

A study of **THE RESURRECTION**

INTRODUCTION

THE RESURRECTION! What an amazing thought! The idea of someone being raised from the grave, after they have been dead for days or even years, is beyond comprehension by the human mind. It compares in magnitude to the creation of the world and, in fact, would require the same kind of power to accomplish as it did for the creation. When you think about it, it is a creation of its own kind and dimension.

Where did such an idea as a resurrection from the dead originate and what is its scope and purpose? In all the centuries of time the only reference to a resurrection is found in the Bible and the Christian Religion. No other religion, power or philosophy in all history has set forth the promise of a resurrection. And certainly no institution known to man, along with any governing rules of such institution, has ever posed the concept of a resurrection from the dead with the ability to perform it. Not only has no other institution ever prescribed as its principals of life, the promise of a resurrection, neither has the founder and builder of such institution proposed such an amazing event nor have such founders themselves experienced a resurrection. Every religion known to man throughout history has been completely devoid of any experience or promise of a resurrection for anyone related to or embracing its foundational principals. The famous Greek philosophers, with all of their learning and myths, including all of the gods they embraced, have no equal to the prospect of the Christian resurrection. Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, nor any of the ancient myths or religions or their founders ever offered to the world the idea of returning from the dead by way of a resurrection. Their only means to project and continue life was by way of their mythical immortal spirit which they said man possessed. Plato claimed that the "soul" inhabited the body as a pilot inhabits a ship. (See our lessons on the "soul", where we address this issue in detail).

A resurrection is unique to the Christian religion. That is true simply because the founder of Christianity himself was raised from the dead, never to die again, and has promised the very same kind of a resurrection to all who are his followers in truth. Thus, a resurrection from the realm of the dead (the grave) is unique to Christianity, exclusive to Christianity, has occurred only in Christianity, is promised only to Christians and cannot be duplicated, fabricated or in any way obtained apart from Christianity. And while all other religions have their philosophies, morals, promises and rules upon which they are built, Christianity is founded upon "THE RESURRECTION". From the fall of Adam to the sacrifice of Christ at calvary, to the day of his return to the earth again, the clarion call of the gospel and the cornerstone upon which it is built is the resurrection of "those that are Christ's at his coming", I Cor. 15:23. That is the message of the Bible, the story of the gospel of Christ and the hope of the Christian.

This amazing and marvelous message is simply this: Jesus Christ died for our sins, was in the grave for three days and three nights for proof thereof, and arose again for our justification. Because he lives, we can live also. It is by the replication of his death, burial and resurrection in our own lives (Rom.

6:1-5), that we may also have a resurrection like his. This is the message of the entire Bible. Every type, every command, every divine portrayal of hope, every hidden message and its true meaning points to the day of the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the child of God. That was the hope of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, Isaiah, Job, David and every other child of God. The resurrection was the message which Paul preached while enduring much suffering and hardships, so that he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. That is the blessed hope and the grand purpose of the promised return of Christ to the world again: to raise from the dead those that belong to him and thereby to confer upon them immortality, eternal life. That is the one truth of the entire gospel and of the church of God, which, if it could be eliminated, every other command, message, and doctrine along with all hope for all mankind, would crumble in ashes. The resurrection is the one hope and the one event which alone offers to anyone of all time the prospect of coming into everlasting life. If we cannot have a resurrection we cannot live forever in any form anywhere. It is through the hope and ultimate reality of the resurrection of the child of God that all of the glorious purposes and grand fulfillment of life evermore can occur. There is no hope, possibility, or means for anyone of the human family of all time to obtain everlasting life in any form, except through the process of being raised back to life again at the second return of Christ to the earth. Whatever God, in his eternal plan, purposes, and mercy has promised for his children, it can only be obtained through and by a resurrection from the dead at his return.

THAT IS WHY WE BELIEVE AND PREACH AND CONFIDENTLY DECLARE THAT THERE IS "LIFE ONLY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST". LIFE ONLY THROUGH CHRIST means that no one can obtain eternal existence in any form, except through the saving grace of Christ Jesus our Lord and that this eternal life is conferred upon those who belong to Christ at the resurrection in the last day. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that hath not the Son shall not see life. (Jn. 3:36).

AND THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY, that we might explore the scriptures, throughout the entire Bible, to see what this glorious truth is and what it means to the child of God. What a wonderful and sacred privilege it is to search the scriptures for the blessed truth by which we may obtain everlasting life with all of its glory and wonder and peace.

A STATEMENT OF FAITH ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

THIS STATEMENT OF FAITH WILL SET THE STAGE FOR MUCH OF THIS STUDY AND WILL ALSO POINT THE WAY IN WHICH IT WILL GO. IT IS AN ADVANCE INDICATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE STUDY.

WE BELIEVE:

- 1. THAT THE RESURRECTION IS TAUGHT IN BOTH THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT.**
- 2. THAT THE RESURRECTION IS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE ENTIRE BIBLE MESSAGE TO MAN AND THAT WITHOUT THE RESURRECTION EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE BIBLE CRUMBLES.**

3. THAT THERE ARE SCRIPTURES WHICH TEACH A "SPIRITUAL" RESURRECTION AS COMPARED TO A "LITERAL" RESURRECTION AND THAT RECOGNIZING THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECT.
4. THAT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST LITERALLY OCCURRED AND THAT IT IS THE FOUNDATION OF EVERYTHING HE TAUGHT AND DID, INCLUDING CALVARY.
5. THAT THE RESURRECTION AS PROMISED IN THE BIBLE IS THE VALIDATION, PROOF AND GRAND SCHEME OF THE GOSPEL AND THE PLAN OF SALVATION.
6. THAT IT IS BY THE PROCESS OF THE RESURRECTION THAT IMMORTALITY, ETERNAL PERFECTION AND ETERNAL LIFE IS GRANTED TO THE CHRISTIAN. TO ASSUME OR TEACH THAT THE WICKED WILL BE RESURRECTED IS TO GRANT THEM THIS SAME STATUS.
7. THAT ONLY CHRISTIANS, GOD'S OWN CHILDREN, WILL BE RESURRECTED, EVER.
8. THAT THE RESURRECTION OCCURS AT THE LAST DAY OF TIME WHEN CHRIST RETURNS.
9. THAT THE RESURRECTION IS THE GRAND FULFILLMENT OF ETERNAL LIFE WITH ALL OF ITS GLORY AND SPLENDOR FOR THE CHILD OF GOD.
10. THAT WE NOW HAVE "CONDITIONAL" LIFE, BASED UPON OUR CONTINUED, VALID FAITH IN CHRIST AND THAT THE RESURRECTION IS THE ONLY MEANS OF COMPLETING THE "CONDITION" AND MAKING ETERNAL LIFE A REALITY. THIS WILL OCCUR AT THE RESURRECTION AND NOT AT DEATH.
11. THAT ALL SCRIPTURES RELATING TO THE SUBJECT OF THE RESURRECTION MUST BE CORRELATED TOGETHER SO AS TO CORRECTLY INTERPRET THEIR INTENDED MEANING.
12. THERE ARE NOT SEVERAL RESURRECTIONS BUT ONLY ONE AND THAT ONE AT THE TIME OF THE LAST DAY AND RETURN OF CHRIST. IT WILL BE THE TIME OF THE GRAND USHERING IN OF ALL THE PROMISED GLORY AND BEAUTY OF ETERNAL LIFE. EVERY CHILD OF GOD WILL RECEIVE IT AT THIS TIME.

THE RESURRECTION IS TAUGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The resurrection is certainly the fully demonstrated message in the New Testament, but it is not limited to that area of the Bible alone. The Old Testament also bears strong testimony to this great truth. This is altogether fitting since the resurrection is the central truth and basic foundation of the entire Bible. The resurrection of Christ, along with the resurrection for those who belong to Christ, is the great objective of all that the Bible teaches and promises. With that in mind we turn to the Old Testament for our study of "THE RESURRECTION".

THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM SETS THE STAGE FOR THE RESURRECTION.

When we think of Abraham, we generally think of his designation as the "father of the faithful". That is true because God called him out of the world and life he was in and gave to him a "promise" which could only be accepted and sustained by "faith". This fact alone serves as the great cornerstone of the premise of our entire relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. That also means, therefore, that the faith he was given by the word of the Lord was not only for his lifetime, but was the very introduction to that faith which was introduced in the New testament, by which we are saved.

This "faith of our father Abraham" was bound up entirely in God's promise to him of a miracle child, namely Isaac. The promise which God made to Abraham to bless all nations through him could only be fulfilled through future generations and not just in the days of Abraham on earth. He lived to be about 150 years old, but the promises of God through him were for generations to come. Not only that, but they were destined to encompass much more than the idea of some natural blessing upon his future off springs. The specific "seed" of Abraham, through which all the nations of the earth would be blessed, was Christ (Gal. 3:16). Thus the promise of God to Abraham extended to and was specifically fulfilled in Christ. This fact alone includes the resurrection of Christ, but there is more.

The story of the miraculous birth of Isaac and his subsequent life is a divine work in its own right. However, the outstanding scope of that entire story culminates with Abraham being commanded of God to make a sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah. (See Gen. ch. 22) Abraham set out obediently to accomplish what God had commanded, even though he knew that God had promised that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. In spite of this seeming conflict of purposes (blessing the world through Isaac and offering him as a sacrifice to God) Abraham proceeded to fulfill God's will. After "3 days" Abraham came to the place of sacrifice and proceeded to accomplish this mission. We know that just before he took Isaac's life as a sacrifice to God, that a substitute ram was found caught in the bushes close by which took the place of Isaac.

We have to ask on what grounds and by what amazing strength Abraham was able to undertake such a heart-rending command and also how he could reconcile it with the promise which God had made concerning blessing all the world through Isaac? The answer to that question is found in Hebrews 11:17-19. *"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure".*

It is a generally accepted fact that Isaac was a type of Christ. He was a promised child; he had a miracle birth; he was the embodiment of future blessings for the world; at the approximate age of 30 years old, he was offered as a sacrifice to God, and finally, according to Hebrews 11:19, Abraham offered him with one single faith and hope to inspire him to do so: that is, a resurrection from the dead, from whence he received him in a figure (that is, figuratively). Abraham was so infused with the future prospect of a resurrection that he proceeded without hesitation to offer his "only begotten son", confident that God would raise him from the dead to accomplish his promised purpose in him. Thus, Abraham should not only be considered the father of the faithful, but also the father of the hope of a resurrection. In the entire Bible there is no stronger demonstration of faith in the resurrection than Abraham expressed when he had the knife drawn to take Isaac's life as an offering to God. Abraham's designation as "father of the faithful" is not some ambiguous feeling of faith or just a conviction of future blessings upon nations. It embraces the specific promise, hope and steadfast belief in the

resurrection as the singular act which would fulfill all that he believed. The cornerstone of Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice unto God was his clear belief and hope of a resurrection through Christ. Otherwise his willingness to offer Isaac like an animal sacrifice would have been of no faith value and therefore no more than a heathen sacrifice. In like manner, the willingness of God to offer his "only begotten" son as a sacrifice at calvary was a clear expression of his plan to raise him from the dead, without which his sacrifice would have been completely without merit.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOB.

The story of Job is one of the best known of the Bible. However, it may be that with all we know about his great suffering, we may know little about his hope of a resurrection. His own testimony leaves no doubt of his faith in that great hope.

Job was a great man, in fact he was the greatest of all the men of the east. The Bible describes his greatness in his tremendous estate; his beloved family; his far-reaching reputation and his extremely godly character. God describes him as a man that was "perfect and upright and one that feared God and eschewed evil. They don't come any better than that. His devotion to God is legendary. Is there any record of anyone who has lost so much without charging God foolishly with his lips and remained faithful to the Lord in the midst of un-believable suffering? We read Job's story and seem to think that his faith consisted in his own persistent effort to "believe in God" rather than having a specific substance of faith that guided his actions and devotions. Faith is not some ambiguous belief in God's existence; it is to know and believe the truth which God has revealed for your life. In our knowledge of Job we consign him simply to a life of severe suffering for no apparent wrong on his part. There had to be some great conviction in his heart in order for him to be able to stand under the enormous pressure of these sufferings.

For this great conviction we turn to Job 19:23-27, for his pronouncement of the faith which sustained him in all of his trial. *"Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me".* Job anticipated through faith a day that would restore all that he had lost, including his own body. While we might apply this to the restoration which Job received at the end of his suffering, yet it seems impossible to reconcile such emphatic statements in their entirety without Job being redeemed from the power of the grave. He would see his redeemer in his flesh and his eyes would behold him for himself and not another. Job's hope in a resurrection is so well demonstrated in this faith.

Therefore the power that sustained him during his suffering and preserved his integrity before God, was that specific faith that one day he would see his redeemer face to face. What a glorious hope and testimony he exemplified before God and the world. The hope of the mere restoration of all of his cattle, wealth and health, could not compare to the hope he had in

God because of his faith in him. That hope was based upon his faith that one day he would see his redeemer by way of a resurrection from the grave.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LAW

It is recognized by serious Bible students that the law in all of its provisions was a type or shadow of things to come. That is to say that the many things prescribed under the law were not an end unto themselves but they served a far more important purpose. For example, many of the animal sacrifices made under the law were a pre-figuring of Christ and the ultimate sacrifice which he made for our sins. There was a day of atonement held each year in the Hebrew economy during which two goats were sacrificed. The blood of one of these was sprinkled upon the altar while the other was carried off into the wilderness and was known as the "scapegoat". In these sacrifices Christ is typified in his atonement for our sins. Thus it is that throughout all of the law there were different commandments representing different elements of the day of grace and things pertaining to our salvation.

In Leviticus, chapter 23, there is an outline of the several special feast days, including their respective "Sabbath" or special days. In verses 4-14, is the law concerning the Passover feast, which included the 7 days of unleavened bread. This was specified to begin on the 14th day of the first month on which day the annual feast commemorating their deliverance from Egypt was held and the "Passover lamb" was slain. It is readily recognized that this Passover lamb represented our Lord Jesus and his sacrifice which was made to deliver us from the bondage of sin (see I Cor. 5:7). This Passover sacrifice was followed on the 15th day of the same month by seven days of unleavened bread. Since Christ our Passover is the anti-type of the Passover under the law, and since this represented the death of Christ at calvary, it will be readily recognized that his resurrection following 3 days later, is also a part of this great time of feast and sacrifice unto the Lord. The night in which Jesus was betrayed and ultimately crucified, he ate the last supper with the disciples and the scriptures clearly identify this time as the Passover feast.

Even though the crucifixion of Christ was held on the Passover day, and even though we know that his resurrection followed his crucifixion, yet the Passover itself was not a type of the resurrection. However, in Lev. 23:9-14, we have another offering described; one which fell within the time frame of the Passover-Unleavened bread feast period which covered the 14th of the first month through the 21st of the first month. In the above mentioned verses, God commanded Moses to include another offering. When Israel was come into their land which God would give them and reap the harvest thereof, they were to make a "First-Fruits" offering of their harvest. Barley harvest was the first ingathering of their crops and this was the time of the year for that. The commandment was for them to take the very first of their harvest and bring it to the priest to be waved before the Lord in thanksgiving for the blessing of their harvest. Before they enjoyed for themselves any benefit of their labors from their harvest,

they first made this offering to the Lord. Afterwards, they could partake of this same harvest themselves.

