

Death is the greatest fear that haunts mankind throughout human history. It is just as prevalent today. During these last few years of the COVID epidemic, we saw some extreme measures to avoid death. Businesses closed, many to never reopen; churches went to livestream; children went to remote learning; and everyone tried to stay six feet away from everyone else. Even now you can see healthy young people walking alone wearing a mask that study after study shows has little to no effectiveness against a virus that has such miniscule chance of seriously affecting their young lives. Why are they wearing it? In most cases it is the fear of death, theirs or that of a loved one. Life is precious because we are made in the image of God. Every human life is priceless. That is why cryogenic labs exist. People hope that someday they can be brought back to life. We are horrified by the loss of life in Ukraine because the senseless destruction of life is so heartless. But what adds to that fear in our day is that with so many people being medically revived from death, we have thousands of stories of afterlife experiences. Many are wonderful accounts of love and peace in the presence of Jesus, but others are frightening. Most people don't talk about it for fear of being labeled crazy.

Some of the young adults went to the movie *The Case for Heaven*, by Lee Strobel. We saw the accounts of people who had been clinically dead who described the doctors' conversations and operating tools. One lady even described a shoe on top of the hospital building. These things are unexplainable to the natural world. But there is a spiritual world, and we are essentially spirits who have a temporary body. The only reason I like to officiate at funerals is that it is the one moment when everyone attending must stop for a moment and consider that this life is temporal and fragile, and that we will one day leave our bodies and all physical things behind.

This all implies that if there is an afterlife, if resurrection is possible, we need to know what it means. For those of you with any doubts about Jesus' resurrection, I would encourage you to look up **Professor Gary Habermas**. He is the leading expert on the resurrection of Jesus. We have more eyewitness evidence of Jesus' resurrection than of anyone else who ever claimed to be resurrected. By resurrection I mean someone who was dead for days and physically came back to life. Dr. Habermas lays out the facts that point to a conclusion that the Biblical account is true. That is why the disciples who were fearful and once hiding from the authorities became so bold that they were willing to die as martyrs. They had seen the risen Lord and knew death was not the end. They had been skeptics. Even after seeing all Jesus' miracles, they didn't believe Him when He said that after three days He would rise victorious over death (Mark 8:31<sup>i</sup>). None of them were at His grave waiting for it to happen. But when they saw Him, touched His body, and watched Him eat, they knew He was not an apparition (Luke 24:38-43<sup>ii</sup>).

Jesus taught that if we believe in Him, we will have everlasting life (John 5:24<sup>iii</sup>). Though we die, yet we will live (John 11:25<sup>iv</sup>). He said that because He lives, we will also live (John 14:9<sup>v</sup>). His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. And the Apostle Paul clarified that our spirits go to be with the Lord upon death. But when Jesus returns, He will raise our bodies and make them into eternal bodies like Jesus' resurrected body (Philippians 1:23<sup>vi</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17<sup>vii</sup>). That is quite difficult for us to imagine, but the same person who raised the dead on three separate occasions said it. The same

One who said He would rise after three days and then did rise promised it. We can be partakers of that promise if we are genuinely sorry for living in ways that displease God and ask for the forgiveness He provided for us by His death for us on the cross. He paid our penalty.

What then does resurrection mean? First, let me explain that **there are two types of resurrection: the power to change in this life and the transformation that will take place when we rise from death.** There is resurrection power right now. That is the power to live a different life than the one we have been living. That is what matters for this lifetime (John 16:33<sup>viii</sup>). The Apostle Paul calls it salvation from this present evil world (Galatians 1:4<sup>x</sup>). It is the same power that raised Christ from the dead changing our daily lives into ones that are more like that of Jesus. Instead of selfish living, overindulgence, fear, and addictions, - we can live without anxiety (Philippians 4:6<sup>x</sup>), love others as Jesus loves us, extend forgiveness and grace to those who wrong us, break destructive patterns, and have peace and joy in our hearts. That all sounds nice, but it also means that we will be different from our culture, and that results in persecution (John 16:33<sup>xi</sup>). People are fearful of things they don't understand or that challenge their beliefs. But even in the midst of persecution we still have the joy and peace that the world does not know. That is why Paul and Silas could sing to God after being beaten and put in stocks (Acts 16:25<sup>xii</sup>). It is a joy that can't be touched by circumstances.

Salvation from this present evil world lived in resurrection power has eternal purpose and significance. We become attuned to the leading of the Holy Spirit and act at His leading which is the greatest adventure one could have. We see lives changed as people God touches through us are brought from darkness to light (Acts 26:18<sup>xiii</sup>). We are advancing God's kingdom on earth. That is resurrection power at work within us (Ephesians 1:19,20<sup>xiv</sup>). We can be who God made us to be instead of our old nature dragging us down. We are free to walk with God and do His will.

The second kind of resurrection is that of these bodies that will decay and return to the dust. Jesus' body did not decay according to Psalm 16:10<sup>xv</sup>, but I am pretty sure Lazarus' body did. So when Jesus called him out of the grave, decay had to be reversed. Remember that God made man from the dust, the elements of the earth, so on the day of resurrection why can't He reassemble us from the dust in a new and amazing way designed for eternal life? **Resurrection means that we will have new bodies** fashioned like the body Jesus had when He rose from death (Philippians 3:21<sup>xvi</sup>).

What do we know about that body that walked out of the tomb? He seemed to be wherever He wanted to be whenever He wanted to be there. Locked doors didn't keep Him out. If He wanted to be recognized, He was. If he didn't want to be recognized, He wasn't. He ate a fish in front of the disciples. He said He had flesh and bone. You can touch that body and feel substance. He could speak. His body is referred to as glorious. Apparently, our bodies will shine as well in differing degrees of glory (1 Corinthians 15:41,42<sup>xvii</sup>). Since decay is a result of the fall of man, in heaven there will be no decay. We will not age (Romans 8:20,21<sup>xviii</sup>).

**Resurrection means that emotionally there will be no sorrow or sighing.** God is going to wipe every tear from our eyes (Revelation 7:17<sup>xix</sup>). My mother worried about her relationship with one of my siblings. In a lucid moment during her time with Alzheimer's she expressed that concern. I remember the joy in my own heart when I explained that all

misunderstandings will be cleared up and every failure forgiven in that bright land to which we go. Just think of that. Most of us have a place in our hearts that holds pain over some relationship we can't find a way to restore, or that loved one is already on the other side. Would you for a moment look at that pain and realize with me that resurrection means there will be a day when it is gone forever. In its place will be wholeness and love. That thrills my soul, and I hope it thrills yours as well. Forgive now, and experience all the healing we can in our salvation from this present evil world, but also look forward to the time when all involved who are in Christ will have resolution in the most wonderful way imaginable.

**Resurrection means our souls will be healed.** That is our mind, will, and emotions. Our minds are often plagued by what I call ruts. We developed bad patterns of thinking before we came to Christ. We associate certain things that are ungodly as sources of satisfaction because that is how we sought it for so long. Once we come to Christ, we have to constantly reject those thoughts. We know it is a lie and that Jesus is the only true satisfaction. That battle keeps us constantly reminded that we are in a war. When we see Jesus, our minds will be healed.

Our will is often self-centered. That is natural, and it is not a sin to want an easier road. Even Jesus asked if there was some other way than the cross. But ultimately His will was to do the Father's will. We hope that is true of us even now, but if you are like me, you find yourself being willing to obey, but not enthusiastic about it. In the resurrection our will is going to be perfectly aligned with the Father. Our will is going to always joyfully desire to do His will.

Our emotions in these fallen bodies often drag us down to places we would rather not go. Our mental state becomes dark, and we find it difficult to pull ourselves out of it. We can listen to praise music and read Scripture which helps so much, but in that day our emotions will always be joyful and excited about the Lord and His goodness. Mind, will, and emotions will be completely whole as God intended them to be. Hallelujah!

**Resurrection means that everyone you meet will have the same fruits of the Spirit as Jesus** (Galatians 5:22,23<sup>xx</sup>). This is one of my favorite thoughts. Relationships can be so difficult in this life because we lack the fruits of the Spirit. Imagine everyone you meet being like Jesus with His love, His joy, His peace, His patience and all those wonderful fruits we have a taste of now. Everyone! Who are you struggling to get along with now? Just imagine that day when you and that person have the fruits of the Spirit to the extent that Jesus has them. If that doesn't thrill your souls, you are not yet able to comprehend how wonderful that will be. I have a strained relationship with a few believers. I can't seem to do anything about it now. But I look forward to the day when it will be completely healed because we will be like our Lord. The tension will be gone. Forgiveness will be complete. Misunderstandings will be clarified.

**Resurrection means that sin will no longer harass and tempt you.** We will be in a place where there is no sin and nothing to tempt us. Even if there were, our purified being would see through it and utterly reject it. 2 Peter 3:13<sup>xxi</sup> tells us we are looking for a new heaven and a new earth wherein righteousness dwells. Nothing will hurt or destroy in all His holy mountain! Isaiah 11:9<sup>xxii</sup>

**Resurrection means that nature will be healed and be a wonderful playground** (Romans 8:20,21<sup>xxiii</sup>). The lion will lie with the lamb. A child will play safely at the hole

of a snake (Isaiah 11:6-9<sup>xxiv</sup>). Sounds to me like there will be animals. Billy Graham was once asked if our pets will be in heaven. His answer was that if you want them to be there, then they probably will be. But I'm not so sure that we will even think about the past. If nature in this fallen and cursed world is so amazing, imagine what God has prepared for us in the new earth or for that matter in the universe! A new space telescope has found the universe is even more immense than what we learned from the Hubble. It is hard to grasp the billions of galaxies that are out there and the number of the solar systems within them. They must be there for a reason, and maybe one is for us to explore.

