

Lesson # 30

What Does the Bible Say About The Resurrection?

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15

The word "resurrection" [Greek: anastasis (an-as'-tas-is)] means rising again, a rising from the dead

It must have been the most awe inspiring and wonderful event in the history of the world, when Jesus Christ came out of the grave after being dead for three days. When his disciples saw him, they understandably found it hard to believe. They thought they were seeing a spirit, but Jesus said to them:

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said to them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" ([Luke 24: 39-43](#) -

³⁹*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

⁴⁰*And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.*

⁴¹*And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?*

⁴²*And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.*

⁴³*And he took it, and did eat before them.)*

Thus they were convinced that he really was alive again. God had raised him back to life from death, and more than this given to him eternal life. We read Jesus said: "Behold, I am alive for evermore" ([Revelation 1:18](#) - *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*)

Jesus will raise his followers

Jesus taught his disciples that they, too, would be raised from the dead. Consider again at the verse we have just quoted. Jesus went on to say:

"I am he that **liveth**, and was dead; and, behold, **I am alive for evermore**, Amen; and have the keys of hell (or, the grave) and of death" " ([Revelation 1:18](#) - *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*)

Lesson # 30

Now, it is logical that if you have the key to a door, it means you are able to open the door. Jesus has the keys to the grave. This is a way of saying that he has power to open the graves, and set free those who are buried there. This power has been given to him by God. Please read John chapter 5, verses 20-29 –

²⁰For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

²¹For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

²²For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

²³That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

²⁴Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

²⁵Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

²⁶For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

²⁷And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

²⁸Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

²⁹And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

. Notice particularly verse **21**, which says:

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the son quickeneth whom he will."

To quicken is to bring to life; and God has given Jesus the power to bring men and women back to life again. This is not so difficult a concept to accept, if we consider that God created us in the first place. If He created us once, it is a simple matter for Him to re-create us.

Abraham was promised resurrection

As we have already learnt in a previous study, God made great promises to Abraham. They included:

Lesson # 30

"all the land thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (**Genesis 13:15** - *For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.*).

Yet we know that Abraham died without this promise being fulfilled. Does this mean that the promise will not be carried out? No! God means what He says. Abraham must be raised from the dead so that God can fulfill His promise. The Lord Jesus used this very argument to prove the resurrection of the dead. You can read of this in **Matthew 22:31-32**

³¹*But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,*

³²*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

Jesus told the Jews of his day that they would see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, and they themselves cast out (Luke 13:28 - *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.*).

A hope shared by all faithful men

Faithful men of God throughout the ages, have died looking forward to the day when they would be raised to life again. Paul tells us of some of these men, that they:

"died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Hebrews 11:13 - *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*)

Further on, he speaks again of these men who

"received not promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (**Hebrews 11:39-40** –

³⁹*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

⁴⁰*God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*)

Thus we see from this verse that the gift of eternal life is going to be given to all true worshippers of God at the same time.

Lesson # 30

The early Christians also looked forward to this time. When one of their number died, they spoke of them as having "fallen asleep", because just as men wake up after sleeping, so the disciples would be awakened from the sleep of death. In the 1 Corinthians chapter 15, which you have read, Paul speaks of *over 500 disciples* who saw Jesus after his resurrection, saying:

"Some are fallen asleep" (verse 6)

This hope of resurrection and eternal life has been shared by true followers of Jesus from that day to this.

Disciples of Jesus knew that he could raise the dead

Three followers of Jesus, Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary, lived in Bethany, a small village near Jerusalem. On one occasion, Lazarus fell ill and we read: "his sisters sent unto him [Jesus], saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick". (**John 11:3** - *Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*) Yet we read that Jesus delayed going.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was" **John 11:5-6** –

⁵*Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*

⁶*When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.*

It was not because Jesus did not care, but that he might teach a profound lesson to his disciples. By the time Jesus arrived Lazarus was dead. Yet he told the disciples:

"I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, **to the intent ye may believe;**" **John 11:14** - *Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*

So the event was to be used as a lesson. A lesson to teach his disciples belief and faith in Jesus and the power given to him by God, to raise the dead.

