of the Zarephath widow from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-22).
2. Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman from the dead (2 Kings 4:32-35).
3. A man was raised from the dead when his body touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:20, 21).

## **People Raised from the Dead by Christ:**

1. Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain from the dead (Luke 7:11-15).
2. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Luke 8:41, 42, 49-55).
3. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44).

## **People Raised from the Dead by the Apostles:**

1. When Christ sent the disciples out to preach, He told them to do four things: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons" (Matthew 10:8). We assume that they did what they were told and that some people were raised from the dead but the Bible does not give specific examples. Since Judas was included in this group that was sent forth (v.4), it is possible that he too raised someone from the dead.
2. Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-41).
3. Eutychus was raised from the dead by Paul (Acts 20:9, 10).

## **Three Unique Cases:**

- 1) Many Saints Rose from the Dead at the Resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 27:50-53).

Matthew is the only gospel writer who tells us of certain saints who came out of the graves (verses 52-53). There was an earthquake which took place at the time of Christ's death (verse 51). This earthquake caused the rocks to split and the graves to be opened, but Matthew is careful to explain that the bodies of these saints did not come out of their graves until "after His resurrection" (verse 53), which indicates that Christ's resurrection took place first (compare 1 Cor. 15:20). These risen saints went into Jerusalem and appeared to many people, letting them know that Christ's victory over death also guarantees that His believers will have victory over death.

This is all that Matthew tells us about this remarkable event, so we need to be careful not to be dogmatic about what the Scripture does not reveal. When the Bible is silent we need to be silent. Or, if we have a theory about what we think might have happened, we need to be careful to make sure

people understand that it is just a theory.

There are two possible ways of understanding the timing of when these believers were raised up: 1) They were raised up from the dead on the day that Christ died at the time when the graves were opened, but their bodies remained in their tombs until after Christ's resurrection; 2) They were raised up from the dead after Christ's resurrection at which time they went into Jerusalem and appeared to many, even though their tombs were opened three days earlier, at the time of Christ's death. The Greek grammar is somewhat inconclusive; either view is possible.

The better understanding seems to be that these saints did not rise up from the dead until after Jesus had been raised, even though prior to that, on the day of Christ's death, many of the tombs were opened as the result of the supernatural earthquake. [Alford and Jamieson/Fausset/Brown support this understanding.] It does not make sense that they were raised up at the time of Jesus' death and sat around for three days in the tombs before finally coming out and going into the city. It is more reasonable to say that they were raised up after Jesus' resurrection even though their tombs were opened prior to this. This would harmonize with the fact that Jesus was "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20 and compare Acts 26:23), which would seem odd if these believers were raised ahead of His resurrection.

We are not told where they went after they entered Jerusalem.

This passage does not answer the question as to whether these saints were raised like Lazarus and the other examples given above, only to die again, or whether they were raised up in a resurrection body never to die again. We are just not told. My own theory is that they were raised up in resurrection bodies and after they appeared to people in Jerusalem; then they were taken to heaven. This makes sense because we never hear about these people again. But I cannot prove this. The passage just does not give many details.

It seems that God wanted to demonstrate to people that Christ's resurrection would guarantee the resurrection of His believers, and He accomplished this amazing miracle to prove this point. "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

2. The Two Witnesses are Killed and Raised Back to Life (Revelation 11:7-12).

These two men were killed by the "Beast" (Antichrist) and three and a half days later were raised from the dead and then they ascended to heaven.

3. The Beast (Antichrist) is healed of a deadly wound caused by a sword (Rev. 13:3,12,14).

Interpreters differ in their understanding of this, but if this man actually died as the result of a sword wound, then this would be another example of a resurrection from the dead, only in this case it would be done by the power of Satan. Or, did it only appear that he came back from the dead (a Satanic hoax)?

**Jesus Rose from the Dead;  
Never to Die Again (Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18).  
(Matt. 28:5-8; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5, 6).**