

"The Resurrection"

Job asked, "If a man dies, will he live again?" You may be asking that question too. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore the great hope that we have in Christ. So stay with us.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search God's Word for the Lord's will. The Word of God is the only book that can give us the true answer to the most pressing questions of life: Where did we come from? Why are we here? And what will happen to us after we die? The Scriptures tell us that God created us after His own image so that we might seek and serve Him. The Scriptures are such a blessing. We're so delighted when you spend this time with us. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Job asks an important question, "If a man dies, will he live again?" From our physical senses, we can't answer that question. We don't have any modern record of someone who's died and has been buried coming back to life, so it's only natural for us to ask if there is life after death.

We do, however, have a record of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The apostles and many others were certainly eyewitnesses of the resurrection. They believed so strongly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, they were willing to give their lives and suffer death in order to tell the story throughout the world. The resurrection of Jesus demonstrates God's power to raise the dead.

Now the Scriptures reveal God's eternal plan to raise us up on the last day and take us home to heaven. Well, now that's a message. And one that fills us with hope. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:39 to 40, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

You might want to study more about the resurrection, so we offer a copy of this series on the afterlife, we offer it free. And you can get this booklet or a CD of our studies at no cost! Just mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Corinthians 15:12 to 19, and then we'll explore what the Bible says about the resurrection.

Our reading today comes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 15 verses 12 to 19.

Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, (then) your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

That's something that should give us serious thought. Let's pray together. Oh heavenly Father we're grateful that You have given us Your assurance that Jesus has risen from the dead by many convincing proofs. And that the early disciples believed Him so strongly they were willing to die for their faith. Father, help us to have that strong faith too. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

When you ask people about what happens after death, you'll get several answers. Some think death is the end, and a person just ceases to exist. Some say the righteous will live on while the unrighteous will cease to exist. Others think that we'll be reincarnated in different life forms on earth. Hebrews 9:27, however, teaches that we suffer death once, and after this comes judgment. You know even in the New Testament, the Sadducees and the Pharisees disagreed over whether there would be a resurrection. My friend, the Bible isn't simply one voice among many; it speaks God's truth with authority. The Lord Jesus discussed the resurrection with the Sadducees. Let's begin our study of the resurrection with that discussion.

The Bible says in Matthew 22 verses 23 to 32: On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, asking, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up children for his brother.' "Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. "Last of all, the woman died. (Well) "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her."

But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

This passage says that life does go on after death. As we have said, the body dies but the spirit of a man continues to exist in conscious form. The Bible presents the resurrection as one event, not two. Both the righteous and the wicked will arise on one day. The Lord Jesus said in John 5 verses 25 to 29, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

At the end time, when Jesus comes again, He will call all who are in the tombs to come forth. That's everyone from every century in every place. Jesus won't leave out any body. He will raise both the saved and the lost all at the same time. All will come out of the grave in answer to the call of Jesus Christ. He'll then judge all men. We'll have more to say about that next week. But the scriptures teach us that there is but one general resurrection of all people. Paul said at Mars Hill, "there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked" (Acts 24 and verse 15).

For those who love God and serve Him faithfully, belief in the resurrection is a great promise and a great comfort. As a minister I've spent many hours at funeral homes and cemeteries. I've watched families grieve as they lowered the casket of a dearly loved one into the ground or placed it in a mausoleum. And nothing could bring back that loved one, but knowing that there is a resurrection helped to comfort them. And we can be confident of the resurrection, because we know that the Lord never lies. And we can trust every word from His mouth.

In John chapter 11, Jesus went to Bethany to meet with the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. They were grieving over the death of Lazarus. Well in John 11:23 the Lord Jesus told Martha, "Your brother will rise again." (Well) Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the

resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11 verses 23 to 26).

Well the Lord Jesus wept with the two sisters, Mary and Martha, and then He called Lazarus back to life. And in spite of the fact he had been in the tomb for four days and there would be a stench, Lazarus did miraculously come back to life. They moved that heavy stone, and they took the linen wrappings off of him, and they gave him back to his sisters alive. Now everyone who was there saw the miracle and they believed it. Even the Jewish enemies of Jesus believed in His power to raise the dead. The enemies of Jesus said in John 11:47 to 48, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. (That is miracles and) If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him.” Well if He could raise Lazarus from the dead, my friend, He can raise you.

