

9. Prophecies about the Resurrection

Lesson 8 explored the prophecies concerning Christ's coming: he would come with the angels of his power; the earth would tremble; the kingdom of Christ would remain and endure eternally; and the faithful followers – dead and alive – would be caught up to meet him in the air where they would forever be with the Lord. 2 Thess 1:5-10 summarizes the events and outcomes at the coming of the Lord:

. . . as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.

This lesson turns on those prophecies of a resurrection of the dead – an escape, at the coming of Jesus, from the grave that holds us, into an eternal life. This is the victory in Jesus.

The Old Testament Foretold a Redemption from the Grave

Job, who wrote from the patriarchal age, foretold a resurrection that included the redeemer of man. In Job 19:25-27:

25 I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
26 And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
27 I myself will see him
with my own eyes – I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

Job 33:28 clearly showed a redemption from death:

28 He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit,
and I will live to enjoy the light.'

The Psalmist renewed this prophecy in Ps 49:15, foretelling redemption from the grave:

15 But God will redeem my life from the grave;
he will surely take me to himself.

Hosea was more specific in Hos 13:14, where he saw redemption and victory with the destruction of the death and the grave:

14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death.
Where, O death, are your plagues?
Where, O grave, is your destruction?

According to Paul the power over death and the grave comes with the Lord at the last trumpet. In 1 Cor 15:52-54, he wrote:

For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

The trumpet will sound; the dead will be raised; then death has been swallowed up in victory. All of these fulfill Isa 25:7-8, where death will end forever in a resurrection to eternal freedom from death, tears, and disgrace:

7 On this mountain he will destroy
 the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
 the sheet that covers all nations;
 8 he will swallow up death forever.

The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears
 from all faces;
 he will remove the disgrace of his people
 from all the earth.

The Lord has spoken.

In 1 Cor 15: 55-57, Paul finishes his preceding statement by quoting Hosea 13:14, above:

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?
 Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Prophesied the Resurrection for the Dead and the Destruction of Hades

The Resurrection of the Dead

Throughout the gospels, the word *resurrection* only appears 14 times and most of them are in connection with the Sadducees trying to catch Jesus by asking a question about marriage in heaven. He responded in Matt 22:30-32:

30 At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 31 But about the resurrection of the dead – have you not read what God said to you, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

He once again taught about the resurrection in Luke 14:13-14:

13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Jesus taught that the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous would come at the same time in John 5:28-29:

28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

A the death of Christ, the dead were raised miraculously in Matt 27:51-53:

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. 52 The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

At the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus seized upon the opportunity to instruct on the resurrection of the dead. John 11:23-26 reads:

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

In this single statement, Jesus explained the resurrection and its place in God's plan for our redemption. Eternal life? Do you believe this?

The subject of Christ's resurrection became the object of discussion and teaching during and after Christ's march to the cross. The following is a summary of many such instances:

Matt 16:21: 21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Matt 17:9: 9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Matt 17:22-23: 22 When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. 23 They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief.

Matt 20:18-19: 18 "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death 19 and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

Matt 27:51-53: 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. 52 The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

John 21:14-15: 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter,

Paul chronicled these appearances of the Lord after his death in 1 Cor 15:3-8:

3 For what I received I passed on to you. . . : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

The Destruction of Death and Hades

Jesus was explicit in his prophecies of the end of death and Hades (realm of the dead). Indeed, if there were to be a resurrection from the dead, it would necessitate the destruction of death and Hades. Jesus described the Hadean world of the wicked, and the nature of the punishment of the unrighteous in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:22-24:

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell [*Hades*], where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'"

The promise of the Lord was that Hades could not and would not overcome his church in Matt 16:18: "18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

The theme of the destruction of death and Hades continues in the final revelation of God's mystery revealed to John in the Revelation. That book opens with Christ affirming that he holds the keys of death and Hades in Rev 1:18: "18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." Death and Hades were to continue on the earth with power during our time, according to Rev 6:8:

8 I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Paul prophesied in 1 Cor 15:20-26 that Christ would conquer death at his coming:

20 But Christ has indeed been **raised from the dead**, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since **death** came through a man, the **resurrection of the dead** comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 **The last enemy to be destroyed is death.** [Emphasis added.]

In 1 Cor 15:54-57, cited above, Paul told how the resurrection would strip death of its power:

54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev 20:13-15 sealed the fate of death and Hades in lake of fire:

13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The first death, that spiritual and physical death that came with Adam, ended with the second death, the lake of fire, as quoted above in 1 Cor 15: "22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

The Apostles Preached and Prophesied the Resurrection of the Dead

From the time that the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, they preached and prophesied about the resurrection of the dead. Their written prophecies presented the facts of the coming resurrection in stunning detail. Paul devoted all of 1 Cor 15 to the subject; and prophecies, such as those of Peter, were common to the apostles. He preached in Acts 2:32-33:

32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Peter immediately repeated the message in Acts 3:15: "15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this."

The Logic of the Resurrection

No case for the resurrection can be made better than the case made by Paul in 1 Cor 15:12-19:

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

The validity of the entire Christian faith depends on our accepting the resurrection. The logic of this passage is a bipolar set of facts and conclusions that inexorably lead to the conclusion: Christ was raised from the dead; and because of his resurrection, we will be raised from the dead.

The Manner and Form of the Resurrection

The resurrected form has a manner different from any earthly things we know. Our resurrected body will replace our mortal bodies with one that is imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual. Paul taught in 1 Cor 15:42-44:

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 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.

