

Back to Basics – Resurrection of the Dead I Cor. 15:1-57

Thesis: To help us better understand the purpose of the resurrection of the dead.

Introduction:

In this lesson, we will notice only the resurrection of the dead. Lord willing, we will look at the eternal judgment next week.

In this lesson, we also presume that we will die before the coming of our Lord. Certainly, we do not know this for a fact, but when we talk of the resurrection, we are talking of those who have died.

I. The Resurrection is a Reality (15:1-8).

A. Christ was raised from the dead (15:3-8).

1. There were many witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, many of whom were alive in the days of Paul (15:3-8).
 - a. Peter (15:5)
 - 1) Jn. 20:1-10
 - a) Mary Magdalene tells Peter and John that Jesus is no longer in the tomb.
 - b) Peter runs to the tomb and enters it, and finds the handkerchief and linen clothes that were used to wrap the body of Jesus.
 - c) The point is that Peter observed the empty tomb.
 - 2) Jn. 21:1-14
 - a) Peter and some of the other disciples were fishing.
 - b) Jesus appears on the shore and tells them to “cast the net on the right side of the boat” (21:6).
 - c) When they do this, they find a great catch, so that they were not able to draw the fish into the boat.
 - d) Peter, upon realizing that it was Jesus on the shore, jumped into the water and swam to Him.
 - 3) Acts 2:32 (Peter on the day of Pentecost) - This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.
 - b. Over five hundred brethren (15:6)
 - 1) Even though we do not have another record of this in the Bible, we know it happened because Paul said it happened.
 - 2) In fact, Paul says that “the greater part remain to the present.”
 - 3) This is an indication that most of those who saw Jesus on this occasion were still alive when Paul was writing this letter, and this would give proof to the fact that Jesus rose again.
 - c. James, and the rest of the apostles (15:7)

- 1) Each account of the gospel records that Jesus met with the eleven disciples after His resurrection.
 - 2) All of the apostles would easily know that Jesus had been raised because He appeared to them.
- d. Paul (15:8)
- 1) Acts 9:1-19
 - a) Paul had received a letter from the high priest to arrest anyone in Damascus who was “of the Way” (9:2).
 - b) While on the way, Paul saw a great light (9:3-9).
 - c) Christ appeared to Paul and told him to go into the city and wait (9:6).
 - d) The point is that Paul physically saw Christ.
 - 2) Acts 13:29-37 (Paul speaking in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia) - Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. {30} But God raised Him from the dead. {31} He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. {32} And we declare to you glad tidings-- that promise which was made to the fathers. {33} God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’ {34} And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’ {35} Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ {36} For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; {37} but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.
2. The resurrection of Christ proves that there is a resurrection from the dead.

B. Jesus Himself taught that there would be a resurrection from the dead.

1. Jesus told the Sadducees that there is a resurrection (Mt. 22:23-33).
 - a. The Sadducees ask Jesus a question concerning a brother that married a woman and had no children (22:23-28).
 - b. Jesus responded by condemning them for “not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (22:29).
 - c. Mt. 22:31-32 (quote from Ex. 3:6) - But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, {32} “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

2. **Jn. 5:28-29** - Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice {29} and come forth-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

II. The Resurrection has a Reason (15:12-19).

A. If there is no resurrection from the dead, there are severe consequences to face (15:12-19).

1. If there is no resurrection from the dead, then Christ has not been raised (15:13).
 - a. Christ could not be raised from the dead if there was no such thing as the resurrection of the dead.
 - b. However, because there is a resurrection, Christ was raised from the dead.
2. If there is no resurrection from the dead, then faith of the brethren is empty (15:14, 17).
 - a. The faith of the Christian is based upon the resurrection.
 - b. The birth, death, and burial of Christ (as well as everything in between), does not mean anything unless Jesus was raised from the dead.
 - c. **Rom. 10:9** - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
 - d. Without the resurrection of Christ, our faith is useless.
3. If there is no resurrection from the dead, then the preaching of Paul is empty (15:14-15).
 - a. Paul also says that his preaching is useless if Christ did not rise from the dead (15:14).
 - b. He goes on to say that he is a liar if Christ was not raised from the dead (15:15).
 - c. Remember, Paul had said that he was a witness to the resurrection of Christ.
4. If there is no resurrection, then there is no hope (15:18-19).
 - a. Again, our hope is based upon the resurrection of Christ.
 - b. If He was not raised, we have no hope of being raised to live with Him in eternity.

B. The reason for the resurrection is so that we can have hope (15:19).

1. We have the hope of something greater through the resurrection of Christ, even if we have died (physically).
2. **I Thes. 4:13-17** (Paul reminds us that we have hope, even in death) - But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. {15} For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. {16} For the

Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. {17} Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

3. **I Pet. 1:3-5** (Peter says that this hope is only in the resurrection of Jesus) - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, {4} to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, {5} who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

III. The Resurrection has great Results (15:35-44, 50-57).

A. It is after death that we can be changed (15:35-44).

1. Paul uses the illustration of seeds to show that we must die in order to be resurrected as a new creature.
2. If a seed does not die, it will not grow into its own body.
3. In order to put on our eternal bodies, we must die.

B. It is in this resurrection that we have the victory in Christ (15:50-57).

1. We, in our human bodies, cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (15:50).
2. Whether we die or not, we must be changed (15:51-53).
3. We have the victory over death in Christ (15:54-57).

Conclusion: