Sermon transcript

Meeting start 1991-02-03 15:00
Broadcast date 2026-07-15 19:30
Location Krefeld, Germany

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preached on 3. 2. 1991, 15:00, Krefeld, Germany

Topic: "A proper exposition of the various resurrections!"

broadcast on 15. 7. 2026

We are simply so grateful that God has set us into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

I had to think about this when I picked up Brother Graff from Düsseldorf airport yesterday. I saw two Salvation Army officers, both were wearing a fine uniform, just as William Booth had envisioned it. And there, on the top of their military caps, the words "Salvation Army" were written so beautifully. And I thought to myself: they are committed to carrying on, no matter what God is still doing on earth. They remain true to their cause.

And when we look at the religious world as a whole, Catholics remain true to the Catholic system, Lutherans to the Lutheran system, Anglicans to the Anglican system. Every movement remains true; they feel they must.

And we have simply recognized that our loyalty does not belong to a denomination, but to the Lord, who is faithful. And our obligation is not to any tradition, but truly only to the Lord.

And so, by grace, we may claim for ourselves that we are led from knowledge to knowledge, from clarity to clarity, by grace, through the Spirit of God, who has certainly not ceased to work. On the contrary, it goes ever deeper and becomes ever clearer, until, as it is written in Proverbs, the full light of the day and the morning star can rise fully in our hearts [Pro 4:18, 2 Pet 1:19], until the end has become like the beginning again.

Well, we have heard much of God's Word. I believe there is certainly no lack of it. May God grant us grace that we might experience it all and become doers of the Word. [Jam 1:22]

There are always two things: the whole of Holy Scripture is full, but we want God to have his way and for what he wishes to say to us to be spoken.

Here, our main concern is the proclamation of the whole counsel of God, not the interpretation of parables, but the revelation of what is hidden within them.

I would just like to refer very briefly to Psalm 89. And then we shall move on to the prophetic Word, and also to the New Testament.

Psalm 89, verse 13:

[13] ***Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.***

[14] ***Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face.***

[15] ***Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.***

[16] ***In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.***

[17] ***For thou art the glory of their strength; and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.***

[18] ***For the Lord is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.***

I read on, but we shall keep it brief this afternoon.

There are simply passages that stand out so clearly, that convey something special.

And for those who read on here, there is mention of Christ as the firstborn, first of the son of David and the throne of David. And then again of our Lord, in verse 26 it says:

[26] ***He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.***

[27] ***Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.***

Verse 29:

[29] ***His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.***

And then verses 34 to 37:

[34] ***My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.***

God does not change his Word. God knew in the beginning what he knows in the end. He cannot increase in knowledge. He can never amend or correct himself. What he says is valid from everlasting to everlasting.

And that is why it is written here, as we have read: ***"nor alter the word of my lips"*** [Ps 89:34]

[35] ***Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.***

It is written in Romans 3: ***"Every man is a liar, but God is true."*** [Rm 3:4]

The promises he has given are yea and amen.

And if our faith is thus anchored in God and God's Word, we too shall see the Lord's right hand raised.

Verse 36 reads:

[36] ***His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me.***

[37] ***It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.***

It is wonderful to know that God has sworn by himself, placing himself under an oath to fulfill what he has promised.

We have of course read many scriptures in the two services. We notice that God has a church, that there is a bride, that there are chosen ones from the nations, and that there are chosen ones among the people of Israel, that there are different resurrections.

And I would just like to touch on this very briefly, starting by drawing a comparison with a passage from Joel chapter 3, which is then quoted by Peter in his first sermon.

However, Peter stops right in the middle of a verse, just as Jesus did in Luke chapter 4, when he read the scripture from Isaiah 61, stopping in the middle of a verse and reading only the part that applied to the time and did not read the rest.

It is simply very important to read only what is necessary or intended for a particular context.

I read Joel chapter 2, verse 32:

[32] ***And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;***

But the sentence continues:

[32] ***…for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.***

Take note of the first part of verse 32:

[32] ***Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

Peter did not read on about Mount Zion and Jerusalem.

Acts chapter 2, verse 21:

[21] ***And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

Imagine if Peter had carried on reading and told all of us from every nation that salvation was on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, then we would all have set out on a pilgrimage to seek, find, and experience salvation there.

Do you see the wisdom of God? Do you see the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

These are men of God who can even stop in the middle of a verse to rightly divide the Word of truth.

