

The Resurrection of the Dead

1 Corinthians 15: 1 – 58

1) The fact of the resurrection of Christ (vs. 1 – 11)

- A reminder of the gospel by which we are saved
- This is of primary importance:
 - Christ died for our sins
 - He was buried
 - He was raised on the third day
- This was in fulfillment of the scriptures
 - Isaiah 53: 5,6,8,10,11,12 But he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the chastening for our well being fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him. And as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? If he would render himself as a guilt offering, he will see his offspring, he will prolong his days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand. He will bear their iniquities. Yet he himself bore the sin of many.
 - Psalm 16: 10 For thou wilt not abandon my soul to sheol; neither wilt thou allow thy Holy One to see the pit.
- Jesus appeared to Peter
 - This was significant considering that Peter had denied Jesus 3 times
- Jesus appeared to the twelve apostles
- Jesus appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time
- Jesus appeared to James
- Jesus appeared to all the apostles
- Jesus appeared to Paul
- These are all witnesses of the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead
- John 20: 29 Then Jesus told him (Thomas), "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
- Many Muslims have come to faith in Jesus because He has appeared to them.

2) Our hope in the resurrection of the dead. (vs. 12 – 33)

- Some people were denying the resurrection of the dead (v. 12)
- Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. (2 Timothy 2: 17b & 18)
- Paul argued that if there is no resurrection then not even Christ has been raised
- The implication if Christ has not been raised:
 - Our preaching is useless
 - Our faith is in vain/futile
 - We are false witnesses about God
 - We are still in our sins
 - Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost
 - It is only in this life that that we hope in Christ (which is no hope at all) so we are to be pitied more than all men.
- BUT Christ has been raised from the dead.
- He is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep – what has happened to Christ is the guarantee that it will happen to us who believe.
- In Adam all die – In Christ all will be made alive.
 - There are only 2 types of people in God's eyes – those in Adam and those in Christ. There is no gray area.

- According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thess. 4: 15 – 18)
- Christ will reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet – death being the last one to be destroyed.
- Some people were being baptised for the dead – a practice that Paul neither promoted nor condemned but merely stated the futility of it if the dead aren't raised.
- Implication of the resurrection in our lives:
 - We will give our all to God taking risks for Him (v. 32)
 - We will stop sinning (vs. 32 – 34)
- Paul's message was the hope of the resurrection (Acts 23: 6; Acts 24: 15; Acts 26: 6 – 7; Acts 28: 20)

3) The nature of the resurrection of the dead (vs. 35 – 58)

- The question being asked here is: “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?”
- Paul uses the analogy of a seed that has to die if it is to come to life.
 - An oak tree is contained in an acorn – the seed of an oak. But that acorn has to be buried for the fullness of the oak tree to come to life.
 - Our natural bodies are merely the seeds of the body that we are to receive at the resurrection. Would an acorn ever consider that it ever be a glorious oak. Then how glorious will our resurrection body be?
- Paul refers to the different degrees of glory as God had determined
 - Sown perishable – raised imperishable
 - Sown in dishonour – raised in glory
 - Sown in weakness – raised in power
 - Sown a natural body – raised a spiritual body
- The natural came first then the spiritual
 - Adam became a living being. The last Adam a life giving spirit
 - The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven
 - Dust to dust and ashes to ashes. This is why we need to be born again or be born from above so that we will not be of the first man but the second to attain to the resurrection of the dead.
- We will bear the likeness of the man from heaven – Jesus
 - We will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet
 - The dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed
 - The perishable will clothe itself with the imperishable
 - The mortal with immortality
- Death has been swallowed up in victory
 - The final enemy, death, will be conquered at the final resurrection.
 - Death has already been defeated at the cross when Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself
 - The law was nailed to the cross removing the power of sin.
- Implications of the resurrection:
 - Stand firm – let nothing move you
 - Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord – your labour is not in vain