

# Resurrection

1 Peter 3:21-22

<sup>21</sup> Baptism, which corresponds to this (the great flood), now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (1 Peter 3:18-22 (ESV))

All that you and I become in Christ, all the comforts we enjoy during the days of this life, and all of the joys unspeakable that we will experience in eternity all hinge on this one special event spoken about here in our passage, the “Resurrection of Jesus Christ”.

And yes, I know that all three elements of the Gospel are of equal importance, His death, His burial and His resurrection. But though I do not yet fully comprehend all of its special significance, I know that the “resurrection” holds the answers to most all the mysteries about God that we can only wonder about.

And it all begins with the very “first” resurrection, the “resurrection of Jesus Christ”. He is the “first fruit” of all resurrection and because of His resurrection, we can follow Him on into our own resurrection. And though I don’t fully understand it all, I sure do look forward to it. Why? Because I really do believe all of these things that we have talked about over all these years, about eternal life, about mansions in glory, about there being no more sickness or death, or fighting or wars, just peace and joy beyond our comprehension. And I really, really do want to go there.

And yes, I confess that even now in this life, I do live a very enjoyable existence, love and joy and peace and rest abound for me, so much so that each day I stop to marvel at why God has chosen to bless me and my dear wife with such blessings. But I also know that these blessings cannot compare to those that are yet still out in front of me.

And yes, it is also a frightening consideration when I stop and ponder what I, what each of us, will have to go through to get to those joys of our resurrection. Suffering is almost always involved, sometimes very difficult suffering. But the joy of knowing that as we breathe our last breath here, we don’t really die, we instead simply step from this present life out into a timeless eternity, makes it all worthwhile . . . it’s that special promise that Jesus’ spoke to His good friend Martha about when He

<sup>25</sup> . . . said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26 (ESV))

Folks, I do believe those precious words. There will surely come a day when I will, in this life, cease to breathe. But I will not die! I will instead be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, and life eternal will begin, a sure and certain promise from God.

And it all has to do with Jesus Christ! He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the "resurrection and the life", and just as assuredly as He was resurrected and now sits on His throne at the right hand of God the Father, so shall you and I be resurrected! That is His trustworthy promise to all who have received His precious salvation! We shall be resurrected! And we will live and reign with Christ forever and ever. And I ask you, "Do you believe this?" "Do you really believe this?"

May I say that over the recent few weeks, I have begun more and more to consider my own mortality. And the revealing words of these scriptures are so very comforting to me.

Here, we are told that it begins first with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And the power within His resurrection enables our souls, our consciences to be cleansed from all sin. And then we are told that Jesus has gone on ahead of us into heaven.

Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.  
(1 Peter 3:21-22 (ESV))

And in John 14, Jesus told us what He was going to do for us there in heaven. He said, <sup>1</sup> "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.  
(John 14:1-3 (NKJV))

Folks, we can read all these words and merely receive them as information, or we can read them and get really excited about what they mean to us personally. I prefer the latter. Too many times, I have read the words of these scriptures and have only put them away in my memory bank as good information about God and about myself for perhaps some later use. But I don't ever want to do that anymore!

These are precious words of truth that reveal so much more to us than we could ever know otherwise. Here, we are told that though Jesus died, as we also will surely die, He now lives, eternally.

Yes, Jesus is God and He has always been God! He was in the beginning with God and was the creator of all that exists in the heavens and on the earth. But folks remember, Jesus also became a man, a person, like you and me, and fully so, with mortality being an absolute part of who He was! He lived as we live. He suffered as we suffer. And He died as we will die. He breathed His last and He gave up His Spirit.

But then miracles of miracles, on the third day, He was resurrected back to life. And He walked and He talked among us. And He did that so that we could see and believe that there truly is life after this life.

We are told a lot about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 and I want us to turn there and to read several portions of that passage, but I also want to encourage us to study these words more later, and carefully so, and to not just receive them as information, but to instead get really excited about them, because they really do have to do with you and me personally, and with our own personal mortality.

They begin first by telling us about the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He was the “first” and we who have Him as our Savior and Lord will follow in His footsteps.

Please follow along with me. 1 Corinthians 15, beginning in verse 3,

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me, (the Apostle Paul).

(1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV))

For those who want or need to have eye witness “evidence” of Jesus’ resurrection, here the Apostle Paul quotes ample proof that Jesus’ resurrection took place.

But there are still many who do not want to believe that such things are possible for us, that there is anything beyond our last breath, neither for Christ nor for any of us. Listen, beginning in verse 12,

<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:12-19 (ESV))

Again, there are many who really don't want to believe in a "next life", that there is anything after we breathe our last in this life. But just because someone might not want to believe in a "next life" does not make what they believe to be true for them. Regardless of what they believe to be true, there really will be a "next life". There will be a "Paradise" and there will be a "Torment", and all people will be "resurrected".

Why some don't want to believe in a "next life" I can only guess. I have concluded that for many of them, they fear being held accountable for the things they have done in this life. The prospects of being resurrected and having to stand in judgment for their behavior is unthinkable to them.

But these next words, beginning in verse 20, assure us that all that we read here in these scriptures about Christ and His resurrection are really true. Listen!

<sup>20</sup> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:20-24 (ESV))

Here, Jesus is the first to enjoy the resurrection. And as we read in our passage from 1 Peter 3, we see Him joining God the Father in heaven. Those words again, Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (1 Peter 3:21-22 (ESV))

It is in words such as these that we gain a small glimpse of the Trinity. And yes, just how the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit actually

functions is a mystery beyond our comprehension, but here we get a glimpse! Jesus, God the Son, is seated on His own throne at the right hand of God The Father. And we must also know that the Holy Spirit, being present everywhere, is also there. And here, we read that all authority and power in heaven and on earth has been given over to Jesus, but that also, at some point, He will humble himself and give it all back to God the Father, words that we can only imagine the true meaning of.

Some days ago, my son and I talked about this very thing, asking if any one of the three within the Trinity is in more authority than the others? The Westminster Confession of Faith says of the Trinity,

In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

My understanding is so very limited. But using what I have, I believe that God, though being three distinct persons, is of only one essence, one substance, one power, and one mind. All three, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are one person, but having three separate beings and three separate roles. When we talk to one, we talk to them all. If we deny one of them, we deny them all. And when we are told to “Love the Lord our God”, we are being told to love all three as One, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

And as we try to visualize the words of our text in 1 Peter 3,

Jesus Christ.<sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.  
(1 Peter 3:21-22 (ESV))

Yes, we are looking at Jesus, and God the Father, but we are actually looking at the preponderance of all three.

And this visualization is given to you and to me to remind us that Jesus really has been resurrected and also that you and I will also be resurrected and we will join with Him and we will reign with Him, not on thrones with Him as Gods, but as “Sons of God”.

As to our own resurrection, follow along with me, beginning in verse 35

<sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”<sup>36</sup> You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.<sup>37</sup> And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps

of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38 (ESV))

#### Verse 50

<sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> 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." <sup>55</sup> "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" <sup>56</sup> the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:50-57 (ESV))

What more can be said to add to this! These words tell it all and I am excited about my coming resurrection! Are you?

Jesus Christ, (the firstfruits). <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (1 Peter 3:21-22 (ESV))

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to (Martha) her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26 (ESV))

And Jesus has said to us,

<sup>1</sup> "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. (John 14:1-3 (NKJV))