Look, when our Lord gave the command in Matthew 10, he said to his disciples: ***"Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; do not go into the way of the Gentiles."*** [Mt 10:5–6]

But after his resurrection came the command to go into all the world: ***"Therefore go into all the world and make disciples of all nations."*** [Mt 28:19]

Matthew 28, verse 19.

Everything in its own time, in its own place, for the specific era or time for which the Word went forth from the Lord's mouth.

If we look at the proclamation with Israel in mind, then it will be in Jerusalem again on Mount Zion.

If we have the nations in mind, then it can be in the USA, in China, in Europe, it can be anywhere where people hear the proclamation and come to believe in Jesus Christ, their Lord.

I'm reading from Joel chapter 3, verse 16: And we will see that this concerns Israel and consequently Mount Zion as well.

By the way, as Brother Russ mentioned, we have been there several times, and it is simply wonderful when one knows, even in purely geographical terms, where Mount Moriah is and how Mount Zion runs as the Temple Mount.

And it is simply very good when one does not just read about it in the Bible, but knows exactly where things are located.

Here in Joel chapter 3, verse 16 it says:

[16] ***The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.***

When we then read Revelation 14, there the Lord is shown as the Lamb with the 144,000 on Mount Zion.

And Mount Zion is not in heaven; Mount Zion is in Jerusalem.

It is the end of Mount Moriah, and that is where the temple pinnacle ends, from which Satan wanted to push our Lord down. [Luk 4:9]

There are groups that teach that the bride consists solely of the 144,000 and that she will be raptured to some Mount Zion up in heaven.

There is no such place.

And the 144,000 will not be raptured at all.

There is not a single scripture to support this.

Only the bride is raptured and enters the marriage supper.

The 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel only become believers and are sealed after the rapture.

How then can they be raptured?

So there really are very clear scriptures that teach all this and shed light on the matter.

The Lord, too, will then have his dwelling on Mount Zion.

Let us read this, perhaps verses 16 and 17 again in context.

[16] ***The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem;***

Because Mount Zion is in Jerusalem, so it's 100% true.

Then it goes on here:

[16] ***…and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.***

[17] ***So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.***

Here we already have the introduction, the transition into the millennium.

It is written in exactly the same way in Amos chapter 1, verse 2.

Amos 1, verse 2.

And he said:

[2] ***And he said, The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.***

Anyone who examines these two scriptures and others will find the word 'roar'.

And in Revelation 5 and in Revelation 10, we find this written in both places.

Firstly, John saw the Lamb, but then the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

A human speaks, a lion does not speak, a lion roars.

One must note carefully here: when the Lamb is shown, it signifies redemption; when the King is shown, it signifies dominion, ruling.

Everything has its place in the kingdom of God: Son of God - redemption, Son of man - prophet, Son of David - king. Everything is always where it belongs and has been biblically ordained by God.

Just as we said, when it is written in Revelation 10, "***he will then roar like a lion***" [Rev 10:3], then that's already connected to the start of the millennium.

Then his voice will resound and all nations will tremble. And he will of course be on Mount Zion at that time, and that is where the millennial reign will begin.

I briefly alluded to the resurrection.

If one reads 1 Corinthians chapter 15, or 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, and certain other scriptures, there is talk of the resurrection.

And when we then read Revelation 20 or Daniel 12, there is again talk of resurrection.

But one must read carefully and then understand what is being spoken of.

For example, when we read 1 Corinthians chapter 15, it says here in verses 43 and 44:

[43] ***It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:***

[44] ***It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.***

And then Paul goes one step further and writes in verse 51:

[51] ***Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,***

[52] ***In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ... We shall be changed.***

[53] ***For this corruptible must put on incorruption.***

I recently read an exposition in which someone, a famous Bible teacher, sought to use this verse which says '***in a moment, at the last trumpet***'.

He wanted to prove that the bride church must go through the entire tribulation, through all the vials of wrath, until the last trumpet eventually sounds.

Not that we are looking down on this from on high, but the man had not understood what it actually means.

Surely not the trumpets of judgment. We are not destined for wrath, but to inherit salvation. [1 The 5:9]

And after us the deluge, after us the judgments, after us the destruction.

And so we are grateful for Revelation chapter 10.

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound..." [Rev 10:7]

Namely the last time the gospel will be proclaimed to all peoples, tongues, and nations.

We will certainly go into these matters in more detail in writing.

But you can imagine how grateful I am to God that we do not cling to a single letter.

And by the way, if one wants to be quite precise, and anyone can look this up in the chronology found in all Bibles, Paul had already written all his letters by the year 64, or at least by 68.

