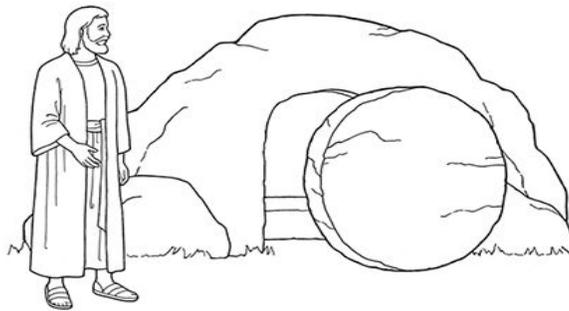


Resurrection and Lordship of Christ



Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 1 Class Overview and Goals

Introduction to the Study

Among other things, this study is about our destiny. Though we rarely think in these terms, almost all of our existence will occur after we die. That destiny, the reality of the life we will have after we die, deserves our time and attention. Our hope of resurrection and eternal life is dependent on the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, but it is also linked to the resurrection and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection, and our expected response form the essential message of the gospel, and we find them frequently connected in the New Testament. A few examples:

- In the first public proclamation of Christ after his death (Acts 2:23-24), Peter declares ²³ *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*
- Paul speaks of the things of first importance (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) as being – *that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures*
- In Romans 6:5, he says: *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*
- New Testament churches gathered as a whole to remember Christ in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:26) as both the one who died for us and the resurrected one who will return - ²⁶ *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*
- Both are detailed in the great blessings listed in Ephesians 1 ⁷ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace and the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead*

For the Christians who lived during the period of the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus had two profound implications – one immediate and one in the future. The immediate implication was his resurrection declared Jesus to be not only the Messiah, but the Lord. By the use of Lord, they were affirming they understood him to be God. Of course, they spoke of God the Father as being distinct from God the Son, but this meant for the Jewish Christians, their entire viewpoint of God had radically changed to one that recognized the triune nature of God (Father, Son, along with the Holy Spirit). In the

earliest NT writings this is their belief, and no other explanation can be given for such a profound change except for their confidence in the reality that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

The future implication was the resurrection of Jesus stood as the foundation upon which they could have assurance of their own eventual resurrection, that they could be confident of eternal life. It was the basis for their hope and the faith that sustained them through opposition and persecution. As we examine the many passages of the NT concerning the resurrection of Christ, we will see the importance of both of these implications for our own walk with God. In our next lesson, we will elaborate on some other themes connected with resurrection, but these two alone should invigorate and encourage us as we embark on this 13-lesson study.

Overview of the Study

Many studies focused on the resurrection of Christ are intended to be studies of evidence – demonstrating the resurrection of Jesus indeed occurred. For that reason, they often focus on the Gospel accounts – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – and what the eyewitnesses to the resurrection saw. This study is more of a textual study, recognizing the discussion of the resurrection (Christ and ours) is found in virtually every New Testament book with the possible exceptions of Philemon and II and III John. One benefit of the class will be our exposure to such a wide variety of books. At the same time, we cannot help but be impressed along the way at the overwhelming evidence for the reality of the resurrection; not just in the eyewitness accounts, but also in the way in which the faith of Christians differed from the beginning of Christianity from anything that was believed before.

Our overall approach in this study can be seen in the list of lessons summarized below. In this lesson and the two to follow, we will recognize the breadth of teaching in the Bible including the way in which the New Testament teaching is connected to, yet different from, the Old Testament picture of resurrection. Lessons 4 through 10 are the heart of the study, and we will go through many texts on the resurrection developing five major themes. But as with all Bible study, the key is whether we are changed by the Word God has revealed to us. The last three lessons will draw some important and practical lessons for each one of us.

Please give yourself fully to a careful consideration and study of each one.

Lessons	Date	Content
Lessons 1-3	<i>The Importance and Scope of Resurrection</i>	
Lesson 1	January 5, 2020	Class Overview and Goals
Lesson 2	January 8, 2020	Survey of Biblical Teaching on Resurrection
Lesson 3	January 12, 2020	Eternal Life and Resurrection in the Old Testament
Lessons 4-10	<i>Resurrection in the New Testament</i>	
Lesson 4	January 15, 2020	Paul and the Resurrection – Minor Texts Part 1
Lesson 5	January 19, 2020	Paul and the Resurrection – Minor Texts Part 2
Lesson 6	January 22, 2020	Resurrection in Hebrews and the Epistles of Peter and John
Lesson 7	January 26, 2020	Gospel Accounts of Resurrection – Part 1
Lesson 8	January 29, 2020	Gospel Accounts of Resurrection – Part 2
Lesson 9	February 2, 2020	Paul and the Resurrection – Major Texts Part 1
Lesson 10	February 5, 2020	Paul and the Resurrection – Major Texts Part 2
Lessons 11 - 13	<i>The Implication of Christ’s Resurrection</i>	

Lesson 11	February 9, 2020	Implication of Christ's Resurrection – He is Lord and God
Lesson 12	February 12, 2020	Implication of Christ's Resurrection – We Have Hope
Lesson 13	February 16, 2020	Review and Challenge

Class Goals

We may agree as an entire class to set some additional goals, once we are fully underway in our study but we will start with these in mind:

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Preparation Exercises

1. Select and read one of the four Gospel accounts of the resurrection. Note the reaction of the eyewitnesses and any actions taken by Jesus.
2. Look for and identify other passages where the crucifixion of Christ and his resurrection are discussed together.

Thought Questions

1. How will a deeper faith in the resurrection change the way in which you live your life? How might it change the way you speak to others?
2. What do you desire to know about your eventual resurrection and eternal life?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 2 **Survey of Biblical Teaching on the Resurrection**

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Resurrection in the New Testament

The Old Testament contains frequent references to life beyond death, but in comparison to the New Testament the references are far fewer in number and lack the same degree of clarity. In lesson 3, we will examine the richness of those Old Testament scriptures.

On the other hand, we find the reality of the resurrection and eternal life discussed everywhere in the New Testament. There are the well-known eyewitness accounts in the Gospels of the apostles and others seeing Jesus after he was resurrected, but you may be surprised at the frequency of references throughout the rest of the New Testament. This is not a comprehensive list but will give you an idea of the scope of the content:

- Acts sermons and events
 - Appearance after death – Acts 1:1-11
 - Sermons of Peter and John – Acts 2:24-36, 3:26, 4:2, 5:30-32, Acts 10:40
 - Vision of Stephen – Acts 7:55-56
 - Paul's conversion – Acts 9:4-6, 22:6-8, 26:12-15
 - Paul's Sermons – Acts 13:30-38, 17:30-32;
 - Paul's defenses – Acts 23:6, 24:14-15, 26:6-9, 22-23
- Letters of Paul
 - I Thess. 1:9-10; I Thess. 4:13 – 5:11
 - II Thess. 1:7-10
 - Philippians 2:6-11; 3:10-11; 3:20-21
 - Galatians 1:1, 12-16
 - Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:9-10
 - Colossians 2:13-14; 3:1-4
 - I Timothy 3:16
 - II Timothy 1:10; 2:8-12; 2:17-18
 - Romans 1:3-4, Romans 6; Romans 8:10-11

- I Corinthians 15:1-58
- II Corinthians 1:8-11; 4:13 – 5:10
- Other Books
 - Hebrews 2:5, 14-18; 5:7-9; 6:2; 7:23-25; 11:17-19, 35
 - James 5:15
 - I Peter 1:3-4; 3:21-22; 5:1, 10
 - II Peter 3:13
 - I John 2:28 – 3:3
 - Jude 21
 - Revelation 1:5, 17-18; 2:8-11; 20:11-15; 21:3-9

Five Repeated Themes

Despite the quantity of passages on resurrection, we have identified five primary themes. The study and discussion of these themes will constitute the heart of the class. The five themes are:

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality.
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later.
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life.

A deep discussion of these themes is not needed in this lesson; but a brief explanation of each should be helpful in laying a foundation. The scriptures teach Jesus was resurrected in a physical, bodily form. He could be touched, and he could act on the physical world. Yet, his resurrected body was different than the body he had before death. Surprisingly, the resurrection of Jesus was a singular event, separate from the resurrection of all other men. Even the most ardent believers in resurrection had no concept of their Messiah being raised first with his followers to wait for a later resurrection. I Corinthians 15:23 speaks of Christ as the first fruits with the rest of us to be raised at the end. That resurrection, we are assured, will be a bodily resurrection like that of Christ's (Philippians 3:20-21).

Consistently connected with the return of Christ and the assurance of our resurrection is the ultimate judgment of all mankind. II Corinthians 5:10 is a prime example, where following a lengthy discussion of resurrection and eternal life, Paul says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Our emphasis in this class will be on the eternal life promised to Christ's believers, but the subject cannot be separated from the eternal condemnation that awaits those who reject Christ (I Thessalonians 1:10).