Paul proceeds to contrast the spiritual and natural bodies, in effect, giving us two ways to look at this spiritual phenomenon. Our new body will be a spiritual body from heaven. 1 Cor 15:44-47 set the stage for the conclusion in 1 Cor 15:48-49:

48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

All those, who look for a materialistic life on earth at the so-called second coming, should pay special attention to the next verse, 1 Cor 15:50: "50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

The Suddenness of the Resurrection

Paul uses the metaphor—*in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye*—to describe the suddenness of the resurrection as it occurs simultaneously for the living and the dead. 1 Cor 15:51-52 reads:

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

In 1 Thess 4:16-17, Paul added detail that helps one understand the suddenness of the resurrection. Again there is the sudden trumpet call of the Lord and the dead in Christ will be raised and, together with those living, be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord. It is there that we shall ever be with the Lord:

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Nothing can depict the suddenness of the Lord's coming and our attendant resurrection like the Savior's own words where lightning is the metaphor in Matt 24:27: "27 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

The First and Second Resurrection

The Bible is clear that for Christians there are two resurrections. To be a part of the second resurrection, people must be raised in the first resurrection. Rev 20:5-6 states the absolute essential nature of this first resurrection: "This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them . . ." This lesson previously showed that the first death was a death to sin, resulting in the death of the mortal bodies. The second death is explained in Rev 20:14-15: "The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." This second death will be the eternal home of all those lost sinners, according to Rev 21:8:

8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

The first resurrection is essential for all those who wish to avoid the second death—the horrible and eternal death in the fiery lake of burning sulfur—and who want to be raised in the Day of the Lord to live eternally with him. Rom 6:3-4 fully describes a resurrection of those dead in sins and trespasses to live a new life:

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

In Col 3:1-4, Paul makes clear the resurrection from the death of sin, where one dies to sin, is the direct pathway to the second resurrection where one will appear with Christ in glory at his coming:

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Peter, just as Paul, taught with certainty that the resurrection from the watery grave of baptism is the first resurrection, calling it the new birth in 1 Peter 1:3-4:

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you,

The attainment of this eternal inheritance in heaven—the second resurrection—comes only by submission to the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus in baptism from which one comes out of the water in the first resurrection. 1 Peter 3:21-22 teaches:

21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

In conclusion, Rev 20:5-6 stands as a demand for all who want to avoid the second death: “This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them . . .”

Study Questions from the Scriptures

1. 2 Thess 1:5-10: What will happen when Jesus is revealed in heaven? What will happen to those who know not God and obey not the gospel?
2. Job 19:25-27: In the end, who will stand on the earth? What will happen to Job's skin?
3. Job 33:28: From what would Job's soul be redeemed?
4. Ps 49:15: From what would the Psalmist's life be redeemed?
5. Hos 13:14: Where are the plagues of death? Where is the destruction of death?
6. 1 Cor 15:52-54: How will the dead be raised? What will be swallowed up in victory?
7. Isa 25:7-8: What will happen to death? What will happen to tears and disgrace?
8. 1 Cor 15: 55-57: What is the sting of death? Through whom is victory?
9. Matt 22:30-32: What will Christians be like in heaven? Of whom is God the God?
- 10 Luke 14:13-14: When will you be repaid for good deeds?
11. Matt 27:51-53: When were many holy people raised to life?
12. John 11:23-26: Who will live even though they die? Who is the resurrection and the life?
13. Matt 16:21: When would Jesus be raised to life? Who would kill Jesus?
14. Matt 17:9: What were the disciples not to tell anyone?
15. Matt 17:22-23: What filled the disciples with grief?
16. Matt 20:18-19: What would happen to Jesus in Jerusalem? When would he be raised to life?
17. John 21:14-15: How many times had Jesus appeared to his disciples?
18. 1 Cor 15:3-8: List the specific appearances of Jesus?
19. Luke 16:22-24: After he was buried, what was it like for the rich man? Where was Lazarus?
20. Matt 16:18-19: What cannot overcome the Lord's church?
21. Rev 1:18: What keys did Christ hold?
22. Rev 6:8: What power do Death and Hades have?

23. 1 Cor 15:20-26: When Christ comes, what is the last enemy destroyed?
24. 1 Cor 54-57: In whom do we have victory? Whom are we to thank?
25. Rev 20:13-15: What will happen to death and Hades? To those not in the book of life?
26. 1 Cor 15: In whom do all men die? In whom do all men live?
27. Acts 2:32-34: What happened to Jesus? Who are the witnesses of this fact?
28. Acts 3:15: Who is the author of life?
29. 1 Cor 15:12-19: Can you repeat Paul's logic proof that there is a resurrection of the dead?
30. 1 Cor 15:42-44: What will the resurrected body be like?
31. 1 Cor 15:48-49: What likeness shall we bear after the resurrection?
32. 1 Cor 15:50: What cannot inherit the kingdom of God? What else can they not inherit?
33. 1 Cor 15:51-52: How quickly will the resurrection come?
34. 1 Thess 4:16-18: How sudden will be the resurrection? What sounds will we hear?
35. Rev 20:14-15: How many resurrections are there? How many deaths are there?
36. Rev 21:8: What is the second death?
37. Rom 6:3-7: From what are we raised in the first resurrection? To what are we raised?
38. Col 3:1-4: How does one get to the final resurrection? Where are we to set our minds?
39. 1 Peter 1:3-5: What do we have through the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
40. 1 Peter 3:21-22: What saves us? By what does it save us?
41. Rev 20:5-6: Over whom does the second death have no power?