



Lesson Six

Bible Basics – The Resurrection

The Dead Shall Rise!

Imagine you are being chased by a terrible enemy. You run and you run, yet you cannot outrun it. You can't hear it, but you know that it is there. Maybe you have seen it get your friends or family. No matter what you do, it is coming for you, and you cannot escape. Then imagine that enemy was defeated by something benevolent, something more powerful than your enemy had been. Imagine the relief you would

feel!

In a way, all of us are being chased by an invisible enemy. From the moment we are born, only one thing in our life is guaranteed: that one day, we will die. The bible refers to death as our 'enemy' (1 Corinthians 15:26). Yet in that same verse, Yahweh God promises us the destruction of our lasting enemy! How is this possible?

Discussion: How does the bible describe death?

Most of us have lost loved ones in death. Perhaps you have lost a loved one or know somebody who has. Losing someone close to us can bring with it immense pain and grief. When confronted with such times, we can rely on God's Word to bring us comfort (2 Corinthians 3:1-4). The bible gives us a clear view of how Yahweh God feels about death. Through the prophet Ezekiel, Yahweh declared, "I have no pleasure in the death of anyone." (Ezekiel 18:32)

During his ministry on earth, Jesus famously said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." (John 11:25, ESV). Jesus was referring here to the resurrection, a future

event where all those who are dead will be brought back to life. Jesus himself knew the pain of death. One of his friends, a man named Lazarus, got sick and passed away (Lazarus 11:14). The bible shares that Jesus was so distraught by his friend's passing that he even wept from grief (John 11:33-35).

It might be difficult to believe that once somebody has died, they can be brought back to life. Indeed, under normal circumstances, this would be impossible. Yet with God, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). When Jesus arrived in Bethany to visit the relatives of Lazarus, it had been four days since his friend had passed. But on that day, Jesus did something incredible. He went to the tomb where Lazarus lay and called out to him, "Lazarus,

come out!" (John 11:43). At his words, Lazarus walked out his tomb, still wrapped in his burial shrouds but very much alive.



Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Lazarus was not the only person raised from the dead. Jesus raised two other individuals, both children, from death. Later, the Apostle Peter would raise a woman from death. In more ancient times, the prophets Elijah and Elisha both raised people from death. These instances serve to prove that God has the power to raise the dead and can bestow it on whomever He chooses. Yet this resurrection blessing

is not limited to these six individuals, or even only to Christians. The bible promises that *everyone* will be resurrected from death (Isaiah 25:8).

Discussion: How do bible accounts of those who were resurrected in the past help us understand who will be resurrected in the future?

Jesus did not perform this miracle on his own. His Father, Yahweh God, gave him the authority to do so. God has proven to be non-partial in granting authority to resurrect the dead. Young and old, women and men, Israelite and non-Israelite, Yahweh raised indiscriminately, evidence of who would be raised in the end. Remember that death does not discriminate against 'good' people vs 'bad' people. The resurrection will

be much the same. Yahweh God will not just resurrect righteous Christians. There will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15).

Two, Not One



It might surprise you to learn that the resurrection isn't one single event. We are told that there will be not one, but two resurrections. In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul wrote "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first." (1 Thessalonians 4:16, ESV). This first resurrection is otherwise referred to as the Resurrection of the Elect (Matthew 24:31).

Again, in a different scripture, the bible says, "And come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the

resurrection of judgment." (John 5:29, ESV). Notice here how the bible undeniably describes two resurrections: one for the elect, and one of judgement.

Discussion: How do we know that there will be more than one resurrection in the future?

What differences are there between these two resurrections? Well, the first is the resurrection of the Elect, and is reserved for baptized Christians. This will take place at the beginning of the millennial reign, at the return of Christ. It will coincide with an event called 'the rapture', in which living Christians on earth will be transformed from bodies of

sin into perfect bodies, like that of Adam before he ate the fruit in the Garden. The first resurrection is full of rewards, including the promise of eternal paradise on earth.

What about the resurrection of judgement? Who will partake in that? The answer is simple: *everyone else*. The bible states that those resurrected into judgement will be brought forth from death sometime during the millennial reign. Even close to the end, there will still be people being resurrected from death (Revelation 20:4-5). Those resurrected into judgement will have to work hard to prove themselves worthy of a paradise calling.

Although it is little talked about, the theology of two resurrections is common in most Christian ministries.

Some believe the falsehood that the first resurrection is that into heaven, while the second is into hell. That part may be incorrect, but the idea remains that there will be some resurrected into reward while others are resurrected into judgement. Notice what it says in Isaiah: "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead." (Isaiah 26:19, ESV). Notice that this is a bodily resurrection, not just a spiritual one (Romans 8:11). Our bodies will be changed from one of imperfection and sin to one of glory and light (1 Corinthians 15:52).

