

The Resurrection of the Body

Introduction:

1. Most of us have made many sad trips to a cemetery, a place where the bodies of our loved ones are interred. If we have reason to believe our loved one died in Christ, we sorrow, but we do not sorrow *“as others which have no hope,”* I Thess. 4:13.
 - a. In such instances our sadness is mingled with joy – joy in believing the deceased, though physically dead, is *“safe in the arms of Jesus,”* Rev. 14:13
2. It is common for preachers, at funerals, to read from I Corinthians 15, “the great resurrection chapter of the Bible,” and in which a vivid contrast is made between that which is buried in the grave, and that which will ultimately be raised from the grave.
3. This brings us to a very important question: “will there be a bodily resurrection from the grave?”
 - a. Many have been known to scoff at the idea of a bodily resurrection, Acts 17:32.
 - b. To some, such an idea is considered *“incredible,”* Acts 26:8.
 - c. The Sadducees taught that *“there is no resurrection,”* Acts 23:8.
 - d. Some at Corinth taught that *“there is no resurrection of the dead,”* I Cor. 15:12.
 - e. Some in the first century taught that *“the resurrection is past already,”* 2 Tim. 2:18.
 - f. Some today (even among brethren!) have subscribed to the position of Max King that the resurrection took place in A.D. 70!

Discussion:

I. The Bible Teaches that there will be a Bodily Resurrection!

A. Scriptures:

1. John 5:28-29; John 6:39.
2. Acts 23:6; 24:15.
3. I Cor. 6:14.

B. I Corinthians 15 is the “great resurrection chapter” in the Bible.

1. In this chapter, there is not just one verse here and there which alludes to the resurrection; rather the entire chapter (in one way or another) deals with the fact of the resurrection, sets forth the consequences if there be no resurrection, and reveals the glorious hope made possible by reason of the resurrection of the body.

II. Examine I Corinthians 15 in the light of the Resurrection.

A. The existence of the gospel affirms the fact of the resurrection of Christ.

1. I Corinthians 15:1-4 sets forth the three cardinal facts of the gospel – the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
 - a. If there were no resurrection there would be no gospel, and thus no “power” to save, Rom. 1:16.
 - b. The fact that Jesus was raised means we will be raised, I Cor. 15:20-21.
2. The fact of Jesus’ resurrection was attested by many witnesses, I Cor. 15:5-9.

B. The Consequence of the No Resurrection theory.

1. If there is no resurrection, then Jesus is not raised, I Cor. 15:13.
2. If Christ be not raised, then:
 - a. *“We are found false witnesses of God,”* I Cor. 15:15.
 - b. *“Your faith is vain,”* I Cor. 15:17.
 - c. *“You are yet in your sins,”* I Cor. 15:17.
 - d. Those which are *“fallen asleep in Christ are perished,”* I Cor. 15:18.
 - e. *“We are of all men most miserable,”* I Cor. 15:19.

C. Further Affirmation of a bodily resurrection.

1. *“In Adam all die...in Christ shall all be made alive,”* I Cor. 15:22.

III. Paul then dealt with His Objectors, I Cor. 15:35-50.

A. “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” I Cor. 15:35.

1. On the surface that may have sounded like a plausible question.
 - a. *“How are the dead raised up?”* The bodies may have long since decomposed. Some burned alive. Some eaten by animals, etc.
 - b. *“With what body do they come?”* One’s body as a baby, a teenager, in early adulthood, middle aged, old age, etc.

2. Reply: *"Thou fool. That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die,"* v. 36.
 - a. The analogy of a seed planted in the ground. It germinates, and comes forth as a plant
 - b. Different kinds of seed produce different kinds of plants, v. 37, and God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, v. 38.
3. Suppose you just arrived here from Mars, and you met a farmer carrying an acorn in his hand, and you asked what is it good for. And he pointed to a big oak tree and said that tree came from an acorn just like the one you are holding in your hand.
 - a. Would you think he is crazy?
 - b. Yet we see that sort of thing every day! If God can raise an oak tree from an acorn, He can raise your body from the grave. There is continuity between the acorn planted and the oak tree it produces. And there is continuity between the body which is buried and the body which is raised! If God can raise an oak tree from an acorn, he can raise you from the dead. Cf. Matt. 19:26.
- B. He alluded to different kinds of bodies, I Cor. 15:38-40.
- C. The affirmation: *"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption,"* v. 42.
 1. That which *"is sown"* is that which *"is raised."*
- D. The Beautiful contrast, vs. 43-51.

Note: this chapter deals with the resurrection of the righteous. The wicked will also be raised, John 5:28-29, but in this chapter Paul discusses the fate of the righteous.

 1. Sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power, v. 43.
 2. Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body, v. 44.
 3. *"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"* v. 49.
 - a. This change in *"image"* must take place because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, v. 50.
 - b. Hence, we *"shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"* v. 51.
 - (1) *"Not all sleep"* or die, because some will be alive when Jesus comes, I Thess. 4:13-18.
 - (2) Cf. Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:1-2.
- E. What will occur when the Lord returns, v. 51-57.
 1. *"We shall all be changed,"* v. 51.
 2. *"The dead shall be raised incorruptible,"* v. 52.
 3. *"This corruptible must put on incorruption,"* v. 53.
 4. *"This mortal must put on immortality,"* v. 53.
 5. Death will *"be swallowed up in victory,"* v. 55.

IV. How We should react to this good news, I Cor. 15:57-58.

- A. We should thank God! V. 57.
 1. For the victory He has given us *"through our Lord Jesus Christ,"* v. 57.
 - a. We don't win this victory by ourselves! It is *"through"* Jesus Christ. Cf. Phil. 4:13.
- B. *"Therefore,"* we should, v. 58
 1. Be steadfast.
 2. Be Unmoveable.
 3. Abound in the work of the Lord, v. 58.
 - a. Why? Because our *"Labor is not in vain in the Lord,"* v. 58.

Conclusion:

1. Life in the flesh is not always easy. It is filled with temptation, we encounter many, many difficulties along the way; friends may let us down, our health may give way, family difficulties may arise. It is so easy to get discouraged and even be prone to give up.
 2. But the true Christian marches to the beat of a different drummer. He enjoys all *"spiritual blessings"* in this life, he lives in hope of eternal life, Tit. 1:2; death itself becomes a blessing, Rev. 14:13, and some day he will be raised with death having been swallowed up in victory, as he now has a *"spiritual body"* designed to dwell eternally in that home of the soul!
- Bobby Witherington, March 13, 2016.