The fourth theme speaks to the immediate change in the belief and language of the first followers of Christ subsequent to his witnessed resurrection. They spoke of him as Lord in language used exclusively for God. They recognized him as God, even as they spoke of God the Father. A profound understanding of the Triune Nature of God is apparent from the beginning and it is connected to the resurrection of Jesus. It's in the words of Thomas as he sees the crucified Jesus alive (John 20:28), but it's also the dominant description, along with Christ, of Jesus throughout the New Testament.

Lastly, while not in any way diminishing the reality of a future bodily resurrection, the picture of resurrection – of new life – is used repeatedly in the New Testament to describe our conversion and

transformation as redeemed sinners. Romans 6 portrays our conversion in baptism as a death and a resurrection, with an expectation we will walk in newness of life thereafter.

Preparation Questions

1. Read either I Corinthians 15:1-58 or II Corinthians 4:13 – 5:10. Make notes of any confusing phrases.
2. Read the following passages. For each one note which theme or themes is being emphasized in the passage:
 - a. Romans 1:1-4
 - b. Colossians 2:13-14, 3:1-4
 - c. I Thessalonians 4:13-18
 - d. Philippians 3:20-21
 - e. Luke 24:36-43
 - f. John 20:26-28
 - g. I Peter 4:5
 - h. II Corinthians 5:4-10

Thought Questions

1. Compare the goals of the class to the five themes. For each goal, list at least one theme that will help us accomplish this goal.
2. Do you have other goals you hope to see accomplished in this class?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 3

Eternal Life and the Resurrection in the Old Testament

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Life After Death in the Old Testament

In the previous lesson, we noted a significant contrast between the discussion of eternal life in the Old Testament and its discussion in the New. The most obvious difference is the quantity of passages; in the OT there are relatively few that even contemplate life beyond the grave, while this is a dominant and ubiquitous theme of the NT. The OT references also lack the clarity of the passages of the NT. None of this should be surprising. The OT writers focused their hope on the nation of Israel and the promised land rather than the destiny of individuals after death. Death is often portrayed for what it is – a one-way journey in which once death occurs, the dead cannot return to the place of the living (II Samuel 12:22-23, Job 7:7-10, Psalms 39:12-13; 49:19). For a book such as Ecclesiastes, with its study centered on the “life under the sun”, i.e. life before death, it’s not surprising to find such references (Ecclesiastes 2:18-23). What does ultimately happen to the dead is often not under consideration at all.

Nevertheless, the OT does not contend there is no life beyond the grave. To the contrary, there are elements of our themes to be found throughout. In particular, there is agreement that God will execute a judgment after death (connected to our third theme). There are numerous passages speaking to life beyond death, even the power of God to raise men and women in new bodies (the first theme). And resurrection is used as an imagery, not for the individual’s changed life as in the NT (our fifth theme), but as metaphor for the restoration of God’s nation from its exile and destruction.

Key Old Testament Passages

Let's look at some of the more important scriptures from the Old Testament. They are organized in four groups below. The first group corresponds to our Theme 3 on Judgment, the second and third groups relate to our Theme 1, and the last group is similar to Theme 5. Many of these passages could have been included in multiple groups as they emphasize more than one aspect of life after death.

1. Those that speak of judgment beyond death:
 - a. Psalm 73:17-19
 - b. Ecclesiastes 3:17
 - c. Ecclesiastes 8:12-13
 - d. Ecclesiastes 11:9
 - e. Ecclesiastes 12:14

2. Those that speak to eternal life:
 - a. Enoch and Elijah
 - i. Genesis 5:24
 - ii. II Kings 2:11-12
 - b. Hope in Three Psalms
 - i. Psalms 16:8-11
 - ii. Psalm 49:14-15
 - iii. Psalm 73:23-26
 - c. Sleeping with (going to) one's ancestors
 - i. I Kings 1:21, 2:10, 11:43
 - ii. II Samuel 12:22-23 – here David expects to be with his child who died before him.
 - d. Job 33:29-30

3. Those that describe a personal resurrection:
 - a. Daniel 12:1-2
 - b. Isaiah 25:6-9 and 26:16-19
 - c. Hosea 13:14

4. Resurrection as a metaphor for restoration of the nation from exile:
 - a. Hosea 6:1-2
 - b. Ezekiel 37:1-14 – the valley of dry bones
 - i. What do the bones represent (vs. 11)?
 - ii. Where is the nation when this is written?
 - iii. What will the people receive (vs. 14)?

The Period Between the Testaments

Several hundred years passed from the time God prophesied through Malachi until the initial events recorded in the New Testament occurred. While there were no inspired writers revealing a message from God during this inter-testament period, there were numerous writers who recorded the beliefs of the Jewish people regarding life after death. There were many different beliefs, and that's evident in the New Testament account of the conflict between the Sadducees who denied resurrection and the Pharisees who affirmed it. But it appears overall a majority view prevailed centered around future

judgment and resurrection (a restored life after death). Here are two examples from the writings of the period between the Testaments:

Facing death at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes - *you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.* From the brother of the first speaker – *One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him.*
II Maccabees 7:9,14

The world which is not yet awake, shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. And the earth shall give up those who are asleep in it; and the chambers shall give up the souls which have been committed to them.
4 Ezra 7:28-32

While similar to the faith Christians will declare in a future resurrection, significant differences stand out from the belief of this period and in the days before Jesus' death. The Messiah's resurrection is never viewed as a stand-alone event, separate from that of all righteous people (our second theme), and absolutely no hint is ever given of the Messiah's resurrection demonstrating his divinity. These two facts regarding Christ will come fully developed, without any prior anticipation, following his crucifixion.

Additional Note – Their Faith and Our Faith

Peter writes of our faith and understanding as superior to that of the prophets who could only prophesy and then wonder of the grace to come (I Peter 1:10-12). Even the angels, he says, longed to look into this. With the mission of Christ accomplished – and the sting of death not merely prophesied to be removed (Hosea 13:14) but vanquished in fact (I Corinthians 15:55, Hebrews 2:14-15) – it should hardly surprise us that our faith and understanding of eternal life and the resurrection far exceeds those who penned the Old Testament. God reveals such matters in his own time.

Yet we should admire the faith they had in God as a loving God who would always provide for them. By the time of Christ, the confidence of most Jews in a future resurrection was every bit as centered on their confidence in God, as it was in any revealed scriptures. Those scriptures supported such a faith but left much unsaid and much unclear. We should be grateful for the clarity and assurance we have today in the promise of life eternal. But there is much about our future state that remains unaddressed in scripture, and we too should be people of faith in the goodness and power of God, willing to live with questions and desires to know more, as we wait to see our Lord one day as he is and as we will be (I John 3:2).

Thought Questions

1. Should it disturb our faith that the Old Testament lacks a heavy emphasis on eternal life? Why or why not?
2. How might we use the Old Testament teaching that one cannot return to this life to strengthen our resolve to follow Christ?
3. What passages might Christ have used the night he appeared to his disciples and taught from the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms that he would be raised from the dead (Luke 24:44-46)?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 4 Paul and the Resurrection – Minor Texts Part 1

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. **Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later**
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Note on the Next Five Lessons

In the next five lessons we will spend time in virtually every book of the New Testament with two primary goals in mind. The first will be to familiarize ourselves with the content of those scriptures that deal with eternal life and its implications. As we noted in lesson 2, there is no small supply of such passages. For example, consider one short but profound passage – Philippians 3:20-21:

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

In just two verses, Paul declares the bodily resurrection of Christ, his Lordship and power; and foresees the time when we will be resurrected with a body like Christ's.

In each of these five classes, our second goal will be to emphasize one of the Five Themes we have identified; in this lesson the second theme - Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later – will receive special attention. Look again at Philippians 3:20-21 and you will see this theme. Christ has already been resurrected; now we wait for his return and the receiving of our new bodies.

Conversion of Paul

We begin with the conversion of Paul because his confidence in the resurrection is centered in his own interaction with the raised Lord on the road to Damascus.

- Read Acts 9:4-6, 22:6-8, 26:12-15

Saul (as Paul was previously known) was a lead persecutor of those who believed in Christ, those who believed he was raised from the dead. The story of Paul's conversion is told three times in Acts – twice in Paul's own words. From these accounts, we learn Christ spoke to Paul and identified himself (Acts 9:4-5). He explained why he appeared to Paul (Acts 26:16). Paul would speak of this as a heavenly vision (Acts 26:19) and included himself in the list of eyewitnesses to whom Christ had appeared after death (I Corinthians 15:58).

What Paul believed about Jesus from the very beginning is clear in his recorded sermons.

- Read Acts 13:30-38 – here Paul affirms the reality of Jesus' resurrection (vs. 30) by connecting it to prophecy (Psalms 16:10) and eyewitnesses (vs. 31) who remained alive to attest to it.
- Read Acts 17:30-32 – to a skeptical audience in Athens Paul contends Christ was raised from the dead.

