

## People Came Out of Their Tombs After Jesus Died?

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**Question: Were some people raised from the dead after Jesus died, or was it after He was resurrected? Were they raised in their natural bodies or in resurrected bodies?**

**Answer:** Matthew is the only gospel that gives us this information:

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. (Matthew 27:50-53 NIV)

### **WERE THEY RAISED AFTER JESUS DIED, OR AFTER HE WAS RESURRECTED?**

When did these dead people come back to life? One theory says they came back to life immediately after His crucifixion and before His resurrection. According to this theory, they waited inside their tombs until after Jesus was resurrected to come out. This seems highly unlikely. Why would God bring them back to life and have them wait for three days before they could come out?

To suggest that these people who came back to life were in resurrected bodies before Jesus arose from the dead contradicts the clear teachings of Scripture that Jesus was the first one to be raised from the dead in a resurrection body:

[Jesus] is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18).

...Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:15).

This means these people could not have come back to life until after Jesus was raised. The words "were raised to life" and "came out of the tombs" are connected to the phrase "after Jesus' resurrection."

### **WERE THEY RAISED IN THEIR NATURAL BODIES, OR IN RESURRECTION BODIES?**

The Scripture only tells us that their dead bodies "were raised to life" without giving any details. If they were raised from the dead in their natural bodies, they would have been dead only 2 or 3 days. Their coming back to life would have been resuscitations like Lazarus (John 11:43-44), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:52-56), and the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:13-15).

If this was the case, they were temporarily brought back to life in their natural bodies to testify to people in Jerusalem, but they would die again later. The people went into Jerusalem and probably testified about Jesus conquering death, which was how they were able to come back to life.

The phrase "the tombs broke open" supports the theory they were in their natural bodies. Each tomb would have a heavy stone in front of it and would need to be opened to let them out. But if they were raised in resurrected bodies, the tombs wouldn't need to be opened because they would be able to pass through the walls like Jesus did.

Some people believe they came back to life in resurrected bodies, which assumes that they would have ascended into heaven when Jesus did. However, when Jesus ascended into heaven, Acts 1:9 says that He ascended into heaven alone and makes no mention of others in resurrected bodies also ascending.

The Scriptures tell us there is an order of resurrection—that Christ was resurrected alone, and that those who belong to Christ will be resurrected at His coming.

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep...For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one **in proper order**: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end (1 Cor. 15:20, 22-24)

This indicates that those who came out of their tombs were not in resurrected bodies.

Making Life Count Ministries  
P.O. Box 680174  
Prattville, Alabama 36068  
[www.makinglifecount.net](http://www.makinglifecount.net)