

The Hope of Resurrection

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THE HOPE OF THE AGES

*R*esurrection (not death) has always been the hope of God's people.

This hope is based upon the promise of God:

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes" (Hosea 13:14).

This hope is clearly expressed by Job:

"For I know that 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; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

Paul confirms that without the resurrection, there would be no hope:

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:17-19).

In fact, Paul devotes his longest chapter to this vital subject of resurrection (I Corinthians 15).

THE NEED FOR RESURRECTION

The reason that the truth of resurrection is so important is that man is appointed to death.

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die ...” (Hebrews 9:27).

“For the wages of sin is death ...” (Romans 6:23).

This appointment of death came upon man through Adam.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

THE CONDITION OF DEATH

Death is simple – it is the end of life. In the Scriptures the dead are dead, and are therefore always in contrast with the living.

In death there is no praise of the Lord.

“Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being” (Psalm 146:1-2).

“The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence” (Psalm 115:17).

In death man’s breath leaves.

“... His breath goeth forth ...” (Psalm 146:4).

“... Thou takest away their breath, they die ...” (Psalm 104:29).

In death man returns to the earth.

“... He returneth to his earth ...” (Psalm 146:4).

“... They die, and return to their dust” (Psalm 104:29).

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ...” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

In death man's thoughts perish.

"... In that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4).

In death man doesn't know anything.

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything ..." (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

In death man is silent.

"The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17).

GOD'S REMEDY FOR DEATH

God's remedy for death is so simple – it is the resurrection of the dead!

Man speaks of death as a friend, but God speaks of it as an enemy!

"For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:25-26).

God will destroy death in resurrection!

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 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. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Corinthians 15:20-24).

DEATH LIKENED TO SLEEP

Death is likened unto sleep in the Scriptures.

"Lazarus sleepeth ... Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (John 11:11, 14).

"... Lest I sleep the sleep of death" (Psalm 13:3).

"... For now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be" (Job 7:21).

“Why died I not ... for now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept ...” (Job 3:11-13).

“... Them that sleep in the dust of the earth ...” (Daniel 12:2).

“And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:60).

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption” (Acts 13:36).

“... Them also which sleep in Jesus ...” (I Thessalonians 4:14).

RESURRECTION LIKENED TO AWAKING

So, in contrast, resurrection is likened unto awaking from sleep in the Scriptures.

“As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Psalm 17:15).

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake ...” (Daniel 12:2).

ARE THE DEAD DEAD, OR ALIVE?

The Scriptures speak of the dead as not being alive.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection” (Revelation 20:5).

IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH?

Yes! In resurrection!

There is not life in death, but life after death! After Christ defeats our final enemy, death, we shall be raised. Christ’s own resurrection is our assurance of life after death.

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 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. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to

God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (I Corinthians 15:17-26).

THAT BLESSED HOPE

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

We have seen from the Scriptures that the hope of man has been the resurrection. To Paul, the apostle, God revealed a mystery in relation to resurrection. He called this mystery hope the “*blessed hope*.” Some saints will bypass death and proceed straight to resurrection. This will be the blessed experience of those who are still alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So 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*” (II Corinthians 15:51-54).

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For 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. For 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: Then 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

THE RESURRECTION AND THE GOSPEL

“Many a gospel message has been spoiled and robbed of its power by omitting the great truth of the resurrection.”¹

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

1. Stuart Allen, *Resurrection and the Purpose of the Ages* (Berean Publishing Trust, 1957).

“Failure to grasp the truth concerning death strikes at the very heart of the gospel. Whatever the wages of sin is, Jesus Christ endured it to the full, in order to become man’s Saviour. If the wages of sin is eternal punishment, Jesus Christ could not be the Saviour of anyone, for He did not endure that. ‘*The wages of sin is death*’ (Romans 6:23). ‘*Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised the third day*’ (I Corinthians 15:1-5).”²

Resurrection is at the very heart of the gospel.

2. Tom Ballanger, *Heaven Dwellers*.

Taken from chapter 6 of *The Salvation of All: Creation’s Final Destination* (A Biblical Look at Universal Reconciliation). Available from StudyShelf.com for \$16.⁹⁵ (+\$3.⁷⁵ s&h).

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