Early Writings of Paul

The letter to the Galatians and the two letters to the church at Thessalonica are generally considered among the earliest writings of Paul. Here we read, within approximately 20 years of Jesus' death, not just Paul's beliefs but the same Gospel message being taught by all of the Apostles (Galatians 2:6-9). Paul speaks of it as a revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:12) and as a word of God not a word of man (I Thessalonians 2:13). The importance of these early writings cannot be overstated – they contain a fully developed teaching about the resurrection and lordship of Christ and about the promise of eternal life to all believers. All five of our themes can be identified. There had been no time for myths or legends about Jesus to develop slowly decades later among Christians who no longer had a connection to the eyewitnesses. Just the contrary. Paul leaves no question as to the immediate teaching that Christ was physically raised from the dead, able to teach and interact with men, that he ascended and that he is God, the Lord, the Son of God. And he does this in a time when eyewitnesses – including himself – could be challenged.

- Read Galatians 1:1, 12-16
 - Which of our themes is stressed in these verses?
 - What does Paul say happened to him in vs. 16?
 - How does Paul refer to Jesus in Galatians 1:3 and 2:20?

It's noteworthy in both letters to the Thessalonians, Paul refers to Jesus as Lord (I Thessalonians 1:1, II Thessalonians 2:1-2), a title exclusively used of God in the Old Testament (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4).

- Read I Thessalonians 1:10 – here are at least three of our themes. Christ is already raised and in heaven. We await his return (our theme of emphasis in this lesson) and there is a wrath or judgment to come.
- Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18 – here Paul reassures the Thessalonians all Christians will share in the resurrection, even those who have already died (4:15). It will be a permanent state – we will always be with the Lord. Following this section, Paul exhorts them to live lives in preparation for Christ's return.
- Read II Thessalonians 1:7-10. What themes are touched on here?

Some Later Writings of Paul

Perhaps we should have noted earlier, the reference in the lesson title to the “minor texts” of Paul. These passages are in no way inferior or of lesser importance. We only mean in comparison to I Corinthians 15:1-58 and II Corinthians 4:13 -5:10 (which we will refer to as “major texts”, these minor texts contain discussions of the resurrection that are briefer and less detailed. Nevertheless, the teaching is clear and consistent. Consider these passages in Ephesians and Philippians, written at a latter time in Paul’s service.

- Read Ephesians 1:20-23, 4:9-10
 - Find the reference to Jesus being raised from the dead.
 - Where is Jesus now that he has been raised? What title does Paul use for him in Ephesians 1:17?

We began this lesson with Philippians 3:20-21. Look again not only at this passage, but others in Philippians

- Read Philippians 2:6-11, 3:10-11,20-21
 - The emphasis in 2:6-11 is on the Son of God coming into the world in the form of a man. But where is he now? What will mankind eventually do before him?
 - 3:10-11 is another passage that teaches Christ is already raised, but there is a resurrection remaining for us. Paul yearns to attain that resurrection. He also speaks of the power of his resurrection as a driving force in his life now.
 - In 3:20-21, we already have a citizenship in heaven, but we are waiting on our savior, the Lord Jesus Christ to transform our bodies into ones like his glorious body.

Thought Questions

1. Why should we not sorrow as the unbelieving world?
2. Why is the immediate belief of the first Christians in the resurrection and divinity of Jesus difficult (impossible?) to explain unless he truly was raised from the dead?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 5

Paul and the Resurrection – Minor Texts

Part 2

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. **Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life**

Introduction

I Corinthians 15:1-58 and II Corinthians 4:13 -5:10 are two extensive texts containing detailed discussions of the resurrection. Before we examine them in lessons 9 and 10, we are reviewing the many briefer and less detailed texts found throughout the New Testament. This is the second lesson focused on the writings of Paul. Once more, though we have titled them “minor texts” we will find a rich trove of information on eternal life. In this lesson, we will consider what Paul says in Colossians, Romans, I and II Timothy, and passages in I and II Corinthians other than the two major texts noted.

Theme Emphasized – Resurrection as a Metaphor

We have to exercise caution with the theme we will emphasize in this lesson – our fifth theme – the use of resurrection in the New Testament as a metaphor for our new lives in Christ. The caution is needed, because some skeptics claim the only thing meant by resurrection is its symbolic use to describe a renewed spiritual life in this world. As we have already begun to see, and will continue to a fuller extent in our study, the resurrection of Christ is consistently presented as a true physical reality, an event that actually occurred in real time and space. Our future resurrection is also conveyed as an assured physical event.

Yet, at the same time, the use of resurrection as an image is ideal for teaching important lessons. The reality of Christ’s resurrection (and his sacrificial death) necessitates a profound change in the lives of those who would follow him. That change is aptly expressed in terms of life and death. Consider this passage from Ephesians not included in the previous lesson:

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins . . . ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:1, 4-6)

In being saved from our sins, we have been rescued from death; we are raised – resurrected – and allowed to sit in fellowship with the resurrected Christ. But we are then obligated to live as new men, new lives of righteousness and holiness distinctive from our former corrupt lives (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Paul and the Colossians

Paul did not convert the Colossians, but he rejoiced at their acceptance of the same gospel and their faith and hope. The gospel message always affirms the resurrection:

- Colossians 1:18 – Christ is described as the firstborn from the dead
 - Which of our themes is being taught here?
- Colossians 2:12-14, 3:1-4 – The language is the same as Ephesians 2 – we were dead but are now made alive together with Christ (2:13). An additional image of death and resurrection is found in 2:12, which will be expanded in Romans 6. He speaks of baptism as a burial from which we are raised with Christ. Baptism is the moment of our conversion, our spiritual resurrection. Such language makes it hard to deny the essential nature of baptism in our salvation. But once more, in Colossians 3, Paul stresses the need to live as one raised from the dead – *you have been raised with Christ* (vs. 1), *you have died* (vs. 3) – now you must put on a new self (vs. 10 ff).

Paul and the Romans

These important passages in Romans touch on several of our themes, but the most extensive discussion uses resurrection as a metaphor for our conversion and new life.

- Romans 1:3-4 – this is a powerful statement of our fourth theme – Paul says *Jesus was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord*. Because of the reality of his resurrection, Christ should be seen as the Lord, the Son of God.
- Romans 6:1-14 – note here perhaps the clearest use of resurrection as a metaphor. Like Colossians 2:12, it starts with conversion – baptism as a burial ⁴*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life*.
 - What should be our new viewpoint (vs. 11)?
 - What are we no longer to do (vs. 12)? Why (vs.13)?
 - Could vs. 5 be a reference to our future bodily resurrection?
- Romans 8:10-11 – this is another use of resurrected life as a metaphor for how we should live now.
 - What is clearly said twice about Jesus in vs. 11? Which of our themes is this?
 - How has God given life to our mortal bodies?

Paul and Timothy

There are relatively few passages addressing resurrection in Paul's letters to Timothy, but they are consistent with Paul's other letters.

- I Timothy 3:16 – a reference to the ascension of Christ following his death and resurrection
- II Timothy 1:10 – credits Christ with abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light
- II Timothy 2:8-12, 17-18 – the most distinctive statement here is that false teachers are saying the resurrection has already happened (vs. 18)
 - Which of our themes can you identify in vs. 8-12?

Paul and the Corinthians

We will have much more to learn from both of these letters in subsequent lessons, but note here the passages other than the two major ones:

- I Corinthians 9:25 – we are working for an imperishable goal. This is a hint of the deeper discussion in I Corinthians 15:42.
- I Corinthians 11:26 – As is often the case, the death of Christ is linked with his resurrection. In our remembering Christ during the Lord's Supper, we are proclaiming his death until he comes. Obviously his death was not his end.
- II Cor. 1:8-11 – Paul speaks of the comfort he has received of God, having come to rely on the God who raises the dead. The ability of God to do this in the future reassures Paul of God's ability to rescue us now.
- II Cor. 13:3-4 – Christ lives by the power of God; we will live with him by the power of God
 - Which themes do you see in this passage?

Thought Questions

1. What changes need to be made in your life in order to live as someone already raised with Christ?
2. How is the metaphor of a spiritual resurrected life after conversion made more powerful given it is based on a real physical resurrection? Would we be as motivated to live changed lives if there were no actual resurrection?
3. Based on the passages we studied in this lesson, what would someone lose out on if they were never baptized?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 6

Resurrection in Hebrews and the Epistles of Peter and John

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. **Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.**
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

We now turn our attention to writers of the New Testament other than Paul. They also have much to say about the resurrection and lordship of Christ, and about our future hope of resurrected, eternal life. Their teaching is entirely consistent with what we have learned from Paul, and we should expect that to be true for they were teaching the same Gospel. The themes we saw in Paul's letters and sermons will be repeated in Hebrews and the writings of Peter and John. In this lesson we will put additional emphasis on the Judgment that will occur when Christ returns, and we are resurrected.

