

# **The Resurrection Of The Dead**

Explore Your Faith Teaching Series - Explo-12 ©  
With Pastor Joseph Rodrigues

## **OUTLINE**

### **Introduction**

The bible gives clear direction as to events that will take place at the end of time, referred to by the theological term 'eschatology'.

One of those events is the 'resurrection of the dead'.

This is a fundamental Christian teaching and is set out in the early statements of the Christian faith like the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed.

The study covers a biblical view of death, the certainty of resurrection for everyone who dies, and its eternal consequences, whether for one's good or for eternal damnation.

Only the Christian faith deals with 'life after death' with such authority.

We hardly hear this doctrine from pulpits today!

We need to know that God *has already told us* about certain forthcoming events. This will not only enable us to stand firm in the trials and persecutions of the times, but also to rest assured that God is in control, even though it appears otherwise from the things we see around us!

***Before we look at this doctrine, it would pay to be informed about a coming "new order" that the Bible talks about.***

1. The reality we experience in this life is not everlasting. The ultimate reality is spiritual and eternal. What is visible is physical and temporary; what is invisible is spiritual and eternal (**2 Cor. 4:17-18**).

2. For us to experience this ultimate reality we need to move out of "time" (the zone in which we presently exist) into "eternity" (the designated permanent order). This will happen to all mankind! The eternal state is man's destiny. There is no such thing as *annihilation!* We are all going to have a form of existence after this earthly existence.

3. The bible clearly states that *this present world* is **not** our home (**Hebrews 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:19**). Biblical prophecy offers us the sure conviction that Christ is coming again (see **2 Pe. 1:16**). We have in an earlier session considered that all prophecy originates with God, not man. We have also seen the accuracy of the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus which were fulfilled *literally* (not allegorically). For these reasons, we can be confident that what God has said about the 'end times' and the 'end of time' **will come to pass exactly as he has ordained.**

### **Some general misconceptions that need to be addressed about the 'end times'**

Many people are under the impression that the whole world will be converted, and much talk about the great 'end-time harvest' really finds its roots in this belief. **The bible does not teach this!** On the contrary, the bible says that *in the midst of all the wickedness and tribulation prevalent during the last days, the church will complete her task of preaching the gospel (Matt. 24:8-14) and then Christ will return.*

***This is what the bible clearly states about the state of the world just prior to Christ's return:***

*-That righteousness and wickedness will mature simultaneously (Is. 60:1-3). The parable that Jesus gave about the tares and the wheat is good evidence of Jesus' endorsement of this truth (Matt. 13:37-43). Revelation 22:10-12 reinforces this!*

***Consider: in the light of this, how are we to pray?***

*-That there will be tribulation like never before just prior to the return of Jesus and that corruption in those days will be irreversible. (Matt. 24:21-22, 29-31)*

There is a whole series of events that take place after Jesus' return. We will consider those in a separate session. For this session we will simply consider one of those events, which is 'the resurrection of the dead'.

### **What happens when we die?**

“Dust Thou art; to dust thou shalt return”. We are all familiar with the truth of this biblical pronouncement!

To understand what follows upon death in this life, we need to have a valid starting point. That starting point is the composition of the human personality. (Refer Genesis for man’s creation).

Our human personality consists of: a) spirit b) soul c) body. We are tripartite beings (see **1 Thess. 5:23**).

When our bodies die, the soul and the spirit continue to exist. Our bodies return to the dust from which we were created. Resurrection therefore is an event that relates to the physical body. It means “to stand up again” ie, to be full of life again.

It is important to understand that after death *there is no loss of personal identity* even though there is no body; that is, souls can still recognize persons, retain recollection of life on earth, and be conscious of present conditions. That this is true is evident from the parable in **Luke 16:19-31**. However, though the soul is still alive after physical death, it experiences only a sort of ‘shadowy’ or ‘incomplete’ existence without the body. Upon resurrection of the body the soul is reunited with it (though, of course the body is now a glorified one, fit for heaven). For this reason, salvation is not complete until we are resurrected from the dead! ***After all, the whole purpose of God’s redemptive plan was to restore fallen man to eternal fellowship with God. In other words, Eden restored!***

After death there is a definite separation of the righteous from the unrighteous (evidenced from the same parable, Luke 16:19-31 discussed earlier). However, there is a distinction between the prevailing state of those who died *before* Christ died and those who died *after* Christ died. The following will help us to understand the difference that Christ’s resurrection made.

#### **Situation of dead Before Christ died**

All souls passed into Hades (Greek) or Sheol (Hebrew). This was the unseen world, the place for departed souls. However, this place was divided into two separate areas, keeping the righteous apart from the unrighteous, *with no possibility of crossing over from one place to the other!*

#### **What happened to Christ when he died?**

His spirit was committed to the Father (**Luke 23:46**)

His soul descended into Sheol / Hades (**1 Pe. 3:18-19**; note: the *point is that he visited souls*)

His body was laid in the tomb (**Acts 2:31**, plus gospel accounts)

#### **What happened to Christ when he was resurrected?**

His spirit and soul were reunited with his body. But it was a body that could never be subjected to death or destruction. It was not subject to any of the rules or limitations of mortal human bodies. It was a glorified body, having physical form. It was in this condition that he appeared to his disciples and others during his last days on earth prior to his resurrection.

#### **The consequences of Christ’s resurrection the dead**

1. The righteous souls in Hades were released into God’s presence; e.g. Abraham etc.  
2. Henceforth the spirits of the dead ascend *directly into God’s presence*. This is evidenced from at least two New Testament passages:

a) **Acts 7:59** - the account of Stephen, the first martyr, and

b) **Phil. 1: 23-24** - Paul’s desire “to be with Christ”

3. Jesus’ resurrection guarantees ours. It is compared to a birth. He is the firstborn from among the dead (**Col.1:18**). *Note:* he is the firstborn from ‘**among the dead**’, not the firstborn ‘**of the dead**’. The first denotes his singularity in resurrection; the second means that many others have also risen from the dead, of whom Christ was the first (as in the case of ‘John was the first Australian to fly around the earth’). No one else has been resurrected from the dead.

4. His resurrection body is the pattern for ours (**Phil 3:20, 21**). Space or time does not limit it.

5. There will be a change in our present bodies according to the natural pattern of a seed that is planted (**1 Cor. 15:35-38**). In fact there will be ***five specific changes*** (**1 Cor. 15:42-44; 52-53**).

-sown perishable, raised imperishable

-sown in dishonour, raised in glory

-sown in weakness, raised in power

- sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body
- from being clothed with mortality, to being clothed with immortality

### **The mechanics of the resurrection from the dead**

Three distinct phases:

1. Christ the firstfruits (**Lev. 23:10-11; Matt. 27:51-53**). *This phase has already taken place*. It provides the assurance of those things that will happen in the future. The study of the concept of 'first fruits' is of significance here.
2. Those who are Christ's *at his coming*. (**1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4**; Note "end of first resurrection" in **Rev.20: 5**).
3. Final general resurrection (**Rev. 20:12-13**-at the end of time. We will move into eternity).

### **Conclusion**

There are many other important aspects to deal with in considering the doctrine of 'resurrection of the dead', such as its importance and its witness in Scripture. They will be considered at another time.