

WHO NEEDS A RESURRECTION?

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We have a number of beliefs that differentiate us from most other church-goers — The Sabbath ... The Biblical Holy Days ... “Cults don’t believe in the Trinity”.

There is one major teaching that we may sometimes overlook ... yet has huge repercussions.

It was a key-teaching in the early Church ... yet rarely mentioned by most “Christians”. It should be vivid to us.

THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD is a key teaching — an important teaching.

If you ask the average church-goer what happens when you die — they answer Heaven (if you are good) ... Hell (if wicked) ... maybe purgatory (if you are a Catholic 😊).

Every so often ... we read of a tragedy in the papers. Perhaps a young family die in a fire or a car crash. Their relatives often comment “at least they’re in heaven together” or “in a better place”.

At funerals ... one often hears about how grandpa or grandma are looking down from heaven and smiling at those left behind. It’s one of those common beliefs.

Some people who’ve had “near-death experiences” tell of visits to heaven ... and meeting their relatives there.

A popular book about 9 or 10 years ago was “Heaven Is For Real”. The story of a 4 year old boy (Colton Burpo) who had emergency surgery and “died” and went to heaven.

He met John Baptist ... a great granddad ... dead sister (who was miscarried before he was born). He met Jesus who was riding a rainbow-coloured horse.

It was a New York Times best-seller. Then a movie was made of the story ... which made more than \$100 million.

Millions of church-goers believe that — believe in an afterlife.

But then ... millions don't know their Bibles!

Fewer than half US adults can name the 4 Gospels! Sixty per cent can't name even 5 of the 10 Commandments. Over 50% of high school seniors think that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife! The level of ignorance is huge!

No wonder they don't know what the Bible really teaches about "going to heaven when you die"!

One of the biggest casualties of the idea that people (good 😊) go to heaven when they die is that it effectively destroys the need for a Resurrection. Why be resurrected —if you're enjoying heavenly paradise ... with Jesus and John Baptist?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

12 Now **if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

13 But **if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.**

14 **And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.**

15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.

16 For **if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.**

17 **And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!** (You don't have a living Saviour)

18 **Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

19 **If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**

If the dead don't rise — there is no hope! All who've died — perished (even the "saints" ... Stephen ... James ... Abraham ... Moses?). If there is no resurrection ... then they have perished.

Most church-goers have a fundamental belief that there's an immortal soul.

Hebrews 6:1-3

1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection (*maturity*), **not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,**

2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

3 And this we will do if God permits.

The foundation includes the RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

It is not “incidental”. It was widely understood and discussed in New Testament times.

Acts 23:6-11

6 But when **Paul** perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; **concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!**”

7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided.

8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees’ party arose and protested, saying, “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

10 Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks.

11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

Acts 23:6 (NIV)

6 I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.

“Hope” = confident expectation.

Paul wasn't playing "tricks" here. The Resurrection — of Jesus — as first to be resurrected — was fundamental to Paul's Gospel. Good news! We'll live again.

John 11:1-6

1 **Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany**, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

4 **When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."**

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

John 11:11-24

11 These things He said, and **after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."**

12 **Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."**

13 **However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.**

14 **Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."**

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away.

19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.

21 **Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."**

22 **But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."**

23 Jesus said to her, **"Your brother will rise again."**

24 **Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."**

They knew that Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection.

John 11:25-44

25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.**"

26 **And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.** Do you believe this?"

27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

28 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him.

30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him.

31 Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

32 **Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."**

33 **Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.**

34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

35 **Jesus wept.**

36 Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

37 **And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"**

38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

40 **Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"**

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. **And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.**

42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.”

43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, **“Lazarus, come forth!”**

44 **And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.** Jesus said to them, **“Loose him, and let him go.”**

Mary ... Martha ... many “ordinary” people believed in a resurrection at the Last Day. Till then — dead — asleep in the grave.

(I can't think of any Bible stories of people up in heaven).

Lazarus was physically resurrected (this time).

John 5:24

24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.**

Do they go straight to heaven?

John 5:28-29

28 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.**
(Judgment)

Those who are in the graves will hear His voice. Two resurrections. Two outcomes — life or death.

Matthew 12:38-42

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

39 **But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.**

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 **The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it,** because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

42 **The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation (He’s talking to) and condemn it,** for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

Nineveh will rise with you. The Queen of the South too.

They will rise in judgment. In the future. No hint that they’re alive now — in heaven or hell.

Matthew 22:23-28

23 The same day the Sadducees, **who say there is no resurrection,** came to Him and asked Him,

24 saying: “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh.