In 1 Cor. 15:20-23, in the chapter known as the “resurrection chapter”, Paul addresses the resurrection of Christ. In previous verses he affirmed the reality of the resurrection of Christ to some of the Corinthians who did not believe in one. Then in verse 20 he says, *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept”*. Thus you have the ancient first fruits offering made by Israel unto the Lord, serving as a type of Christ who became the first fruits from the grave. Further in verse 23 of this chapter we read: *“But everyman in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming”*. From all of this we know that the resurrection of Christ was taught (by type) under the Law of Moses. It is everywhere acknowledged that the Passover is a type of Christ, but not everyone understands the representation of the resurrection by the type of the first fruits offering. If the Passover typified his death, then, in the necessary order of things, something must typify his resurrection. It is the first fruits offering that fills that necessity. This makes complete the great plan of salvation provided by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE PSALMIST

David was God’s chosen king for Israel, but he was much more. He was also the sweet Psalmist of Israel, a mighty warrior, a prophet and of course he wrote many of the Psalms. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the kingdom of God was the fact the he was a type of Christ and the head of the “Davidic” dynasty of kings. The importance of this goes beyond just having a long list of kings following in his family line of the tribe of Judah. It is through the tribe of Judah that Jesus, the king of kings, would come into the world. But in order to have the true title of king among men, it was necessary that he descend through a particular lineage or dynasty of kings. That is why it was always so important to keep the lineage intact and never let it become mixed with any other family or name. The first verse of the first chapter of the book of Matthew begins with the words: *“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”*. Then that chapter continues and establishes the long line of descendants through which Christ ultimately came into the world. Not only was Christ of the seed of Abraham, but also of the seed of David who was in the same family lineage. Thus with David being God’s chosen king and with Christ descending through that dynasty of kings, Jesus Christ, in his native right, was in line to be the king over Israel. Further, by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, and since he ever lives and cannot die, he is the eternal king of God’s people.

Therefore, all of this serves to put David in a position to speak directly concerning Christ, and, as we shall see, about the resurrection also. In Psalms 16:8-10, we have a very direct prophecy by David relative to the resurrection of Christ. *“I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”*. These words may not seem so directed to

the resurrection of Christ if we only consider this passage in Ps. 16. But we have the benefit of scriptures concerning this in the book of Acts that will shed much light on the words of the Psalmist. In that location the setting is the day of Pentecost and the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Peter has been preaching to the assembled multitude about that great event and how it was precipitated by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. In Acts 2:22-32, we have the following explanation. *V22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; 23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25. For DAVID speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, that he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. 26. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. 30. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31. He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

What a marvelous commentary this is on the words of David, spoken hundreds of years before Christ every came into the world. How exact they are in their prophecy on the one hand and in their fulfillment on the other. Of course you would not expect anything other than that from the providence of God. The point we wish to make with these scriptures is the fact that Old Testament saints of God believed in the resurrection as surely as we do. It will no doubt be argued by some that we have so much more light in the New Testament than they did in the old and therefore the Old Testament saints had no way to have an understanding of this very important matter which is central to Christianity. I would acknowledge that it is true that there is a further demonstration and extension of the truth of God, relating to his great plan of salvation, as it is recorded in the New Testament. However it would be denigrating to the Old Testament saints to think that they had no light on this matter and, further, it would be the equivalent of telling God that he could not reveal total truth to his people of that era in whom he certainly entrusted the founding basis of all truth. As it has been said many times, the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. By virtue of the fact that the event of the resurrection is a New Testament occurrence you would expect more light at the occasion when it took place. However, that should not lead us to think that Old Testament saints, in whom God vested the very prophecy of that event, were ignorant of its plan and purpose. David may not have had a full understanding of its process but he surely knew of its

occurrence. This fact emphasizes again that the resurrection is the very foundational truth of the entire plan and purpose of the word of God.

ISAIAH'S TESTIMONY

Isaiah is known as the Messianic prophet because of the fact that he prophesied more detail about the coming of Christ than any other prophet. For this reason you would certainly expect that he would include his testimony regarding the resurrection. I am sure that there is more than one reference in his prophecy concerning the resurrection even though I am only going to illustrate one which is found in Isaiah 25:6-9. *And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. 7. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. 8, He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. 9. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.* The ready answer to show that this scripture is a prophecy of the resurrection we only need to turn to Paul's letter to the Corinthian church, I Cor. 15:54. Remember that this is the resurrection chapter. *V54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.*

Some seven hundred years before Christ came to the earth and gave his life at calvary, Isaiah was inspired by the Spirit of God to write about the great purpose of what his sacrifice meant to mankind. He spoke in such beautiful and glorious language about the day when the Lord would make a great feast on "this mountain" (of Jerusalem), describing it as a feast of fat things. Then he said that God would destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people and the veil that is spread over all nations. That covering and that veil is sin and death. Then "he will swallow up death in victory" describes the great act of God in destroying the greatest of all enemies, death. (I Cor. 15:26) Let us never doubt in the least the necessity of the death of Christ at calvary for our sins, but let us also realize that calvary without the resurrection would have been of no avail. He "died" to be a substitute for our death and he arose from the grave to give us life from the dead. Isaiah understood this truth centuries before it occurred and declared with glory and praise: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; (Jehovah) we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation".

THE TESTIMONY OF JONAH

Every child that has ever attended church at all knows about the story of Jonah. Most of us learned it as the story of a man being swallowed up by a huge fish, a whale if you prefer. We also learned that this ordeal occurred because of the disobedience of Jonah in not going to preach the message of God to the wicked people of Nineveh who did not know their left hand from their right hand. Then we learned that this whale miraculously vomited up Jonah on the

shore of the sea and subsequently he went on to Nineveh and preached the message of God to them and they repented of their wickedness. This story is duly recorded in the book of Jonah. We will direct our focus to chapter 1:17 and 2:10. *Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Johan upon the dry land.*

It would be easy to read the book of Jonah and confine our understanding to the surface events which are described therein. However, those events have a prophetic impact many years to come in the story of Christ. In Mt. 12:39-40, we read: "But he answered and said unto them, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth". These verses use the event of Jonah being swallowed up by the whale as a sign of the resurrection of Christ. In fact it is one of the strongest confirmations there is of the requirement that the Savior would be in the grave for three full days and three full nights.

The entire story of Jonah is more than just an event in one Hebrew's life and also that of the people of Nineveh; it is a picture of redemption in Christ and the resurrection and the salvation of a wicked people, Nineveh, who also typify the Gentile sinners of the world. Besides that, the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, which reflects the truth that the first Adam disobeyed the Lord's command and the "second" Adam (Christ) obeyed God's command.

Therefore we have in Jonah a confirmation of the resurrection from Old Testament events and prophecy as well as an undeniable measurement of time for Christ to be dead in the grave. There are other Old Testament scriptures, having to do with a resurrection, which will be addressed in a later portion of this study.

THE RESURRECTION AS TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

We come now to the New Testament and its glorious message and event of the resurrection of Christ and the promise of this same resurrection to the people of God. It is without any doubt the central message of the New Testament and it will be our intent to seek out every scripture relevant to this great subject and try to understand their meaning. That will be a formidable task for there are many scriptures on this subject in the New Testament and, we might add, there are also many controversies on the theology derived from them. We will begin with the four gospels, where the promises and event of the resurrection are so well recorded. From there we will look at the book of Acts and the epistles for the story of the resurrection as illuminated in them.

Sometimes we forget or overlook the scriptural meaning of the expressions "Old Testament" and "New Testament". God has had two covenants with his people through the ages. The

first of these is, of course, the old covenant by virtue of the fact that it preceded the new. The old covenant was put forth in the law and its many types and shadows of the new. The new covenant of God with his people was a covenant of "life". That is, it was a covenant of God with man to offer him life in the place of death, which had been inherited from Adam. From these two covenants therefore, we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. These should be looked upon as the old being fulfilled in the new. The "New Testament" from God to man was made possible through the shedding of the blood of Christ, along with his burial and resurrection. Without the resurrection there would be no new covenant; it is sealed only by way of the fact that Christ has risen from the grave, and, because he lives we may live also. The "New Testament" is not only a collection of the writings of the gospels and the epistles, it is the New Covenant which God made for and with man through the redemption available through Christ, which redemption is founded on the validity of the resurrection, both of Christ and those who belong to Christ at his coming. The beauty and power of the resurrection unfolds in all its glory, first in the teachings of Christ himself recorded in the four gospels, and secondly in the teaching of the apostles in the rest of the New Testament. It is an amazing story.

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION AS TAUGHT BY CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

A. THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

To begin the study of the Resurrection in the gospels I have chosen first of all the passage of scripture we are all familiar with which is found in Jn. 11:23-27. This is at the occasion of the death of Lazarus and Jesus, after he had delayed four days, has finally arrived to greet Mary and Martha. They lamented the fact that Jesus was not there sooner in which case their brother, they believed, would not have died. We take up the conversation in Jn. 11:23. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. 24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in "the resurrection at the last day". 25. Jesus said unto her, I AM THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27. She saith unto him, yea, Lord: I believe that thou are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. Two things are significant in this scripture. (1) Martha acknowledges the fact of, and her faith in, the resurrection "in the last day". This suggests that her faith from the teaching of the Old Testament scriptures convinced her that there was a resurrection to occur at the last day. Even if you would prefer to believe that she had learned this from the teaching of Jesus, it still shows her faith in the resurrection, before Christ had been raised. (2) The second point that is so significant in these verses is the declaration of Jesus that he was the resurrection and the life. That is, the faith and power of a resurrection was vested completely in him and for his discretion. Then he qualifies this possibility of a resurrection upon the condition of "he that believeth in me". Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Some construe this "never dying" condition to say that the believer goes to their eternal reward at the time of death. That is not what it says or means. What it says is that he that "believeth" shall never die. In

other words it is a life that is conditioned upon faith. Further, it means that their eternal life will be conferred at the time of the resurrection, not at the time of natural death. The condition upon which it will be conferred is faith in Christ. By extension, this means that he that believeth not does not have eternal life (of any kind). The resurrection is confined to those who believe. Other scriptures will confirm this as we get to them.

Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days. Jesus raised up Lazarus who had no element or hope of life in him unless the Lord by his power should bring him back to life, which he did. But this is not the type of resurrection that Jesus was preaching to Martha; one that lasts for a short time and is over again. He was preaching a resurrection of which the very essence was the total transformation of the old corruptible state to an incorruptible, immortal state.

B. THE CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION. LK. 20:27-38.

The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection unto eternal life and they came to Christ questioning his teaching of one. They posed a “gotcha” question about 7 men who had each been married to the same woman, wanting Christ to tell whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Now their point in the question was simply to try to trap Christ in the interest of proving that there was no resurrection. The answer which Christ gave them was found in LK. 20:34-38. And Jesus answering said unto them, the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being THE CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, For he is not a God of the dead; but of the living: for all live unto him.

The first point here is that the Sadducees did not understand anything concerning the world to come; therefore they had it all wrong. The second point is that those who obtain a resurrection are those who are “accounted worthy”. Then, among other attributes, he says of them that they are the “children of God”, being the children of the resurrection. In other words, to obtain a resurrection, in that day, you must be of those who have been translated from the kingdom of this world to the kingdom of God. Thirdly, Jesus speaks of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of Moses whose understanding was that they would live in God. God is the God of those whom he presumes to be alive by faith, even though they presently sleep.

C. THE PRECISE BUT LIMITED TIME FOR CHRIST TO BE IN THE GRAVE.

In Mt. 12:40, Jesus says, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”. Jesus was answering his critics who were asking him for a sign that would verify his authenticity.

This was the only sign he gave them. In other words, when they knew that Jesus had been in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights, and subsequently arose from the grave, they would have their sign of authenticity. This scripture confirms for us that he would, (1) be in the grave for three full days and three full nights, just as Jonah was likewise in the belly of the whale a like amount of time; and, (2) That he, indeed, would be resurrected from the grave, because it was not possible that it could hold him.

D. THE RESURRECTION OF THE TEMPLE

In Jn. 2:18-22, Jesus again was being asked for a sign to verify that he was the Christ. This is the conversation: "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus said. This is the second time Jesus has explained the "sign" of his messianic authority as being the resurrection. In effect, what he is saying is that, if I am really the long-awaited Messiah and Savior of mankind, my resurrection from the grave will be the proof thereof. In this "sign" he has placed all credibility of him being the Messiah. Everything depends on the resurrection from the grave. That is so abundantly true, not only of Christ but also of our own discipleship. Without a resurrection we have no claim to authenticity. The resurrection validates all scripture, the Messiah, the church, our salvation and our only means to come into eternal life.

THE THIRD DAY

There are many references in the four gospels declaring the fact that Jesus would be raised from the grave on the "third day". This not only describes the amount of time which he would spend in the grave, but also serves to verify the expectation that he would be resurrected. We need to look at a good representation of the times this is alluded to in the gospels. We are not at this point trying to verify the day of his crucifixion or the precise time which he spent in the grave. We are certain that it was a full three days and three nights just as the scriptures require, even though there is much confusion about this time element. We have a separate lesson on the subject of "THE THIRD DAY", which covers this thought more thoroughly than we will here. As we have mentioned we will review several of the scriptures where the resurrection is foretold to occur after the third day, as a further documentation of the reality of the resurrection itself.

Mt. 16:21. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Mt. 17:22-23. And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

Mt. 20:18-19. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Mk. 9:31. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

Mk. 10:33-34. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles. And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall, kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Lk. 9:22. The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Lk. 18:32-33. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again.

Lk. 24:7. The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

Lk. 24:46. And said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

Acts 10:40. Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly.

I Cor. 15:4. And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

As we have already mentioned, these scriptures not only describe the time frame in which Christ was in the grave, they also verify the fact of the resurrection. It is important to the believer that an event as important as the resurrection be confirmed by many scriptures. That is what these verses assist us with. In addition to that they also convey an almost hidden thought which increases that confirmation many-fold. That thought is found in Lk: 24:46 and I Cor. 15:4. These verses tell us that this fact of the resurrection of Christ was "written in the scriptures". The only scriptures available at that time to confirm this fact of the resurrection were the Old Testament scriptures. As we have already seen, the resurrection is authenticated in the Old Testament. Even the thought of Christ being in the grave for three days and three nights is of Old Testament origin and confirmation. The story of Jonah, the story of Abraham and Isaac and others verify this part of the thought. Other than their present, visible experience of the resurrection of Christ, the only proof the early church had was the Old Testament scriptures. He was betrayed, mocked, scourged, spit on and otherwise cruelly treated and then crucified. He was buried in another man's tomb and after three days and three nights of entombment he was raised from the dead to become our living Savior.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

In all the history of the world, nothing has been as amazing, powerful and life changing as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave after three days and three nights. Of course many did not and still do not believe that it occurred. That is not a point which we are going to attempt to authenticate; the Bible and history has verified that with all of the verification that should be necessary. Even some Christians, so-called, do not believe that Christ literally arose from the grave. If I could not believe in the absolute reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I would not associate myself with Christianity; it would be a hoax and the Bible would be unreliable in anything. This chapter will not seek to prove that he arose from the grave; we will simply provide the account as it is preserved for us in the Bible.

All four of the gospels provide details concerning the actual resurrection of Christ. No one was present at the moment in which he arose but that does not alter anything. They had so much authentic proof of his resurrection that the only way to deny it was to deny the obvious truth that was so openly available to them. Let's cover the account of his resurrection from the grave which occurred three days and three nights after his crucifixion.

Mt. 28:1. In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. When they arrived at the tomb there was an earthquake in the midst of which an angel appeared unto them which frightened them very much. But the angel had a glorious message for them: **Mt. 28:6.** "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay". From this encounter they departed quickly from the grave and came and told the disciples. On the way, however, they met Jesus who called out to them and they worshipped him.

In **Mk. 16:1-4**, provides the following account: "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great". This is a very similar account as that which Matthew recorded. In Mark's account, they also encountered a "young man dressed in white". Verses 6-7 declare: "And he saith unto them, be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you".

There is no wonder that they were afraid and amazed all at the same time. The last time

Jesus was seen he was dead and in the tomb. Now they come, no doubt with the intent of applying spices to his body, and they find out he is not just gone, "HE HAS RISEN". And this is not the resurrection of someone like Lazarus; this is the resurrection of the Lord of glory, the Savior of the world. His resurrection is not just a miracle; it is the cornerstone of all that he came to do and all which he would later do for mankind in the future and all eternity.

Lk. 24:1-2. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. Then in Verse 6, the same declaration as in the other gospels: "He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee. Again, the record of Luke is very much the same as the others. Following the visit very early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the sepulcher and found it empty. This was followed by messengers with a divine mission of telling them that Jesus is not in the grave, but has risen.

