

Study 6. We love the future (doctrine of resurrection)

Big idea: Christ's resurrection means we will be raised too. There is hope for the world. Nothing can hurt us in a way that God can't fix. Our bodies, and what we do with them, matter to God.

What is your greatest fear?

Observation and interpretation

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

- Why does Paul dwell on how many people saw Jesus raised from the dead?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-22

- How would the gospel be different if Jesus wasn't actually raised from the dead?
- What does Christ's resurrection mean for our future?

You might also like to refer to Acts 4:2, 17:31, John 6:40, 11:25, and Romans 1:4, 4:25, 6:4-5, 8:11.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

- How does the experience of resurrection differ for those who are already dead as opposed to those who are still alive when the resurrection comes (verses 51-52)?
- What does Paul have in mind when he talks about "our labour" (verse 58)?
- Why isn't this labour in vain?

Read Daniel 12:2

- Do all people experience the resurrection, or only some? (See also Acts 24:15 and Revelation 20)

The Bible has lots to say about the final resurrection of the dead:

1. All the dead will be raised (Acts 24:15, Revelation 20) and join those who are still alive (1 Corinthians 15:51)
2. All will be judged according to what they have done (Romans 2:6). No one will be declared righteous by obeying the law (Romans 2:13), but everyone who calls on the name of the Lord (that is, who confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes that God raised him from the dead) will be saved (Romans 10:9-13).
3. Many therefore will get better than they deserve: everlasting life in resurrection bodies in a new earth where righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). Like Jesus' body (which was new and yet the same) the new creation has both continuity and discontinuity with the earth we know now. Some differences include no more marriage (Matt 22:30), and no more mourning (Rev 31:4). It seems that it will be a physical place, with God dwelling among his people (Rev 21:3).

The Bible does not, however, give as clear a picture of what happens to people while they are “asleep” and their bodies are decaying (Acts 13:36). Christians who have “fallen asleep” are in some sense safe with Jesus (Luke 23:43), and yet the exact nature of this existence is open to interpretation (and therefore most views on the subject involve no small amount of speculation). The main focus of Scripture is on the resurrection, which happens later, is final, and is therefore more important.

Implications

Read 1 Corinthians 6:14-15

- Why do you think Paul reminds the Corinthians of the resurrection before rebuking them for being relaxed about sexual sin?
- How would Christianity be different if a) Christ was reincarnated or b) Christ's soul went straight to heaven (rather than being resurrected)?
- In the gospels, once Jesus is raised he eats with them and his scars are still visible. What does this tell us about our own resurrection?
- How does knowing about our future (resurrection) change how we think about:
 - Our bodies
 - Our daily work
 - Identity
 - Disability
 - Old age and dementia
 - Food
 - Mental illness, such as depression

Rory Shiner has written an excellent book on the link between Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection called *Raised Forever* (Matthias Media).

Prayer ideas

Thank God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the assurance this can give. Perhaps then pray for people who we long to know this assurance.