Judgment is a frequent topic in the material of this lesson, especially in the letters of Peter and in Revelation, but we have already seen it emphasized by Paul in his various discussions of the return of Christ. Paul, for example, in I Thessalonians 5:2-11 says the return of Christ will be like a thief in the night in which destruction will fall on the unprepared (vs. 3), but salvation from wrath will be the end for those who follow Christ, those who might live with him (vs. 9-10, cf. I Thessalonians 1:18). In the next lesson we will see Jesus had much to say on this topic as well. One instance was in John 5:28-29: *²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.*

Resurrection in Hebrews

There is no place where the Hebrew writer takes up the subject of resurrection in an extended manner, but he has much to say about a variety of aspects of it. The letter begins with the declaration that Christ is alive and seated at the right hand of God (1:3, cf. Ephesians 1:20), and all through the epistle Jesus is

presented as acting now – after his death – on behalf of his brethren, as a brother, as a merciful and sympathetic high priest, as the perfecter of our faith. His resurrection is plainly assumed throughout.

- Hebrews 2:14 – here Jesus is said to have destroyed the power of death
- Hebrews 6:2 – resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are included in the list of elementary (foundational) doctrines.
 - What two themes are part of this verse?
- Hebrews 7:16, 21, 24 – Christ became a priest by the power of an indestructible life (vs. 16); he is a priest forever (vs 21,24).
- Hebrews 11:17-19, 35 – remarkably, Abraham concludes God could raise Isaac from the dead even if he sacrificed him. In vs. 35 some were indeed raised though they would later die.
- Hebrews 13:20-21 – God brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.
 - What theme(s) are found here?

Peter and Resurrection

Peter speaks with the assurance of one who was an eyewitness of Jesus after his resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:34, 36-43; John 20:19-23, 21:7-23; Acts 2:32; I Corinthians 15:5). While not specifically referring to Jesus appearing to him, Peter does declare himself an eyewitness of Christ's transfiguration and majesty (II Peter 1:16-18) seeing and hearing Elijah and Moses – still alive – speak with Jesus. He was told on that occasion not to tell of it “*until the Son of Man had risen from the dead*” (Mark 9:9). Peter also appears to distinguish himself from those of his readers who had not seen Jesus (I Peter 1:8) or the subsequent glories (I Peter 1:11) in contrast to Peter who had seen both. In his two letters, it is only natural to find passages on the resurrection.

- I Peter 1:3-9 – this section speaks of us being “*born again to a living hope*”, using resurrection as a metaphor for our current lives, but also pointing to our future inheritance when Christ will be revealed. Peter says all of this is accomplished by God “*through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.*”
 - What indications are given in this section of a future judgment?
- I Peter 1:18-21 – once more Peter says God raised Christ from the dead and notes we have been ransomed by the *precious blood* of Christ.
- I Peter 3:18-22 – as was true of the two passages above, Peter discusses our rescue or salvation (think of a coming judgment) as predicated upon the death and resurrection of Christ. Baptism saves us through his resurrection. Jesus Christ who has now gone to heaven and is at the right hand of God with all power and authority.
- I Peter 4:5 – sinners must give an account to Christ who is ready judge the living and the dead. This implies a raising of all – those who belong to God and those who do not – but with different eternal consequences at stake.

- II Peter 1:11, 3:11-13 – eternal kingdom; scene of judgment
 - For what are we waiting?
 - How does it motivate us now (vs. 11-12)?

John and Resurrection

Like Peter, John was an eyewitness of Jesus raised from the dead. He was at the cross as Jesus died (John 19:26-33), but later touched him and ate with him on more than one occasion. We will look at John's Gospel of Christ's life in Lessons 7 and 8, but in that account, John says of himself "*this is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things*". John's epistles have relatively few resurrection references; we will only examine I John. But Revelation, as one writer described it, is "a book as resurrection-soaked as any in the New Testament". In particular, Revelation asserts the raising of all dead, the wicked to a second death and the faithful people of God to an eternal dwelling with him. Thus, as in many other passages in this lesson, resurrection is connected with a future judgment.

- I John 2:17 – the world will pass away, but we will abide forever
- I John 2:28 – 3:3 – John speaks of the day when Christ will appear (vs. 28), and the faithful will be confident, not shrinking in shame. This suggests a judgment of all at that time when many will and should be in shame. John also tells us, at Christ's return, we shall be like him (cf. Phil. 3:20-21).
 - What themes do you see in this portion of I John?
- I John 3:14 – we have passed from death to life (resurrection as a metaphor)
- Revelation 1:5, 7, 17-18 – How is Jesus identified in these verses? What speaks to the judgment of all?
- Revelation 2:10-11 – the promise to the church in Smyrna that the faithful until death will receive a crown of life and will not be harmed by the second death.
- Revelation 6:9-11 – the appeal of the slain Christians for a future judgment
- Revelation 20:11-15 – the dead are judged. A lake of fire, the second death, awaits the wicked
- Revelation 21:3-9 – the future of the righteous and the wicked are contrasted. A second death awaits the wicked.

We did not list every passage in Revelation concerning judgment or eternal life. What are some other passages that are not listed above?

Thought Questions

1. Is it important to be able to find the same teaching about eternal life in the other writings of the New Testament besides Paul? Why or why not?
2. How can the reality of either a future eternal life or eternal condemnation motivate us day to day to follow God?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 7

Gospel Accounts of Resurrection – Part 1

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. **Resurrection is a bodily reality**
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

In this lesson, at last, we will look at the accounts written of the actual resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all have much to say about the events follow his death. Keep in mind two of the writers were Apostles (Matthew and John) and as such were definitely eyewitnesses of his resurrection. Given Mark's presence in the city of Jerusalem, it seems likely he was as well. Luke was not, but he speaks of having received, along with others, a narrative of things delivered by eyewitnesses, and being able to write an "orderly account" providing "certainty". In other words, all four men were in a position to know the truth regarding the events of which they were to write these essential accounts.

In this lesson, naturally, our emphasis will be on the theme of the bodily reality of the resurrection. Jesus will speak to other themes in his teachings, but the story of the Sunday when Jesus arose from the dead is one centered on the reality and undeniability of his resurrection.

Statements of Jesus Regarding Resurrection

Before we examine the four narratives of Christ's resurrection, we need to spend some time reviewing what Jesus himself had to say on the subjects of judgment, resurrection and eternal life. Given he is declared to be God himself who took on the form of a man (Philippians 2:6-8), then he speaks with perfect knowledge of these matters. He said a great deal during his ministry as recorded by the four Gospel writers. This is a sampling:

- Matthew 12:40 – Christ predicts he will be raised after three days

- Matthew 17:1-12 – he is transfigured before Peter, James and John, and is visited by Moses and Elijah. Their presence is clear evidence of continued life. The three disciples are warned not to tell of this event until after Jesus is raised from the dead.
- Matthew 25:31-46 – this is a judgment scene connected to the coming again of Christ (vs. 31) in which everyone is judged. The consequences are eternal – some to eternal punishment and the righteous to eternal life (vs. 46).
- Mark 8:31-32, 9:31, 10:34 – three separate predictions of Christ that he would be killed and on the third day rise again.
- Luke 16:19-31– Lazarus and the Rich Man. Here Jesus speaks of the condition of the dead now. We will examine this passage more fully in Lesson 12.
- John 5:21-29 – he speaks of judgment (vs. 22) and promises eternal life to those who believe in him (vs. 24). He then makes this bold statement, *an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.*

What Happened on That Sunday?

All four Gospel writers tell of the Sunday when Jesus arose from the dead. There are different details provided in each of the accounts, but they do not contradict one another as some skeptics allege. Here we take the events recorded by them and place them in a likely and consistent sequence:

1. Prelude – On Friday before sunset (the beginning of the Sabbath) Jesus is buried quickly, wrapped in a clean linen shroud (Matthew 27:59) along with 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes (John 19:39), in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:42-46, Luke 24:50-54).
 - a. A great stone is rolled against the entrance of the tomb (Matthew 27:60, Mark 15:46)
 - b. Mary Magdalene and other women from Galilee see where the body was placed and made plans to return to further prepare his body (Mark 15:47, Luke 24:55-56)
 - c. The Jewish leadership requests of Pilate and is granted a guard of soldiers to watch the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66)
2. Mary Magdalene and the other women arise early on Sunday morning to go to the tomb. This is their first opportunity to do so because the Sabbath ended on Saturday at sunset, and it was too dark to return until now.
 - a. It is dark as they leave (John 20:1) and they arrive at dawn (Luke 24:1) with the spices they had prepared for his body.
 - b. They worry on the way about how the great stone will be moved in order to allow access to the body (Mark 16:3).
3. Before the women arrive, an earthquake occurs, and an angel moves the stone and sits on it (Matthew 28:2). Jesus leaves the tomb.
4. The guards are frightened and flee into Jerusalem (Matthew 28:4, 11-15)