And John, on the Isle of Patmos, may have written in the year 96.

How could Paul, who wrote at least 30 years earlier, refer to something that had not yet been written?

Do you see? But human wisdom is not sufficient for divine matters. Divine wisdom and perspective are required to truly place these things in the biblical context.

Let us now move on to the second point, something similar to what we have read here, namely in verse 52, the last part:

"... and we shall be changed."

So, not only the resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ, but the transformation of the firstfruits living with Christ.

The same is described to us in even greater detail in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4.

I would just like to read it very briefly, so that I can then highlight the difference.

1 Thessalonians 4, verse 14:

[14] ***For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.***

[15] ***For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.***

And then we read on here:

[16] ***For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:***

[17] ***Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.***

So both those who have fallen asleep in Christ and those who are alive in the Lord will be caught up together to meet him.

Now as regards the people of Israel and the martyrs from Israel we do indeed have a separate program for this in Holy Scripture and in God's plan. Daniel chapter 12 from verse 1. Daniel 12 from verse 1:

[1] ***And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people...*** [Daniel's people] ***thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.***

So there is no mention here of the rapture or the marriage supper. I shall continue reading verse 2:

[2] ***And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.***

[3] ***And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.***

Add to this the passage from Revelation 20 where likewise nothing is said of the rapture. Revelation 20 from verse 4:

[4] ***And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.***

And then it says:

[5] ***But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.***

Here we have a very clear picture. This raising or resurrection is for the millennial kingdom, not for the rapture. There is no mention of that here. So as stated earlier, one must simply take the context and leave it as it is. Here too the text speaks of judgment not of the marriage supper, here thrones were set up for judgment and judges sat upon them and the judgment was given to them. We shall not go into this in greater detail now but our Lord said even then "***it is you who will judge the twelve tribes of Israel***" [Mat 19:28] and it is written in Corinthians: "***you who are to judge the world are you unable to judge trivial matters among brothers?***" [1 Cor 6:2]

God has destined us to be with him, with our Lord when he returns from the marriage supper and settles accounts with all the forces of evil, and then pronounces a just judgment. We shall not go into further detail on this either. My sole aim was simply to make it clear: when one reads God's Word, one must pay attention to the

context, one must know what is being spoken of, and then determine precisely what is being stated here, to whom it applies, and also to what period of time.

Let us summarize what God has graciously given us this weekend.

Firstly, that we know the significance of his infallible Word. And that we do not interpret this Word, but believe it from the heart, and through the revelation of the Holy Spirit have its meaning shown to us by God in the right context.

That is precisely the advantage, and I simply have to smile at that, the advantage that God has given us is that we do not uphold a doctrinal view that we might have brought with us from the past, as some sort of precious tradition, but rather we have placed ourselves before God, and asked him to guide us into all truth [Jn 16:13] through his Spirit in accordance with his Word. And to those who make themselves available to God, and ask him for this, he will grant their request. And so we can rightly say that we have been taught by God.

We can go one step further, and for the sake of truth, tell ourselves that we do not after all have the key to these things tucked away somewhere in our pocket, but that God, in accordance with his Word, had a prophetic ministry in our generation, and thus, by his grace, gave us an introduction, an initiation into all that we would not have known on our own.

Just as Paul was called by God in a special way back then and could say: "***I did not learn the gospel in a classroom, nor did I receive it from men, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ"*** [Gal 1:11–12], Brother Branham could say the same. He was a man sent by God. I believe what he reported. I also saw the witnesses, I was with him after all.

On the 11th of June, 1933, at about 2pm, whilst he was baptizing several hundred people in the Ohio River, and was about to baptize the 17th person, and then prayed, a supernatural light descended through a low-hanging layer of clouds, visible to over 4,000 people. It remained above Brother Branham, and the voice resounded: 'Just as John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Christ, so you are sent with a message that will forerun the second coming of Christ.' I believe that a man of God had no need to delude himself, or to make things up out of thin air, he was able to specify the day and hour, the place, the date, everything exactly.

By the way, there were plenty of witnesses. Some fainted, others prayed. Of course, there were also those who did not understand. But that has always been the case and will remain so until the end.

It is simply a matter of us taking God's side.

And we do not follow a man. He did not have his own agenda. He was placed by God in this prophetic role as a prophet of God. And for that, we are grateful to God.

And I would even like to offer the following advice and use this as a comparison to all those who perhaps claim to be prophets or prophetesses and base their teaching on them.