In John the 20th chapter, Mary is described as coming to the sepulcher early on the first day of the week, while it was yet dark. John describes her experience of not seeing the Lord in the tomb where he had been laid. She even stood before Jesus (while it was yet dark) and did not recognize him, supposing him to be the gardener and assumed that he had taken the body of Jesus and put it somewhere else. Then Jesus called her name and she recognized who he was. She then came to the disciples and told them that she had seen the Lord and that he was alive.

In all of the accounts in the four gospels, the resurrection is very emphatically declared, with enough detail that there should not be any doubters around. However, truth is not very convincing to some who would rather advocate their own agenda than what "thus saith the Lord". The fact of the resurrection in the four gospels puts an entirely new day and new hope before the world. Now begins the time when the everlasting gospel of salvation can be preached to the entire world. In a few days after the resurrection, the Lord will pour out of his Holy Spirit on the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem and then will the everlasting gospel of Christ, based upon his death, burial and resurrection, be sent forth into the world for whosoever will. It should be emphasized over and over that the resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone, the foundation and the eternal basis of God's plan of redemption for the entire world. With this eternal life is a possibility; without it no one has any chance of an eternal existence of any kind, anywhere. We either have hope of a resurrection through Christ or we perish in the silence of corruption forever. We cannot, we must not limit the power and purpose of the resurrection to just a miraculous event applicable only to Christ Jesus. His resurrection is the only plan, possibility and purpose by which we have the promise of coming into eternal life by way of our own resurrection at the second return of Christ.

THE MESSAGE OF JESUS ON THE BREAD OF LIFE, THE RESURRECTION. JN.6

In John chapter six, verses 22-63, we have the message of Jesus on the “Bread of Life”. In this message Jesus specifically taught the resurrection and its basis and process. This message followed the miraculous feeding of the five thousand by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus and his disciples had taken ship and came to Capernaum, during which journey Jesus walked on the sea. The day following this, the people also came to Capernaum. It was at this occasion that Jesus preached unto the multitude about the bread of life.

He began by telling them that they had not followed him because of the miraculous work of multiplying the loaves and fishes, but because they had eaten and were filled. In other words, they enjoyed the meal but did not comprehend or put much emphasis on the miracle of it all. Jesus admonished them not to labor for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life. At that point Jesus told them that it was not Moses who gave them the “true” bread from heaven, which must have been hard for them to understand. Then he adds to their dilemma by telling them that he is the true bread of life. Even though Jesus pointed out to them the difference in the bread which Moses gave them and the true bread of life, they did not understand it.

Then in verse 39, it seems that Jesus introduces another subject than the bread of life, which is not another, but simply an explanation of what the bread of life really was. “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day”. Thus Jesus introduces to them the incredible wonder that through him they could be resurrected from the dead “at the last day”. With this he has opened up the hope of the resurrection for all who come to him. The verses following are a beautiful discourse on this precious truth.

In verse 40, Jesus says, “that the will of him who sent me, is that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day”. There, in that single statement, is the blessed and eternal truth that those who “believe” (and everything that believing means) on him, that he would raise them up at the last day. Thus you have a resurrection promised to a distinct class of people; those who believe on him. This makes a resurrection a conditional promise and not a general event for all mankind, saved or unsaved. It also defines the time of the resurrection as “the last day”. Continuing in verse 44, Jesus declares that a resurrection is available only to those whom God draws into a saving faith in Jesus Christ. This is the same as that great truth expressed in Jn. 3:16, that, “whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life”.

In verses 48-51, Jesus emphasizes again that he is the bread of life. In contrast, the bread we daily eat is not the “bread of life” which Jesus speaks of; he is speaking of bread that will give everlasting life and this everlasting life comes to us by way of a resurrection at the last day. Then in these verses Jesus offers another astounding truth: “I am the bread

which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die". Now they were trying to understand how, (1) he came down from heaven and (2) how they would never die if they ate this bread. In verses 53-54, Jesus gives a further explanation of this. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you". "whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day".

"Eating his flesh and drinking his blood", has lead to some very unscriptural teachings. Jesus is telling us that, if we hear, believe and obey his word and are filled with his Holy Spirit, that he will raise us up at the last day. And this is the pattern throughout the founding of the church in the book of Acts: men hear the message of the gospel of salvation through the atoning work of Christ at calvary and they believe that message and commit their lives unto him. They are filled with his Holy Spirit which enables them to live the life that the teaching of his gospel provides for them. Based upon these conditions, the obedient hearing of the gospel and the filling of his Holy Spirit, by which we can live the new life which he imparts, we have the promise of everlasting life. This promise is ours now, based upon the condition of our continued faith in him. That faith will then be changed into reality at the return of Christ when he resurrects those who belong to him from the dead. The path, the only path, to a resurrection is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who do not have this saving faith shall remain in the congregation of the dead (Prov. 21:16).

THE MESSAGE OF THE RESURRECTION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

ACTS 1:22. CERTIFIED WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION.

"Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection".

The resurrection as a factual event is so important that when it became necessary to select someone to fill the place of Judas, who betrayed the Lord, it was necessary that the one selected be someone who was with the apostles during the ministry of Christ and was able to personally verify his resurrection from the grave. The resurrection of Christ is THE cornerstone of the entire Christian faith. Its message to the world must be borne by those who had a firsthand experience of its occurrence. Shouldn't it still be testified to by those who have had a "firsthand" experience with the Lord?

ACTS 2:24, 30, 31 and 32. OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES GIVE WITNESS TO THE RESURRECTION.

The second chapter of Acts records the marvelous beginning of the church by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The promises of God down through the centuries that he would provide salvation for all mankind, is now being fulfilled. Peter, standing with the other eleven apostles, introduces this great promise to a multitude of people which had gathered at Jerusalem to partake of the annual feast of weeks. On this occasion God sent the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost on the 120

disciples gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. As the multitude of people from all over the Roman Empire gathered to witness this mighty phenomenon, Peter stood and began to speak. In his message he quoted from the words of David as recorded in the 16th Psalm.

His message to them explained the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit, using the book of Joel as a basis for his thoughts. Then he turned his thoughts directly to the life of Jesus, who only recently, by wicked hands had been crucified and slain. This statement was only a platform upon which to declare that God had raised him up, because it was not possible that he could be held in the grave. Then he described the message from David's prophecy in the 16th Psalm, interpreting this prophecy to be specifically applicable to Jesus and his resurrection from the grave. This Jesus, Peter declared, God hath raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. As it turns out, this preaching of the resurrection of the one whom the Jews thought they had killed and buried, was a burning fire upon their theological manipulations.

The first message of the gospel of Christ, proclaimed by the apostles of the church, was a message of the resurrection of Christ. It was not just a confirmation of the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave, though it certainly was that. It was more. Embodied in this irrefutable truth is the hope of all mankind. Because he lives, we can live also. As we shall learn in another passage of scripture in this study, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is the template for our own death, burial and resurrection through him. Apart from this unique event of the resurrection of Christ, there is no gospel, no grace, no hope and no plan of salvation. All that we have available to us as Christians comes directly through the plan and power of the resurrection. It is the first message and the last message and all others must derive from and harmonize with it.

ACTS 3:15. WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION.

This verse is involved with that special occasion when Peter and John went up to the temple to pray and healed the lame man at the gate who was begging alms. Thus began some exciting events for these two apostles. As they went on into the temple, the lame man following, praising God for his healing, a multitude of people gathered to witness this grand event. They knew this man and that he had been lame for many years and this was no fluke. So Peter and John get their attention and begin to preach to them about how this healing occurred.

They pointed out how that Jesus had been taken by wicked hands and slain and that the people demanded the release of a murderer rather than Jesus. Then they killed the prince of life, "WHOM GOD RAISED FROM THE DEAD; WHEREOF WE ARE WITNESSES". From this they continue their explanation of the healing of the lame man that it was by the power of God because of the risen Christ.

ACTS. 4:2, 10, 33. THEY PREACHED THROUGH JESUS THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

This chapter continues the story of the occasion of the healing of the lame man. You would think that everyone, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, all, would have graciously embraced the healing of this man who had been begging alms for many years. But that is not the way that organized religion worked. They were the ones in charge and they were not going to allow some “fictitious story of a poor Galilean who was not a part of their elitist circle to have any credit for anything”.

Verse 2 tells us that they were grieved that they taught the people and preached THROUGH Jesus the resurrection from the dead. This wording is important because it shows that they were not only teaching that Jesus had risen from the dead, but that they were teaching that through Jesus, there was a resurrection of the dead. Otherwise the particular expression “through Jesus” has no other significance. This was unbearable to them. First of all, the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of any kind for anyone. Then, the rest of the hierarchy certainly was not about to concede that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was, indeed, resurrected from the dead as the apostles claimed. No way! Their grief was stirred to the boiling point at the notion that there was a resurrection for others “through Jesus”. That was tantamount to destroying everything they stood for.

However, whether they liked it or not, that was the message they were proclaiming. And it contains a message for us today also. It reinforces the promise that “through Jesus” there is a resurrection for others. But it goes beyond that. If there is a resurrection “through Jesus” for others the question becomes, “what others”? The context will allow only those who come “through Jesus”. And that is the express teaching of all scripture concerning the resurrection of the dead. Only those who come “through Jesus” will be raised from the dead when the Lord returns.

In verse 10, the apostles declare that it was by and through the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom God raised from the dead, that this lame man was healed. Then they add in verse 11, that this is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. In other words, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of the superstructure of God’s kingdom, the church, wherein is contained the plan of his wonderful salvation.

Then a wonderful thing happens. After the apostles had been detained overnight and had been examined by the priests in an attempt to accuse them of some wrong doing, they had to let them go. The healing of the lame man was a great and obvious miracle which no one could deny. So after threatening them, they let them go and they returned to their own company (V23). After rehearsing all that had happened to them, the entire company went to the Lord in prayer, knowing that they were up against a formidable foe.

When they had prayed (V31), the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with

boldness. They are mightily empowered by an outpouring of the Holy Ghost by which their souls were deeply touched to equip their efforts with their resources. Not only that, but also with great power they gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. They have been seriously opposed in their innocent, but powerful demonstration of the gospel in the temple and had been cruelly treated. If this was what they could expect any time they tried to tell the wonderful and true story of the resurrection of Jesus, to which they were witnesses, then they would need the power of God to enable them. That was the result of their prayers.

The outcome of it all was that they were touched deeply by the Lord; they spake the word of God with boldness; they sold their possessions and gave them for the propagation of the gospel, and, with great power gave they witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. God has especially enabled them to boldly go forth and proclaim this message of the resurrection of Christ and “through Jesus” the resurrection of the dead. Thus the resurrection message is, again, shown to be the focus of the mission of the church.

ACTS 10:39-44. THE GENTILE WORLD IS INTRODUCED TO CHRIST BY THE RESURRECTION.

“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

In this chapter, God has appeared to Cornelius, a centurion at Ceasarea and unto Peter, who was at that time residing at Joppa, with a series of miraculous visions given to affect the coming together of each of them. The purpose of this meeting was so that Peter could preach the gospel to Cornelius, who was a Gentile. Peter has come to the house of Cornelius, along with several others with him, and he proceeded to preach Jesus Christ unto them.

Peter introduces him to Jesus (though it is likely that Cornelius at least knew of him) and his work and ministry. His message follows an outline very similar to that of his message at Pentecost. He proclaims the death, burial and RESURRECTION of Christ and that his resurrection was witnessed by those chosen by God for that purpose. Peter also confirmed the fact that this message of Christ and his resurrection was witnessed to by all the prophets and that through Jesus, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. It was with this message of Peter to Cornelius, with their hearts hungry to hear what God had to say unto them, that the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the

word. Thus it is that with the message of the resurrection, the gospel of salvation has come to the Gentile world and the door of faith is opened to them.

ACTS 13:26-37. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY GAVE TESTIMONY TO THE RESURRECTION AT ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA.

V26. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher. 30. But God raised him from the dead: 31. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33. God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, thou shalt not suffer thine Holy one to see corruption. 36. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption. 37. But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. 39. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

On this, the first missionary journey of Paul, he goes forth preaching the gospel of Christ, mainly among those who attend the synagogues. At this particular time he has stopped at Antioch of Pisidia, which is not far from Ephesus, which borders on the Mediterranean Sea. He is given the opportunity to speak by the rulers of the synagogue and proceeds to preach to them about Christ. First, by outlining some of their past history, including the words of the prophets about Christ, and then proceeding to preach to them about the mission and message of Christ and his gospel.

There would be no accurate way to preach about Jesus and not specifically declare his death, burial and resurrection. Of course the very mentioning of the resurrection was an amazing message in its own right. Paul carefully delineates the process and verification of this resurrection story. He shows that it is upon the power of this marvelous fact that salvation has come to all that believe. Wherever Paul preached, the resurrection was the message, in fact the only message, through which he could proclaim the hope of salvation to the world. In this sense it becomes vitally important that the offer of redemption be presented upon the basis and strength of the resurrection. And that is the eternal truth of

the gospel. The death of Christ at calvary was absolutely essential as an offering for the sins of the world. However, without him being raised from the dead, his great suffering at calvary would have been of no avail. In today's proclamation of Christ, very little emphasis is placed upon the resurrection as the essential cornerstone of the plan of salvation. The entirety of the gospel of Christ is his "DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION". That is the message we have to offer. Its reality is the foundation of ever valid message of hope to a lost world. It contains every component of our redemption: death (to our sins); burial (in water baptism for the remission of sins); and a resurrection or spiritual awakening (to a new life in Christ). Paul is careful to point out to those in the synagogue that day, that this message of the resurrection of Christ, was foretold and corroborated by Old Testament scriptures.

ACTS 17:18, 31, 32. THE RESURRECTION IS DOUBTED AND MOCKED AT ATHENS.

V18. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, what will this babblers say? Other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. V31. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. 32. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter.

Paul is now in Athens, the hotbed of philosophers, heathen worshippers and people who, in general, had no care or relationship with God. But Paul does not miss an opportunity to preach Christ and his resurrection. The fact that they were so deeply entrenched in heathen worship and philosophy and cared nothing for the "unknown God", only gave Paul stronger motivation to declare the wonderful gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ unto them. They surely needed it and they were candidates for redemption if they would only cast off their heathenism and believe in Christ.

First they derided him as a babblers and a setter forth of strange gods because he had dared mention the resurrection. From that he proceeded to preach Christ unto them. In this case he used the background of their own idols and proceeded to tell them of the God who would bring righteousness into the world through which all the sins of mankind would be judged. This "judging", mentioned by Paul in verse 31, refers to the message of the gospel being offered to mankind, by which all who believe could forsake their unrighteousness and be "judged" as having forsaken their sins and turned to the "living" God.

When they heard of the resurrection "of the dead" they mocked and declared that this would be a matter for later discussion, as in debating and deriding the very thought of such. I put the expression "of the dead" in quotation marks to call attention to the fact that his message was not only about the resurrection of Christ, but "of the dead", which

includes all those who belong to Christ. When Paul declared the gospel of Christ, he was declaring the offer of a spiritual awakening from sins and ultimately a resurrection from the grave because of having been spiritually resurrected.

ACTS 23:6-8. THE RESURRECTION IS A DESPISED SUBJECT AMONG JEWISH RULERS.

V6. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. 7. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude was divided. 8. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

The setting for these scriptures is the occasion when Paul has come to Jerusalem where there is an uproar made by his opponents, accusing him of sedition and of desecrating the temple and more. The mob that gathered around this uproar would have murdered Paul if it had not come to the attention of the chief captain who got control of the mob. As he was being ushered to safety, Paul asked for and obtained the opportunity to speak to the crowd of people who were demanding his destruction. As he spoke, detailing his great conversion by God, the people listened. But when he declared how that God had sent him to preach to the Gentiles, they no longer listened to him but instead demanded that he be killed. They bound Paul until they could determine what to do with him. Paul questioned them about binding a Roman citizen who had not been legally condemned. This put fear into the chief captain and the Romans.

