

Article of the Month **January, 2016**

SPIRITUAL THUMB-DRIVES

The new calendar year often brings thoughts of renewal to many people. Of course, the biggest renewal in all of the universe will be the awakening and restoration of mankind from the state of death into the ultimate perfection which will result in a re-established favor with God and an eternal life.

Resurrection versus Awakening

Sometimes Christians either fail to note or are careless with the subtle distinctions of the words “awakening” and “resurrection.” The Bible, however, is very precise in making such distinctions. “Resurrection” is from the Greek word “anastasis.” Its very specific meaning and Scriptural usage is “a total re-standing.” In other words, in the Bible, resurrection is not an awakening from the dead. It is a process of bringing an individual away from a condition of separation from God into a condition of absolute perfection and acceptance with God. Waking up from the dead, on the other hand, is just that: a recussitation. Because death is merely a condition of nothingness in which all functions cease to exist (including thoughts), “awakening” is quite literally a re-making of the individual who used to exist. (Psalm 146:4)

The Varieties of Resurrection

Before continuing, it is imperative that we understand God’s plan to include TWO KINDS of resurrections. The Bible refers to the “first resurrection.” This, in itself, proves that more than one resurrection exists. In all of the references to the subject, John 5:29 (in its better translations) explains the two resurrections best. Jesus refers to them as (1) “a resurrection of life,” and (2) “a resurrection of judging” (or, “by judgment”).

These two resurrections refer to two groups whose experiences vary widely. The “resurrection to life” is for the faithful members of the “Body of Christ” being developed now in this Christian Age. It is they who will be the promised “Seed of Abraham” who are developed so that they will be the instruments in blessing all the families of the earth in the incoming age. Jesus refers to them in the context of John 5:29 in verse 24. He states that these will “not come into judgment.” This refers to the “resurrection by judgment” in verse 29. The faithful of this age will not come into that judgment because they will be, instead, a part of “the resurrection of life.” That is why (in verse 24) Jesus

says they have “passed out of death into life.” This resurrection (the “first”) will be to a condition of being spiritual beings like Jesus is. (I John 3:2)

On the other hand, the “resurrection by judgment” will be the process experienced by the vast majority of mankind. It will not be a resurrection into a spiritual world, but into a restored and perfect earth. This “judgment” resurrection will result in eternal life as perfect human beings with flawless and joyful surroundings. Isaiah 26:9 refers so well to the process: “...when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” The “judgments” are not about what men have done in their past (this life), but about how they will be judged by their progress then. This is, after all, the literal answer to the prayer which Jesus taught us: “...Thy will be done in earth.”

We will not here focus on the first resurrection for Jesus’ faithful disciples, but rather on the other resurrection (for nearly all who have lived). We will do this because understanding of the mechanism is made clearer in our day by modern technological advances.

Technology Gives Us a Clue

The Scriptures make it clear that many humans will be carried over into the new world of God’s Kingdom without having to die. (See, for example, Psalm 46:10.) They (along with awakened ones) will then begin the resurrection process which will bring them back to youthful perfection. (Job 14:13-15; 33:25)

But the vast majority of people have died and have been buried—awaiting the awakening and the resurrection process. God’s promises to accomplish this, naturally awaken questions in us. After all, the old tradition and error that we have immortal souls which leave us when we die, but which continue to exist—that tradition makes resurrection or awakening totally unnecessary! It does, however, overcome one difficulty. If we didn’t really die, our thoughts and memories would continue. But the fact that death obliterates all thought and memory leaves us with the problem and question of how the old memory (and thus the old person) can be re-made!

Many of us do not comprehend the complexities of modern technological devices. But we can, at least, marvel at what these devices accomplish.

One of these devices, the “thumb drive,” gives us a clue of how God will be able to restore all of the individuals who have ever lived (with their memories and identities intact).

Just as our physical brains process and collect information throughout our lives by utilization of electrical and chemical reactions, even so, computers do the same thing (but without the emotion and intellect capable in the human brain). But all of the information stored on a computer can easily be transferred to “thumb drives”—little

devices of technology which capture the information intact, and can transfer that information (without flaw) to another computer.

God, Who is so far superior to any science of ours, apparently has “recorded” all of the thoughts, memories, and emotions of every individual who has ever lived onto His “spiritual thumb drives.” When, then, it comes awakening time, all He need do is “plug in” the thumb drives into newly-created bodies (in the forms of the old ones), and **THERE THEY ARE!** Each individual will be there again—ready to experience the growth-judgments which will bring him eventually to the completion of the resurrection process.

There were times in the past when doctrinal errors or “blind faith” were the only answers to the questions regarding how God could accomplish His promises. While our poor human intellects are yet extremely limited in such matters, our own efforts at scientific applications prove to us that many things we used to consider “impossible” are now common in every-day life. We are so far beneath the Creator in thinking ability, but we can, at least, begin to comprehend the “hows” of His plans and purposes—even though we think of it all on such a small and limited scale.

May the meditations of the new year bring you closer in appreciation of and a desire for “the mind of God.”
