

Resurrection of the Dead

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There are 3 New Testament Resurrections to consider

1. The resurrection of Jesus the Christ (Past).
2. The spiritual resurrection of the believer in Christ (Present).
3. The final resurrection of “all that are in the grave” (Future).

1. The resurrection of Jesus the Christ (Past).

In the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 15:20 — But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Matthew 28:6 — He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Acts 2:24 — whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

In the Old Testament.

Psalms 16:8-11... For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Jesus was seen after His resurrection.

Acts 1:3 — to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Believing in the resurrection

A. It is an important revelation and fact.

1 Corinthians 15:12-22

Paul is saying that the resurrection is crucial to faith. Without the resurrection there is no more purpose in being a Christian than being a Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim, etc.

1. After the death of Jesus it is expected that His followers would be severely depressed (they were immediately after the crucifixion). Something sensational must have occurred to bring about the dramatic change in their demeanour from fear and despair to boldness and joy.

2. Initially, all of the Christians were Jews who revered the Sabbath. Nevertheless, they changed their day of worship (the Sabbath) from Saturday to Sunday.
3. The tomb was empty, no corpse was found, and the embalming wrappings were found in the empty tomb (John 20:5-9). It seems exceedingly unlikely that grave robbers would unwrap a dead body they were stealing.
4. The eyewitnesses were accepted as being of high moral character.
5. The numerous people who saw Jesus and the numerous times He was seen by various people over a period of 40 days.
6. The multitude of fulfilled Old Testament prophecies of the cross and resurrection.
7. The character and claims of Jesus: He said that He was God (John 8:58; 10:30; 14:9); and that He would rise on the third day (Matt. 16:21) — He has to be Lord, liar, or lunatic, there are no other options.
8. The fact that though the Pharisees remembered that Jesus had said that He would arise on the third day (Matthew 27:63-65) the disciples did not (or else they didn't really believe it) so that they were not even looking for or expecting His resurrection.
9. The eyewitness documents recording the facts, the Gospels, were all written by eyewitnesses or associates of those witnesses before A.D. 100.

B. It is vital to our salvation.

Romans 10:9 — that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

“confess” GK – homologeo means “to declare the same thing.”

This means that the confessor is declaring the same thing that God has declared: that man cannot save Himself and the provision God has made for our salvation is accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord.

What Is Declared In The Resurrection Of Jesus Christ?

A. Justification of believers.

Romans 4:25 — who was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised because of our justification.

B. Death is defeated.

Romans 6:9 — knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

C. Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Romans 1:4 — and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

D. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Ephesians 1:20-23 — which 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 principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

E. A new life source.

1 Peter 1:3 — Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead....

The Greek word translated “begotten us again” here is translated “having been born again” in verse 23. Thus, this refers to being born again. Through the resurrection of Christ, we are “begotten again” or “born again” and thus share in His eternal life.

F. Judgment is promised.

Acts 17:31 — “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

HOW ARE WE PRESENTLY RESURRECTED IN CHRIST?

A. We are quickened, or “made alive together with Christ”.

Ephesians 2:1 — And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Colossians 2:13 - And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

B. This resurrection is expressed through water baptism.

Romans 6:4 -5 — Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.

Colossians 2:12 — buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

There is proof within our lives to show that this resurrection has occurred:

1. A new master is served and obeyed.

2 Corinthians 5:15 — and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

2. A new life.

Romans 6:4 — Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

3. New purpose.

Colossians 3:1-2 — If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

What Do We Know About The Future Resurrection That Will Take Place?

A. The Bible speaks of it. It will be connected with the last day and the second coming of Jesus Christ, but only God knows when it will take place.

John 6:39-40 — “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:44 — “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

In this verse Jesus’ words indicate that no one can decide entirely on their own to accept Him as their Lord and Saviour. Rather God Himself draws the person to Jesus. This presumably occurs by God overcoming the blinding caused by Satan and giving the individual revelation of who Jesus is as well as convicting them of their shortcomings. The result is repentance and faith leading to salvation by grace. We know from Matthew 18:14 and 2 Peter 3:9 that it is God’s will that none should perish. That being the case, every person must be called or “drawn” by God at some point or points in their lives. However, our free will still determines our response to God’s drawing. If our pride prevents us from accepting God’s gracious offer He will allow us to go to Hell but it is our choice.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 — Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

A Biblical “mystery” is a revealed truth that cannot be discerned by human wisdom. This revelation that not all believers will experience physical death could have been revealed to Paul only by God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, trumpets were used to call God’s people together (see Numbers 10:1-10). They were also used upon the coronation of a new king for Israel (see 1 Kings 1:34). Prior to the events of the Great Tribulation, the dead in Christ will be raised with glorified bodies. Those believers who are still living will then be caught up into the air (“raptured”) and instantaneously changed into their permanent, glorified bodies (see. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17). The trumpet sounding will thus be calling God’s people together and announcing the coronation of King Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 — 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.

B. All that are in the grave shall be resurrected.

Acts 24:15 — “I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

C. The believer shall receive a glorious body, like that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:21 — 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.

1 John 3:2 — Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

We can’t fully understand or explain the nature of the glorified body we are to have. When Jesus was on the earth for 40 days after His resurrection He could pass through walls, eat and drink. Our resurrected bodies may be similar in those respects. Jesus’ body was apparently not unusual in appearance or some comment would likely have been made by the disciples. We know that it did still have the nail holes in the hands and the wound from the spear because Jesus invited Thomas to put his fingers into them (John 20:27). ***The differences in our resurrection bodies compared to our earthly bodies then are more likely differences in capabilities rather than in appearance.*** The only things we can be sure of is that a) “it has not yet been revealed what we shall be” and b) “we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2 above). In any case, we’ll just have to wait until Jesus returns to know for certain.