At this point the chief captain brought the priests and their council together in order to determine what, if anything, Paul was guilty of. After an exchange between Paul and the chief priest, Paul took an opportunity by which he could cause trouble between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He cried out that he was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee and that it was for the hope of the resurrection of the dead that he had been called in question by all the council. In other words, they were accusing him of at least some of what they claimed they believed also. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of any kind for anyone. They did not only disbelieve the resurrection of Christ, they did not believe in the message of the resurrection as taught in the Old Testament scriptures. On the other hand, the Pharisees did believe in a resurrection. This divided the mob of people as well as the council which consisted of both Pharisees and Sadducees.

It was following this event that a group of men, above forty, bound themselves with an oath to slay Paul. All of this has devolved from the fact that Paul has claimed that God had anointed him to go preach salvation to the Gentiles through the resurrection of Christ. This violent determination of the Jews to slay Paul will continue on into the next chapter, to which we now turn.

ACTS 24:13-15. A RESURRECTION FOR THE JUST AND THE UNJUST.

V13. Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. 14. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: 15. And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

The banding together by this large group of men to kill Paul through deceitful allurements into the temple became known to Paul first and then it was brought to the chief captain. That night the chief captain arranged an escort of over 400 soldiers to safely bring Paul to the governor Felix, in Caesarea. Several days later, Ananias and others were summoned to this city to accuse Paul. They made their accusations and then Paul was given the chance to speak on his behalf. Paul gave his own defense of his actions while in Jerusalem and then denied that they could prove the things of which they were accusing him. However, he went on to confess his faith in the Old Testament scriptures regarding a “resurrection for the just and the unjust”.

It is very critical at this point to keep this entire event, covered in chapters 21-24, in perspective for a reliable context to Paul’s argument here. Remember that he was giving his defense of his conversion to the mob who was accusing him and that they were giving him audience to speak peacefully until he mentioned that he had been sent to the Gentiles with the message of Christ. (See ch. 22:21-22). It was at this point that the madness of the crowd boiled over and they demanded that he be killed. Paul has just declared that God, by his ministry, has granted repentance unto eternal life to the Gentile world. This was anathema to the Jews. If you will review all of his missionary efforts, this was always a matter of deep conflict between Paul and the Jews nearly everywhere he went. Their violence on this occasion is precipitated on this account.

I ask you at this point to consider one simple truth regarding the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles. Insofar as the Jews were concerned, they were the “just” ones and the Gentiles were the “unjust” ones. It did not matter to them that the Old Testament prophets had clearly revealed that it was the plan of God to bring about redemption to both Jew and Gentile, that is, the just and the unjust. This redemption was clearly set in language of a “resurrection” nature. Examples of this are found in Daniel chapter 12 and Ezekiel chapter 37, of which we will speak more thoroughly in a later portion of this lesson.

The Pharisees, as Paul pointed out (Acts 23:6-8) believed in this, while the Sadducees did not. The mob was enraged that Paul should preach that God was going to bring the Gentiles into the realm of righteous or “heavenly” things. The Jews thought that they were the exclusive people of God and that the Gentiles were a filthy bunch of heathens who could only come to the Lord as submissive servants to their law and subservient to

them. Even Peter, in the 10th chapter of Acts, had trouble believing this when God was calling him to go preach to Cornelius, a Gentile. Nevertheless, the Old Testament scriptures (which were the only ones available at the time) were abundantly clear that God would “raise” the Gentile people from their status of being dead in trespasses and sin, to walk in a new (resurrected) life, in Christ.

This is such a critical and salient truth, that I want to further corroborate it from the writings of Paul to the church at Ephesus, largely a Gentile church. In Eph. 1:3, Paul tells them that they have been “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”. In 1:5, he tells them that they were predestinated in Christ Jesus to the adoption as children. The rest of the first chapter of Ephesians further describes elements of God’s work in bringing the Gentiles from among the “unjust” to the “justified”. Chapter 2, verse one declares: “And you hath he quickened, (raised up) who were dead in trespasses and sins. Then 2:6, he declares: “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”. These scriptures certainly support the fact that Gentiles were “resurrected”, spiritually, from among those who were “dead in trespasses and sins” and have been given equal status with all others in Christ. See Eph. 2:1-6.

All of this is set forth in view of the fact that Paul, when speaking specifically about a literal resurrection instead of a spiritual one, always restricted such literal resurrection to the righteous and at the last day. On the other hand, when speaking about a spiritual awakening or resurrection from our sins, Paul definitely included, not just the Jews, but the Gentiles also. That was the point he made which set the mob on such an enraged uproar, demanding that he be killed. In their view, there was no place for the Gentile among the people of God. They were wrong.

There are other scriptures on this thought of a spiritual resurrection or a literal resurrection, which we will discuss further in this lesson.

THE RESURRECTION FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS

The book of Acts provided us with a broad view of the resurrection as it was preached by the early church and especially by the apostle Paul on his missionary journeys. These accounts serve to verify the amazing truth of the resurrection and that it was the basis for the gospel of Christ. Through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, we have all of the combined work of redemption through Christ Jesus.

Turning now to the book of Romans, additional references will be supplied about the resurrection which will strengthen and enlighten us in this important study.

Rom. 1:4, In his greetings to the Roman Christians, Paul declares that Jesus was the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. In other words, the message he has

for them is based upon the amazing truth that Jesus has overcome death by his resurrection. Through this we have hope also.

Rom. 4:24-25. In these verses Paul emphasizes that the righteousness which was imputed unto Abraham by faith, shall also be imputed unto us, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was crucified for our sins but he was raised again so that we might be justified from those sins, if we believe in him.

ROM. 6:1-6. WE ARE TO BE IN THE LIKENESS OF THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

V1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

In these very powerful scriptures we not only have an affirmation of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, but we also have the likeness of this marvelous work replicated in our own lives. Actually, Paul's argument is on behalf of our lives being converted from performing sin to performing righteousness. We cannot continue in a life of sin on the presumption that we have grace from God and that grace will eliminate our sins. God forbid! Instead the grace of God should enable us to overcome the deeds of the flesh and inspire us to work the works of righteousness. Otherwise what is grace for?

Nevertheless Paul emphasizes that it is the very fact that we have been "baptized into Christ" which should mean that we are "baptized into his death". It is not only the fact of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ which is so important for our salvation; it is moreover our own "death, burial and resurrection" which secures for us the power over a sinful life. These three components, death, burial and resurrection, encompass the work of redemption in our own lives.

1. **Death.** This represents our dying to sin; our repentance from a sinful life.
2. **Burial.** This represents our being baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ. Burial is a total acknowledgement of death; you don't bury someone who is not dead.
3. **Resurrection.** This represents our being raised (spiritually) from our being dead in our trespasses and sins. It is this spiritual awakening that enables us to walk in a new life with Christ. You cannot just decide that you are going to live a new life; you must be resurrected from sin and death of the old life in order to walk with Christ.

Thus Paul likens our water baptism unto the burial of Christ and our spiritual quickening he likens unto the resurrection of Christ. This does not complete the process or in any manner eliminate our future resurrection from the graves wither we shall go. It is the guarantee that we can hope to have that future literal resurrection from the grave.

In the rest of the chapter Paul continues his teaching on the theme of our members being servants unto the righteousness of Christ. That is, the members of our bodies (eyes, heart, mind, hands, feet, etc.) are intended to be servants to Christ, to walk in his gospel, which our being crucified, buried and raised up from the dead enables us to do.

ROM. 8:11. THE GREAT "IF" OF THE RESURRECTION.

V11. But "IF" the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

It does not matter whether you consider this verse as a reference to a spiritual or a literal resurrection, or both, the "if" factor remains the same. Only God can raise the dead. The most overlooked fact in the study of the resurrection is that the results of such resurrection, which must be performed by God, is conditioned upon our faith and transformation in him and that the results of such resurrection is immortality, perfection, eternal life. In other words, if you are blessed to be raised from the dead when the Lord Jesus returns to earth again, then such resurrection will guarantee you perfection of life immortal and with it all the joys God can provide. The resurrection performed by the Lord at his return is not some raising from the grave like he did Lazarus, only to die again, or otherwise to live in corruptibility. It is a resurrection like that of Christ's, which means you will never know corruptibility. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, in I Cor. 15:53-54, speaks of the resurrection as a putting on of incorruption. That could not be if there was such a thing as a resurrection for a sinner.

So then, the great "if" of the resurrection is simply this: "IF" the Spirit of God dwells in you; if you are a child of God, then, on that basis, God will also resurrect your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you.

Rom. 10:9. Finally, in this verse, our salvation is predicated upon our faith in the efficacy of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that we simply say that we believe that Jesus was, in fact, raised from the dead. Salvation is not based upon statistics but upon an inward work of righteousness. The very next verse tells us that it is with the "heart" that we believe unto righteousness. There is no way for the organ of the heart to literally believe anything. This is a spiritual statement referring to the desires and conditions of life that come from the seat of all our sensations, our heart, that is, what we desire. This faith in a risen Lord that has the component of salvation in it comes with the total commitment and transformation of our heart and all that we desire in life.

THE RESURRECTION CHAPTER: I COR. 15:1-58.

We come now to the 15th chapter of I Corinthians, which is generally recognized by all who study the Bible as “The Resurrection Chapter”. It is referred to as such simply because the entire chapter deals with this subject and in a very direct and teaching manner. The reason for this is that, in the church at Corinth, there were some who were denying that there was any resurrection of the dead (V12). As is well known, Paul, in this letter to the Corinthian Christians, has dealt with a number of issues and problems among them. In fact, it is known as the trouble church and indeed it was. However, the question could well be asked if there ever was a church without troubles; maybe some more than others. So this letter to the Corinthian Christians about varying problems among them can also serve to help us when we encounter problems in our own Christian assemblies.

The good thing about this letter, even when you recognize that they had problems at Corinth, even to the point that some of them did not believe that there was any such thing as a resurrection of the dead, is that this portion of the letter serves us as an extraordinary lesson on the entire message and doctrine of the resurrection. In a manner of speaking it is the last word on this subject, even though there are other scriptures which just as well support and explain this very important subject.

When Paul first arrived at Corinth and began to preach to the people there in the synagogue, he immediately encountered much trouble from the Jews, just as he did most everywhere else he had been. But the Lord appeared unto him and told him not to fear, but to speak and hold not your peace, for I am with you and I have much people in this place. So Paul labored in Corinth for about 18 months and a great church was established there, to which he now writes this letter.

We will begin our analysis of the subject of the resurrection from this chapter with verses one and two. V1. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; V2. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Looking back to the time when he first went to Corinth, Paul reflects upon the message which he preached unto them then. This means more than the fact that he just took some evangelistic message out of his portfolio and preached “a” message to them. It means that he preached “the gospel” unto them and that being the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. So he reminds them of this fact and also that they had received the gospel which he preached unto them and wherein they still believed, unless they had simply rejected it. When he reminds them that it was by this gospel message that they were saved, he is laying the ground work for asking them a simple question: “If you were saved by the gospel of the resurrection, then why do you not believe it”?

Following this, he provides them with a long list of witnesses, many of whom were still living, who were eye witness accounts of the fact that Jesus had, indeed, been raised from the dead.

V3-10. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; V4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: V5. And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: V6. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. V7. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. V8. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. V9. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. V10. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Paul reaffirms in these verses that he had indeed preached unto them a risen Christ. Then he proceeds to confirm that Christ was seen of a multitude of witnesses after his resurrection, and that they are able to verify this great truth. He is not asking them to simply take his word for this important truth but provides sufficient verification that Christ has risen that no reasonable person has any grounds upon which to doubt it. This is important because there are those at Corinth who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Before Paul sets out the process of the resurrection, he first of all offers ample proof that it, indeed, has occurred. Notice also, that he refers to this entire truth as the “resurrection of the dead”. His point is that it was not only the resurrection of Christ, but his resurrection included that of his own people when he comes. This will be confirmed in further verses. He also includes his own apostleship and his own witness of the resurrection of Christ. It is debated as to whether Paul meant that he had seen him sometime during the time after his resurrection, or if he was seen in that appearance of Christ to him on the Damascus road. It is not a point which should be contentious; it could be either way, but all the other witnesses he makes reference to have seen him visibly and in person. Whichever it is, it certainly was with enough verity that there was no doubt left in Paul’s mind as to whom he saw.

The next point Paul presents in his proof of the resurrection and of its process and applicability, is in the form of a question: “If Christ be not raised”.

V11-19. V11. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach and so ye believed. V12. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? V13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: V14. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. V15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. V16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: V17. And if Christ be not raised,

your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. V18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. V19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

In these verses Paul argues that the resurrection of Christ provides for and proclaims the resurrection “of the dead”. Thus it is not just the resurrection of Christ that is in contention at Corinth; nay, instead, it is the resurrection of the “dead”, meaning the dead in Christ. It thus appears that some Corinthians were agreeable to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but were denying that there was any such thing as the resurrection of (any) other dead at any other time. Paul is arguing that this completely eliminates the entire purpose of the resurrection of Christ. If it be true that there is no such thing as the resurrection of those who have died in their faith in God, then there is no reason at all for there to be any resurrection of Christ. In fact, that would destroy any purpose for his death at calvary since his crucifixion was the necessary predecessor of the resurrection, which was, in turn, the only validation of crucifixion. Christ was not raised from the dead just for his own glory and blessing; he was raised from the dead as the first fruits of them which slept (V20).

To those at Corinth (and by implication all others) who say that there is no resurrection of the (sleeping) dead, Paul declares that everything else they claim to have and believe about Christ and the gospel which was preached unto them (which they professed to believe), is in vain; null and void. By denying the resurrection of the dead they destroyed everything they had claimed about Christ. Further, they made their entire profession of being Christians a pure vanity and absolutely useless. Paul’s declaration and question in verse twelve becomes a watershed moment regarding the question of the resurrection of the dead. If, as he had been describing in previous verses, Christ was truly raised from the dead and had been witnessed by many infallible witnesses, and had been preached to the Corinthian Christians, which preaching they had fervently believed, then they either had no valid question regarding the resurrection of the “dead”, or all they had believed and professed was pure vanity and false. The point he is making is that their denial of the resurrection of the dead is totally contradictory to any belief that Christ was, indeed, resurrected. Either there was to be a resurrection of the “dead” or there was no such thing as the resurrection of Christ. One without the other was a nullity. If Christ be not raised, then your faith in him is in vain and you are not Christians, but are still in your sins. In addition to this, based upon an invalidation of the resurrection of Christ, then them also which are fallen asleep believing in Christ are perished without hope.

Perhaps we have not heretofore given adequate meaning and forcefulness to Paul’s argument in these verses regarding the utter dependency upon the resurrection of Christ for any truth and validation of the Christian faith and experience. Without it everything relating to Christianity has utterly no merit or foundation, and, in Paul’s words, is vain. It goes further than this. First of all, his argument on the one hand demands a resurrection

for the “dead in Christ”, while on the other hand it completely pre-empts or denies a resurrection for anyone outside of the Christian experience of salvation. If there is an inseparable union between the resurrection of Christ and the ultimate resurrection of those who belong to Christ, there is likewise a complete denial or disconnect of a resurrection of any kind for anyone outside of Christ. Thus the theology of a “general” resurrection for both “saint and sinner” is an impossible theology. There is absolutely nothing to connect or link the sinner to a risen Christ; neither by way of divine edict or divine creation from the dead. This fact will be overwhelmingly proven in verses following next.

Another point, which this declaration of Paul makes for us, is in regard to the theology that the resurrection of the “dead” is already in the past, having supposedly occurred in 70 A.D. at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the doctrine of the Preterist belief. If this argument had any merit to it, then the expression of the “dead” in verses 12 – 18, would be totally meaningless. The “dead” in these verses cannot, by any theological rationale, be interpreted to exempt anyone who died in Christ after 70 A.D., and thereby no “resurrection” factor could be associated with them. Finally, Paul clearly defines who he is embracing as the “dead”, when in verse 18 he specifies “them who have fallen asleep in Christ”. And it is not like he is allowing that those who die in Christ subsequent to 70 A.D. will somehow come into eternal life by some other unknown (and un-biblical) process. He speaks of those who have fallen asleep in Christ as having “perished”, if the “dead” are not raised.

These verses (12-19) are very important and very strong regarding Paul’s teaching of the other points of the resurrection contained in the rest of this chapter, as well as his writings on this subject otherwise. Let’s see if we can summarize the point of these verses.

