

The Resurrection

There will always be those who deny the resurrection of the dead! In Matthew 22:23ff, the Sadducees came to Jesus with what they must have surely thought was the unanswerable argument. The scenario they offered involved a woman married to seven brothers each dying before the family seed would be carried forward, per Deuteronomy 25:5. Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?

The scenario was plausible to a point. Genesis 38:6ff finds the story of Tamar and the sons of Judah, Er, Onan and Shelah. But like so many, the Sadducees attempt to use the scriptures with a dishonest twist, for they did not believe in the resurrection (Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:8).

Even others continued to reject the teaching of the resurrection. Festus heard about the resurrection and called the apostle Paul mad (Acts 26:23-24). Some of the philosophers on Mars Hill said Paul was a babbler (Acts 17:18). Even at Corinth, some were saying there is no resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12).

In light of the Corinthians charge, the apostle Paul presses the conclusion of denying the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-19):

1. If there is no resurrection – *“then Christ is not raised!”* (1 Corinthians 15:13).
 - a. He is not the Son of God (Romans 1:4).
 - b. There is no judgment day (Acts 17:30-31).
 - c. Jesus is not reigning over his kingdom (Acts 2:30; Romans 15:12).
 - d. There is no occasion for rejoicing (1 Peter 1:3).

2. If Christ is not raised – *“Our preaching is vain”* (1 Corinthians 15:14).
3. If Christ is not raised – *“Your faith is also vain”* (1 Corinthians 15:14). If Christ is not raised – The eyewitnesses *“were false witnesses of God”* (1 Corinthians 15:15).

If there is no resurrection, the following is true:

1. *“Christ is not raised”* (1 Corinthians 15:16).
2. *“You are still in your sin”* (1 Corinthians 15:17).
3. *At death, one ceases to exist* – there is no life after death (1 Corinthians 15:18).
4. *If our hope is only connected to this world* – what a miserable faith we have (1 Corinthians 15:19).

Now, I do not want you or I to believe just because of the consequences, nor do I want us to deny the truth if God teaches there will be a resurrection. What does the Bible say about the resurrection? Folks, the evidence is overwhelming. Let's start with what would be a hallmark passage on the resurrection.

“I know my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another...” (Job 19:25-27).

1. Job knew that his redeemer liveth – God is a living God.
2. His redeemer would stand upon the earth (John 1:14; Matthew 1:23).
3. After death, the body would decay and go back to the dust.
4. He would be resurrected to see God with his own eyes!

In addition, there are many other plain

passages concerning this subject: *“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul”* (Genesis 2:7). Our physical bodies have an origin, the dust of the earth.

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). When we die our physical bodies go back to where they originated, they return to the dust from which they came. That is not true of the soul.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). Now, what sleeps in the dust? Our physical bodies. What shall awake from the dust? Our physical bodies!

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection...” (Matthew 27:52-53). The graves were opened and the physical bodies of the saints came out of the grave.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). What goes into the grave? Our physical bodies. What will hear His voice and come forth? Our physical bodies.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: And another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and

death and hell (Hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (Revelation 20:12-13).

May I make this needful observation? The body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26), but the soul without the body is not referred to as being dead. In Luke 16:19-31 as well as Matthew 22:32 the Lord makes it clear that the soul is very much alive after death. On the judgment day the sea and the grave will surrender the bodies that occupy them, and Hades will deliver the souls confined to that realm, and the two will unite to face the Lord’s judgment.

Jesus wants us to understand the reality of the resurrection, and its significance. It is one of the fundamentals of our faith. In 1 Corinthians 15:20, *Jesus is said to be the first fruits of them that slept*. Now, when we die and they put our physical body in the grave, the Bible repeatedly refers to that as sleeping. Let’s put that with our Lord’s promise in John 2:19: *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* Jesus was referring to His physical body. He was saying – You can put me to death, but there will be a bodily resurrection.

Beloved, that is why the Bible places so much emphasis on the eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ.

1. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18).
2. The other women after they left the sepulcher (Matthew 28:9).
3. Peter (Luke 24:34).
4. The two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31).
5. The disciples (without Thomas) who were assembled behind closed doors (John 20:19-23).
6. The disciples (eight day later) with

Thomas (John 20:24-29).

7. Above 500 brethren at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6).
8. Seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:2-22).
9. James, the Lord’s half brother (Matthew 13:55; John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:7).
10. The apostles on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:4-11).
11. The apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8).

What manner of body?

The Bible is not illustrated so we cannot know for certain how the resurrected body will appear, but I want to mention two things in closing:

1. The body that comes out of the grave will be better than the one that went in the grave (1 Corinthians 15:42-43; Philippians 3:21).
 - a. Sown in corruption – raised in incorruption.
 - b. Sown in dishonor – raised in glory.
 - c. Sown natural – raised spiritual.
2. The body that comes from the grave will never enter the grave again (1 Corinthians 15:54-55; Revelation 1:18).

Jesus gave a precious promise that is one of the cornerstones of the gospel. When I come again the faithful will be raised up from the grave on the last day (John 6:40; 44; 54).

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the 27th Annual Mid-West Lectures, “God’s Precious Promises.” To hear or view the complete lesson go to www.kc-cofc.org/2009Lectures.htm or contact the 39th Street Church of Christ 15331 East 39th Street Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

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