

## THE RESURRECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 15:1-23.

Intro: The doctrine of actual, physical resurrection is a doctrine that runs through the Bible -- in the OT as well as in the NT. No one can rightfully claim to believe the Bible who does not believe in bodily resurrection.

We have it in the OT. We have it in the NT. There have been resurrections in the past; there will be more -- many, many more -- in the future.

But all of the Biblical teaching about resurrection focuses on one resurrection which is the most important of all: THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead -- a physical, bodily resurrection -- is one of the fundamental doctrines of all of Scripture. In fact, it is so fundamental that, if Christ were not raised from the dead, we have nothing at all to preach!

I have taken as my subject this morning: THE RESURRECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE. I cannot, of course, deal exhaustively with any of them. But I want to survey them briefly, and then concentrate on one in particular.

As I have said, the most important of all is the resurrection of Christ.

But there were those who were raised from the dead before He was, and there are an amazing number of resurrections yet to come.

But the place where I want to put the emphasis this morning is upon the relationship between physical resurrection and the spiritual resurrection that takes place whenever God brings a person to life in Christ!

Let us begin with:

### I. THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

I can only deal with this in part this morning. Let me call your attention to three things:

#### A. The Bible deals with it as an historical fact.

This is the final climactic historical fact in all four of the Gospels! The preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles in the Book of Acts can be interpreted in no other way. Note our reading in 1 Cor. 15:3, 4. It is put along side of the death of Christ -- and this is

characteristic of the way it is handled throughout the NT.

B. The importance of Christ's resurrection.

I have already touched on this. We had this also in our Scripture reading -- especially in verses 12-19!

If Jesus Christ were not raised from the dead, we have nothing to preach. We should not be here. Central Bible Church and every other true New Testament Church should close its doors forever. There is no Gospel without the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, it is of the greatest possible importance.

C. The meaning of Christ's resurrection.

A series of messages could be preached on this subject.

For this morning let me just mention briefly with seeking to be exhaustive in any of them three important truths which grow out of the resurrection of Christ:

1. The resurrection is one of the greatest proofs of Christ's Deity. Cf. Rom. 1:3, 4.
2. It is evidence given to us that Christ's work was accepted by the Father. Cf. Rom. 4:24, 25; Heb. 1:1-3.
3. And I am stepping ahead of myself a little here, but -- It gives us both the guarantee and the pattern of our resurrection. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Phil. 3:20, 21; John 14:19.

Note: If you want to strengthen your faith, spend much time reading about the resurrection of Christ, and meditating on it.

Now let us turn from the resurrection of Christ for a few moments to look at other resurrections in the Bible -- both OT and NT.

II. PEOPLE WHOSE RESURRECTIONS ARE RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE -- OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT.

A. In the Old Testament:

1. Samuel (1 Sam. 28:3-20).
2. Elijah raised the widow's son in 1 Kings 17:17-24.
3. Elisha raised the Shunamite's son in 1 Kings 4:18-37.

4. The dead man who was raised when his body touched the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13:20, 21).

B. In the New Testament:

1. In the ministry of Christ -- four resurrections:
  - a. The widow's son (Luke 7:11-18).
  - b. Jairus' daughter -- recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 9:18, 19, 23-26; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56).
  - c. Lazarus (John 11:1-44). I want to come back to this before I finish my message.
  - d. Many raised when Christ died (Matt. 27:50-53).
2. In the book of Acts:
  - a. Possibly the Apostle Paul (Acts 14:19, 20; cf. 2 Cor. 12:1-10).
  - b. Eutychus (Acts 20:6-12).

Note: There undoubtedly were others, even some raised by the Apostles during the ministry of Christ, but these are the ones recorded.

These, too, were confirmations of Christ's Deity, especially those raised from the dead by Him!

And then there are two resurrections yet to come -- one which is filled with the greatest possible comfort; the other which should strike the hearts of all who are not Christians with the greatest terror.