- “The dead”, in these verses applies to those who have “fallen asleep” in Christ.
- The preaching of Christ without the necessary inclusion of those who belong to Christ, at his coming, is a vain message.
- If the “dead in Christ” have no hope of a resurrection, then Christ is not raised.
- This resurrection of the dead includes all who belong to Christ of any age and cannot be limited to certain events or periods of time, such as the Preterist teaching.
- This resurrection of the dead totally precludes and denies a general resurrection for the wicked simply because they have no connection to the Christ and therefore have no seed, Spirit, promise, purpose or hope of a resurrection.
- Everything concerning and connected to Christianity is all in vain if “the dead” do not have hope in a resurrection.
- Just as it was with Christ, the resurrection is the total fulfillment of any hope of a future existence, and therefore, precludes the theology of “going to heaven and an eternal reward at death”. The very idea is preposterous.

- Preaching, believing, following and obeying Christ is in vain if he is not raised, and, if those who are his children are not raised.
- “If in this life only we have hope in Christ” is a reference to the hope of the resurrection and not “going to a better world” at death. If someone asks me if I believe in going to a “better world above” at death, my answer is: “No, I believe in a resurrection, and you can’t have it both ways”. Either you believe in a resurrection when the Lord returns again or you deny the reason for the resurrection of the body and it’s significant purpose altogether. The notion of a “general” resurrection is a fabrication to accommodate the theology of an “immortal soul” and a last day “judgment” gathering and all of this to accommodate the theology of a mythical, pagan—inspired kind of eternal existence not taught by the Bible.

VERSES 20-23. CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS ----- AFTERWARDS?

V20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first—fruits of them that slept. 21. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.

Listen to this 20th verse again: “But now is Christ risen from (among) the dead (what dead), and become the first in-gathering of them that slept”. (But) – A reference back to the pro and con expressions Paul was using regarding the compelling argument as to whether or not there was a resurrection of “the dead”, (not just of Christ, but the dead). After he has given his reasons and has declared that without a resurrection of the dead, that, neither Christ or “the dead” have any resurrection and all that has been preached and believed are totally vain.

Then he gives a rising proclamation that “NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD”. Out of the midst of those who have died (or fallen asleep in the Lord) Christ has come forth as the first one to come back to life on this earth, never to die again. The expression, “first-fruits” is one that is taken from the instructions under the law that every year Israel was to offer to the Lord the “first-fruits of their harvest, before they partook of any of it for themselves. This first-fruits offering was always made during the time of the feast of Passover – unleavened bread, which always began on the 14th day of the first month of their year and continued through the 21st day of this month.

In like manner that Israel made a first-fruits offering unto the Lord, so also, Jesus is the first-fruits from the dead. I do not believe that there is any theological controversy over this type and anti-type being fulfilled by the resurrection by Christ. The important lesson for us in this is that Jesus is not the only one to be included in the theology or teaching of the resurrection from the dead. He is the first one and is to be followed by others. Let these scriptures address this for us.

Verse 22 has two inescapable truths for us. First, it tells us that “in Adam” all die. There can be no argument about this. We are all “in” Adam and we all die; there is no discharge in that war. Because we are the offspring of Adam and bear in our bodies the corruptibility he brought upon the human family, we die. When we are born, there is a progressive work of deterioration until the great enemy and plague of all mankind finishes its work and we return to the dust from which we were taken. Let me emphasize that it comes about all because we are everyone “in” Adam; the offspring of his corrupting pro-creation.

Secondly this verse tells us that, “even so “in Christ” shall all be made alive”. This tells us that if we are in Christ we shall also be made alive as he was. It is vitally important to make the right application to this condition of being “in Christ”. II Cor. 5:17 tells us that all that are “in Christ” are new creatures. It is for sure that we are not born in Christ by our natural parents. The only way to be “in Christ” is for a new birth by the transforming power of his work of salvation in our lives. We are in Adam by being born into his family. We are in Christ by being born into his family. There should not be any controversy over this, but theologians, in order to accommodate a “general” resurrection for everyone, including the wicked, wrest this scripture to say that “in Christ” ALL shall be resurrected. That simply is not what it is saying. To verify that, just continue reading the next verse.

“But every man in his own order”. The order Paul refers to here is that of Christ the first-fruits and – afterwards – they that are Christ’s at his coming. This brings a completion to the entire scope, purpose and timing of the resurrection. Christ is the first to be raised from the dead. Afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Paul does not proceed to describe any other category of people to ever be included in a resurrection. The reason should be obvious, no other category of people are “in Christ”.

Theology has done a grave disservice and total misinterpretation to the process of the resurrection by simply making it an act like that of raising Lazarus from the dead (who subsequently died again). The resurrection is not a bolt of lightning which strikes the ground and all who have ever died are thereby raised by divine power. Sure, God does have that kind of power. But if that is the process then it is only a matter of time before the recipients thereof die again. On the other hand, the resurrection comes about because an un-corruptible seed of faith has been planted in those hearts which hear the gospel and choose to believe it. As I Pet. 1:23 tells us, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever”. As Paul will later describe in this resurrection chapter, the resurrection has its beginning in a seed. In this case it is the seed of the everlasting gospel, which, if planted in the human heart, becomes the basis upon which life can come forth unto everlasting duration.

There is no such seed in the human heart which only has the seed of Adam as its origin. Therefore there is no basis upon which a resurrection unto an eternal existence (of any kind, good or bad) may be accomplished. Thus the expression in verse 22, “in Christ shall all be made alive” can only be applied to an expression such as is in verse 23, “they that

are Christ's", and cannot apply to the wicked dead, ever. In addition, to interpret these verses as only applying to the Corinthian Church, as the Preterist doctrine does, defies the application of the various statements in all of these verses to the dead in Christ, which their very express statements require and which the entire context of the chapter demands.

The embrace of the statement in verse 23, "But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ at his coming" has only two components to it: Christ and those who belong to him by way of the new birth. No one else is embraced in it and no one else can be.

Thus far Paul has identified witnesses of the resurrection, the utter vanity of the resurrection of Christ and his gospel and our faith without it and that only those who are in Christ have hope in one. There is one other overtone to all of these thoughts and that is the elevation of the idea of a resurrection far above anything connected to sin or the wicked and is allowed and expressed only as a part of the great work of redemption's plan and the sacrifice of Christ at calvary. To declare otherwise means that you must come up with a completely different origin and seed capable of producing it.

VERSES 24-28. THE RESURRECTION IS THE END OF ENEMY #1, DEATH.

V24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

"Then" – cometh the end! Then, that is, after the "every man in his own order; Christ the first –fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming", event, then cometh the end. Thus the sequence of events which usher in eternal life is, (1) the resurrection of Christ; (2) afterward those who belong to Christ when he returns, and (3) then the end. I make this point because there are so many different interpretations of what the return of Christ and the end of the world applies to. There is a variety of tribulations, resurrections, raptures, general resurrection and even when the end of the world itself occurs, presented by an equally broad array of theologians, that the average Bible student cannot possibly reconcile them all in harmony with each other. But everyone can go to this simple sequence outlined in these scriptures and not be dismayed by such a discombobulated mass of confusion. If this sequence which Paul outlines here is factual and trustworthy, and we are sure that it is, then no other passage of scripture in the Bible will refute it, interpretations to the contrary notwithstanding.

“When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power”. The next four verses must be carefully explained or their entire meaning will not be observed. “When he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom” sounds like he has something packaged and is in the process of delivering from earth to heaven. These verses use other statements that go along with this one and they are: the putting down of all rule, authority and power; all things being put under his feet; when all things shall be subdued; the Son himself will be subject unto him that put all things under him, and, God will be all in all.

First, we should remember that we are still reflecting on the subject and process of the resurrection of the dead. When that has occurred and subsequently the end occurs, then it is that these events which speak of putting down power, submission and all things being subdued will be in place. These expressions are teaching us of the ending of the office of the work of mediation of Christ. More specifically, they speak of the end of the work of salvation in the lives of sinful people because that is over and eternal life is now being ushered in. The covenant of God to man, as every sincere Bible student knows, is mediated to man through the man Christ Jesus in all of his work for our salvation. We cannot come to God (deity) except through the man Christ Jesus, that is, through the work of atonement accomplished by him for us at calvary. The atoning work or the mediating work of redemption will be over when the Lord returns and resurrects all of his children from the grave. That will end the work of mediation for salvation. All rule, authority and power (of the flesh or the world) will be put down as of that work. Then, when the office of mediation for redeeming sinners is closed, God will be all in all. We will no longer need mediation by a man for men, before God but we will stand face to face with our God and savior, the creator of the world. Christ reigns now in a mediatorial capacity; then he will reign in the capacity of God himself.

Someone will question as to what is meant by the Son himself being subject unto him that put all things under him and we reply that the mediatorial office, not a specific being, will be ended. This includes all the work of the church, salvation, the gospel and every related event in bringing men from their sins into the fold of God, will no longer be functioning as it does now. The simple reason is that faith has become reality; Christ has returned; mortality has been changed into immortality and the ongoing process of daily yielding to Christ and the gospel will be transformed into our eternal existence. And all of this will be done through and by the process of the resurrection. This expression of the Son being subject unto God has nothing to do with godhead theology; it has to do with the work of redemption through the atoning work of Christ, which will not be necessary in the eternal age.

Perhaps a practical illustration would be beneficial to illustrate this mediatorial office and its ending. Consider the example of the apostle Paul. He gave his life to Christ and labored in the ministry until his death, reportedly by being martyred for his faith during the reign of Emperor Nero, approximately 66-67 A.D. He has slept in Christ for nearly 2000 years,

awaiting, as he said in II Tim. 4:8, the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge would give him at that day, and not him only but unto all them also who love his appearing. So Paul has returned to the dust from which he was created. The next thing on his agenda will be when the Lord returns, he will be resurrected from the grave unto eternal life. The mystery and marvel of this resurrection brings with it the crowning of life forever more. Surely someone will question as to how God will know which grains of dust to recreate Paul from. However that is not the question. God will recreate Paul by the same power with which he created Adam to begin with. The difference will be that Adam was created in a probationary status, dependent upon his obedience to the tree of life. Paul, when he is resurrected, will not be in a probationary or conditional status, dependent upon his faith in God to live by; he will be in an immortal, incorruptible status, never to die again. That is what the resurrection is for and it is precisely what is missing in the theology of a "general" resurrection, including those who died in their sins with no seed of faith in them. Either the resurrection is the hope (the only hope) of the Christian or we should cut out a major portion of the Bible and discard it.

There is yet one other major point in these verses, 24-28, with their emphasis on the ending of the mediatorial office of Christ by way of the resurrection. Verse 26 tells us that the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. That, too, is what the resurrection is all about: the destruction of death. The arch enemy and the universal plague of death will be completely and totally obliterated from before the presence of God and in the existence of mankind. Nowhere, in any form, will there be any death; it will be destroyed by virtue of the resurrection. With the destruction of death comes also the destruction of sin, sin's consequences and the attendant woes mankind has suffered because of it. Death is not an "angel" sent to transport us to a "glory-world". It is not the gate to glory. It is not our friend to usher us to a brighter world above. It is and always has been the greatest enemy that mankind has known. It came about because of the disobedience of one man, Adam; see Romans chapter five. Perish the thought that it is the door to a better life; it is the gate to perdition and destruction.

Let us lift the resurrection to its rightful place in the plan of God. It alone is the means by which God will confer eternal life upon his children who have lived faithfully and true to him with all their heart. The resurrection is the door to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Death is the door to the grave. The highest honor a Christian can ever have is for the Lord to resurrect him or her from their dusty grave when he returns to the earth the second time. Shall we elevate sin and death to this level of honor? God forbid! Looking ahead to verse 54 of this chapter we are taught there that by way of the resurrection, death will be swallowed up in victory. There is utterly no way to equate that kind of statement with the idea of death being an angel sent of God to carry us to a brighter world. Either we are accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead (Lk. 20:35-36), or we shall remain in the congregation of the dead (Prov. 21:16). The resurrection: it is the glorious hope of the child of God!

V29. HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD?

V29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

We are right in the middle of the great resurrection chapter and here is inserted a verse that addresses water baptism. Not only does it address it but the way that it does so. What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? Does this mean that people can or should be baptized for others, even those who are dead? That is what some teach. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are those who teach that you can be baptized for those who have died and did not have a saving relationship with Christ. They propose to use this verse of scripture to support such a claim. Let us explore that further. You have a family member who has died without Christ and you read this verse and some preacher tells you that you can be baptized on behalf of this dead relative and that God will, because of your vicarious baptism for them, forgive them of their sins and take them out of that burning lake of fire to which they presumably have been consigned and transport them to streets of gold. How shall we charge God with such folly? What happened to the plan of God that teaches that “whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life? That is, what happened to individual faith in God as the medium for individual salvation? Further, if it is possible to be baptized for someone else in order that they might be saved thereby, then let us get in line and fill the baptistery with water everywhere and we can save the entire world (without them even knowing it). How ludicrous.

Just what, then, is this verse teaching us? Every verse of this entire chapter is saturated with nothing but the thought and message of the resurrection of the dead. The verses which follow after this are dedicated fully to that message. Surely Paul didn't inadvertently jump in the middle of this very vital subject and inject one verse about being literally baptized for dead people, with no relevant connection to that great theme. And just as surely he is not talking about some kind of spiritual baptism for others either.

The matter of contention which Paul is addressing to the Corinthian Church is whether or not there is any resurrection of the dead. In doing this, he has shown conclusively that Christ has risen from the dead. If there is no resurrection of the dead, he argues, that neither has Christ arisen from the grave. Further, without the resurrection of Christ and subsequently the resurrection of the dead, then all faith, preaching and obedience are in vain. Thus his question of “what shall they do which are baptized for the dead” is a reference to their being baptized into Christ. For if Christ has not been raised from the dead then their baptism into Christ is useless. That is one part of the answer to this question. The other part has to do with why they were baptized into Christ in the first place. They were baptized into Christ in the “hope of the dead”, that is, in the hope of their own resurrection from the dead.

This point is clarified in Romans 6:3, which reads: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death”? Verse 4 of this chapter continues, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Then verse 5 gives us the exact wording for the answer to our question of being baptized for the dead; “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection”. The reasonable meaning of I Cor. 15:29, is: we have been planted (buried, baptized) into Jesus Christ because of our faith in him that we will obtain a resurrection unto eternal life at his return. And Paul questions the Corinthians on this point, because they have been baptized into Christ. His question is therefore, why are you baptized for someone who you say is dead, or why are you baptized for the hope of a resurrection from the dead if the dead rise not?

V30-34. BAD THEOLOGY WILL CORRUPT GOOD MORALS.

V30. And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? 31. I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die. 33. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 34. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Continuing on his emphasis of the resurrection of the dead, Paul inserts some practical illustrations of his message.

- Why must I live with my life always threatened and in jeopardy if the only thing I have for it is in this life and there is no resurrection.
- My life is a daily sacrifice for the message of the resurrection of the dead.
- So what if I have fought with wild beasts and won; or if I am the most famous man in the world, or if I am the wealthiest man in the world and have more riches than Solomon. If the dead rise not then it is all in vain.
- Beware of the theology that teaches that there is no resurrection of the dead because it will corrupt your faith and there by your Christian conduct.
- Let me warn you that some do not have a proper knowledge of the truth about the resurrection. It is shameful that this is true, but it is.

V35-41. HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP?

V35. But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? 36. Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 37. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. 38. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and

to every seed his own body. 39. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

Paul anticipates the question that will be raised by those who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, which is: "How are the dead raised up and what kind of a body will they have"? It is a good question from which to provide an answer that will strongly confirm the truth of the resurrection of the dead as Paul has been teaching it. There are still questions of this nature in today's theology, especially as it relates to the "body" which shall be. In addition, the question relating to how the dead are raised up covers more than just the power by which it is accomplished. There should be no doubt that it is the power of God which alone is able to perform a resurrection, but the question also embraces the condition of a resurrected person, that is, will they die again or will there be a condition which eliminates death and all human suffering?

