

19 February 2012

## Resurrection Part 1 and Introduction

The word *resurrection* occurs 40 times in the Scriptures. There are three Greek words that underline the English word *resurrection* in the Holy Scriptures. According to the Oxford dictionary the word *resurrect* means:- "Raise from the dead (rare); revive practice or memory of; take from the grave, exhume" and resurrection means:- "rising of Christ from the grave: rising again of men at the last day. Exhumation lit. or fig., resurrecting (man, Body-snatcher)."

In this, part 1 of a study on *resurrection*, we will cover 4 (four) points which include:-

1. *Resurrection* in the Scriptures is where the dead are made alive
2. Jesus Christ is the *resurrection* and the life
3. The Lord Jesus Christ was *resurrected* from the dead
4. Some doubt the *resurrection*

Let us add a little detail to the above points;

### 1. Resurrection in the Scriptures is where the dead are made alive

Acts 25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

a) A dead person is physically brought back to life (even though the word *resurrection* is not used) to have breath in their lungs.

In 12:1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

Our heading for this sub-point has a note, that *resurrection* is where a dead person is physically brought back to life (even though the word *resurrection* is not used). We do so on the basis that *raised up* can also mean *resurrected* (see 1Cor.15: 13-15). When the apostles speak of the *resurrection* of Christ they use the word raised (see Acts 13: 29 & 30).

The example we provide is of the Lord Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. The people may have said that Lazarus was sleeping, but Jesus reminded them that he was in fact dead. This occasion is recorded by John in chapter 11: 1-42. The whole purpose of the event is that the witnesses may see the glory of God (see verse 40). Jesus is clear, he that was once dead, has come alive (see verse 42). From that event many believed.

The apostle Paul also involved in the *resurrection* of a man named Eutychus who had died while he was long preaching (see Acts 20: 9-12). Such a miracle was a sign that God was in the work, for the early church which was Jewish, "for the Jews require a sign" (see 1Cor.1: 22).

But do we expect to see people who are dead come forth from their grave clothes and walk among us again? NO! Such miracles were performed by our Lord so that those who were witnesses would see that which the prophets have prophesied as coming true. We see this when the Lord told his disciples to go tell John the Baptist that the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the blind see and the dead are raised (see Lk.7: 22), it is a reference to that prophesied in Is.35: 4, 5 & 6. But it is interesting to note that although the Lord Jesus mentions the dead being raised such an activity is not included in the prophesy of Isaiah. I look forward to the Lord's teaching on that verse as with most of the other scriptures. As we know that there is much that is hard to understand (see 2Pet.3: 16).

So, physical *resurrection* where people are being physically raised from the grave to walk again was, according to the Lord Jesus, prophesied to occur and did occur when He walked on the earth and during the early church. But because we have that which is perfect (the Holy Scriptures), then that which was in part, was done away (see 1Cor. 13: 10).

b) A dead person is raised up in the after life

In 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

See also 6:54, 11:24, 25 & Mk 12:23

Everyone is resurrected (raised up) from the dead to the after life. This is a physical bodily *resurrection* (see Jn.20: 25-27). And as our verse from John points out there is a *resurrection* to eternal life (for those saved, for those in Christ) and there is a *resurrection* to damnation (for the lost, for those who have never believed the gospel of Christ crucified, for those who reject the Lord Jesus as their Saviour).

Are you going to be *resurrected* to eternal life or eternal damnation?

Now we that for us who receive this teaching, we are saved by God's grace, UNLESS, we have believed in vain (1Cor.15: 2), and so we will be *resurrected* to eternal life. That is the hope of the Scriptures, in Christ Jesus (see 1Pet. 1: 3, Acts 23: 6 & 24: 15). *Resurrection* in the Scriptures is where the dead are made alive.

## 2. Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life

*In 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

In Romans 1: 4 Paul writes, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead".

