

DOCTRINE MATTERS: ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Message 15: Resurrection and Ascension

RESURRECTION

The importance of Christ's Resurrection from the dead:

1Corinthians 15:12-19 *Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

If the Resurrection is not true then:

1. Christ is still _____.
2. Preaching is _____.
3. Our faith is _____.
4. We are _____.
5. Our faith is _____.
6. We are still _____.
7. All dead Believers are _____.
8. We are a _____, _____ people.

The Resurrection is an _____ of the Gospel.

1Corinthians 15:1-4 *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel..... that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*

The Resurrection is the _____ of the Gospel!

Eternal _____ which is the final curse of _____ is defeated, to be replaced by eternal _____!

1Corinthians 15:54-57 *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Nature of Jesus Christ's Resurrection from the dead:

Christ's unique Resurrection:

John 11:25,26 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Jesus experienced _____ not _____.

Many people throughout the Old and New Testament experienced revivification. They were brought back to life to die again at a later time. (ex. Lazarus John 11:1-44) Resurrection means that Jesus rose from the dead to die no more. Resurrection teaches that someone dies and returns to physical life forever, or what the Bible calls eternal life, patterned after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Important point taught in John 11:25:

Jesus Christ did not just experience Resurrection, but He claims to _____ the _____ and the _____.

(Note: John 11:25 is one of the "I AM" statements of Jesus that declares His Deityship.)

What Resurrection is not:

Resurrection does not mean there is a second chance for salvation such as the teachings of _____ and _____.

Reincarnation is the belief that the human soul migrates from one body to another in a succession of lives seeking for complete purification until it is finally joined to the ultimate reality of the divine.

Purgatory wrongly teaches that following death there is an extended period of potential cleansing and maturing that allows someone to then enjoy heaven as an unbeliever.

Hebrews 9:27 refutes both of these errors.

Hebrews 9:7 *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,*

Resurrection does not mean that everyone, believers and unbelievers alike will escape eternal punishment in hell.

_____ falsely teaches that everyone is eventually saved and goes to heaven.

_____ is an erroneous teaching that unbelievers will simply cease to exist at some point following death and will therefore escape an eternal punishment in hell.

Daniel 12:2 *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Resurrection does not mean the end of _____ where both the body and the spirit lie at rest until the resurrection, as is taught by some Seventh-Day Adventists.

When the New Testament speaks of believers as “asleep” it does so as a metaphor to distinguish the death of believers from unbelievers (1Cor.15:20). It is speaking of the soul at rest in Christ after death (2Cor. 5:8 “away from the body and home with the Lord”) contrasted to the unbeliever that is in torment awaiting the final judgment (Luke 16:22,23 “The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment,).

Biblical Resurrection Defined:

The Scriptures teach very clearly that at the time of death there is a separation of the soul from the body. The body is left to decay but the soul continues in conscious existence somewhere (life after death). Most Biblical scholars believe that before Christ’s resurrection both saved and unsaved souls went to Hades (Luke 16:19-31). The unsaved are confined to the torment side, and the saved to “Abraham’s bosom” which is a place of rest. Both are awaiting their final judgment. This is the teaching we find throughout the Old Testament. We know that something has changed after the resurrection of Christ because Paul makes it very clear that the soul of the saved now enters into the presence of Christ in heaven upon his death.

2 Corinthians 5:8 *Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

Philippians 1:23 *I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

Scholars believe that this transition from Hades to Heaven is hinted at in Ephesians chapter 4.

Ephesians 4:8-10 *Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.” (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

This passage tells us that Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth (where the Bible describes is the location of Hades). When He ascended He led a “host of captives” which probably refers to all the believers in Abraham’s bosom. Since the atonement had now been completed and justification had been applied, these saints were now fit to stand in God’s presence.

The concept of a bodily Resurrection was introduced by and is unique to Christianity. For most religions there is at least some type of spiritual consciousness or existence. Most belief systems acknowledge some type of “life after death” where the soul continues some type of conscious existence. Christianity teaches that there is a bodily resurrection. The soul is reunited with the body and the body is brought back to life.

“Life after life after death”

For the Believer this is described as “life after life after death” by N.T Wright in his book **The Resurrection of the Son of God**. Wright proposes that in the first century resurrection did not mean “life after death” in the sense of “the life that follows immediately after bodily death”. Wright goes on to explain that resurrection was a way of “speaking of a new life *after* ‘life after death’, a fresh living embodiment *following* a period of death-as-a-state. According to Wright, the meaning of resurrection as “life after life after death” cannot be overemphasized because most modern writers continue to refer to resurrection as simply “life after death”.

The distinction Wright is making is important. Most religions believe that the soul continues to exist in a conscious state after physical death. This disembodied soul is typically the final state for these religions. This is not resurrection. Christianity teaches that the soul continues in a conscious disembodied state for a period of time after death. This is considered “life after death”. Christianity further states that at a point in history God intervenes and brings the body back to life to die no more and reunites it with the soul thus restoring the complete person. This is “life after life after death” or the true definition of Christian resurrection. This is what took place for Christ. His body was raised to life to die no more after three days in the grave.

It is important to note that the unbeliever also undergoes a resurrection. Their soul is separated from their body at the time of death to enter the torment side of Hades to await their final judgment. When their time of judgment comes (Great White Throne Judgment Rev. 20:11-15), they are reunited with their bodies, judged, and cast into the “Lake of Fire” which is Hell, or the “second death”. There they will exist in eternal torment. So their journey might be described as “death after life after death”. If we understand that the unbeliever is plunged into the torment side of Hades after physical death, then we may refer to this as a type of death also because they will know no rest as the believer does. Therefore, we may describe their journey as “death after death after death”.