5. The women arrive at the tomb and discover the following:
 - a. The stone has been rolled to the side and the tomb is open (Luke 24:2)
 - b. Two angels are there (Luke 24:4). One speaks and explains that Jesus has risen and invites them to look into the tomb (Matthew 28:5-6). The tomb is empty (Luke 24:3)
 - c. The women are told to go tell his disciples Jesus has risen from the dead (Matthew 28:7)
 - d. The women with fear and joy go to find the disciples and Peter (Matt. 28:8, Mark 16:7)
6. Mary Magdalene leaves before the other women, apparently as soon as she sees the tomb is open, having concluded the body was taken away. She runs to Peter and John (John 20:1-2).
7. Peter and John run to the tomb (John 20:3-10)
 - a. Peter enters the tomb and finds it empty except for the linen cloths and a face cloth that has been neatly folded.
 - b. John enters and believes.
 - c. The two return home.
8. Mary stays at the tomb weeping outside (John 20:11). She looks inside and sees two angels who ask her why she is weeping. As she turns away, Jesus appears to Mary, though at first she did not realize it was him (John 20:14-15). When he calls her by name, she knows it is the Master (John 20:16) and she clings to him (John 20:17). Mark says this was the first appearance of Jesus (Mark 16:9)
9. Jesus appears to the other women as they are headed to the disciples (Matthew 28:9). They take hold of his feet and worship him.
10. Mary reports seeing Jesus to the disciples (John 20:18), but she is not believed (Mark 16:11).
11. Later in the day, Jesus (unknown) travels with two men to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27).
12. Jesus eats with the two men and reveals himself to them and leaves (Luke 24:28-32)
13. Jesus appears to Peter (perhaps before this trip with the two men) (Luke 24:34, I Cor. 15:5)
14. The men travel back to Jerusalem and find the apostles (Luke 24:33)
15. That evening, Jesus appears to ten of the apostles and these two men (Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-23), eats with them and teaches them from the Old Testament how he was meant to die and be raised again, and speaks of them as witnesses (Luke 24:48).

Make a list of the physical activity done by Jesus that would have made it clear to the witnesses that he was alive in a bodily form.

Thought Questions

1. How can we be sure that Jesus was dead?
2. Did the disciples of Christ expect Jesus to be raised from the dead? What shows their shock?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 8 Gospel Accounts of Resurrection – Part 2

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. **The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.**
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

In the previous lesson we focused on the resurrection accounts of the first Sunday following the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. This was the day he arose from the dead and first appeared to his disciples. There were other appearances during a 40 day period (Acts 1:3) before he ascended to the Father. In this lesson we will look at those additional appearances, and once more, will emphasize one of our five themes – that the resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and divinity.

This theme will receive a much deeper examination in Lesson 11. The language used throughout the New Testament to identify Christ can be shown as that preserved only for Jehovah God in the Old Testament. But even before that more detailed study, we will see in the actions and the words of those who saw Jesus raised from the dead an early, almost instinctive, recognition of his divinity. His own statements of authority will only enhance this understanding. For example, in the previous lesson the women to whom he appeared in Matthew 28:9 took hold of his feet and worshiped him. This kind of reverential conduct is always discouraged by the recipient, even if they are an apostle, but for Jesus the Son of God, it was entirely appropriate.

The Appearance to Thomas (John 20:24-29)

During the evening of that first Sunday, Jesus appeared in the midst of the apostles and the two men who had seen him earlier in Emmaus before returning to Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-23). Thomas, one of the apostles, was not there at that appearance (John 20:24) and expressed his grave doubts as to the resurrection of Jesus, declaring his threshold of proof - *“Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will*

never believe.” On the next Sunday, Thomas is with the other apostles and Jesus appears to them and offers Thomas the opportunity to touch him as he had demanded necessary.

- What statement does Thomas make instead (vs. 28)?

As noted above, we will examine later the importance of the title Lord in seeing Jesus as divine, but here Thomas also calls him “*my God*”.

- What did Jesus say of those of would not see him risen from the dead?

The passage that follows this appearance account (John 20:30-31) sums up the purpose of John’s gospel – *that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name*. It becomes essential to see the resurrection as a profound proof that Christ is God, even as the Father is God.

The Appearance to the Seven (John 21:1-24)

The last chapter of John contains an account of Jesus appearing to seven of his apostles along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Five of the witnesses are named – Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee (James and John).

- What did Jesus do that showed he was resurrected in a bodily form?

John says when they saw Jesus, they did not need to ask who he was for they knew it was the Lord (vs. 13). According to him, this was the third time Jesus had revealed himself to the disciples after being raised from the dead. After they had eaten, a personal conversation followed between Jesus and Peter, but there is an important reference in verse 22 where Jesus refers to the time when he will come again.

- What themes can you identify in this chapter?

Final Appearances in the Gospels

Two more important appearances of Jesus are recorded in the Gospel accounts; in both Jesus speaks of the mission he is giving the apostles until he returns.

- Matthew 28:16-20 – this is often called the Great Commission. For a study on the resurrection and the Lordship of Christ, this event standouts out for several reasons
 - It is another resurrection appearance. The eleven apostles saw him (vs. 17).
 - They worshiped him (vs. 17). If he were not seen as God, this would have been entirely out of order.
 - The fact that some doubted (vs. 17) is confusing – what was it they doubted? – but the statement indicates they were skeptical observers, not naïve men who desperately wanted to believe Jesus was still alive. They needed convincing evidence and they got it.
 - Jesus claimed all authority in heaven and earth (vs. 18). This is in harmony with the will of the Father (cf. Ephesians 1:20-23), but it bolsters the belief that Jesus is divine.
 - Jesus speaks of an end of the age (vs. 20) consistent with his other statements about returning.

- Luke 24:50-53 and Acts 1:6-11 – Luke records in both his Gospel account and in Acts what took place just before Jesus ascends into heaven. Jesus leads the eleven out to Bethany (about two miles from Jerusalem). This event also is important for our study:
 - This is yet another resurrection appearance. They speak to him and hear him (Acts 1:6-8), they see him ascending until “out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).
 - They worshiped him (Luke 24:52). Once more our fourth theme reflects their belief and action from the very beginning.
 - Two angels explain Jesus “*will come in the same way you saw him go into heaven*” (Acts 1:11)
 - When he is gone, they are joyful, not grief-stricken (Luke 24:52-53). This indicates their expectation of being reunited with Christ.

Other Appearances

There were other appearances of Jesus after his death that are mentioned in the New Testament but not in the four Gospel accounts. In lesson 4, we looked at the appearance to Saul of Tarsus (Paul) on the road to Damascus. There are three accounts of that appearance in the book of Acts (chapters 9, 22 and 26). The other appearances are:

- I Corinthians 15:6 – Paul provides a list of appearances by Jesus from the dead including to a group of 500 at one time. At the time Paul wrote I Corinthians, he says most of the 500 are still alive. They could have vouched for the veracity of what he said.
- I Corinthians 15:7 – In this list, Paul also mentions an appearance to James, evidently the Lord’s brother.
- Acts 7:55-56 – As Stephen is dying from the stoning he received, he sees “*the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God*” and calls out to the Lord Jesus. Ironically, Paul is one of those who heard him call out to Jesus in this manner (Acts 7:58, 8:1). He would have been deeply disturbed by it in that moment, but later uses the same language constantly in speaking of Jesus.

Thought Questions

1. Why do we not need to personally see Jesus to know that he has risen from the dead?
2. Why is it remarkable that the early Jewish believers worshiped Jesus and called him Lord and God?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 9

Paul and the Resurrection – Major Texts Part 1 II Corinthians 4:14 – 5:10

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

This lesson and the next differ in many ways from the previous five lessons. In each of those we reviewed many passages from several New Testament books. In these two lessons, we will only look at one passage – II Corinthians 4:14 – 5:10 here and I Corinthians 15:1-58 in the next. In the previous five lessons, while noting the occurrence of many of our five themes, we stressed one particular theme in each lesson. Here we will see all five themes touched on in one significant portion of scripture.

The text of II Corinthians 4:14 – 5:10 is included below in the English Standard Version to assist our study. After you read this passage, before moving on in this lesson, take a moment and try to identify all five of our themes in the content of the passage.

¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

⁵ For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³ if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that

what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ *He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

⁶ *So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,* ⁷ *for we walk by faith, not by sight.* ⁸ *Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.* ⁹ *So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.* ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

Read some other translations to increase your familiarity with the passage.

Five Themes

This passage is in the middle of a longer section of the epistle in which Paul speaks of his ministry – its immense importance (II Cor. 2:15-16) and the intense suffering he is enduring to fulfill his calling (II Cor. 4:8-9, 6:4-10). Yet, he maintains throughout that he has not lost heart (II Cor. 4:1) including twice within the verses of this lesson (II Cor. 4:16, 5:6 - *we are always of good courage*). That he could maintain this spirit in such present trying time was a testimony to his confidence in the future. One that included resurrection and eternal life.