The two-resurrection theology brings the bible together cohesively. It resolves many problems that

Christians today have with end time prophecy. For example, the bible says all of us will have to face judgement, but is it fair for a loving and just God to judge somebody to a standard they've never heard of? Although Christianity is one of the largest religions in the world, not everybody knows it, or has read the bible. What about a biblical calling? The bible says that 'many are called, but few are chosen' (Matthew 22:14). Many, but not everyone.

The bible speaks of those resurrected as 'the firstfruits' of the resurrection (James 1:18). This, of course, presupposes the idea of 'secondfruits', or those who come later. Yahweh knows whose heart is right. He wants everyone to come to the proper knowledge of His word. While many will be misled, those of us who are

faithful to the way are predisposed for everlasting life in eternal paradise. This will be a period of eternal peace, where death is no more (Revelation 21:4). Humanity will live for all eternity in paradise with God.

Discussion: Read Revelation 21:1-4 and discuss the following:

How does the bible describe paradise?

This beautiful return to an Edenic paradise might seem a little far-fetched. But is it? We have seen many incredible examples throughout the bible of God making promises that later come true. Remember, the chances of these things happening by chance are so slim, they're negligible. It would be impossible for every single prediction that the bible has made to come

true as they have without
divine interference. We know
we can rely on God's
promises of everlasting life.

The Rewards of the First Resurrection



The Resurrection of the Elect is the first resurrection. This is for those elected by Christ. In other words, this resurrection is for baptized Christians. The first resurrection is set to take place at the beginning of the millennial reign, at the return of Jesus the Christ. This will coincide with the rapture, an event where Christians living on earth will be transformed to serve alongside the resurrected ones.

Many churches teach about the rapture, but they don't always have the facts. What is it, exactly? During the end times, there will be many living Christians on earth. Those living through these times are still elected of God. When the time comes for the first resurrection, the living

elect will be gathered from all the earth to join Jesus upon his return (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The apostle Paul describes a transformation that we will undergo. Our bodies will be transformed from our current state to one of perfection and holiness (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Discussion: What is the rapture? How does it differ from how others might teach rapture theology?

The bible tells us that Jesus was the first of the first resurrection. He is called the 'firstfruits of the resurrection' (1 Corinthians 15:20). The apostle Paul instructed Christians to have faith in Jesus' resurrection. Because

Jesus was resurrected, we know that we, too, will be resurrected from death (1 Corinthians 15:17). Jesus was a spirit creature before his birth, so when he was resurrected, he returned to heaven to sit by his Father's right side. Living Christians today will not be sent to heaven. Instead, when we die, our souls sleep until such time as we are called to life again.

Remember how the bible says we all must face judgement? If Christians are resurrected as elect, when do we face judgement? *Christians are facing judgement right now*, as we live (1 Peter 4:17). By what criteria are we judged? Christians today are judged by Yahweh based on their obedience to His commands (James 1:25, 2:12, Revelation 2:23). However, we will still

falter and fail. In those times, we rely on Jesus to intercede on our behalf, and to make a good name for us with his Father.

Take the example of a police officer pulling someone over for excessive speed. If the speed limit had not been posted, how could the law say that the man was speeding? It would be ludicrous to condemn a man for a law that does not exist.

Likewise, Yahweh's law exists to give us a basing for judgement. When we adhere to the bible law, we are judged righteous and true. It would be unjust for Yahweh not to provide us a standard before judgment. But if we knowingly break God's law, we put ourselves in a terrible position (Matthew 12:45). Those who knowingly break God's commands are

described as “a dog that goes back on its vomit” (Proverbs 26:11). This means that when we knowingly break God’s laws, we are judged with extra harshness than if we had not heard of God’s laws to begin with.

Discussion: Read 2 Peter 2:21 and discuss the following:

Why might the bible say it is better to have never known the truth than to break away from it?

That is not to say that we shouldn’t know truth. Knowing the truth and acting on it is a great benefit to us. Firstly, the bible indicates that living the way of God is to our own righteousness. Everything in the bible is good for us, to teach us and to guide our steps (2 Timothy 3:16). God knows what is best for us. He wants us to

live our lives to the fullest we can. That is why He provides the bible, so that we can live happier lives. When we commit bible principles to our hearts, we find true joy and happiness there.

Like Jesus was rewarded for his extraordinary faith, baptized Christians today will be greatly rewarded for ours. The bible teaches about how we are rewarded at the first resurrection. Revelation 20:4 reads, “Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”



the Christian Elect will be teachers during the Millennial Reign

Notice how the bible says that they are granted the “authority to judge”. Those in the First Resurrection will sit on thrones with Jesus and serve as judges. They will be teaching everyone else about the truth and will be priests and kings in the Millennial Reign. Later in the same chapter, the bible reads, “Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they

will reign with him for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:6) Notice how it says over such the second death has no power? This is part of the reward of the first resurrection: that they will not be subject to the second death!

