

## **“If A Man Die, Shall He Live Again?”**

No. 14

### **Introduction.**

- I. One time God tested the faith of Job by allowing Satan to afflict his body with loathsome sores from head to foot. In the midst of this great suffering, Job asked, “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14).
- II. This question asked by Job has been raised countless times throughout the history of man. Nearly every person has asked at some time, “If I die, shall I live again?” I would like for us to answer this question from God’s holy word.
  - I. **Importance of the Resurrection** - The doctrine of the resurrection is of great importance.
    - A. Our whole philosophy of life depends on it. If there is a hereafter, we should be busy preparing ourselves for it. If there is no hereafter, we should not live the Christian life. We should enjoy life in the fullest carnal way.
    - B. Paul said. (1 Cor. 15:32).
  - II. **Reasons For Belief In The Resurrection** - As most of you know the resurrection is in the realm of faith. It cannot be demonstrated in the laboratory or at the graveyard. Even though it cannot be demonstrated, there is abundant evidence for it. We can be sure, we can have unwavering confidence that the dead will be raised. **I would like to give some reasons why I believe in the resurrection.**
    - A. I believe in the resurrection because **Jesus promised that all men shall be raised from the dead.** (Jn. 5:28, 29; 11:25). Since Jesus has never failed to keep a single promise He has made to man, I believe He will keep this one.
    - B. I believe in the resurrection because it has been **demonstrated before eye-witnesses** numerous times.
      1. **Jarius’ daughter** (Matt. 9:18-25).
      2. **Widow’s son at Nain.** (Lk. 7:11-17).
      3. **Lazarus** (Jn. 11:43, 44).
        - a. Once I read an interesting story concerning the resurrection of Lazarus. **Robert Ingersoll**, the noted infidel, once night in one of his lectures tried to prove that the resurrection of Lazarus was a planned affair to bolster the fame of Jesus. He charged that Lazarus pretended to be sick and pretended to die and Mary and Martha were to bury him and send for Jesus. Lazarus was to fake death till Jesus should come and say, “Lazarus, come forth.” To emphasize the situation he said, “Can anyone here tell me why Jesus said, “Lazarus, come forth”? A white-haired man in the audience arose and with a shrill voice said, “Yes, sir, I can tell you.! If my Lord had not said, ‘Lazarus,’ He would have the whole graveyard of Bethany coming out to him!”
        - b. Ingersoll later said this was the only time in his life he was ever left completely speechless.

4. The Bible also tells us that at the death of Christ many dead ones were raised from the tombs and appeared in the city so that all could witness the great power Jesus possessed. (Matt. 27:51-53).

C. I believe in the resurrection because **Christ was raised**.

1. Jesus was resurrected on the third day as He had promised. (Matt. 16:21; 1 Cor. 15:3-8).

**1CO 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**

**1CO 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**

**1CO 15:5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.**

**1CO 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;**

**1CO 15:7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;**

**1CO 15:8 and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.**

- a. Paul states there were more than 500 witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. Most of these witnesses were still alive and could give testimony to what they saw.
  - b. There are two things that lead me to accept their testimony.
    - 1) First, these witnesses were **competent**. If it could be shown that these witnesses were easily fooled, it could be argued that their testimony was unreliable or questionable. But the gospel narratives show that this supposition is not true. Thomas, for example, was extremely hard to convince. He refused to believe that Jesus had arisen even when ten other men declared they had seen Him. But when he saw Him with his own eyes, he believed.
    - 2) Second, I believe the testimony of these witnesses because they were **willing to suffer ridicule and even death rather than deny they had seen the risen Lord**. Men will not die for something they know to be a lie! They will die for the truth.
2. The question arises, **“What does the resurrection of Christ have to do with our resurrection?”**
    - a. Paul gives the answer to this question in 1 Corinthians the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter. He states if Jesus was not raised we will not be raised and our faith is vain.
    - b. He further states that Christ is the “first fruits” or “pledge” of our resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:22, 23).

D. I believe in the resurrection because it **occurs every year**.

1. During the winter months the beautiful green grass fades into the color of death. The leaves on the tree die and drop to the ground but with the coming of spring, vegetation is resurrected once again.
2. Paul uses a similar argument for the resurrection in the First Corinthian letter. (1 Cor. 15:35-38).

**1CO 15:35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they**

come?"