Paul begins his answer with a very confrontational exclamation: "thou fool". The original Greek renders this, "O senseless man". In other words Paul specifically calls attention to their incapability of knowing such an important issue. Another way of expressing it would be that, if you had a genuine faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, you would know the answer to this question. Perhaps it is good that the question is raised because it provides us a chance to gain an understanding of this important question. Consider his answer.

In his answer to this question, Paul uses 4 different analogies to illustrate it. First he illustrates it by a process that his readers would readily understand; that of sowing of grain. His first point is that whatever you sow (plant) in the ground is not quickened (or comes up to life) except it die first. This is true of grain which the farmer sows in the field. Next, following the analogy of planting grain, he describes the fact that the seed which you plant in the ground will not be what you see when it sprouts into a plant. What you sowed in the ground is not the same body which you see when it comes up. This is true whether you plant wheat, corn, beans or some other seed. The seed dies and, because there is what we call a germ of life in that seed, it springs forth with a plant, specifically peculiar to its own seed or nature. The body that it has, be it wheat, corn or beans, is one which God, in his creative wisdom and power, has given it. Each seed will have its own respective body.

Then he uses the analogy of flesh of different species. It may be of man, beasts, fish or birds and each species will have its own flesh. This is a very basic truth and reality in the realm of creation. God has given different species of flesh its own body as it has pleased him to do.

Next he uses the analogy of celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, and he explains that the glory of the celestial differs from that of the terrestrial. Celestial refers to heavenly bodies and terrestrial refers to earthly bodies, both of which there are many and they each differ from the other.

Finally he points out that there is one glory of the sun, another of the moon and yet another of the stars, explaining that each star differs from another. When you look at the sun you are awed by the brilliance of its light and heat. On the other hand, the moon is darker and gets all of its light from the sun and the moon has a varying amount of surface visible to us at different times of the month.

With these four analogies Paul uses illustrations which everyone would be familiar with and it will allow him to answer the question as to how the dead are raised up and with what body do they come? Primarily he is describing the different kinds of bodies of different portions of creation which can then be used to describe what the resurrection will be like. His main point in this is to illustrate that the body which we now have is not the body which we will have in the resurrection. It also confirms the fact that there will, indeed, be a “body”, visible and functional, which some deny.

It will also be a benefit to us if we consider some of the attributes of a “seed”

- A seed has life in it or there is no chance of germination and growth. Thus life springs forth from the seed planted because of the “life element” it possesses. Comparing this to the Christian vs. a non-believer, there is no “life element” in an unbeliever.
- We plant a small seed of corn and we get a very large stalk of corn, green instead of yellow and we also get re-productivity.
- No sowing of seed; no sprouting of a plant.
- There is a season for planting and a time when it will not germinate. Also other elements, like rain and sunshine, are necessary.
- The seed must be buried. Seed in a bag do not germinate.

V42-44. THE NATURAL BODY AND THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

V42. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. That is, “that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die, and, thou sowest not that body which shall be. The analogies which Paul has used of seed, flesh, planets, etc. will serve to inform us that there is a vast difference between the body that is buried and the body which is resurrected. There will be a complete change of what the resurrected person is made of and exists by. We should be careful not to equate this to our former make up of physical characteristics because the

change or difference he refers to will be described by altogether different characteristics than our former natural life. Paul proceeds with a description of these differences. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption". Herein is the great truth and power of the resurrection available through the saving grace of Christ. Everyone understands that this natural life is corruptible. Even as we live, there is a corrupting process taking place. We deteriorate as we age. Then, when we die, the description that comes down to us since the time of Adam applies: "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return". We are laid in the grave and we deteriorate (corrupt) into dust just as that from which we were first created. That is the unchangeable story of all mankind. But verse 42 continues, "We are raised in incorruption". Thus the resurrection of the "dead" of which Paul is teaching in I Cor. 15, does not in any circumstances, include the unbeliever. If it did, we would have to conclude that they are to be raised in incorruption. There would be nothing corruptible or sinful about them and they would not have a corruptible body. Follow this same thought in the next verses.

In verse 43, it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. Everyone is planted in their graves out of weakness (to prevent it) and nothing so dishonors life as does sickness and death. But the promised resurrection is applicable to the sleeping Christian, who in their time will be raised unto power and glory. How would it be possible to equate this with the wicked? "The Resurrection" does not include those who are outside the pale of God's saving grace and have not believed and accepted his atoning blood which was shed at calvary.

This is further emphasized in verse 44 where Paul recites that it is sown a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body. Again, is it possible to describe the wicked, assuming they are to be resurrected also, as having a spiritual body? What an oxy-moron that would be.

This verse raises another issue we must address; just what is meant by a "spiritual body"? The simple answer is, the body we have in this life is "a body by natural processes", while the body we will have after the resurrection will be "a body by spiritual processes"; or a body by the (Holy) Spirit. This also eliminates the applicability of a resurrection to those who have not the Holy Spirit in their life. (See Rom. 8:11) There are many different opinions about the meaning of the expression "spiritual body". It is often described as some invisible entity since the word "spiritual" is applied to it. However, if you research this word in the New Testament you will find that the word spiritual is applied to those who have been transformed by the power of God to a new life in the church. (Exam. I Cor. 2:15, Gal. 6:1, I Pet. 2:5) The best way to fully describe a spiritual body after the resurrection would be to look at the example of Christ. Before his resurrection he had a natural body but after the resurrection he had a body by the Spirit, eternal in its existence. The point to be made by his example is that in every detail he had a visible, functioning body with every essential member, yet without death and corruptibility. That is what a resurrected, spiritual body will be like. There is more on this in the following verses.

V45-49. THE TWO ADAMS.

V45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

This explanation of the “two Adams” is given in support of the previous verses regarding the “natural body and the spiritual body”. I make the assumption that there is general agreement about the two Adams, that the first Adam was the one created in the garden and the second Adam was Jesus Christ. The specific description Paul gives to each of them serves as confirmation that life eternal (by way of a resurrection) comes through the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

The first Adam was made a living soul. Gen. 2:7 reads: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”. He was alive by the creative power of God, but he was not a life giver. That is, he had no capacity to create life of an eternal nature. The better rendering of this might be that “man became a living being”. He was alive but not the giver of life.

The last Adam, however, was made a quickening spirit. That is, he was made a life giving spirit; the one who gives life. And as Christ said, “I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly”. He is the giver of life and by him we have the hope of eternal life, even a resurrection from the dead. It is a point with no dispute that eternal life is offered only through the Lord Jesus Christ; not through the first Adam. Further, as Paul has described it in this chapter, the life that Christ gives is, first of all a life based upon our faith in him and his atoning work at calvary, conditional and probationary upon the justification of that faith, and, second of all, based upon the promise and process of a resurrection through Christ to those who belong to him. Therein it is that the second Adam is called a quickening or life-giving spirit.

First came the man which was by nature and secondly that which is spiritual. The first man was earthy, made of the earth; the second man was the Lord from heaven. That is, he was God in human form come down to man to establish himself as the quickening spirit, or life-giving one. We are earth as Adam was and therefore we bear his image. Because of the sin and fall of Adam, we do not bear the image of the incorruptible God; we bear the image of corruptible man. But thanks be to God, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly because we have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus, II Cor. 5:17. Here and now, we walk by faith, transformed by faith into the likeness of him who gave himself for us, so that we are even now in his likeness, only in a conditional, by-faith similitude. Because we are his children by the new birth, we are not described officially as dead, but asleep. That is

because we are expecting and awaiting the “awakening”, the resurrection and because our “death” is not permanent “as others who have no hope” I Thess. 4:13.

V50-52. THE GREAT MYSTERY.

V50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51. Behold, I shew 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 trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

These verses introduce the event of the resurrection itself. Paul prefaces that event with the reminder that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Two things are important here: (1) “flesh and blood” refers to the natural man and this earthly life. It does not have any reference to some presumed status of flesh and blood after a resurrection. (2) Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. One way to interpret this is that it is simply a duplicate statement of what has been already said about flesh and blood. Another way to interpret it is that corruption, that is a deceased person, cannot inherit incorruption or immortality through the resurrection. There is no need to complicate the verse; leave it as it is and it prohibits any entrance into eternal life of any kind through corruptible flesh and blood. There must be another way to obtain eternal life and there is.

Behold I show you a mystery, which is: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. This refers to the obvious: When Christ returns there will be both living Christians and sleeping Christians. Technically, a resurrection would not apply to living Christians for the obvious reason that they are not in the grave. Therefore Paul explains that “we shall all be changed”. That is, after all, what a resurrection is all about. And I might add that it is the very component that advocates of a resurrection for the wicked fail to take into account.

Paul introduces a “change” which will take place as a part of the resurrection. Later verses will describe this “change” in specific detail. As a matter of practical theology, Paul is teaching that, when the Lord returns, the sleeping saints will be resurrected unto eternal life and the living saints will be “changed”, translated unto eternal life. This is the mystery he refers to and he explains it more in succeeding verses.

This event will not be extended over the years of some presumed tribulation or over a future millennium of peace or any other time consuming event. But in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, this event shall transpire. Whether or not you want to make this description refer to a “split second” or whether or not you apply it to an immediate and very quick event is hardly the point. Certainly God can accomplish it by the mere speaking of his word, instantaneously. There is no doubt, from the description given, but that it will transpire quicker than our perception can comprehend, so we will leave it there.

As to the sounding of the trumpet, I have never believed that God operated with a literal trumpet section, though he certainly could. I would rather see this as the last sound of the “gospel trumpet”, which only God would be able to discern. In whatever manner God chooses to signal his return and the resurrection and translation, it will be immediate and complete. At that express moment the dead (saints) shall be raised incorruptible and both the living and dead saints will be changed unto eternal life.

V53-56. FROM CORRUPTIBLE TO INCORRUPTIBLE BY THE RESURRECTION.

V53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. 55. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56. The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

Man is mortal in every aspect and attribute of his existence. Being mortal describes our condition of being in a dying state, always progressing toward the grave. Being mortal also means that there is nothing immortal about us. Never does the Bible ascribe immortality to mankind in any form until after the resurrection. “Immortal” is found one time in the Bible and there it is ascribed to God. “Immortality” is found five times in the Bible and never is it applied to man until after and by way of the resurrection. Even though orthodox theology teaches the immortality of the human soul, there is not one single scripture that states or insinuates that it is so. Therefore verse 53 states that this mortal must put on immortality, it is telling us that in order to have any quality that cannot die, it must be “put on”. It is not a present possession (See separate studies on the soul and spirit).

This verse also states that this corruptible must put on incorruption. We are in the process of corrupting now but in a total sense corruptibility comes when we are in our grave and we return to the dust from which we were made. Here again, the fact that incorruptibility is something which we must “put on”, is ample proof that we do not currently possess it.

Further, in verse 54, it is specified that at such time when we who are corruptible and mortal shall have put on incorruptibility and immortality, that, at that time, the scripture (which can be found in Isaiah 25:8) that states that death will be swallowed up in victory will have been brought to pass. That time is when the resurrection occurs.

What Paul has done in these verses is eliminate any possibility of coming into a deathless state or condition until the resurrection. Not only that, but he has also validated the truth that it is by the power and process of the resurrection that this incorruptibility and immortality is conferred upon those who receive it. Further, he has absolutely denied any possibility of anyone having a resurrection without it removing from them any essence of mortality or corruptibility. This emphatically precludes any such thing as a resurrection of the wicked, since to have one means that they also would have become victorious over death and would now be crowned with immortality. One other inescapable conclusion this

brings you to is that the resurrection is the only means and process by which eternal life in all reality is conferred upon the child of God. It does not happen at or by death; the resurrection is the one time and procedure which alone can give us eternal life. This is further confirmed by the example of Christ. He did not ascend into the heavens at his death at calvary. The scriptures clearly deny this possibility. The question must be asked, then, by what means and at what time could it be said of him that he had obtained immortality, a never dying quality. Obviously it was not before calvary, because he, in fact, did die at calvary. Who is going to put forth the thesis that after the resurrection he was not immortalized, never to die again? This leaves only one process and event by which immortality was given to Christ (as a man). That one event is the resurrection.

My reason for extending this thought to such length is that, because the doctrine of a general resurrection for every human being which has ever lived, regardless as to their relationship with God, we have minimized, diluted and completely offset the real purpose of a resurrection through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It needs to be exalted to its rightful place as the only possible means of anyone ever being crowned with eternal life. What, I might ask, is so bad about that? The crowning achievement of Christ shall also be the crowning achievement of all who belong to Christ of all ages. The resurrection is not something for an Easter celebration and the one time that many go to church throughout the year; it is something for every child of God to praise God for and be filled with the hope which it alone can give. **TO BE RESURRECTED WHEN JESUS RETURNS TO THE EARTH THE SECOND TIME IS THE MOST GLORIOUS EVENT AND HOPE WHICH THE HUMAN HEART CAN HAVE AS ITS OWN.** The reason is simple: it will crown us with life evermore.

Then death will have lost its sting and its plague upon mankind will be forever eliminated. It is the enemy of mankind, not our friend. The grave and the cause that puts us there will be forever banished. And the blessed recipients of the resurrection will inhabit eternity with the Lord Jesus. Yes, this is a teaching about the resurrection that will not be accepted by hoary tradition or orthodox theology. Neither is it the doctrine of the masses. But neither is it the doctrine of religions, pagans and false promises. Judge it by the word of God; nothing else will stand.

V57-58. VICTORY IN JESUS.

V57. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, un-moveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

In conclusion of this long message and explanation of the truth about the resurrection of the dead, in what appears to be a glance back over this wonderful truth, Paul exclaims, "Thanks be to God". Thank God for the wonder of the resurrection of Jesus! Thank God for the resurrection of those who belong to Jesus! Thank God for the witnesses of this

wonderful truth and the absolute certainty of its reality! Thank God for the miraculous process of this profound mystery, that we shall all be changed from mortality to immortality; from corruptibility to incorruptibility! Thank God that death, the arch enemy of mankind, will be swallowed up in victory, never to appear again!

And, “thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! This is a victory which can be known because we have received the message of his death, burial and resurrection, which has brought to us a quickening from our sins wherein we once walked, and thereby assures us that, at that day, we shall receive a crown of eternal life that shall never end when he resurrects us from the dead.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast and faithful to this blessed truth concerning the resurrection of “the dead” and don’t be shaken or moved from its everlasting foundation in the Lord. Go forth from this moment, always abounding in every work the Lord calls you to, doing it full of joy and hope, because your labor is not in vain in the Lord. If it were true, as some among you have said, that there was no resurrection of the dead, then your labor in the Lord would be vain. It is in every minute detail proven that those who say such things are totally misguided and false, by virtue of the undeniable truth that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, just as the Old Testament scriptures said he would, and afterward they that are Christ’s will be resurrected at his coming.

At the conclusion of this chapter, in which Paul has set forth a most beautiful and persuasive declaration of the one truth of the everlasting gospel upon which everything else depends, may our hearts rejoice in this wonderful promise and the hope it brings to the Christian heart. In addition, let us hereafter lift the message and hope of a resurrection for “the dead in Christ” above and beyond the mysticism of an invisible departure from our earthly bodies at death, thereby to achieve an eternal reward totally apart from the resurrection. What could God give us or do for us that is more miraculous, full of eternal hope and more perfectly fits his own example and mold in Christ, than to offer us a resurrection when he returns. If Jesus Christ entered into eternal glory by way of a resurrection, why is that not our only hope also?

THE RESURRECTION IN CHAPTER THREE OF THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

The story of the Philippian Church is one of the most exciting in all the book of Acts. Paul went there after a vision from the Lord called him to that area. There Lydia, the seller of purple, and her household were baptized unto Christ. Following this, Paul and Silas were put in jail and from this experience, the jailer and his household received the gospel and were baptized. Now Paul, in prison again, or at least under detention, writes an epistle to this church, addressing it to the saints at Philippi. The church at Philippi is considered to be one of the strongest and most spiritual churches of the New Testament. In the letter Paul writes to them, he writes about his being apprehended for the message of the resurrection through Christ. We will take up that thought beginning in ch. 3: 8-14.

