

The Resurrection

Many people believe in a life after death. But what does God's Holy Word teach us on this matter?

The Bible teaches us that life after death can only come by being raised from the grave, a miracle called Resurrection. Resurrection means "an arising". The resurrection is the arising from the dead by certain people. The rising of Christ from the dead is a perfect example of what will happen to those who die and are buried in the true Hope of the Resurrection. Jesus said, after his resurrection... "*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore*" Revelation 1:18.

We are shown the real significance of Christ's Resurrection in the following words from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:12-21... "*Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain [useless]. 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. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Jesus] came also the resurrection of the dead.*" This shows how vital the Resurrection of Christ is to the future of those who come into contact with the Gospel!

Note the expression "*them that slept*". These people are sleeping the deep sleep of death without any living existence until the Resurrection when they will come out of their graves. Christ is the "*firstfruits*" of all faithful believers, with a "full harvest" to follow when he returns to the earth. At that time there will not only be a Resurrection of faithful believers, but also of those who have known the Gospel message, whether they have obeyed it or not. "*There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*" Acts 24:15.

But there are many who have not received this knowledge and call of the Gospel; they will not rise from the dead. "*Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*" Psalm 49:20. "*They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.*" Isaiah 26:14.

The Resurrection is the great Hope of the followers of Christ. Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*" John 11:25. So, those who die, believing and obeying the Gospel, have the wonderful prospect of eternal life. The Apostle Paul wrote of the Resurrection to comfort the early Christians in Thessalonica who had suffered the death of some of their loved ones: "*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. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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 [precede] them which are asleep. 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.*" 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16.

The outcome of this gathering of the dead and living for those faithful believers who, by the grace of God, are accounted worthy, is given in 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23 ... "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*". The way to be "*in Christ*" is to believe the Gospel and to be "*baptised into Christ*" Galatians 3:27. The way to be "*Christ's*" is to then obey his commandments. By this means, we have the Hope of being made like Jesus, "*alive for evermore*" at the Resurrection!

Note: all quotes are from the King James Version of the Bible.