

THE RESURRECTION

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About the author...

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Introduction

The Bible admonishes us in 1 Peter 3:15 *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”* In this study we will seek to set forth before every man the reason for the hope which lies within us about the resurrection. After all, the resurrection lies at the very heart of christianity (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). For if there is no resurrection we may as well enjoy the here and now because tomorrow we die (1 Corinthians 15:29-32). If there is no resurrection, there is no point to christianity and *“...we are of all men most miserable”* (1 Corinthians 15:19). Therefore, it is impossible for us to be able to answer every man concerning the hope that lies within us about the resurrection.

Skepticism

There have always been those who’ve scoffed at the resurrection of the dead. In the days of our Lord there was the sect of the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23). They didn’t believe in the resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit (Acts 23:6-8). It was no different in the days of the Apostles, when Paul spoke of the resurrection to the Athenians on Mars Hill the scriptures say *“...some mocked...”* (Acts 17:32). Nor was the church immune to these skeptics. Paul in writing to Timothy, told him of Hymenaeus and Philetus who taught that the resurrection was past already and thus overthrew the faith of some (2 Timothy 2:16-18). This erroneous belief may have had something to do with the events which transpired after the crucifixion. After Jesus was resurrected many of the saints which slept came out of their graves and went into the holy city and appeared unto many (Matthew 27:50-53). Let us remind you again that they were resurrected after Jesus had been resurrected (53). He was the first to rise from the dead never to die again (Colossians 1:18). Others were resurrected from the grave but only to die again. He was the first to triumph over death and the grave (Revelation 1:18). And as such He will some day deliver those who obey Him (Hebrews 2:14-15 and 1 Corinthians 15:54-58). Then there were those at Corinth who taught that there is no resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12-18).

Indeed, the world has always had it’s skeptics when it comes to the doctrine about the resurrection.

There Will Be a Resurrection

Job once said, *“If a man die, shall he live again...”* (Job 14:14). The answer to this statement is, of course, a resounding, YES! There will be a resurrection of the dead. How can we be so sure

that the dead will rise again? What proof is there to this end? There are many recorded cases where people have died and rose again. Let's note a few of them.

- C In John 11:43-44 we read how Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave.
- C In Luke 8:51-56 Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead.
- C Peter raised Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead in Acts 9:36-41.
- C And, in Acts 20:9-10, Paul restored life to Eutychus after he fell down from the third story window and was taken up dead.

Remember, all of these people would die again. Jesus was the first to rise never to die again. While all of these accounts about those who have been resurrected from the dead are interesting and amazing, there is no story more compelling than the resurrection of the Lord Himself (Luke 24:1-9). His resurrection alone should be testimony enough to the resurrection of the dead. After all, if He died and rose again surely we will too. And not only us but all who have died in Him (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Not only is there going to be a resurrection of the dead but it will be both of the just and unjust (Acts 24:14-15). The one will be resurrected to eternal life and the other to eternal condemnation (John 5:28-29). One will experience eternal bliss in heaven (Revelation 21:1-5) and the other eternal torment in a Devil's hell (Mark 9:43-48, Matthew 25:30, and Revelation 20:10). While the scriptures seem to indicate that there will be different degrees of reward and punishment in the resurrection (Luke 12:47-48 and Jude 9), let me assure you that the best seat in hell will be unbearable torment and the worst seat in heaven will still be eternal joy. The tongue of the orator cannot tell, nor can the pen of the writer describe, nor can the brush of the painter portray the beauty of heaven or the horror of hell. If they could, I'm sure that all mankind would amend his ways.

Questions Surrounding the Resurrection

There are many questions surrounding the resurrection of the dead. Some of these can be answered and some cannot. While God supplies us with all the answers to things which pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), there are some things which we do not need to know in order to be saved. God does not always tell us all we desire to know about these things (Deuteronomy 29:29). I believe this to be the case concerning the resurrection of the dead. Some at Corinth, like many of today, wanted to know *"...how are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come"* (1 Corinthians 15:35)? Paul answers by explaining that there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, and that they are different from each other (1 Corinthians 15:36-44). Note that Paul never does tell us what the spiritual body will look like. Perhaps this is because it is not something we need to know. John seemed to agree with this when he said, *"...it doth not yet appear what we shall be..."* (1 John 3:2). If Paul and John, two inspired writers of God, couldn't tell us what the spiritual body will be like then how could anyone today make that boast?

However, there are some things about the resurrection that we can know.

- C There seems to be some type of recognition in the spirit world (Luke 16:22-24).
- C There is no need for sexual gender for there is no marriage or giving in marriage (Galatians 3:26-29 and Matthew 22:29-30).

- C A spirit does not consist of flesh and blood (1 Corinthians 15:49-52). Nor does it have bones (Luke 24:39).
- C But a spirit is eternal and incorruptible as is God (1 Timothy 1:17 and 1 Peter 3:4). The word used to describe God in the first text (immortal) and the one used to describe the hidden part of man in the second text (not corruptible) is the same Greek word. Thus, the scriptures teach that there is a part of man that is as immortal as God. There may have been a time when we did not exist but there will never be a time when we do not exist. We are one breath, one step away from immortality.

Conclusion

I'm sure we have not answered all the questions about the resurrection of the dead nor have we said all that could or should be said about the resurrection of the dead. We only hope enough has been said to explain to every man a reason of the hope that is in us about the resurrection. Because, there is going to be a resurrection of the dead. Both of the just and unjust. And, however we have lived here on earth will determine where we will live after the resurrection, in a Devil's hell or in heaven with God.