V8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

- a. Paul had suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ. This is not some vicarious or figurative loss he refers to, but he had, indeed, lost all that he had going for him in his life before his conversion. Not that he regretted that loss but he looked upon it as gaining a far better life and hope than he had before. In addition, his sufferings for the gospel of Christ were so extensive and real that he was, in effect, deprived of any essence of a normal life as others knew it.
- b. The losses he bore, when compared to the gain he had in Christ, were so that he may know the power of his resurrection. Religion was not an issue with Paul; the power of the resurrection through Christ was the compelling reason he was willing to suffer the loss of everything. This message was his life-long focus and driving force, not only for himself but for all to whom he was privileged to preach.
- c. When he says, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead", he has summarized the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead through the Lord Jesus Christ in one expression. It shows that it is attainable through Christ; that it is not automatic, and that it is worthy of all he has given up in order to obtain. It further shows that, if he must give his all to obtain this resurrection, then where does that leave the rest of the world? This one statement puts the resurrection within the reach of the Christian only and leaves no room at all for a resurrection of the wicked.

- d. He further clarifies this hope with the fact that he has not already attained to the resurrection, which teaches us the necessity of continuing in the faith with all diligence in order to receive this blessed hope.
- e. Then he offers us an unusual statement. I follow after this hope if I might “apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus”. Paul was presently under arrest for his labors in preaching the resurrection of the dead. That resurrection was exactly what he was striving with all of his soul, having suffered the loss of all things, that he might apprehend it for himself. If a resurrection from the dead required of Paul to suffer the loss of everything and follow after Christ diligently, how could it possibly be offered to anyone else without that?
- f. The prize to which Paul was pressing, having left behind all other things, was a resurrection from the dead. Paul never expressed the idea of going to his eternal reward at death; but only by way of the resurrection.
- g. This was the high calling of God: to attain unto the resurrection of the dead at any cost. There is no prize in all of the Christian journey as worthy and as grand as the resurrection from the dead. Why should we not elevate this hope to the loftiest height of Christian attainment as Paul certainly did?

The faith Paul impressed upon the Philippian Christians, as he did to all to whom he preached, was that, if they suffered the loss of all things in order to know Christ and serve him, was that they could attain unto a resurrection from the dead. He did not leave with them the doctrine of a resurrection for the ungodly.

THE RESURRECTION MESSAGE TO THE THESSALONIANS. I THESS. 4:13-18.

SCRIPTURE TEXT. V13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

While it may be said that the 15th chapter of I Corinthians is the resurrection chapter and offers the most complete analysis of the subject of any passage in the entire Bible, yet, it can further be said, that I Thess. 4:13-18, offers us the most definitive, digested form of this very important subject. It is so clear in its direct and thorough explanation of exactly what to expect on that great day of the return of Christ and the resurrection. It totally harmonizes with all the rest of Paul's teaching on this subject, which is exactly what you would expect. The disharmony on this subject comes from the interpretations people apply to it which so often varies from that which Paul taught.

These verses begin with an expression of concern on the part of Paul, that the Thessalonian Christians might not thoroughly understand the process of their hope in Christ. He is not accusing them of ignorance as a people; he is concerned that their faith in the great hope of Christianity be thoroughly understood by them. This is for their edification and comfort. When you look at the extreme views on the subject of the resurrection held by many, you are made to feel that Paul's concern for the Thessalonians is still a concern for Christian minded people today. What Paul is about to explain to these early Christians was not only good for their comfort and hope as well as their spiritual enlightenment, it is equally as necessary for our spiritual understanding on this subject as well. These verses, as we have already indicated, offer to us an encapsulated description of the scope and process of the resurrection.

Next, he is about to describe for them the present state of those Christians who have already died, and the ultimate process by which they will ever inherit eternal life. "Concerning them which are asleep", can only be a reference to Christians who have died in their faith in Christ. They are asleep in the sense that, ere long, they will be awakened by the resurrection. "Others which have no hope" can only apply to those who died without Christ in their lives. Thus Paul has established the condition of two different categories of people; one which belong to Christ and one which does not. He has not only distinguished these two classes by the condition of being "asleep" as opposed to being "dead", he has also distinguished between them with the thought that the "others" have no hope. With this in mind, the question arises, what hope? As we pursue the rest of these verses, the answer to that

question is unequivocally the hope of a resurrection. Those who are asleep have a hope (in a resurrection) while the others who have no hope, will not have a resurrection. Nothing else, I submit, can be correctly deduced from these distinguishing thoughts and classes of people.

Verse 14, which follows includes conditions which restricts the hope of a resurrection to those who possess such conditions, without which there is no resurrection. That condition is: "For if we believe". Faith is thereby established as an unalterable requirement for a resurrection. If we believe that Jesus died and arose from the grave even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. We all recognize that our relationship with God is based upon our faith in him as it relates to his atoning work at calvary. The sequel to that relationship is that, by faith, we will also be resurrected from the dead. The entire process of anything related to the resurrection is predicated upon the condition of faith. Without faith in Christ, then, there is no hope or chance of a resurrection. As I have stated before, the theology which includes a resurrection for the ungodly at the return of Christ, robs the resurrection of its glory and crown, thereby reducing it to an act which does not have hope in it. In addition to this, a resurrection based upon the condition of faith in Christ as the hope and culmination of that faith, eliminates the possibility of obtaining an eternal hope in any other way and at any other time except at the return of Christ and the resurrection.

That is what Paul is trying to convey to the Thessalonian Christians. If they had already gone to a better world above and were enjoying the full measure of their eternal hope in the Lord, then the resurrection would hold absolutely nothing for them. Either we must eliminate the idea of obtaining our eternal reward through the process of dying or we must eliminate it through the process of a resurrection. In I Cor. 15, Paul emphatically declared that our crown of incorruptibility, immortality, was obtained by and through the resurrection of the dead, not by the process and event of dying. To the church at Thessalonica, Paul teaches that those who have already died in Christ are asleep in him, and based upon their faith in the resurrection of Christ, they too will have a resurrection from the dead. That is their hope, which others who do not know Christ, do not have. Again, their hope is not in going to a mansion in the sky when they die, their hope is in the return of Christ and their personal resurrection.

Now, in verse 15, Paul broadens his explanation of their hope in a resurrection. We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. When Christ returns the second time, there will be living Christians, carrying on the work God has entrusted to their care, and there will be those, down through all the ages, who are asleep, awaiting his coming and the resurrection. There is an interesting phenomenon applicable to those who sleep in Christ which further magnifies this condition of "sleep". Take Abraham for example, he has been dead for hundreds of years. But if we consider him in a condition of a deep sleep, the next thing which he will be aware of will be the resurrection. It will no more seem like a long time for him to have been in his grave, than for you to arise from a long night of deep sleep. The many years which have passed since his burial in the field of Macpelah will be no more than a "blip" in terms of time.

These two categories, “remain and asleep”, in the 15th verse are said to be placed in separate priority regarding the resurrection. Those who “remain”, that is, are alive when Christ returns, shall not “prevent” them which are “asleep”. The original Greek for this word “prevent” is rendered “precede, which lends more clarity to the event. This means that those who are asleep in Christ will be raised first ----- let’s just let verse 16 describe it for us.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. It really does not need much explanation beyond what Paul has given it. The Lord himself shall descend. Just as he promised in Acts 1:11, this same Jesus who ascended up into the heavens, shall so come in like manner as he ascended. Also in Titus 2:13: Looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The subject of the coming of the Lord is another subject, requiring much study, but it is inseparable from the resurrection. For this verse (V16) Paul is describing to the church at Thessalonica just how it will transpire. The Lord himself will descend from heaven ----- and the dead in Christ shall rise first. At this point, proponents of a resurrection for the wicked become careless in the handling of this statement. They assume two things as a corollary to the statement, “the dead in Christ shall rise first”. They assume that because there is a “first” event or resurrection mentioned that it means that there is necessarily a second resurrection and that it will be for the ungodly. Thus you get a doctrine of two resurrections, the second being for the ungodly. From there the imaginations can go anywhere.

However, if you continue reading the scripture an explanation is usually forth coming, which is exactly the case here. Verse 17 begins with, “THEN we which are alive and remain”. The corollary to the dead in Christ being raised “first” is that those who are living Christians at the time shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. He has already pointed out (in verse 15) that we which are alive and remain shall not precede them which are asleep. Now (in verses 16 & 17) he explains that the sleeping children of God shall first be resurrected, followed immediately by we which are alive and remain. And we, the living and sleeping Christians, shall be caught up, each together, to meet the Lord in the air. From this wonderful event they shall ever be with the Lord. It does not say nor imply that we shall always be in the air, but that we shall always be with the Lord. I think that it is safe and satisfactory to leave it to the Lord to take us where ever he deems best.

With this explanation Paul has given of the sleeping and living saints of God, he exhorts them to be comforted by these words. There are several points to affirm from these scriptures.

- The great truth about them which are asleep in Christ.
- “If we believe” that Jesus died and rose again.
- Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him (resurrect them).
- The living saints shall not precede the sleeping saints in this great event.
- The Lord himself will descend from heaven.
- The dead in Christ shall rise first.

- Then we which are alive and remain.
- Will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, together with the resurrected saints.
- Take comfort in this great hope.

We have already pointed out how that orthodox theology would try to interpret these scriptures to include a resurrection for the ungodly. It just is not there. There is a strange sequence of preaching that occurs at nearly every funeral service. During the comments preachers make while assembled in the church they invariably describe the deceased as having already gone to a much better world. They affirm to us that immediately at the point of the last breath of the deceased they are in the presence of Christ, looking over their mansion and walking on streets of gold. They are further described as enjoying every detail and promise God has made concerning eternal life and they possess every capability to communicate, see, talk, understand, enjoy and participate in this world of glory.

As soon as the service is dismissed and we re-group at the grave side, they invariably turn to I Thess. 4:13-18 and proceed to read these wonderful words of Paul, which he gave to help those at Thessalonica avoid being ignorant about those who sleep in Jesus. But now in the short span of less than one hour, we are told that death is the angel which has taken them to be with the Lord in eternal glory, but we must wait until the resurrection to be re-united with them at that time. The process for this, we are told, is that the Lord will take them out of their mansion and away from the festivities they are enjoying, and bring them down to earth to be re-united with a body that is taken out of the dust so that the "soul" can be put back into it.

Why don't you compare that presumed process of events with that which Paul has so clearly laid out for our comfort and hope in I Thess. 4:13-18. Surely we can see the difference.

OTHER REFERENCES TO THE RESURRECTION FROM THE EPISTLES

Rom. 1:4. "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead".

The greatest and most undeniable certification of Jesus as the Son of God is the resurrection.

II Tim. 2:18. "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some".

Paul addresses those who, by saying that the resurrection is already over, overthrow the faith of some. Maybe they allowed the resurrection of Jesus but they would not believe in their own resurrection to come, as a part of the total work of the resurrection.

Heb. 11:35. "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection".

The hope they had in a "better resurrection" gave them far greater peace than the possibility of deliverance from their tortures. And these were Old Testament believers in a resurrection.

I Pet. 1:3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".

We have been brought to the possibility and experience of a lively (living) hope because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Without that there would be no hope for anyone.

I Pet. 3:21. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Our water baptism is a part of our salvation, answering to the burial of Christ. Like he was buried in the grave because of his death at calvary, we also are buried with him in baptism, (Rom. 6:3-5). The resurrection of Christ establishes the purpose and value of baptism which is our confirmation of faith in Christ and his resurrection.

II Cor. 4:14. "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

Our hope and prospect of our own resurrection is contingent upon the connection we have by faith in the resurrection of Christ.

Eph. 1:19-20. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

The work of the power of God in our lives to save us from sin is available unto us because of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the grave.

I Thess. 1:10. We await the coming of him who was raised from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the certification that he is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

II Tim. 2:7-8. "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. 8. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel".

Paul is asking Timothy (and us) to consider and accept what he has preached to them. His justification for asking this is not based upon his learning or authority, but upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of the gospel which he has preached, without which it would have no foundation.

SCRIPTURES WHICH TEACH A SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

Including questions relating to a resurrection for the ungodly.

We have steadfastly declared that a resurrection at the return of Christ, at the last day of time, is for the Child of God only. More specifically, we have objected to the theology of a resurrection for the ungodly at any time. We have maintained that the resurrection of the dead at the return of Christ was for the distinct purpose of crowning the child of God with immortality, incorruptibility, eternal life; qualities that are never offered to the ungodly. We have consistently shown, from a large array of scriptures in both Old Testament and New Testament, that a resurrection was contingent upon the condition of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever is favored with a resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit is, thereby, transformed from corruption to incorruption; a condition that could never be applied to the ungodly.

We are very much aware of various passages of scripture which are used by orthodox theology to teach a resurrection for the ungodly. It is the purpose of this section to deal with those scriptures so as to determine just what it is that they are saying. It is not fair to look into the Bible on a subject as important and wonderful as the resurrection is, and not consider every relevant scripture that has any practical bearing on its final interpretation. It is totally unacceptable to select certain verses of scripture to uphold any thought or doctrine, when there are many other verses which either have or appear to have a different point of view. In addition it is absolutely essential that the final interpretation of a subject of this magnitude be made with total biblical harmony and support.

We will begin this portion of our study with scriptures from the 37th chapter of Ezekiel.

THE RESURRECTION AS TAUGHT IN EZEKIEL CHAPTER 37.

Eze. 37:12-14. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.

Reading the entire 37th chapter of Ezekiel will be beneficial in the application of these scriptures. Undoubtedly, there is a prophecy of a resurrection (literal or spiritual) in these verses. This is the chapter with the well known story of the dry bones which Ezekiel was told to prophecy to and that they would come together. Ezekiel obeyed the word of the Lord and the bones came together and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then Ezekiel was told (V11) that these bones were the whole house of Israel and this prophecy was given because they were all dried up and disjointed from each other. At this particular time, Judah had been carried away captive into the land of Babylon. There they had come to a very low

condition in their spiritual experience with the Lord. In addition, they were captives in the land of Babylon because of their backsliding and sins against the Lord.

This prophecy by Ezekiel is of a spiritual awakening or resurrection of the people of God which was fulfilled historically when they were delivered from Babylon about 636 B.C., and spiritually when the Lord brought to them salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the prophecy was directly to the “House of Israel”, it is necessarily confined to those unto whom it is sent. For this reason alone it could not be applied to a resurrection for the ungodly in the last day when Christ returns. Further, it does not mention the return of Christ and neither does it apply to that event. Verse 21 will clarify exactly what it is about. “And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; behold, I will take the children from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land.”

Verses 12 and 13 specifically state that they would be brought up out of their graves. The question may be asked if this does not mean that it will be a literal resurrection. The answer is that it does not. You cannot correctly take the verses that manifestly teach a spiritual resurrection and then apply other verses in a different manner. In Eph. 2:1, Paul wrote that the Ephesians had been quickened (awakened) which had been “dead” in their trespasses and sins. If these were dead (spiritually), then they were necessarily buried (spiritually). Thus the people of God in Ezekiel were spiritually dead and buried and God promised their resurrection from their graves of sin.

I do not disagree that this prophecy can have an application to the deliverance of Judah from Babylon, but it is more than that. This is true for the simple fact that the “whole” house of Israel is included in the prophecy. This refers to the “10 tribes comprising Israel” and the “two tribes comprising the house of Judah”. It is not limited to Judah in the Babylonian captivity. Both divisions of the “House of Israel” were taken away by the heathen and are a part of the prophecy regarding their spiritual awakening. This spiritual awakening has reference to the coming of Christ (through the lineage of David) and the establishment of salvation through his sacrifice at calvary, which is the only means for a spiritual awakening for anyone. It has nothing to do with the theology that teaches a future restoration of the nation of Israel.

Finally, it is patently obvious that those who are the recipients of this “coming up out of their graves” are “restored ones”; not good and evil. They had all been evil which is why they were carried away in the first place; but now, being restored, they are put back in good stead with their king. Nothing in this story gives eternal life to the ungodly.

DANIEL 12:1-2. MANY SHALL AWAKE.

V12. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

We will not attempt in this lesson to enter into an explanation of the entire 12th chapter of Daniel; we have dealt with the prophecies of Daniel in other lessons to which you are referred.