Paul affirms the Lord Jesus Christ was *resurrected* from the dead, and that such *resurrection* is an expression of God's power. So when Christ said, that "I am the resurrection and the life" we should not be surprised to see that Paul makes this link between the power of God and the *resurrection* (see Romans 1: 16) where Paul declares that the gospel, is the *power of God* (see 1Cor.1: 24). And we know that the gospel of Christ crucified (the power of God) that is preached today includes the death, burial and *resurrection* of Christ see 1Cor.15: 1-4...verse 4 says, *And that he was buried and that he rose again according to the scriptures* (see also Rom.10: 9). Amen! Hence the resurrected Lord IS the power of God (see Rom.1: 4).

Why would Jesus say that He is the *resurrection* and the life?

Perhaps because He is the defining point in history when *resurrection* took place, as the word is not used prior to the New Testament and when Jesus Himself was raised, the just (who were in their graves) were resurrected at the same time (see Matt.27: 52 & 53).

Perhaps He is declaring that He is the only way to be resurrected to life, to eternal life, even though our physical body which we reside in is dead (see 1Cor.15: 35-38).

Does Mohammad say that he is the *resurrection* and the life? Don't think so!

Does any other prophet proclaim that they are the *resurrection* and the life? Don't think so!

Next time the Lord opens up an opportunity to share the gospel with a Muslim, ask him if Jesus and Mohammad are the same, that is; are they both prophets, or is one of them more than a prophet?

Yes, we know that Christ is also declared to be the Son of God and Mohammad was not the son of Allah, but perhaps ask the Muslim if Allah has ever raised anyone from the dead, or did Mohammad rise from the dead?

Let us encourage each other to sow seeds of the one who not only said, he was the *resurrection* and the life, but as we will see in our next point, He was raised from the dead.

## 3. The Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead

*Acts 2:31 We seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

See also Acts 1:22, 2: 32, 3: 26, 5: 30, 10: 40, 13: 33, 34, Rom.4: 24, 6: 4, 8: 11, 1Cor.6: 14, 15: 15, 2Cor.4: 14 & 1Pet. 1: 21.

A person faced with the truth of Holy Scripture either believes what is written or calls God a liar and so does not believe. Those same Scriptures record for us today that his body was put in a grave and when the disciples returned, his body was no longer there. Jesus taught that after 3 days he would rise from the dead (see Matt.27: 23) and so after his death the Pharisees commanded that the stone be rolled against the tomb to ensure that someone did not simply remove the body and claim it had been *resurrected* (Matt.27: 64). And the Scriptures record that there were witnesses to Him returning to earth in his *resurrected* body (see John 20: 13-18) and the Scriptures also record that the early church attested to the truth of the *resurrection* of the Lord (see Acts 1: 22).

During the traditional church festival of Easter they celebrate the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not dead like Mohammad and Buddha, He is risen, just as the angel told the woman at the tomb after His death (see Matt.28: 5-8).

The Lord Jesus Christ was prophesied to die and be raised again, it was also prophesied that others would be *resurrected* from the dead as a sign that the Messiah had arrived, as we see in Lk.7: 22 *Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and hear...the dead are raised.*

Can you explain to another soul what happened to the Lord Jesus Christ when he died?

Do you believe that God raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead and can you explain His *resurrection*?

Do you know others who do not believe the *resurrection*? Well that is covered in our next point. For now let us all be certain in our own hearts, as we are of any other doctrine in the Scriptures, that God raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

#### 4. Some doubt the resurrection.

1Cor 15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

See also Mk 12:18, 22: 23, Lk 20:27, Acts 17:32,

A Christian believes the Scriptures, they believe the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ being *resurrected* from the dead. Hence, regardless of whether your minister, your teacher or the Archbishop decides to deny the *resurrection* of Christ, you can be sure, if they believe such to be true in their hearts, then they have never believed the gospel of Christ crucified and so are NOT a Christian (as we have discovered earlier, the gospel of Christ crucified includes the *resurrection* of our Lord - 1Cor.15: 4). Those who deny the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus Christ are soldiers for Satan disguised as Christians (see 2Cor.11: 13-15).