All five themes to some degree can be noted in the passage:

- Resurrection is a bodily reality – this theme is not as prominent in this passage as it is elsewhere, but vs. 14 immediately asserts God raised Jesus. It doesn't specify the nature of this resurrection – whether he was raised with a physical body or simply as a spirit – but the promise that we will be raised with him (vs. 14) and the indication throughout that we will have a physical body (cf. 5:1-4) makes it clear the same was true for Christ.
- Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later – This is a key point of vs. 14. Note the past tense to refer to the raising of Christ and the future tense (“will raise”) related to us. All that follows is a contrast of our current state to our future one – momentary affliction vs. eternal weight of glory, transient things vs. eternal things, earthly home vs. heavenly dwelling, home in the body vs. home with the Lord.
- Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection – 5:10 is unambiguous concerning this judgment. We all must appear in this judgment – the good and the evil.
- The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity – this is not a primary topic of Paul here, but nevertheless the language and the future actions of Christ all support his divinity. We will discuss at length in Lesson 11, the implications of using the term Lord to describe Jesus. Paul calls him Lord in 4:14 and again in 5:6, 8. The picture of Christ seated in judgment of all mankind is one that would be exclusively true of God. As the Son of God, it is only fitting Christ would serve this future role.
- Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life – there is much discussion of our present life, though generally in the sense of its burden and difficulty. But in 4:16 he speaks of our inward man *being renewed day by day*.

Nature of Our Eternal Life

We should take time to consider and rejoice in our future destiny. Paul is inviting us to look beyond our current life and examine the future destiny God has promised us.

The scene Paul describes in 4:14 is connected to his faith (cf. 4:13). He has just explained he is carrying in his body the death of Jesus (4:10), being given over to death for Jesus' sake (4:11), but with a goal in mind – that the life of Jesus would be seen in his body or mortal flesh. His suffering made a statement; it was a manifestation of his assurance that Jesus had been raised. For the Corinthians this would mean life, and he paints a picture of their future; they will be brought into the very presence of God along with the risen Jesus and with Paul. This is our future – to be in the company of God and Christ.

In 4:17, he speaks again of his suffering and terms it *“light momentary affliction”*, but once more he compares that to our future destiny. This future he says is an *“eternal weight of glory”*. Note each word is in contrast to our present life: eternal vs. momentary, weight (or substance) vs. light, and glory vs. affliction. Then he adds this future is beyond all comparison. It's the glory of our future life that makes it worth any tribulation now, and makes it better than any joy we experience in this life.

In 5:1-5, Paul addresses the weakness of our earthly body. The earthly home, the tent he mentions are images used to describe that body. It is seen as woefully inferior by comparison to our future existence. He speaks of our future bodies as being a building from God, a heavenly dwelling. This body will be eternal – not like the bodies we have now, which are temporary just as a tent is not meant to be a permanent home. The language he uses for obtaining this new body is striking. We are not looking to be without a body (*“found naked”* vs. 3, *“be unclothed”* vs. 4), but to have this promised better one (*“further clothed”*). He speaks of the time when *“what is mortal may be swallowed up by life”*. Our mortal bodies are ones destined for decay and death. Our future bodies are ones of life. They are more fitting for us. Little wonder we are said to groan in this *“tent”*, to long for the heavenly eternal body.

The scenes of resurrection we have studied describe a grand day when the Lord will return, and we all will be called forth from the dead (John 5:28-29, I Thess. 4:14-17, II Cor. 4:14) But what is the nature of our existence immediately after our personal death yet before the resurrection? II Corinthians 5:6-8 perhaps gives some insight. It speaks of our time in this life, in this body, as one of being *“away from the Lord”*. To be away from this body is to be *“at home with the Lord”*. This is similar language to that used by Paul in Philippians 1:23-24 where he spoke of the choice of remaining in the flesh or departing and being with Christ. While we are left with many questions, what we are assured of is we will be with Christ our Lord. We will return to this topic in Lesson 12.

Thought Questions

1. Though our eternal weight of glory is beyond all comparison, give thought to the joys and pleasures you have experienced in this life which serve as a foretaste of what is to come.
2. What do you find comforting in this passage?
3. List ways in which your future body will be superior to the body you have now.

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 10

Paul and the Resurrection – Major Texts Part 1 I Corinthians 15:1-58

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

We could have studied this passage in the previous lesson, especially since Paul wrote it first. But we waited because this is the longest continuous discussion of the resurrection found anywhere in scriptures and it will summarize much of what we have studied to this point.

As in the previous lesson, the full text of our study is included below in the English Standard Version. After you read this passage, before moving on in the lesson, take a moment and try to identify all five of our themes in the content of the passage.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

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

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

²⁹ Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? ³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹ I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³² What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." ³⁴ Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² 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. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ 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."

⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory?"

O death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Five Themes

As was true of the II Corinthians passage studied in the previous lesson, all five themes can be noted in I Corinthians 15:1-58, some more prominently than others. We will note them briefly:

- Resurrection is a bodily reality – this theme and the next are the primary topics of this entire chapter. Paul begins by presenting evidence that the resurrection of Jesus had occurred; providing a list of eyewitnesses to his resurrection (I Cor. 15:4-8). He addresses a number of questions that might be posed about how a body could be resurrected and what would be its nature (I Cor. 15:35-49) and finishes with a strong statement of our mortal and perishable bodies putting on immortality.
- Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later – our resurrection is being questioned by some and Paul asserts our later resurrection is as certain as that of Christ which has already happened (I Cor. 15:12-23). He makes two statements that could be rewordings of this theme – vs. 20 *“in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”* and vs. 23 *“but each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ”*.
- Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection – continuing the thought of vs. 23 that those who belong to the Lord will be raised at his coming, Paul goes on to speak of an end (vs. 24) when Christ will deliver the kingdom to God and destroy every rule, authority and power – a picture of the judgment.
- The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity – Paul speaks of God the Father (vs. 24) and later of the Son (vs. 28), but it’s the title of Lord applied to Christ which is most telling. He first uses it in vs. 30 but completes the chapter with three references in vs. 57 and 58.
- Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life – strictly speaking, Paul does not use resurrection as a metaphor in this chapter as he does in many other epistles, but he does make the same argument here that the implication of our future resurrection is a changed, transformed life now. Vs. 34 – *“wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning”*. He also makes the counterargument (vs. 32) that if we are not raised, we should live as all others do – *“let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”*.

The Certainty of Paul’s Teaching

Perhaps, the most striking feature of this chapter is the forcefulness of Paul’s arguments. How can he be so certain of many things that are beyond our comprehension? Part of the answer lies in his being an eyewitness – one to whom Christ appeared, but that would only provide limited insight into the topic of this chapter. Paul explains the basis of his understanding at the beginning of the epistle. He asserts his ability to *“impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory”* (I Cor. 2:7). This secret wisdom he says (I Cor. 2:9) is:

*“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him”*

It appears these comments were written with chapter 15 in mind where Paul tells us what God has prepared for those who love him. We have not seen the second coming of Christ; we don't know the nature of our resurrected body; we have many questions about eternal life, but Paul claims to have special knowledge of such things. He claims to know the very thoughts of God as revealed by his Spirit and to impart this knowledge in words taught by the Spirit (I Cor. 2:11-13). What does this understanding from God make clear about resurrection?

It leaves no place to question whether or not Christ was raised. The eyewitness accounts alone would suffice to conclude with assurance Jesus was resurrected, but Paul also speaks of it as being in accordance with the scriptures (vs. 4) and a matter of first importance that he had received (vs. 3). Paul was not just aware of the fact of the resurrection, but its implications as well.

Thus, he could teach with total confidence we will be raised also. This was what some had called into question claiming there was no further resurrection of the dead (vs. 12). Paul ties our resurrection inextricably to the resurrection of Christ. One cannot be true unless the other is true (vs. 13 and vs. 17), and a hope that does not include life beyond death is a meaningless, pitiable hope (vs. 18-19). He simply says "*in fact Christ has been raised from the dead*" and then asserts what must follow – all in Christ will be made alive (vs.22) and death will be destroyed (vs. 26). As our confidence grows in the fact that Christ was raised so must grow our faith in our own resurrection.

Of course, naturally we will have many questions about how this will happen, but Paul goes on to say we don't need to know the answers to such questions to be sure we will be raised. Once more he speaks with boldness and awareness of matters that only God can provide true knowledge. Paul stresses the creative power of God – in the way seed dies before producing grain (vs. 36-38), in the way God has already created different kinds of flesh and different types of bodies (vs. 39-41); even in the way God first created man (vs. 45).

While we may not know the exact nature of our future body, we know what matters most – it will be imperishable instead of perishable, a glorious body instead of one of dishonor, powerful not weak, more than a natural body it will be a spiritual body (vs. 42-44); one of immortality instead of mortal (vs. 53). He is challenging us to have courage and faith in the face of death knowing that *as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven* (vs. 49). Death is merely a necessary precursor to our future glorious change. The final words of the chapter are among the most encouraging and stirring to be found in all the scriptures.

Thought Questions

1. What additional questions do you have about your future body and eternal life that the scriptures do not answer? How does this chapter in Corinthians 15 help you deal with the lack of answers?
2. How do the arguments of Paul in this chapter support his exhortation in vs. 58 to abound in the work of the Lord and his assertion that such labor is not in vain?
3. Look again at the four class goals. How does this chapter help you in accomplishing each of these goals?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 11

Implication of Christ's Resurrection – He is Lord and God

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

This lesson stands apart from the previous ten. The emphasis is on the Lordship of Christ rather than on his resurrection. Nevertheless, it is part of the overall title of our study, and it relates directly to one of our themes – the fourth: the resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity. Passages such as Romans 1:3-4 *“his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord”*, make the connection between the resurrection and Christ's Godhood.

