

*The* WORLD TOMORROW

A WORLD-WIDE BROADCAST

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG  
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BOX 111, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Dear Friend:

Are those saints who arose about the time of Christ's resurrection still alive?

It is a common conception, often taken for granted, that the saints who arose shortly after Christ are still alive. But what does the Bible say?

First of all, let us get the picture clearly in mind. This incident, recorded in Matthew 27:52,53, reads as follows: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

These were not the first nor the only people to be restored to life from the dead. Notice II Kings, the fourth chapter. Here we read the story of Elisha and the Shunammite's son, whom he raised to life through the power of God. This young man was resurrected many hundreds of years before Christ and yet Paul says in I Corinthians 15:22,23 that Christ is the firstfruits or the first to be made immortal as the Son of God (Rom. 1:4), and that there is a definite order, Christ first, then afterward -- not those saints -- but they that are Christ's at His coming. Now God is not the author of confusion. He would not set a definite order of resurrections and then violate that order.

And yet, what about the Shunammite's son, and what about Lazarus (John 11:5), and the widow's son mentioned in Luke 7:14,15? These were all raised before Christ's resurrection. What happened to them?

If we cast out preconceived ideas, and merely take the Bible as it is, the answer is very clear. They were not made immortal because Paul states in I Timothy 6:16 that Christ alone, of all men who have ever lived, is immortal. I Corinthians 15:22-23 says furthermore: "For as in Adam all die, even so 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."

NO ONE BUT CHRIST HAS BEEN RESURRECTED TO IMMORTALITY TO THIS DAY -- but those in Christ will be raised NEXT at His second coming! Jesus said that as the Father raised the dead and made alive (quickened) whom He would, so also would the Son do likewise (John 5:21). The answer is simply that these people, from the Shunammite's son down to those raised at the time of Christ's resurrection were made physically alive, undoubtedly healed of the afflictions that might have caused their deaths prematurely. Then they lived out their lives -- human flesh and blood lives. Since they were only mortal, and physically alive again, they must have died.

THUS Scripture reveals that those people merely lived out a natural human life which had been cut short, then died and are even now awaiting the resurrection.

LETTER ANSWERING DEPARTMENT