

## Study 0026

### Scripture Text: Hebrews 6:2c; 1 Corinthians 15:12-54

The resurrection of the dead has always been, and still is, a major issue of debate. Indeed, in Jesus' day, there were those who did not believe in resurrection—the Sadducees and their followers. And when Jesus resurrected from death, even His disciples found it hard to believe the report of those who had seen Him alive. In spite of the prophecies in scriptures, and what Jesus spoke to His disciples about His resurrection, still, some of them initially found it hard to believe that Jesus had indeed resurrected!

For the believer in Christ, the resurrection of the dead is indeed a foundational aspect of the Christian faith. It is a matter that the believer in Christ should never be in doubt about. Any doubt about the resurrection of the dead is an invitation to the enemy of our souls to lead us away from eternal life into eternal damnation—God forbid! To ensure that our faith in the resurrection of the dead is not derailed therefore, we intend through this study, to put to rest once and for all, every doubt and misconception about resurrection of the dead. Hence, we want to satisfactorily answer the question, “Do the dead indeed resurrect?”

The word 'resurrection' should not be confused with 'resuscitation' or 'revival'. Resuscitation is the waking up or bringing back to life, someone who has fainted or collapsed, but who has not died. Revival on the other hand, is awaking someone who is asleep in a physical sense or reinvigorating/re-energizing someone who used to be active, but has become inactive, so that he can again be active. In contrast to both resuscitation and revival, resurrection is the raising of the dead back to life! Resurrection is clearly about bringing back to life what has died! Many people have no problem believing in revival and even resuscitation; however, when it comes to the matter of resurrection they have many questions. In the Old Testament, there were instances where the dead were resurrected. It would appear that some might have assumed these Old Testament resurrection to be resuscitation, otherwise, the issue of whether or not resurrection is possible would not have arisen among the Sadducees and their followers (**1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:8-37; 13:20-21**). During the earthly ministry of the Lord (**Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 7:11-17**), and in the ministry of the apostles (**Acts 9:36-41; 20:7-12**) there were recorded cases of resurrection. Again, many people may have erroneously assumed these to be resuscitation, but nothing can be further from the truth!

From our second scripture text, we see what can be referred to as, “*The Theology of Resurrection*”. The following assertions are inferred from the verses of this text:

- (a) Resurrection is not a myth, but a reality.
- (b) The resurrection of Jesus Christ is evidence of the truth about resurrection (**v. 12-19, 20, 23**).
- (c) If Jesus did not resurrect, then we who are believers in Christ have believed a lie; and have put our hope and faith on falsehood—but indeed, we know that we have a hope that is not faulty; neither can it fail, because of the resurrection of Jesus (**v. 12-19**).
- (d) All who die in Christ (fall asleep in a spiritual sense) will be resurrected (**v. 20, 23**).
- (e) All who die apart from Christ will also be resurrected, but this will be at a later time (**v. 24**).

- (f) If we refuse to believe the resurrection, we will live recklessly rather than righteously (v. **32b, 34**).
- (g) When those who die in Christ will be resurrected (v. **35-53**), it will:
- i) Not be with the same body, but with new bodies; for the old body is sown:
    - *In corruption, but raised incorruptible;*
    - *In dishonour, but raised in glory;*
    - *In weakness, but raised in power;*
    - *A natural body, but raised a spiritual one;*
    - *Earthly (that is dust), but raised heavenly (that is Christ)*
  - ii) Take place in the twinkling of an eye!

In response to a question put forth by the Sadducees to Jesus (**Matthew 22:23-33**), on the matter of resurrection, He asserted that those who say that there is no resurrection are ignorant of the scriptures and the power of God. He then went on to say that at the resurrection, there is no gender; neither is there marrying/marriage. Also, resurrection raises a person out of death into eternal living, but not necessarily with God! Those who lived for Christ while on earth live eternally with God, while those who lived for themselves (apart from Christ) live eternally under the punishment of God.

Resurrection of the dead is of two kinds; (a) temporary resurrection; and, (b) permanent resurrection.

**Temporary resurrection** is what happens when a person who has died is brought back to life through the prayers of the saints. It is temporary because the person so resurrected will eventually die, after which permanent resurrection can take place. There are two types of temporary resurrection: physical (the raising up of someone who has died physically) and spiritual (the raising up of someone who is spiritually dead). The following scriptures earlier given are examples of physical resurrection: **1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:8-37; 13:20-21; Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 7:11-17**; so also is the resurrection of Lazarus (**John 11:1-45**). Spiritual resurrection is what takes place when a person is born again. The spirit of a man who is not born again is dead, but it comes alive (is quickened) when the individual receives Jesus Christ into his life (**Ephesians 2:1-6**); this is spiritual resurrection. Every individual who is born again experiences this; for before his new birth, he did things which were repulsive, but they meant nothing to him as he was dead. In much the same way as a corpse is devoid of feeling and understanding; a man who is spiritually dead is devoid of spiritual feeling and lacks understanding of spiritual things. This is why those who are not born again can engage in degrading and despicable acts and not feel that they are doing anything wrong. Indeed that is why they are referred to as 'sinners'; people who live habitually in sin (**Ephesians 4:17-19**)! But the moment a sinner becomes born again, he is resurrected spiritually and becomes alive to the things around him, puts off the sinful man, detests sin, and is not able to knowingly commit sin (**1 John 3:4-10**). When a person experiences spiritual resurrection, he becomes a new man (**2 Corinthians 5:17**); manifests a new life (**Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12**); exhibits new attitudes (**Ephesians 4:11, 20-32**); obeys a new Master—Jesus Christ (**Romans 6:11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:15**); and, embraces a new purpose in life (**Colossians 3:1-4**).

We shall conclude in our next study, as we look at permanent resurrection.

## **EXERCISE**

Please answer true or false to the statements below.

1. Resurrection, resuscitation and revival are words which mean the same thing, and can be interchangeably used.
2. Resurrection is always about raising those who have died back to life.
3. Resurrection always includes the body, as well as the soul and the spirit.
4. Two kinds of resurrection are temporary and spiritual resurrections.
5. Spiritual resurrection takes place when the spirit of a man is raised up from death.
6. A person who has experienced temporary resurrection may not have to experience permanent resurrection.
7. Those who question or doubt resurrection may in fact know the scriptures.
8. One reason why people find it difficult to accept that resurrection is possible is because they do not know the power of God.
9. Refusing to accept the doctrine of resurrection will make a man to live recklessly.
10. After the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, the matter of physical resurrection ceased.
11. Resurrection only took place in the New Testament.
12. Spiritual resurrection is about becoming a new man, with new attitudes, a new purpose, and a new master (you, instead of the devil).