Yet as unexpected as Jesus rising from the dead was, the recognition by the Jewish Christians that he was God was earth shattering. It would be hard to exaggerate just how profound a change this belief was from all they had held true before. No rational explanation can be proposed for this change other than the early disciples actually saw Jesus resurrected and were made aware of his true identity. In this lesson we hope to convey a sense of the magnitude of the shift in their belief and reinforce the clearness of the New Testament message that Jesus is God.

Old Testament Viewpoint

Consider what the 2,000,000 or so Israelites heard from God at Mt. Sinai not long after being rescued from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 20:1-3). Having already witnessed the power of God pouring down plagues on the Egyptians, demonstrating his power over every element of nature (darkness, river), the insect and animal kingdom, and even life and death, they then heard him declare himself to be the only true God:

² *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

³ *"You shall have no other gods before me.*

Some 40 years later, Moses repeated the commands of God to the next generation of his people. On that occasion they were told in Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

⁴ *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

Verse 4 is the most relevant for our lesson, but vs. 5 is significant as well. Once more God – in no uncertain terms – declares himself to be the only God. Here as in Exodus 20, LORD is the translation of YHWH or Jehovah. Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one. In the coming centuries, the devotion of Israel to God would wax and wane. Often, they would be pulled into the worship of idols and false gods until finally their idolatry was broken by the captivities (Assyrian and Babylonian) with which God punished them.

By the time of Christ, the words of Deuteronomy 6:4 had taken on a special role. They were part of a daily prayer and recitation. Every adult male repeated Deuteronomy 6:4 twice a day. Even today this passage (called the Shema) remains an essential and revered prayer of the Jews. While there was much fault to find with the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders and with the morality of the people in the days of Jesus; they were united in their assurance that *The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*

New Testament Belief

Three scenes in the New Testament convey the new and deeper perspective of God held by the earliest Christians. The first is found in John 20:26-29, which we examined in Lesson 8. Eleven of the apostles were gathered on Sunday in a home in Jerusalem, 9 days after the death of Jesus. Ten of the apostles – all but Thomas – had seen Jesus raised from the dead in the same home the previous Sunday (John 20:19-23; Luke 24:36-49). They watched him eat; they listened as he explained from the Psalms and the Prophets how his death and resurrection was the fulfillment of God's revealed plan (See Lesson 7).

But none of their testimonies convinced Thomas who declared *"Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."* It's not hard imagining the other apostles repeatedly appealing to Thomas throughout the week – what they saw and what they learned. Nor is it hard to imagine how he might have spent that week in contemplation of what it would mean if Jesus was truly alive – reflecting back to what he had seen and learned in the previous three years.

When Jesus suddenly appeared among them again, Thomas grasped the unmistakable reality of his physical resurrection – without needing to touch him – and exclaimed *"My Lord and My God"*. This was not a sudden rash statement, but the conclusion of a man who had thought carefully for an entire week. But what an astonishing statement! Consider the implications as you contemplate the message of Deuteronomy 6:4. Thomas is saying that Jesus is God. This is what John, the writer of the book and an eyewitness of this scene and the rest of the account of his Gospel wants us to conclude (John 20:31) – *"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"*.

Such a message and belief would stir great anger among the Jews which would explain the violence that arose against fellow Jews who believed in Jesus. Among the leaders of this violence was Saul of Tarsus

(Paul). In the second scene in Acts 22:7-10, Saul was traveling to Damascus to do harm to the Christians there when suddenly he was surrounded by a bright light.

I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'⁸ And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

Naturally, when he heard a voice from heaven, he referred to the speaker as Lord, but even when he knows it is Jesus (obviously resurrected from the dead), he goes on referring to him as the Lord (vs. 10 - *I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me*). While Paul's belief here may not yet be fully developed, it stills as a powerful contrast to Deut. 6:4.

The last scene is in the book of Revelation. John receives a revelation from Jesus himself. Here the language describing God the Father is interchangeable with that describing Jesus Christ. Even if we conclude Revelation 1:8 is spoken by the Father (which is debatable):

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

The same is said of Jesus throughout the book – Revelation 1:17 *"I am the first and last"* 22:13 *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."* And there is this statement from Revelation 19:16 speaking of Jesus:

¹⁶*On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

Again, a great contrast with Deuteronomy 6:4. Jesus is now also seen as God, though the belief in one God has not changed, the understanding of his nature has been dramatically enhanced. There is God the Father and also Jesus Christ, God the Son. Other scriptures reveal the Holy Spirit to be God also.

Language of Lordship

In the New Testament, what can be seen clearly is the title "Lord" for Jesus is an indication of his Godhood. That he is to be viewed in the same manner as God the Father. And this language is everywhere. We noted at the beginning of our study how prevalent is the topic of the resurrection; the same can be said of the terminology ascribing Christ with deity. We will examine two important examples here and then make a briefer reference to three others.

Consider the language for God in the Old Testament. Isaiah 45:18-23 is a strong monotheistic passage. In vs. 18 God speaks of his creation of heaven and earth. Then look at vs. 21b -23:

Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me . . . For I am God, and there is no other.
²³By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness
a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear allegiance.'

We have already noted LORD is the translation of YHWH – Jehovah. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek between 200 and 300 BC, in the version known as the Septuagint, the word Kyrios

was used for LORD (YHWH). In the New Testament, this Greek word for Jehovah, kyrios, is repeatedly used to describe Jesus. Compare Isaiah 45:21b-23 to Philipians 2:9-11:

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Not only is the same language applied to Christ who is declared to be Lord (kyrios), but the same message is said to be true of him as it was God in Isaiah – every knee will bow before him.

Even more astonishing is the language Paul uses in I Corinthians 8:6. Consider once more Deuteronomy 6:4: ⁴ *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD (YHWH, kyrios) our God, the LORD (YHWH, kyrios) is one.* Paul certainly knew the Greek OT used kyrios for LORD, yet he says in I Corinthians 8:6 - ⁶ *yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord (kyrios), Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.* Do you see what he did? He split Deuteronomy 6:4 and applied part to the Father and part to Jesus Christ – in the defense of one God! Because both are God, though God is one.

Three more examples of how language used for God in the Old Testament is constantly applied to Jesus:

1. Joel 2:32 prophecies *“and it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD (YHWH, kyrios) shall be saved.”* But in Romans 10:9 Jesus is Lord (kyrios), and the quote of Joel is applied to him in Romans 10:13 *For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*
2. Psalm 34:8 *Oh, taste and see that the LORD (YHWH, kyrios) is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*

I Peter 2:3 ³ *if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

3. Isaiah 8:13 ¹³ *But the LORD (YHWH, kyrios) of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*

I Peter 3:15 *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you*

Thought Questions and Assignment

1. Which would have been more disturbing to an unbelieving Jew – the claim that the Messiah had been crucified and raised or the use of language reserved for God being applied to Jesus?
2. Assignment – over the next two weeks make a list of every reference to Christ as Lord that you come across (in sermons, public Bible reading, your daily devotion, etc.)

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 12

Implication of Christ's Resurrection – We Have Hope

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

The resurrection of Christ assures us of our eventual personal resurrection. Paul was adamant, if Christ has been raised, we will be raised (I Corinthians 15:20-23). The hope we have of living eternally with God and his Son is connected with the resurrection of Christ. Peter stresses this twice in the first chapter of I Peter.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

²⁰ He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you ²¹ who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Because our resurrection is based on such a solid foundation, it is an assured hope and a hope of a better life. The Hebrew writer spoke of the new covenant containing a better hope (Hebrews 7:19), one of a better life.

*Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a **better** life. – Hebrews 11:35*

Not surprisingly, we are expected to long for the fulfillment of that hope, to be anxious for its day to come. There is a Greek word, apekdechometha (απεκδεχομεθα), which is translated as “wait” or

“await” in most English versions of the New Testament. It simply means to expect, wait or look, and sometimes has the word eagerly added to it, though in the Greek it is just one word. There are other Greek words for wait, but this word carries the idea of being patient, while waiting with intensity – looking and wanting something. Thus, the idea of eagerness. It is found in only seven New Testament passages, but each time it is used of Christians who are eagerly waiting, it is for this hope of being resurrected and having eternal life.

- Philippians 3:20 ²⁰ *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*
- Romans 8:23-25 ²³ *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*
- I Corinthians 1:7 ⁷ *so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ*
- Hebrews 9:28 ²⁸ *so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*
- Galatians 5:5 ⁵ *For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.*

This hope will be fulfilled when Christ comes again. But what exactly are we hoping for? What are we eagerly looking forward to?