These verses are often quoted in support of a resurrection for the righteous and unrighteous at the last day when Christ returns again. This explanation is advanced in an attempt to prove a resurrection for the good and the evil, inasmuch as verse 2 says that some will awake to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and contempt. The verses and the entire 12th chapter do not mention the return of Christ and are not applicable to that event. Further, there is no way to use these verses to apply to all people who have ever lived on the earth in all time, as the general resurrection doctrine requires.

Verse two begins with the statement, "And MANY of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake". It does not say or apply to ALL. "Many" is restrictive language and cannot be used to teach a general resurrection for everyone who ever lived on the earth. In verse 4 of this chapter, it says: "many shall run to and fro". No one interprets this to mean that everyone "runs to and fro"; it is restrictive language not intended to be inclusive of all who have ever lived on the earth. Do you include yourself in this number which "runs to and fro"?

There is another problem with applying these verses to a general resurrection at the last day. In verse one it is said, "at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book". Thus you have restrictive language here to those who are found written in the book, which everyone will apply to the righteous. When you couple this with the restrictive nature of "many" in verse two, we are compelled to seek for an explanation other than a general resurrection at the last day when Christ returns.

We can find an illustration of this kind of awakening, some to life and some to shame and contempt, in the second chapter of Acts. We do not mean to interpret Daniel 12 as being fulfilled in Acts two; we only use it to illustrate a point. The second chapter of Acts is the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the inauguration of the church. When Peter preached the gospel to the multitude that day, there was an "awakening"; some to the blessed hope of everlasting life and some to shame and contempt for refusing the offer of the gospel. This is the kind of awakening which is presented to us in Daniel chapter twelve.

JOHN 5:24-29. A RESURRECTION BY FAITH.

V24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life. 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

This is a marvelous passage of scripture because of the fact that it presents unto us the offer of deliverance through the hearing and believing of the word of Christ. However, here again, it is probably the most often quoted scripture in support of a resurrection for the unrighteous at the last day. This conclusion is drawn from the words in verses 28-29, which tell us that an hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. This is a classic illustration of interpreting a verse of scripture without doing so in harmony with the other scriptures covering the thought at hand.

At the very outset of these scriptures, in verse 24, the Lord declares the marvelous offer of deliverance to those who “hear his word and believe on him that sent me”. In this one expression the entire subject matter of verses 24-29 is confined to hearing and believing the gospel of Christ. Nothing that he will say subsequent to that expression will alter that conditional offer. Therefore it remains for us to see just what the other verses tell us that can fit within the boundaries of “hearing and believing”. There should be no question in any mind what is meant by “hearing and believing the words of Christ”: that meaning is that salvation is the by-product of it. It follows then, that if hearing and believing are conditions of the resurrection of which Christ speaks, there is no literal resurrection for the ungodly when Christ returns again simply because they have not heard and obeyed the gospel.

There is another, equally impossible, road block to a general resurrection at the last day in these scriptures. That problem is the time element required in them. Before we look into this as it is given in these scriptures, let us review another familiar passage of scripture that can offer us some support in how the time element affects the resurrection as it is taught in these particular scriptures.

In the previous chapter of John we have the great story of the meeting of Christ with the woman at the well in Samaria. In this story, Jesus told the woman about living water which he would give to all who would come to him. This would be a well of water springing up within her (and to all others who drink of it) unto everlasting life. The woman acknowledged that Jesus was a prophet and called attention that her ancestors worshipped in the mountain of

Samaria, but that Jesus was teaching that men ought to worship at Jerusalem. It was at this point, in verse 21, that Jesus told her that the hour was coming when they would neither worship in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem. Then in verse 23, he follows up on this new day of worship by repeating: "But the hour cometh, AND NOW IS, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

How many times has this wonderful story been preached from in order to proclaim the wonderful gift of living water to all who will come to Christ? I completely agree with the great truth this passage conveys that a new day of worshipping God was about to be established. Every Bible student knows that new day of worship was introduced by the sacrifice of Christ at calvary and was fully implemented on the day of Pentecost and the beginning of the church age. That was the day when living waters would flow out from Jerusalem to touch the whole world with the grace of God. And that was the day which Jesus gave as the specific time for this to occur. We have all quoted his words in verse 23 as proof of this time frame: "the hour cometh, AND NOW IS". There can be no question about the time element of the beginning of this day of living water and its new era of worship of the Father.

We will now return to our lesson from John 5, and the time element for the resurrection which is mentioned there. I am convinced that this resurrection in Jn. 5:24-29, was the spiritual awakening that came so dramatically with the ushering in of the day of salvation and deliverance from sins. Further that it does not teach a literal resurrection at the last day when Christ returns to the earth again. The very positive reason that I am convinced of this is the time element which Christ so emphatically gave in these verses as the controlling factor of its moment of occurrence. That time element is found in verse 25 of this chapter. It reads, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, THE HOUR IS COMING, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE DEAD SHALL HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD: AND THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE". Jesus was teaching about the same essential lesson that he had discussed in Jn. 3, Jn. 4, now in Jn. 5 and even other chapters in John. That lesson was: the new birth, the living water and the spiritual awakening of people who would hear and obey the gospel, NOW being preached to the world.

With the time element of "NOW IS" there is no way to project this message of Christ out into the future, yet to occur, when Christ returns again. But the question might be asked as to how you explain the idea of them coming up out of their graves and some coming forth unto life and some coming forth unto damnation. It is like Ezekiel foretold in his prophecy that the dry bones of Israel would come forth. It is like it occurred on the day of Pentecost and everywhere else the gospel has ever been preached. When the gospel is preached unto people, it draws forth action: either you believe it and follow it and it gives you life, or you reject it and refuse to follow it and it brings condemnation upon you. Everyone knows this who has studied the Bible. Two conditions control the application of the "resurrection" in Jn. 5:24-29. They are: those who hear and believe, and the hour now is. Whatever application we make of these scriptures must take into account these two conditions or it will be wrong.

When Paul visited the city of Ephesus with the message of the gospel of salvation, he found disciples there who knew only the baptism of John. Paul explained to them that Christ had come, as John had preached that he would, and these disciples believed and were lead into the fullness of their salvation. This account is found in the 19th chapter of Acts. If you read this entire chapter you will also find that there were many unbelievers in Ephesus. The message of the gospel became a condemnation unto them.

Then, when Paul wrote back to this church in the epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 2:1-6, he described their conversion to the gospel and their salvation in terms of being “dead in sins”, but “quicken” or “raised” up together with Christ. Thus, as a result of the preaching of the gospel, you have two classes of people: one that believes and is quickened from their sins unto a new life in Christ, and one which did not believe and were therefore under condemnation because of rejecting the message of salvation. This is what Jesus is describing in Jn. 5:24-29. Since Christ conditioned this “resurrection” as being for those “who hear his word and believe on him who sent him”, it is necessarily confined to a spiritual resurrection resulting from the preaching and believing of the gospel.

REVELATION 20: 4-6. “THE FIRST RESURRECTION”

In the entire book of Revelation, the word “resurrection” is found only two times. Those two times are in Rev. 20:5-6. In each case it is referred to as the “first resurrection”. It seems rather strange that this reference to a resurrection is interpreted by orthodox theologians as referring to the resurrection which is expected to take place at the second return of Christ. Since the reference in these two verses addresses a “first” resurrection, the assumption is made that this automatically embraces a “second” resurrection. Thus, it is assumed to be a “first” resurrection for one group (which group depends upon what theologian you are quoting) and then later a “second” resurrection for another group. In this manner and based upon this kind of reasoning, these scriptures are presumed to teach a resurrection for the saints in one group and the sinners in another group.

There are serious problems with this application of these scriptures that simply cannot be resolved in the context of this irrational interpretation. In the first place, the text of scripture does not mention two resurrections and it does not mention two groups of people, i.e. saints and sinners. In fact it says “blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection”. That does not leave any room for sinners in that language.

There is an unsolvable problem with applying these scriptures to two separate resurrections, in some cases and with some theologians, who do so by applying the one thousand years between the two resurrections. In this manner they apply the first resurrection before the 1000 years to the saints and the resurrection they presume to be after the 1000 years, to the sinners. All of this is done to accommodate a “general” resurrection of both the saints and the sinners, which is required in order that they can accommodate a “judgment bar” with everyone who ever lived standing before it to be judged. Notice now, it is taught that the two

presumed resurrections are 1000 years apart, but then at the “second” resurrection, every person who has ever lived must be brought before this judgment bar.

If we would only read the text carefully we could save ourselves this confusion. Notice verse 5 very carefully: “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION. That is, the first resurrection is not before the 1000 years occurs, but after the 1000 years are finished. That does away entirely with two resurrections; one before and one after the 1000 years.

Another problem with this kind of interpretation of the 1000 year period is that it cannot possibly be properly interpreted without including and conforming to the rest of the entire chapter and all that it requires. Arbitrary interpretations are totally unacceptable. I have made an entire lesson on this 20th chapter of Revelation, including the application of the 1000 year period. I would refer you to that lesson for a complete analysis of the various requirements of the entire chapter. Suffice it to say at this point, that the events described in this chapter are applicable to a period of time within the history of the church and events related thereto. None of it applies at or after the return of Christ. In fact the return of Christ is not mentioned in the entire chapter. In addition, as I have pointed out already, the text describing this “resurrection” will not allow it to be applied to two resurrections, especially at different time periods. The 1000 year period must be interpreted in harmony with every other event and requirement of the chapter or it is incorrect. All of the other parts of this vision as outlined within the chapter, such as the binding of Satan, bottomless pit, great chain, the first resurrection, the loosing of Satan from prison, deceiving of the nations, great white throne, book of life, the sea that gave up its dead, and all the rest must be dealt with in order to have a right understanding of the chapter. When this is done, the interpretation will be vastly different from orthodoxy.

Another point to consider in the interpretation of this 20th chapter of Revelation is that “prophecy” is not a good place to establish your basic doctrine of the gospel, especially as important as the subject of the resurrection is. In addition, if your interpretation of Revelation does not harmonize with other scriptures, so clearly declared about the subject, then your problems only enlarge.

SUMMARY

In a summary of this entire lesson, we will draw from portions of the scriptures and events which we have covered and let that be our closing focus.

We began with a brief introduction of this phenomenal event and promise, the resurrection of the dead. We followed this with a statement of faith setting forth the basic outline of the subject of the resurrection as the scriptures proclaim it.

We followed this with a look at this subject as taught in the Old Testament, drawing on such stories as that of Abraham, the psalmist, Jonah and others. The point was to show that the subject of the resurrection is not confined to the New Testament, but instead, finds its basic premise in the Old Testament. Many of the references to a resurrection in the Old Testament are found in one form or another in the New Testament. An example of this was the fact of Jonah being in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights and Christ using this as a type of his burial in the grave for three days and three nights (Mt. 12:40).

Next we observed the scriptures on this subject as found in the four gospels, most of which Christ preached during his earthly ministry. His own resurrection is the plan and pattern for our resurrection when he returns. Paul emphasized this when he declared that Christ was the "first fruits" and afterward we that belong to Christ at his coming. Perhaps the outstanding message in which Christ clearly described the resurrection is found in the 6th chapter of John. In this chapter he proclaims that he is the bread of life. Then he declared that "he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood would have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day. This "eating his flesh and drinking his blood" is accomplished as we eat or receive his word (of the gospel of salvation), and receive or are baptized with his Holy Spirit. In other words, the complete work of redemption, wrought by God in the individual heart and life, is essential in order for one to have a resurrection from the dead. No one else has the relationship with God necessary to obtain one.

In the book of Acts the resurrection was the beginning of the ministry of the gospel. Not only the beginning of the gospel, but also its total substance. Without the resurrection there would be no gospel. Throughout the book of Acts, as the message of hope in Christ was carried to the Roman world, that message was "A RESURRECTION THROUGH CHRIST". It seems so foreign to every element of truth and salvation to teach that a resurrection is not the essential event in our salvation and also the only means by which anyone can ever come into an eternal existence of any kind. That is how Christ came into his eternal existence (as a man, the second Adam), by his resurrection. In the book of Acts, the resurrection was

doubted, mocked, despised by the Jewish rulers, and it was the primary reason which caused Paul to have to suffer so much in the preaching of the gospel.

In the book of Romans, in the 6th chapter, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is set forth as the complete pattern of our salvation. We (voluntarily) die to our sinful life, as Christ voluntarily gave his life at calvary. Then we are buried with Christ in (water) baptism, in recognition of our surrender and repentance toward Christ and our faith in him. Then, by the power of his Holy Spirit, he raises us up from our spiritual graves, to walk in a new life with him. Paul declares in Rom. 8:11, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he will also quicken your mortal bodies by that Spirit that dwells in you.

I Corinthians, chapter 15, is called the "resurrection chapter", because it is devoted entirely to the subject of the resurrection and its total explanation to the Corinthian Christians because there were some among them who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection "of the dead", is a phrase which is intended to extend the resurrection to those who have died in their faith in Christ, that is, they are asleep in Jesus. It is an expression, found in I Cor. 15, simply to show that the resurrection of Christ included those who belonged to Christ as well. The chapter answers every reasonable question which can be asked about the resurrection, including, its conditions, its power, its process, who it is for, when it is to occur, and its affect upon those who receive it. That affect is incorruptibility, immortality, eternal life. The total subject can be preached in all of its facets and truth from this chapter and, conversely, no other passage of scripture can be correctly interpreted without a complete harmony with it. If there was no other information on the subject of the resurrection in the entire Bible, this would provide us with all that would be necessary, from the resurrection of Christ to our own resurrection when Christ returns.

From the 3rd chapter of Philippians, Paul shows us that he had given up everything which would have been counted of value in this life, just that he might win Christ and the resurrection from the dead. That was his message where ever he preached.

To the Thessalonian Christians he gave a brief, but all-encompassing summary of the resurrection of the dead. His basic message to them was that those who believe on Christ would be the ones to receive a resurrection when Christ returns. This was the great hope which he offered them as a comfort in the midst of all that this life brings upon us.

After having covered at least all of the major scriptures relating to the subject of the resurrection, there were some others which, in our opinion, taught, on the one hand a spiritual resurrection and on the other hand, did not teach a general resurrection, that is, a resurrection for the ungodly. Among the scriptures used in this regard were the 5th chapter of John and the 20th chapter of Revelation. In the 5th chapter of John, we showed that two things prevented this passage from the orthodox application to a future resurrection for the sinners. One was the fact that the resurrection mentioned in this chapter is contingent upon faith which, of course, a sinner would not have. The other was the time frame restriction within

the passage. That time frame restricted its message to “the hour is coming and now is”. Thus, it could not be applied to some date yet to occur.

The 20th chapter of Revelation covers the 1000 year period known as the millennium, which most people interpret as yet to occur in the future. When it does occur, according to orthodoxy, it will be a time of complete peace on earth during which all who live at that time will have a better chance at salvation than anyone else has ever had. Impossible! There is no day of salvation any better for anyone that “today”. The expression “first resurrection” in this chapter which is interpreted by orthodoxy as occurring at the beginning of the 1000 year period, is expressly described as being at the end of the 1000 year period, thus destroying the premise of that interpretation altogether.

Finally, the resurrection, as it is taught throughout the Bible, is obviously a distinct part of the work of Christ and the redemption which he came to the world to provide. It is a fallacy to confine the resurrection only to that event of his resurrection, without any connection or application to the resurrection of those whom come to Christ by faith in his gospel. It specifically applies to all who belong to Christ at the time of his coming. What reason, scripture, logic or purpose can the resurrection, which provides incorruptibility and immortality to its recipients, be offered at any time to anyone, other than the child of God?

The resurrection is the hope of the Christian! It will be conferred upon the child of God at the glorious return of Christ and through its process it will bring glory, victory over sin and death, eternal joy and happiness and whatever beauty and wonder God plans for the eternal age. It will be the time when every child of God of every age throughout all history, receives their eternal reward, the crown of life that fadeth not away. It was purchased by his sacrificial death at calvary and is offered to whosoever will believe on him through the grace which he lovingly offers to all who will come to him.