Christ’s position in Resurrection:

1Corinthians 15:20,23 *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

Jesus Christ is the _____ for all Believers. He is the first to rise from the dead to die no more and leads the way for all Believers who will follow.

Christ’s Resurrection Body:

Christ’s was not raised as a _____ body but a _____ body.

Wayne Grudem in his “Bible Doctrine” book lists ten evidences that Christ’s resurrected body was physical:

1. The disciples “took hold of His feet” (Matt 28:9)
2. The disciples on the road to Emmaus saw Him as just another traveler on the road. (Luke 24:15-29)
3. He took bread and broke it. (Luke 24:30)
4. He asked for and ate a piece of broiled fish. (Luke 24:40-42)
5. Mary mistook Him for the gardener. (John 20:15)

6. He showed them His hands and his side. (John 20:20)
7. He invited Thomas to put his finger out to touch His hands and put out his hand and touch His side. (John 20:27)
8. He prepared breakfast for His disciples. (John 21:12,13)
9. He explicitly told them, “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for **a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have**” (Luke 24:39)
10. Peter said that the disciples “ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:41)

Luke 24:39 *See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”*

Jesus specifically mentions His flesh and bones which describes a physical body. Is it significant that He does not mention His blood?

The _____ involvement in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Christ raised by God the Father:

Galatians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— (Acts 2:24; Rom. 6:4; 1Cor. 6:14; Eph. 1:20)*

Jesus Christ Raised Himself:

John 10:17-18 *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”*

John 2:19-21 *Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body.*

The Holy Spirit Raised up Jesus:

Romans 8:11 *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

The Doctrinal Significance of the Resurrection:

Christ’s resurrection insures our _____.

Romans 4:25 *who (Jesus) was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

This is the only passage in the Bible that connects the resurrection with the doctrine of justification. By raising Christ from the dead God was in effect stating that Christ’s work of redemption was complete. Christ’s atonement was effectual, the justice of God was satisfied, and the wrath of God was absorbed.

Christ's resurrection was God's stamp of approval on the finished work of Christ. By our union with Him in His resurrection God is free to declare us righteous, applying Christ's righteousness to us.

***Philippians 3:9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—*

Christ's resurrection insures our _____.

***1Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

Regeneration means to be "born again" or "born anew" as some versions render it. The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides all Believers with a new life and the power to live it. While we do not receive our new body until our resurrection, the regenerating power brought to us by Christ's resurrection gives us the desire and the power to say no to sin and to honor and glorify God with our lives here on earth.

***Romans 6:3,4** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

Regeneration brought about by Christ's resurrection is a SUPERNATURAL act of God in the life of the Believer that jumpstarts the process of SANCTIFICATION by TRANSFORMING the inner man to display an outward righteousness.

Christ's Resurrection= Regeneration= Sanctification

Conclusion: If there is no indication of Sanctification (righteous living) in the life of an individual then perhaps supernatural Regeneration has never taken place. Possibly they just had a "religious experience".

ASCENSION

The Ascension of Jesus Christ is a doctrine that is not emphasized very much, in fact many Bible Doctrine and Systematic Theology books ignore it altogether. There are many important events that would not have taken place if the ascension had not happened. We will examine a few of these:

How the ascension affected Jesus Christ:

1. Jesus Christ was _____ to a definite place, from earth to heaven (Luke 24:50-51)
2. Jesus Christ was _____ to His former glory (John 17:5)
3. As the God-man and the Lamb that was slain, Jesus holds a _____ greater than He had ever known before (Phil 2:9; Rev. 5:12)

4. Jesus Christ is _____ at the Father's right hand.
 - a. This fulfills the Messianic prophecy
Psalm 110:1 *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."*
 - b. It shows the completion of the work of redemption and God's approval.
Hebrews 1:3b *After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*
 - c. It indicates the authority given to Him over the whole universe.
Ephesians 1:20,21 *that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*
 - d. It established His position as head over the Church.
Ephesians 1:22 *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,*
 - e. He is given the authority to pour out the Holy Spirit on the earth.
Acts 2:33 *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*

How Christ's ascension affects us:

1. Jesus begins to _____ a place for us.
2. Our place in Heaven is _____,
3. He will _____ for us so we can be with Him.
John 14:2,3 *In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*
4. We are assured that our _____ is complete and accepted by God.
Hebrews 10:12-14 *But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*
5. When Jesus ascended His High Priestly work of _____ for us began.
1John 2:1 *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*
6. The Church is now _____ to carry out its mission'
Ephesians 1:22,23 *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*
7. Jesus' ascension set in motion the _____.
Acts 1:8,9 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.*
8. As a result of Jesus' ascension, we were given the _____. (see following explanation)

The doctrine of the ascension of Jesus Christ is of utmost importance to us because if it had not occurred, we probably would have never had the opportunity to believe.

John 14:16,17 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth,*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*

John 14:12 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.*

Consider this: Jesus Christ was limited in time and space while here on earth. He could only affect a limited number of people in a limited region. By ascending to heaven He unleashed the omnipotent and omnipresent Holy Spirit on the earth to start the wildfire of evangelism that has engulfed you and me.

As we finish this semester of Bible Doctrines we hope that you are impressed with the importance of increasing your understanding of the foundational beliefs taught in the Word of God. It is critical to see how all the different doctrines are intertwined and support and help explain one another. For this reason, if you have missed any of the sessions it would be good to go back and listen to the podcasts to catch up.

Finally, we pray that your view of God has been enlarged, your amazement at His greatness and glory has increased, and that you have grown in your love and devotion to Him.