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The Identity of Those Individuals Said to have been Raised at the Time of Jesus' Resurrection

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THE IDENTITY OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS SAID TO HAVE BEEN RAISED AT THE TIME OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION

“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 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”
(Matt. 27:51-53).

There are two main views in regards to these three questions.

- **First View**

- A. Who were they? They were a select group of well-known Jewish citizens who had perhaps only recently died.

- B. Why were they raised?

Here it is helpful to observe that there were no less than four supernatural events that transpired from Good Friday through Easter Sunday. These are:

1. The strange darkness which covered the Jerusalem area on Friday from noon till 3:00 P.M. (Matt. 27:45)
2. The tearing of the temple veil (Matt. 27:51a)
3. A violent, rock splitting earthquake (Matt. 27:51b)
4. The resurrection of some dead bodies

The first theory states those four events served as God's final attempt through signs and wonders to show His people that something of unprecedented importance was occurring that incredible weekend, namely, the death and resurrection of Israel's Messiah!

- C. Where did they go? The “holy city” of Matthew 27:51 was the earthly city of Jerusalem.

- D. What happened to them? These resurrected individuals, like Lazarus (John 11) all eventually died the second time.

- **Second View**

- A. Who were they? They were a select group of Jewish citizens who may or may not have been well known in life.

- B. Why were they raised? These resurrected individuals functioned as a wave sheaf offering, described in Leviticus 23:10-12, which offering represented the first of the crop soon to be harvested. Thus, they served as the firstfruits of all believers to be raised in the future (1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

- C. Where did they go? The “holy city” of Matthew 27:5 was the new heavenly

Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1, 2).

- D. What happened to them? They are still alive and with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8), awaiting their permanent and glorified bodies (Phil. 3:20, 21).