The Bible reveals that in the resurrection our bodies will change. We die with flesh and blood, but we won't live throughout eternity in a body like we have now. Now our bodies will be changed from this natural body to a spiritual body that is glorified and immortal. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 50 to 57, “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; (that is heaven) nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now the fleshly body is subject to death, but the body that is changed, what we'll have one day, the one we'll have in the resurrection will be first of all imperishable and second it will be immortal. It cannot die. 1 Corinthians 15 verses 42 to 44 says, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, (but) it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, (but) it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, (but) it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, (but) it is raised a spiritual body. (And) If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” Now the body that we put into the ground will not be like the body that we'll have once God has raised us up and changed us. This body is weak and subject to illness and death. But that body will not have the weaknesses that this body has.

1 Corinthians 15 verses 47 to 49 says, that “The first man (speaking of Adam) is from the earth, (and so he's) earthy; (but) the second man is from heaven. (And) As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. (Well) Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.” In the resurrection, our bodies will be glorified like the body of the Lord Jesus. We won't suffer there from a deteriorating body.

Now I love God's promise found in 1 John 3 and verse 2, and he says, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. (But) We know that when He appears, (that) we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” Now our bodies will be spiritual and immortal. We'll see the greatness and grandeur of our God, because we'll be changed. This will enable us to see and hear things in the spiritual and heavenly realm that we'll never be able to see in this life with a fleshly body.

Let's not get so caught up in this life, that we forget that we have our permanent home, as Christians, in heaven. Now in baptism we die with Christ and are raised up with Him to walk in newness of life as children of God. And one day Christ is coming back for us so that we might live with Him forever. The Bible says in Colossians 3 verses 1 to 4, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, (that is you've been baptized and given this new life then) keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

When we're baptized into Christ, God plants or unites us with Him in His burial and His resurrection. Through baptism God makes us His children and gives us newness of life. When God unites us with Christ in baptism, our names are recorded in the book of life. And this prepares us for the last day when Jesus comes again, and our bodies are raised imperishable, and we receive immortality. Now I tell you God grants us citizenship with Him in heaven in this life, but we'll not enter into that heavenly home that He's prepared for us until the resurrection of the body.

The apostle Paul helped the Philippians to understand about their home in heaven. Philippi was filled with retired Roman soldiers who were very proud of their Roman citizenship. Well our citizenship, as Christians, is in heaven; and the resurrection prepares our bodies to live in eternity. Paul said in Philippians 3 verses 20 to 21, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body (the body you have right now the body) of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, (and He does this) by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

Now the Lord Jesus described how we will live in heaven in Luke 20 verses 34 to 36. He explained, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." Now many things will change in the resurrection. We'll be like the angels, praising and serving God forever and ever.

And we must so live that God may consider us worthy to attain to the resurrection. I tell you we are saved by grace through faith. And the blood of Jesus opens for us this opportunity. In Philippians 3, Paul longed to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. And so he wrote these words to the church in Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 5 verses 23, he said "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved (or saved) complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And folks, that's what we hope for you. That's you'll be saved just like that. Let's pray together. Oh Father we're thankful for all of Your promises and for the power that You have to be able to raise us up again at the last day. Oh Father we pray that we may live in such a way to please You. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A great gospel preacher, Perry Cotham, said, that "Death is no respecter of persons. It comes every day to someone and someday to everyone." Since you are going to face death and judgment someday, shouldn't you think about your relationship with God? The Bible gives us the promise of a resurrection. The Bible says in Romans 8 and verse 11, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

Now since the resurrection will lead either to life or to judgment, we should seek life and blessing. The Lord will come again, He will raise us up from the grave, and give us new bodies. The

Bible says in 1 John 3:2 and 3, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." Where is your hope? Are you pure and right with God? Are your sins forgiven? 1 Peter 1:22 tells us that we purify our souls through our obedience to the truth. Have you obeyed the gospel truth? Have you remained faithful to the Lord?

Now we obey the gospel through faith and repentance. And upon the confession of our faith, we are baptized into Christ Jesus and His death. It's at that time that His blood cleanses us from sin and causes us to be born again in newness of life according to Romans 6 verses 3 to 7. So we ask, will you put on Christ and obey the gospel today?

Now we hope this series on the afterlife and the resurrection has cause you to consider your soul. We're offering this free printed booklet or a CD of these messages. And if you'd like one, they're without cost, just mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

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We do ask that you please worship with a church of Christ in your area. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Churches of Christ love and want guests, and you'll be glad you attended and worshiped with them. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. Keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.