III. THE FUTURE RESURRECTIONS:

A. The resurrection of those who are saved.

Every believer who has ever died is going to be raised, raised with his physical body glorified, raised never to die again.

This is a part of our hope. No all will be raised at the same time -- some at the rapture, some at the second coming, and millennial saints later -- but all will be raised. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 20:4, 5.

B. The resurrection of those who are not saved.

Daniel wrote long ago, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

Note the Lord's words in John 5:28, 29, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 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 Rev. 20:11-15.

And this brings me to my last point this morning -- another resurrection, not physical, but spiritual -- a resurrection that takes place now, whenever people are saved -- BECAUSE SALVATION IS PICTURED AND DESCRIBED IN SCRIPTURE AS A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD -- BECAUSE THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT IT IS.

So listen carefully as I speak about . . .

#### IV. THE RESURRECTION TO LIFE IN CHRIST -- WHICH IS SALVATION.

First let me give you the teaching, and then illustrate the the teaching from the resurrection of Lazarus.

You will never understand what it means to be a Christian until you see that it is a resurrection from spiritual death. This takes it out of the realm of a mere reformation, and shows it to be the miraculous work that it is. In fact, just as a physical resurrection is the greatest of all physical miracles, so salvation is the greatest work that the Lord does in the human heart.

- A. The teaching: Eph. 2:1-7. See also Col. 2:10-13; 3:1. The first passage really applies more to the Gospel.
- B. The illustration of the teaching -- in the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1-46).

Are you concerned about your soul? Would you like to know the Lord? Do you want to be saved? Then listen to what I am about to tell you from the story of Lazarus' resurrection. All you need to know is right here.

1. It is apparent that Lazarus could not do anything to raise himself. He was dead -- he could not move, do, hear, see. What a picture of people without Christ!
2. It is apparent that Martha and Mary could not do anything for their brother.

3. It is also that there was only One Who could help -- and no one else.

Read what Martha said in vv. 21, 22.

4. It is most encouraging to see that the Lord Jesus came.

He delayed, it is true, but only until it was apparent to all that He was their only hope! But He did come.

5. The Lord Jesus spoke to Lazarus while he was still dead: "Lazarus, come forth" (v. 43).

Salvation comes through the Word of God -- not just as we may use it, but as the Lord uses it. It is a living Word. Cf. Heb. 4:12. It will not return empty to Him. Cf. Isa. 55:11. If a person is to be born again, raised spiritually to life, it is always and only through the Word, spoken by the Lord.

6. Lazarus came -- but he had to have life before he could come.

People always come when the Lord calls. They do not always come when I call them.

Do you remember what we have been learning from the Lord Jesus in John's Gospel? In John 6:44 the Lord said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . ." He did not say simply that man will not come, but that he cannot come.

But He (the Lord) also said in John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

How beautifully all of this is illustrated in the resurrection of Lazarus! He could not come, but the Lord called him, and he arose, and came! This is exactly what happens when we are saved.

One final word about Lazarus.

7. Note what the Lord told Mary and Martha and the others who were there to do: "Loose him, and let him go" (v. 44).

This is the ministry of the Church. People are

bound in the grave clothes of sin and death when they are raised to life in Christ, and they need help in getting the grave clothes off so they can walk!

BUT IT IS ONLY CHRIST WHO CAN GIVE THEM LIFE!

Concl: This is one picture from the Word of God to show us what it means to be saved. It is a resurrection from the dead -- not a human work, but a work of God.

When the Lord was speaking to Martha about Lazarus, He spoke the words which you will find in John 11:25, 26. Listen to them as I close. (Read.)

May I ask you this morning, "Believest thou this?" The Lord may be calling you just as clearly as He called Lazarus out of the tomb. Hear and believe! Here and come! There is salvation to be found only in Him. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Long ago the Lord commissioned His servants in Ezekiel's day to proclaim to the world,

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"