

“The First-Born Of The Dead”

Introduction.

1. The expression “the firstborn of the dead” occurs twice in the New Testament.

a. It was used first by Paul in Colossians 1:18.

COL 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, **the first-born from the dead**; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

b. It occurs the second time in Revelation 1:5.

REV 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, **the first-born of the dead**, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood,

2. It is clear both references refer to Jesus Christ as “the first-born of the dead.”

a. The Greek “prototokos” [prah **tah** tah kahs] from “protos” [**proh** tahs] meaning “first” and “tikto” [**tik** toh] meaning “to bear, to bring forth, to give birth.”

b. This word occurs several times in the New Testament.

1) “First-born” - Matt. 1:25; Lk. 2:7; Heb. 11:28.

2) It is used to mean Head of a spiritual family. (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6). Christ is Pre-eminent in the family of God.

3) It is used to refer to the One who was before creation and who is Pre-eminent over it - Jesus Christ. (Col. 1:15).

4) It is used in the plural in Hebrews 12:23 “a church of first-born ones.” It denotes the ones enjoying special privileges and blessings as children of God redeemed by the blood of Christ.

c. The word “first-born” has a special meaning in regard to Christ in Colossians 1:18 and Revelation 1:5.

Bible Students

1. Bible students know Jesus was not the first to be raised from the dead.

2. We have accounts in both the Old and Testaments of people being raised from the dead.

a. The Old Testament records several instances of people being raised from the dead.

1) About 900 years before Christ, Elijah the prophet “stretched himself out on” the body of a dead child, the son of a widow of Zarephath, and cried out to the Lord, “O Lord my God, let this child’s soul come back to him.” Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived (1 Kgs. 17:8-22).