Every apostle and every prophet must be in agreement with what the apostles of the Lord and the prophets have proclaimed. One must be able to test it. And we can only test it by the Word of God.

If anyone says that an angel came down, left tablets here and there, that I then found them and so on, that is nonsense. We can forget all that.

There was one, and that was God, who came down on Mount Sinai. The tablets did not fall from the sky. Moses brought them. The Lord wrote on them. Then Moses smashed them, and then Moses wrote them a second time.

And then there is the New Testament. Everything that God had to reveal has been revealed. Nothing can be added to the completed testimony of Holy Scripture.

On the contrary, it is written in Revelation 22, that ***"to those who add anything, God will add the plagues described in this book."*** [Rev 22:18]

So let us be grateful that God had a man who did not come with special revelations here and there, picking out bits and pieces, but a man sent by God with the word of the hour, with the revelation of the mysteries of God to thus grant us the opportunity and access by grace. It was the work of our God in our days.

However, no one can tell me that they will settle their own affairs with God without the prophets and apostles sent by God. No one can tell me that. For when God sends someone, there is a divine calling, a holy commission, there is a task associated with it for the Lord's church, namely for its calling out, edification, and completion.

And so let no one be angry with us if in these days we agree with God, take his side, believe and receive his entire Word, and long to experience that we may share in the fulfillment of all that God has promised. And we believe that we are now bearers of this Word of promise and that God will carry us into the fulfillment of these promises which we bear today.

We have read it after all: He is the breaker, he will clear the way, and he will lead us to the goal, and by grace finish the work that he began in us. And then also with the people of Israel, first with the election of the 144,000, then with all Israel, and finally with the whole earth. God has a plan. We submit to this plan and are grateful to him that it has been so clearly and distinctly made known and revealed to us by his grace.

Actually, a fool cannot go astray. Only the wise who are clever in their own eyes go astray, and they cannot be restrained because they do not accept instruction. But on the path along which God leads us, as it says in Isaiah 35, ***"a highway on which the Lord's redeemed walk and a fool cannot go astray on it."*** [Is 35:8]

And Paul said that he first had to become a fool in order to then receive divine wisdom. [1 Cor 3:18] And that is what we must all become.

And so may God also grant us the wisdom that comes from above, which is pure, clean and clear, not quarrelsome or know-it-all, but divine wisdom that introduces us to the whole counsel of our God.

Wisdom is, after all, a gift of the Holy Spirit. ***"To one is given wisdom, to another knowledge."*** [1 Co 12:8]

There are, after all, nine gifts of the Spirit. And there is also the Scripture in Revelation 13: ***"Let him who has wisdom calculate the number."*** [Rev 13:18]

God has also sent the Spirit of wisdom so that all things may be ordered according to the divine pattern and placed within the context to which they belong. And we too allow ourselves to be placed by him and shall behold his glory. Blessed and praised be his holy name!

How many of us have realized that God is now having his way with us literally and word for word? Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen.

We give thanks to you together, oh God, for these hours of grace, for this time of grace, and for your Word, Lord, which you have graciously bestowed upon us. You have not passed us by, but have stopped, Lord, and speak to us through your Word, through your good Holy Spirit, oh Lord, faithful Savior! How could we not praise you and extol your name, Lord.

Lord, we ask you, as those disciples did, ***"abide with us, for it is toward evening, the day is far spent."*** [Lk 24:29]

Stay with us, Lord. This is our prayer and our desire.

I ask you, Lord, to bless all the brothers, all the sisters, all those who have visited us, Lord. Be with them, oh God, and grant them a double portion of your love and grace and blessing, oh Lord. Be with them on their way home, and keep them in your love and in your faithfulness and in your Word, oh Lord, faithful God!

We also pray for those who could not come, Lord, for those who had to leave, Lord. Be with them all, oh Lord. We ask this in your wonderful name. Continue to be with us here, Lord. Bless us, bless brother Frank too, Lord, and bless us all, Lord. This is our heartfelt desire and prayer, Lord.

Preserve also your people Israel, Lord, and bless them, oh God. For we know, Lord, that you have brought them back from all the tribes and nations to their homeland, and you see how the enemy rages and seeks to destroy them, Lord. But you hold your almighty hand over them, O Lord.

Thanks and honor, praise and glory to your wonderful name. Hallelujah. Be praised, be glorified for all eternity. To you, the Lamb, be the glory. Hallelujah. Amen.