Discussion: What are the rewards of the first resurrection?

When the 1000 years have ended, paradise will be restored to the earth, and

everyone in the first resurrection will enter this beautiful future. This will be the final Sabbath, where God will renew the earth, New Jerusalem will be built, and those of us living on earth will never have to fear death, illness, or suffering ever again!

The Resurrection of Judgement



As you've read, the second resurrection will include everyone else. This means non-baptized believers, righteous unbelievers, and the unrighteous. Pagans, idolators, apostates, and manslayers will all be included here as well. Yahweh is a God of justice (Isaiah 30:18). Why would He then include those who have committed grievous sin in a resurrection from death?

Yahweh is impartial. He desires that all of us come to an understanding of truth. When we right ourselves on His path, He is just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). That includes every person, despite their past.

Jesus died for every living person (Mark 10:45). Those who profess faith in him will be forgiven, even if they do it late in their life. But there is another reason for God to resurrect, even the unrighteous. The bible affirms that the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). If a person lives their life in sin, and then they die, they are forgiven for the sins they committed in life because they have died. Romans 6:7 states that when we die, we are set free of sin.

The difference here is that while those in the first resurrection are made perfect upon the return of Christ, those in the second resurrection are not. Think of examples of those who were

resurrected in the bible. They did not come back as perfect beings. Instead, they came back in the form they were before. Likewise, those are raised in the second resurrection will not be raised into perfection but will still be "slaves to sin" as they were in their first life (Romans 6:6, 20).

Discussion: Why would Yahweh resurrect even the unrighteous?

Before judgement, those in the second resurrection must learn the truth and abide in it. Only by accepting the New Covenant promises in Jesus can a person be allowed to enter paradise. For 1000 years, Christ and the elect will reign on earth, teaching those in the second resurrection about the ways of God. During this time, the bible says that Satan the devil, who actively misleads

people, will be locked up (Revelation 20:2). Freed from temptation, death, and immorality, those in the second resurrection will have 1000 years to get to know the true God. But that doesn't mean God is making it easy on them. At the end of the millennial kingdom, Satan will be released to tempt the people once again.

Why, after a thousand years of peace, would God allow Satan to come back? The bible says that Satan will be released to tempt the nations through deception (Revelation 20:7-8). By the end of the thousand years, everyone on earth will have been restored to a pre-fall state of perfection, like Adam and Eve were before they sinned. Just as Adam and Eve had to be tested in the Garden, likewise, Yahweh will test humanity again to make sure that we are loyal to Him.

Everyone who turns away from God at this time will be “cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death” alongside Satan and his followers (Revelation 21:8).

While it might feel unfair to have Satan released after a thousand years of peace and freedom, the final test is a blessing to those in the second resurrection. Those who are resurrected into judgement will have a second chance to get to know Yahweh God, this time without any doubts. They will only get tested after they have been made perfect under Jesus’s reign. In today’s age, it can be hard to have and keep faith. This is why those in the first resurrection do not have to undergo the final test. When we have faith in God despite the tribulation of this life, we show God that we are loyal to Him. The bible says that

those who believe before the Tribulation are blessed and worthy (John 20:29). That is why the elect are exempt from this judgement, because they are already deemed worthy.

Discussion: Why does Yahweh allow Satan to tempt humankind again?

Does that mean that only the elect are able to get into paradise? No. When talking about the resurrection of judgement, Jesus said that some are resurrected into everlasting contempt, while some are resurrected into everlasting life (Read: Matthew 25:31-46). What did he mean by that? There will certainly be some people on Judgement Day who are deemed unworthy. These people will not suffer eternal torment, but will simply die a second time, this time for good. However, there will be

some at the final test who are deemed righteous. These people will be granted access to paradise alongside the elect to live for eternity.

Compared to those of us living today, who may live around 80 years, those of the second resurrection will have 1000 years to learn and live the truth. That seems like quite a disparity. What will people be doing during this time? Aside from learning bible truth, those in the second resurrection will be given laborious tasks to complete. Namely, while those of us in the first resurrection will be leading a spiritual restoration, those in the second resurrection will be completing an earthly resurrection. This restoration will include the physical work of returning the earth to the paradise it originally was, with the help and guidance of Yahweh God and under

the leadership of Jesus and the elect.



Those of the second resurrection will complete an earthly cleanup

No matter which resurrection we are a part of, it is by the grace of Yahweh on account of our faith that we are granted entry into paradise. We can ensure our place in paradise by building our faith today! We can “exercise” our faith much the same way an athlete exercises their muscles: by putting it to good use. When we get to know Yahweh and His requirements, we can act in accordance with His divine law and build up our faith. By focusing on the promises of the future, we can strengthen that faith even more and motivate ourselves to act accordingly.