Life After Death Before the Resurrection

Before we can consider life after the resurrection, we must address the questions of where are the dead before resurrection, and what is the nature of their existence. Our resurrection is connected with the second coming of Christ, which still lies in an unknown future moment, yet what is the state of those who have already died? As we will find with life after the resurrection, there is much more we may want to know which God has not chosen to reveal. Still, there is information revealed that gives us valued insight.

In addressing the Sadducees’ denial of the resurrection (Matthew 22:23-33), Jesus counters – based on the passage in Exodus 3:6 – that God is not the God of the dead but of the living. The implication is Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive now, even though the resurrection has not yet occurred. Another statement of importance by Christ was his message to the repentant thief in Luke 23:43 – *Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.* Both Christ and the thief were to die within hours, yet Christ asserts they both would be in Paradise that day.

Then there is the account of a rich man and a poor man named Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. Though one might assume Jesus is using symbolic or exaggerated language here, there is nothing in the account to indicate it is not an accurate depiction of the state of the dead immediately after their death. If it is a literal picture, it is consistent with the promise of Jesus to the thief. Both Lazarus and the rich man are

in Hades, a place of the dead. They are aware of their circumstance. Because of the conduct of their lives, one is in comfort and the other in torment, and their placements are irradicably fixed.

Another passage is found in Paul's writings. In Philippians 1, he is speaking from prison recognizing he may die soon, and he weighs the advantages of living or dying. He says of the two possibilities:

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

What he says of dying is what will immediately be the case – he will be with Christ and it will be far better than this life.

Putting all of this together, we can say the dead in Christ, even before resurrection, are alive, in a better place and with the Lord, and apparently are aware of their circumstances. While sometimes the language of sleep (I Thessalonians 4:14, 15 – “*those who have fallen asleep*”) or rest (Revelation 14:13 - *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”*) is used, that language seems to simply imply they are alive and at peace instead of lifeless or in turmoil.

A Picture of Eternal Life.

But once Christ comes again, and we are resurrected with a body like his (Philippians 3:20-21, I John 3:2); a new body for which we have yearned (II Cor. 5:4), what will our life then be like? Not much is explained of this, but what is conveyed in the Scriptures is thrilling and reassuring. In large measure this is true because of what we are told will no longer be part of our existence – no more tears, or mourning, or pain, and no more death (Revelation 21:4). We have already noted it will be *an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison* (II Corinthians 4:17), and as such we would expect it to address the longings and desires we have that are part of our nature; part of our being made in the image of God. For what do we earnestly desire? Consider these five desires, common to us all, that we can expect to be fully and permanently addressed in our resurrected, eternal existence:

1. Relationship. We all crave relationships, to be part of a family. But all relationships depend upon the good will and intentions of another person. Even the best ones here are not permanent, sometimes end prematurely because of death or other aspects of life beyond our control. But we are promised an eternal, unchanging relationship with Christ – I Thessalonians 4:17 so we will always be with the Lord.
2. Recognition/Honor. Think of all the awards in the world. There is immense satisfaction in being called out for doing well, or when we are simply recognized by somebody we deem important. Imagine being called out by God personally! That's the promise contained in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) which Jesus taught to illustrate the nature of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matthew 25:1). When the five talent and two talent servants were called before their master at his return, he says to each of them “*well done good and faithful servant*”. When Christ returns and the dead are raised, the faithful will be recognized.

We will also be honored. In the judgment scene of Romans 2:1-10, eternal life is promised to *those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality* (vs. 7). Glory and

honor will be given to those who do good (vs. 10). Eternal life is one where honor and glory last and have value because they are bestowed upon us by the Creator.

3. Purpose/ Accomplishment. The statement of the master in the Parable of the Talents would also indicate that we will be active in our eternal life, busy doing something that is worthwhile. In addition to recognizing the two faithful servants, the master says to each, “*you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much*” (Matthew 25:21, 23). While we are not given details regarding what we will do, we can be assured they will be worth tasks well-suited to us and to our spiritual bodies.
4. Pleasure/Joy. – The Parable of the Talents speaks to this as well, inviting the faithful servants to *enter into the joy of your master* (vs. 21, 23). The kingdom of heaven is also frequently pictured as a wedding or a great feast - times of great celebration and happiness (Matthew 22:1-2, 25:1-13). Whatever will provide that pleasure and joy, it will not be of the fleeting and impermanent nature of the joy we experience here, but one that will never be taken away.
5. Peace – We also crave peace. None of us wants to live in a world with constant conflict, nor are we comfortable with the anxieties, fears and worries of this life. God promises eternal peace to those who do good (Romans 2:10).

Thought Questions

1. How can you use the good experiences of this life, the ones you delight in and treasure, to help you anticipate your future destiny?
2. What else do you desire in this life that will be fulfilled completely in your eternal life?

Resurrection and Lordship of Christ

Lesson 13 Review and Challenge

Class Goals

By the end of our study, each of us will:

1. Have a firmer faith that Christ was resurrected
2. Recognize Christ as God and the Lord of our lives
3. Have a clearer vision of our future state and give more attention to what it means to be resurrected
4. Begin to live now as resurrected servants of Christ

Five Themes

1. Resurrection is a bodily reality
2. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later
3. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection.
4. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity.
5. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life

Introduction

How has this study of resurrection and the lordship of Christ changed you? What have you learned in this study that will be useful to you in following Christ? Any worthwhile study of God's word should encourage us to strive harder to be Christ-like and to use our deeper understanding of God's word to assist others in drawing closer to God. With this last lesson, we hope not only to review the material we have covered, but also to exhort each of us to examine our life and look honestly at how we might more fully live new lives now in anticipation of our resurrected future.

Baptism and a New Life

In the previous lesson, we concentrated on the hope we have of being resurrected and receiving a body that is perfectly suited for our eternal existence. A hope that is assured and proven by the overwhelming evidence of Christ's resurrection. But who is entitled to possess this hope? Those who have already been raised with Christ. Paul describes them in Ephesians 2:4-6:

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

This is part of that metaphoric use of resurrection we have examined in previous lessons, where we are said to have a new life or to be born again even before we die. When does this happen and when are we raised with Christ in this life? Repeatedly, it is said to happen when a believer is baptized. Note Colossians 2:12 first:

¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses

Those who have been baptized are those who have been raised with Christ. Romans 6:3-4 speaks of baptism as the moment of our death (to our old life) and the moment of being raised to a new life:

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

But there is also the expectation for the baptized believer there will be a profound change in the conduct and manner of their life. Colossians 3:1 challenges those of us who have been raised with Christ to seek the things that are above and to set our minds on them. In the verses that follow (Colossians 3:5-16) Paul describes this change in great detail. Similarly, I John 3:3 says those who have the ultimate hope of seeing Christ in resurrection are ones who are focused now with purifying their lives. This lesson is meant to provoke a self-examination as to how well we are responding to this exhortation.

Class Goals

We set goals at the beginning of the study. They were intended as a personal challenge to each one of us. Let's examine how well we have accomplished the goals.

1. How has your faith changed? What is different now about your viewpoint of resurrection and eternal life?
2. How would this material be useful in convincing an unbeliever in the resurrection and divine nature of Jesus?
3. How can your daily actions reflect a confidence that Jesus is the Lord, the Son of God?
4. What have you learned about your future destiny? How will that understanding help to sustain you from day to day?
5. If we live now as resurrected servants what will that look like? What will be different in your life? (Give examples of life scenarios)
6. What would be signs that you have been changed according to these goals?

Themes

Test yourself. How well can you identify the themes?

1. For each of the following themes, name at least one passage where you find this theme is taught
 - a. Resurrection is a bodily reality **Passage(s):**
 - b. Jesus was resurrected first (first fruit); we follow later **Passage(s):**
 - c. Judgment of everyone is connected with the return of Christ and our resurrection
Passage(s):
 - d. The resurrection of Christ establishes his Lordship and hence divinity. **Passage(s):**
 - e. Resurrection is used as a metaphor for our converted life **Passage(s):**

2. For each of the following passages, what themes can you identify?
 - a. John 5:28-29
 - b. John 20:26-28
 - c. Romans 1:1-4
 - d. Romans 6:1-4
 - e. I Corinthians 15:20-23
 - f. I Corinthians 15:35-38
 - g. II Corinthians 4:14
 - h. II Corinthians 5:1-4
 - i. Ephesians 1:19-23
 - j. Philippians 3:20-21
 - k. Colossians 1:12-13
 - l. I Thessalonians 4:13-17
 - m. Hebrews 11:17-19, 35
 - n. I Peter 1:3-9
 - o. I John 2:28 – 3:3
 - p. Revelation 20:11-15

3. What passages are familiar to you now and will likely remain so long after this class is over?

Thought Questions/Challenge

1. Examine songs about heaven and eternal life. Note any consistency or inconsistency with the themes we have studied.

2. In the last lesson, we discussed giving greater attention to what our resurrected future holds. To assist in keeping a focus on that future, consider doing the following: Select a favorite passage of each of the five themes of this study. Print the text for all five on one page and for a month read the passages at least once a day.