



## The Resurrection

READING FOR THIS LESSON – 1 Corinthians 15.

### The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The word “*resurrection*” means coming back to life again. It must have been the most wonderful event in the history of the world, when Jesus Christ came out of the grave after being dead for three days.

When his disciples saw him, they just couldn't believe their eyes. They thought it was a spirit, but Jesus said to them,

*“Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence”* (Luke 24:39-43).

At last, they were convinced that he was really alive again. God had given him eternal life. Later we read of Jesus saying – in Revelation 1:18,

*“I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!”*

### Jesus Christ will raise His followers

Jesus Christ taught his disciples that they, too, would be raised from the dead. Look again at Revelation 1:18, which we have just quoted in which he said,

*“I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades”* (Revelation 1:18).

If you have the key to a door, it means you are able to open it. Christ has the keys of the grave. This is a way of saying that he has power to open graves, and set free (or resurrect) those who are buried there.

God has given this power to him as we read in John 5:20-29, noticing particularly verse 21,

*“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.”*

God has given Jesus Christ the power to bring men and women back to life again.



### A hope shared by all faithful men

Men and women of God throughout the ages have died looking forward to the day when they would be raised again. We have considered such men as Abraham and David to whom God made important promises. Paul wrote that,

*“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth”* (Hebrews 11:13).

Further on in the same chapter we read again of these men, who

*"These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect" (verses 39-40).*

We see from this verse that the gift of eternal life is going to be given to all true worshippers of God – at the same time.

The early Believers also looked forward to this time. When one of their number died, they spoke of them as having "*fallen asleep*", because, just as we wake up after sleeping, so the disciple would be "*woken*" from the dead. In 1 Corinthians 15:6, Paul wrote of the 500 disciples who saw Jesus Christ after his resurrection

*"though some have fallen asleep"*

## **When will the Resurrection take place?**

Nearly 2,000 years have passed since Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. When is he going to raise those who have "*died in faith*"?

The apostle Paul answered this question for us in 1 Corinthians 15:22-23,

*"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him."*

We have seen already that Jesus Christ is coming back to set up the Kingdom of God on earth and reign as King. When he comes to do this, he will raise the dead. Those who have been faithful will be given eternal life and will enjoy the great honour of helping him to rule the earth.



In Revelation 5:9-10, we read the words of a song they will sing in that day,

*"And they sang a new song: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth".*

## **Some will be alive when Christ returns**

What of those who are still alive when Jesus Christ comes back? Matthew 25:32 records that when Jesus comes,

*"All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."*

In 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, Paul tells us a little more about this. He wrote,

*"We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words."*



The dead will be raised, and the living will be gathered together, and will appear before the Lord Jesus Christ. Before he gives them eternal life, there must be a judgment – but you will learn more about that in your next lesson.

Carefully read again 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. Here the apostle writes of the time when the faithful believers will be given that great gift of eternal life, or – as he calls it here – immortality.

*"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.."*

As we look forward to that time, the apostle Paul tells us

*"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58)*

### **Some points to remember**

1. God has given Jesus Christ the power to raise the dead.
2. He will do this when he comes back to the earth again.
3. At the same time, he will gather together those "in Christ" who are still living when he comes.
4. He will give eternal life to those who have been faithful, and they will live and reign with him on the earth.