27 Last of all the woman died also.

28 **Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.”**

The Sadducees scoff at the resurrection. They do not believe in any afterlife. Dead!

Matthew 22:29-33

29 Jesus answered and said to them, **“You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.**

30 **For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.**

31 **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.**”

33 And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

The only way God can be God of the living is **IF** there is a resurrection — because Abraham ... Isaac and Jacob are now dead. They are not alive in heaven. There must be a resurrection for these patriarchs to live again.

You and I need the resurrection. It is our hope.

And scripture tells us when.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, *(who have died)* 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.** *(Not the “living” in heaven!)*

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.

The “dead in Christ” rise first — at Jesus’ coming.

Then the living believers changed.

Then off to heaven for the Marriage of The Lamb.

(Are we supposed to believe the “dead in Christ” were already in heaven all along? Souls of some sort? Then they come back to earth for their “bodies” ... to then return to heaven??)

The “dead in Christ” shall rise — which implies that others may rise at a different time — Nineveh ... the Queen of the South.

You and I can look forward to Jesus’ appearing and our resurrection and reward.

2 Timothy 4:1, 6-8

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

“On that day” — Paul will receive his reward at “His appearing”.

Daniel 12:1-2

1 “At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time.

And at that time your people shall be delivered,
Every one who is found written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, (people who are sleeping in the dust ... in their graves)

Some to everlasting life,

Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:13

13 “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

Daniel is to “rest” until then — the first resurrection. He is not going to get his inheritance ten minutes after he dies. 😊

Daniel is still “resting” today. Not in heaven in some “disembodied state” — waiting to return with Jesus to collect his body sometime in the future.

He’s asleep! Unconscious! He needs a resurrection. Without a resurrection — you’d sleep on!

Revelation 20:1-6

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

4 **And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. (These are the dead in Christ) And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

5 **[But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished].** This is the first resurrection.

6 **Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.**

The dead in Christ — believers — are in the first resurrection. They will live and reign for 1,000 years.

All “other dead” will not live again till the second resurrection. So they are not alive now (in heaven ... hell or purgatory).

The purpose and teaching of the Last Great Day explains more about what happens to the “other dead”.

If you and I are believers ... we will be in the first resurrection. Married to Jesus. Reigning with Him for 1,000 years.

And **this is also a better resurrection!**

Hebrews 11:32-35

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:
33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,
34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 **Women received their dead raised to life again.**

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

So we can see ... more than one resurrection. A better resurrection.

Resurrected in a spirit body — glorious and majestic. Reign for 1,000 years. Far better than a physical resurrection?

But without a resurrection ... asleep ... unconscious — in the dust of the earth.

Our future resurrection should be very real and important to us.

To all Christians really ... but commonly minimised. Who needs a resurrection IF you're already "living it up" in heaven?

This is the Resurrection Chapter. (No "Living in Heaven when you die" chapter?!)

1 Corinthians 15:20-24

20 **But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.**

23 But each one in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.**

24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

1 Corinthians 15:35-44

35 But someone will say, "**How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?**"

36 **Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.**

37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain.

38 **But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.**

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

42 **So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.**

43 It is sown in dishonour, **it is raised in glory.** It is sown in weakness, **it is raised in power.**

44 It is sown a natural body, **it is raised a spiritual body.** There is a natural body, **and there is a spiritual body.**

We can look forward to being raised in a glorious spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:50-55

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I tell 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 trumpet.** For the trumpet will sound, **and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.**

53 **For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (There is no immortal soul today)**

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

55 "O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?"

The dead will come to life at the trumpet blast.

Philippians 3:7-14

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

10 **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection**, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

11 **if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

12 **Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but **one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,**

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. *(Which is the resurrection from the dead)*

“May attain to the resurrection FROM THE DEAD”.

Paul was sprinting — enthusiastically — to the reward — RESURRECTION!

Philippians 3:20-21

20 **For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**

21 **who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,** according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

EAGERLY WAIT FOR JESUS ... who will transform our lowly body.

Basically ... if you believe you go to heaven immediately upon death ... there is no need for a resurrection. You're already with Jesus and the Father and the Saints ... enjoying heavenly bliss. Presumably you could continue for thousands of years?

Who needs a resurrection?

But — if you believe upon death that you will be unconscious ... “asleep” ... then you will definitely look forward to the resurrection — it is a great hope.

It will make the struggles of this life worthwhile!

As Hebrews chapter 6 showed us — this is a fundamental teaching of the Church — “essential” or “of central importance”.

It is worth reflecting on. You will be resurrected — one way or another — to life or to death.

LET’S AIM FOR THE BETTER RESURRECTION!