Now when Martha saw Jesus, she said to him:

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." v21

Jesus said to her:

"Thy brother shall rise again." v23

Lesson # 30

Now notice Martha's answer very carefully. She said:

*"I know that he shall rise again in **the resurrection at the last day.**" v24*

Martha knew that there would be a day of resurrection in the future. Jesus said to her:

"I am the resurrection, and the life." v25

Then, demonstrating to all who were there that **he had power to raise the dead**, Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave. And Lazarus came out - **alive!**

However unlike Jesus, Lazarus was not given eternal life. He would die again but, as Martha said, he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. This is what Jesus taught his friends, and they understood and believed him. You can read the full account of these events in John 11.

Something better than life today

Life is full of problems for all of us. Most of us know what it feels like to be ill and we become anxious about many things. Death can take those we love at any time. We also know, the inevitability that old age will come, with its increasing frailty, aches and pains. Do we really want to live for ever in this imperfect world? In our imperfect state?

The life which Jesus promises to his followers when he comes back is something quite different from our lives today with all the cares and worries that we all experience. In the beautiful words of **Revelation 7:16, 17** we are told of those who will be given that life, that:

¹⁶They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

¹⁷For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

They will no longer have bodies which grow old, die and experience corruption, but rather they will share the spirit-life of God Himself. In **Mark 12:25** Jesus says:

"For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

Those who are given eternal life by Jesus when he comes back will enjoy perfect health and unlimited energy, free from all the troubles of today.

Lesson # 30

When will the resurrection take place?

Nearly 2000 years have passed since Jesus was raised from the dead. When is he going to raise those who have "died in faith"? The apostle Paul answers this question for us. He says in [1 Corinthians 15:22, 23](#):

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's **at his coming**."

We have seen already that Jesus Christ is coming back to set up the Kingdom of God and reign over the whole earth. When he comes to do this, he will raise the dead. Then those who have been faithful will be given eternal life, and will enjoy the great privilege of helping Jesus to rule the world. We read in [Revelation 5: 9, 10](#) the words of a song that they will sing in that day:

⁹And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

¹⁰And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Some will be alive when Jesus comes back

What of those who are still alive when Jesus comes back? In [1 Thessalonians 4: 14-17](#)

¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

¹⁵For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Paul tells us a little more about this. He says:

Notice the words "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air".

Lesson # 30

You might think that he is speaking of going to heaven. But look again. Paul does not speak of meeting the Lord **in heaven**, but meeting him **in the air**. So after the resurrection of the dead, those raised will be gathered together with those of those disciples who are alive at the coming of Jesus. Then the judgement will take place [This subject is discussed more fully in another study]. Following the judgement all those who are accepted as worthy of life in the Kingdom of God, will be permitted to serve the Lord Jesus in his work of ruling the earth.

The important thing for all the followers of Jesus is that in that day they will be "for ever with the Lord"; that is in his Kingdom on the earth.

You cannot have it both ways

Many people, probably most people who believe in life after death, believe that men and women go to heaven when they die. The dead body is laid in the grave. But, they say, man has a "spirit" or "soul" that goes on living when the body is dead. When a man dies, this spirit goes to heaven to be with God.

The Bible, on the other hand, says plainly that Jesus will come back to earth and raise the dead.

Now, *both ideas cannot be right.*

To speak of the soul which has been with God in heaven coming back to join the body and be brought to judgement is nonsense. The Bible says nothing about any man going to heaven. It **does** say that disciples will lie in the grave, knowing nothing until the Lord Jesus raises them from the dead at his coming.

Then all who have heard the Gospel and had an opportunity to respond, will be brought before the Lord Jesus Christ. The dead will be raised, and the living will be gathered together. Before he gives some of them eternal life, there must be a judgement - but you will learn more about that in another study.

Read again **1 Corinthians 15: 51-58**.

⁵¹*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

⁵²*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

⁵³*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Lesson # 30

⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

⁵⁷But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Here the apostle speaks of the time when the faithful Christians will be given that great gift of eternal life - or, as he calls it here, immortality. As we look forward to that time, the apostle Paul tells us to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord".

Summary

- God has given Jesus power to raise the dead.
- He will do this when he comes back again to the earth to set up his Kingdom.
- At the same time, he will gather those "in Christ" who are living when he returns.
- To those who have been faithful he will give eternal life and they will live and reign with him on the earth.