

Basic Christianity

Part 12 – The Resurrection of The Dead

Jesus taught that a day will come when everyone will rise from the dead.

John 5:28-29 ... 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.

Our topic is The Resurrection Of The Dead.

Let's ask a few questions and let the Bible give us the answers.

1. What is the purpose of the resurrection?

1 Cor 15:32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

What Paul is saying here is that, if there is no resurrection from the dead, we have no hope.

We might as well close up shop and have a good time.

Secondly, we go back to the words of Jesus.

John 5:28-29 ... 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.

There has to be a resurrection so that there can be a final judgment.

First there is the resurrection, then there is God's final eternal judgment.

2. How will the resurrection happen?

1 Cor 15:23-24 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.

We get a bit more information from 1 Thess 4:13-16: But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, 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.

So this is the order of the resurrection:

- First, Christ rose from the dead as the guarantee of our resurrection.
- Second, Jesus Himself will descend from heaven.
- Next, all those followers of Jesus who have already died will rise up from their graves.
- Then finally, those followers of Jesus who are still alive at His coming will rise to meet Him in the air.

That's not something you'll want to miss.

Here's something else: those who are alive when Jesus returns won't have to die to be resurrected.

But instead they will be immediately changed.

1 Cor 15:51-52 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.

You might be going around your everyday business – and suddenly you will be changed, and rise into the air to meet Jesus.

3. What will my new body be like?

Jesus gave us a clue: In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)

Lots of Christians are looking forward to their mansion in the sky.

Maybe they think they're going to get a huge house with ten bedrooms, six bathrooms, gold fittings, swimming pool and spa.

But what did Jesus really mean?

Why in the world would I need a house in heaven?

Have you ever considered why we need a house down here on earth?

Maybe it's fairly obvious, but here are some reasons we build houses.

1. Shelter from the elements – rain, cold, heat. But we won't need to worry about that in heaven. There won't even be any sun there.

Rev 22:5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

2. A place to store your possessions and keep them safe from thieves. We can't trust people, so we build houses, put locks on the doors, buy burglar alarms, and security screens. But who would steal your stuff in heaven? Can you imagine coming home one day from a long day playing the harp, only to find the Archangel Michael and a gang of angels have picked the lock to your front door, and are busy walking away with your TV set and stereo? I don't think so.

Jesus said, (Mat 6:19,20) Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

3. Think about the idea of a place to keep your possessions. What possessions? What will you need possessions for in heaven? In a place where God provides everything?

So, I won't need a place to hoard my possessions.

I won't need somewhere to sleep at night, because there is no night – and there probably won't be any sleep either.

I won't need a place to lock myself in securely from robbers or murderers, because there won't be any robbers or murderers.

So what did Jesus really mean when He talked about a mansion.

I believe it was something far better than a ritzy house.

2 Cor 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Pet 1:13-14 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, (14) knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

The tent that both Peter and Paul were talking about is the body.

To put off the tent is to die.

Paul says that if he puts off his earthly tent, God gives him a new building.

God doesn't give us a lot of information about our resurrection body.

But from this we know that compared to the tent we have now, our new body will be a mansion.

1 Cor 15:42-44 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.

1 Cor 15:49-53 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. (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.

We don't know all the answers, but here are some of the things that we do know:

- We shall bear the image of Jesus – that alone is wonderful.
- Our new body will be incorruptible – it will never decay – no tooth decay, no wrinkles, no deterioration.
- Our new body will be glorious.
- Our new body will be powerful – no sickness, no pain.
- Our new body will be a spiritual body – not flesh and blood.
- Our new body will be immortal – it will never die – if you are a true follower of Jesus Christ, death is but your gateway to immortality.

And there's going to be a lot more than that too.

1 Cor 2:9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

It's going to be far more wonderful than we can even imagine.

1 Cor 15:35-37 The difference between the body we have and our resurrection body is like the difference between a seed sown and the plant that grows.

If you think that all you'll be doing in heaven is pottering aimlessly around for eternity, you're greatly mistaken.

Every sacrifice you make in this life is going to be well worth it.

Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

So what's your choice?

Are you going to settle for this seed – this body and its pleasures?

Or will you look to God for something far better – the full-grown plant?