**1CO 15:36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;**

**1CO 15:37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.**

**1CO 15:38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.**

a. Paul contends that life comes from death in nature. He also contends that this being true that it is possible for physical death to produce new life.

b. **William Jennings Bryan**, his speech "The Prince of Peace," said:

"Christ gave us proof of immortality and it was a welcome assurance, although it would hardly seem necessary that one should rise from the dead to convince us that the grave is not the end. To every created thing God has given a tongue that proclaims a future life.

If the Father designs to touch with Divine Power the cold and pulse less heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth from the prison wall, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of His creator? If He stoops to give the rosebush, whose withering blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another spring-time, will He refuse the word of hope to the sons when the frosts of winter come.

In Cairo I secured a few grains of wheat that had slumbered for more than thirty centuries in an Egyptian tomb. As I looked at them, this thought came into my mind: if one of those grains had been planted on the banks of the Nile the year after it grew, and all its lineal descendants had been planted and replanted from that time until now, its progeny would today be sufficiently numerous to feed the teeming millions of the world. If this invisible germ of life in the grain of wheat can thus pass unimpaired through three thousand resurrections, I shall not doubt that my soul has power to clothe itself with a body suited to its new existence when this fleshy frame has crumbled into dust.?

**3. One time an Orthodox Jew said to a Chicago minister**, "I do not believe that a dead body can be resurrected." The minister asked, "Do you believe that God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, and that He formed Adam's body from the dust of the ground?" "Yes, I do," said the Jew. The minister then asked, "Why don't you believe that God can bring back into existence a body that has returned to dust?" Thoughtfully the Jew replied, "If you put it that way, I do believe!"

E. I believe in the resurrection because if there is no resurrection **justice does not prevail**.

1. The evil and the righteous will have the same fate. The doctrine of the resurrection is needed to bring justice. Let me illustrate.

2. Nero, a Roman emperor of the first century, was a sexual degenerate who actually lived with a man as his wife for a period of time. At 22 he had his mother murdered and his only remark upon viewing her corpse was: "I did not know I had so beautiful a mother." Later he wanted to get rid of his wife: so he had his mother's killer to testify that he had committed adultery with her. She was banished and later beheaded. Her head was sent to Nero. Nero was then free to marry Poppae. When she was several months along with child, he kicked her in the stomach and both Poppae and the unborn child died. Nero burned Rome because he apparently did not like the way the city was built. The Roman populace was outraged by this action. Nero had to find a scapegoat so he put the guilt for burning Rome upon Christians. He had some Christians covered with animal skins, thrown into the arena, and devoured by dogs. Some were crucified. Others were burned alive. Nero rode through his garden in a chariot and the way was lighted by the bodies of burning Christians! the Roman people finally saw Nero had to be destroyed. Realizing the end was near, Nero attempted to drown himself but he could not do it. He then tried to stab himself but lacked the courage after feeling the sharpness of the blade. Finally, with the help of a servant he was able to get the knife into his body.

3. Is suicidal death the only punishment Nero is to receive? Proverbs 11:21 says, "The wicked shall not go unpunished." There must be a resurrection and judgment for Nero and his kind if justice is to be done!

F. I believe in the resurrection because **all human beings have a desire to live forever**. If there is no after-life, one wonders how such a universal desire could have originated. Has God tricked His creatures by inbreeding a desire for eternal life but refusing the satisfaction of that desire?

III. **Purpose And Nature Of Resurrection** - Now that we have seen some reasons for belief in the resurrection, let's study the purpose and nature of it.

A. In a passage we considered earlier in our lesson, Jesus said. (Jn. 5:28, 29).

1. Jesus says some shall come forth "unto" the resurrection of life. The word "unto" means "in order to receive." The righteous will be resurrected in order to receive eternal life with God.
2. They will not be raised with these old physical bodies, but they shall be raised with new spiritual bodies that are adapted to live forever without pain, disease or death. (1 Cor. 15:53).

B. The wicked will be resurrected in order to receive the just reward for their deeds. They will be cast into the outer darkness! There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 25:30).

### **Conclusion.**

I. Yes, there is a great general resurrection to come. The righteous can look forward to this resurrection with great hope and anticipation. The wicked must dread this day of judgment and condemnation.

II. In view of the great resurrection and judgment to come, why not become a Christian that you might be raised to live forever with God and Christ in the heavenly city?

III. Come as we stand and sing.

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