One example of modern day scholarship/church leader who deny the *resurrection* of Christ is the late Sir Lloyd Geering (Theologian), see <http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=2734>. Another so-called Christian who denies the resurrection of Christ is the Theologian Rudolf Bultmann who "asserts that the resurrection-language of the early church was used to denote not a separate event from the crucifixion but the early disciples' faith that the crucifixion was not a tragic defeat but the divine act of salvation. Easter is thus about the arising, not of Jesus, but of the faith of the early church." Wow

When the resurrection ceases to be biblical truth and is denigrated to a "myth of the 'dying-and-rising god'" as is the case with Geering, then you can logically deny any other biblical doctrine as myth, like the virgin birth. We see this to be the case with the creation account, that much of modern scholarship assert to be a 'myth' - see Wikipedia: Genesis Creation Narrative "The Genesis creation narrative is the creation myth contained in the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis".

Then you have groups like the Mormons who believe in the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus Christ but that alone does not make them Christian.

Then you have those outside the Christian faith who, as we would expect, also deny the resurrection of Christ. See an extract written by Rabbi Yisroel Blumenthal which can be viewed at; [http://www.jewsforjudaism.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=369:resurrection&catid=72:scriptural-studies&Itemid=507](http://www.jewsforjudaism.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=369:resurrection&catid=72:scriptural-studies&Itemid=507)

"The Christian scriptures claim that their leader, one Jesus of Nazareth, was crucified by the Romans and that as a result of this he died. These authors of the Christian scriptures tell us that after Jesus' death he was sighted by some of his followers alive and well. According to these men, this miraculous event is the sign that Christianity is the true religion. Some Christians look at the alleged resurrection of Jesus as a solid foundation upon which to base their faith. These people feel that there exists solid evidence that proves that the resurrection was an actual historical event. Although this event supposedly took place many centuries ago, still these Christians feel that they can honestly be sure that Jesus really was seen alive after his death on the cross." The Rabbi concludes, "Realize, that if such an event indeed happened, the record would have to survive centuries of Catholic censorship in order to arrive here today. That is asking for the impossible. If indeed the body was brought to the attention of the public then why would his disciples still believe the resurrection story? They probably claimed that the body displayed by the authorities was not the one that belonged to their teacher. Who knows? And frankly, who cares."

As we have already noted, there were those in the early church who denied the resurrection (see 1Cor.15: 12-57), just as those who say it is mythical and those outside the church who outrightly deny the event. As we mentioned in point 3 (three), at the end of the day, like all other Christian doctrine, belief in the *resurrection* of Christ comes down

to whether or not you believe the record that we have in the Holy Scriptures (and if you do not believe the record you are telling God he is a liar - see 1Jn5: 10). If you reject the Holy Scriptures (Old and New Testament) it is understandable that you would deny the truth of the *resurrection*. And if there is no *resurrection* of the dead then Christ is not risen (see 1Cor.15: 13) and if Christ be not risen then we (who believe) are still in our sins (see 1Cor. 15: 17). Thats right, if those who believe that Christ did not bodily rise from the dead are true, then we are ALL still in our sins, and we may as well go and party hard - the Scriptures say, we of all men are MOST miserable, if Christ did not rise from the dead (see 1Cor.15: 19). But the truth of the Scriptures, is that Christ, the Son of God, was *resurrected* and became the first fruits of them that slept (see 1Cor.15: 20). *Hallelujah!*

In Paul's day there were some that said the *resurrection* had already passed (see 2Tim 2:18), which is still a denial of the truth. Today, we have seen in this teaching, there are many who claim to be Christian, or claim to be a Theologian yet deny the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let each one of us be ready to give an account, to those who doubt the truth of the *resurrection*.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again.

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