**Resurrection means that our capacity to love will be greatly increased.** As believers filled with the Holy Spirit, our capacity love is greatly increased now. Christians forgive and love their enemies. I am amazed at some of the testimonies I hear of forgiveness for people who have done horrible things to them. And yet, I think we all know our love for Jesus is not all that it should be. Maybe this is personal experience, but my love for Jesus grows as His love for me is revealed to a greater extent (1 John 4:19<sup>xxv</sup>). I feel like my heart just isn't big enough. But when we see Him, I think the fulness of His love will be understood and received and that will mean that my heart will instantly expand to be able to love Him to all the fulness that I should. I want to clarify that this is my opinion. I can't point to a verse. It is just from personal experience and a desire that I believe is from the Holy Spirit.

**Resurrection also means that we will know the depths of God's Word.** I have been studying the Scriptures my whole life and I continue to find new things, deeper meanings, and amazing insights. Can you imagine how it will be when Jesus opens our understanding to the fulness of it? If our heart had to expand to accept the fuller revelation of His love, it will have to expand along with our understanding to get the fulness of the Word. We hear of Jesus appearing to unbelievers and speaking Scripture to them and how it instantly brings them to faith. If the glorified Jesus even speaks recorded Scripture, what marvels must lie within these words. We tend to zip through Leviticus now, but what if Jesus was the commentator? The mind-boggling connections with the rest of Scripture, creation, and history must be amazing. There is surely so much we are not yet able to bear now, as Jesus said to His disciples (John 16:12<sup>xxvi</sup>). But when we are resurrected, the time will have come for full revelation!

**Resurrection means that you can fellowship with the saints of old!** Got a question for the Apostle Paul about a passage? Sit down with him and ask him. Even he will probably be amazed at the depth of meaning the Spirit breathed through him as he wrote. Do you want to know more what it was like when Moses called down the plagues in Egypt at God's command, or how he withstood all the murmuring in the wilderness, or what the burning bush looked like? Just sit down with Him and ask. Or how about asking Peter what it was like to walk on water? You could even ask Eve what actually took place when she bit that fruit... and what that fruit looked like. I want to meet Melchizedek and ask him if he was the preincarnate Christ or just a foreshadow of Christ?

I would even like to talk with some more recent saints like Billy Graham, or earlier ones like Moody or Billy Sunday, or even a bit earlier. A couple of my heroes of the faith are Adoniram Judson and Hudson Taylor. Thank God time will be no more.

**Resurrection means that we will go to a wedding feast** (Revelation 19:7,8<sup>xxvii</sup>). We who have placed our faith in Christ along with all those saints who have gone before will

become the bride of Christ. We will join that wedding feast in the heavenlies with our groom Christ Jesus. What a feast that will be! What a celebration of all of the above. What oneness we will realize together making up His bride.

**Resurrection means that you will have a face to face with Jesus whenever you want.** If we were bound by time we would have to wait in a very long line for an audience with Jesus. But since there is no time, any and all of us can be with Him any moment and yet it just be between the two of you. I know that is hard to grasp, but I am convinced that it is true and logical. You will never tire of His presence. But we will want to hear from the firsthand testimonies of what Jesus did in others' lives and share our own experiences of His grace. I think we will be shown all that Jesus did for us that we were unaware of to guide us through our lives and direct us to His saving grace.

**Resurrection means that you can continue to worship Jesus.**<sup>3</sup> *No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.* Revelation 22:3 King James version and NIV both translate this as *"his servants will serve him."* Worship and serve come from the same Greek word. Heaven won't be boring. We will not only be worshiping Jesus for the increased revelation of all Jesus is and what He has done, but we will be busy serving Him. I don't know just what that entails, but it will be a joy, of that I am sure.

**Resurrection means that you will know Jesus even as you are known.** In 1 Corinthians 13:12 we read,<sup>12</sup> *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.* Face to face with the glorified Jesus! Words cannot describe what that will be like. But to know fully even as we are fully known is another of those concepts that we cannot wrap our minds around. To know Him is to know God. Jesus prayed in John 17:3<sup>xxviii</sup> that life eternal is to know God and the One who He sent into the world. Resurrection means we will fully know.

Let us review the wonderful results of resurrection. Resurrection means we will have eternal bodies. Resurrection means that emotionally there will be no sorrow or sighing; our souls will be healed; everyone you meet will have the same fruits of the Spirit as Jesus; sin will no longer harass and tempt you; nature will be healed and be a wonderful playground; our capacity to love will be greatly increased; we will know the depths of God's Word; you can fellowship with the saints of old; we will be going to our wedding feast; you will have a face to face with Jesus whenever you want; you can continue to worship Jesus; you will know Jesus even as you are known.

As we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, we celebrate knowing that it means all this and more! His sacrifice on our behalf was accepted. Our sin debt is paid in full, and all that resurrection means to us has been made possible by His death and resurrection.

Questions:

What is the resurrection of Jesus so important?

What are the two kinds of resurrection?

List the things that resurrection means to us.

How were they made possible?

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<sup>i</sup> **Mark 8:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

<sup>ii</sup> **Luke 24:38-43 (ESV)**

<sup>38</sup> And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

<sup>40</sup> And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate before them.

<sup>iii</sup> **John 5:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

<sup>iv</sup> **John 11:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

<sup>v</sup> **John 14:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

<sup>vi</sup> **Philippians 1:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

<sup>vii</sup> **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

<sup>viii</sup> **John 16:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

<sup>ix</sup> **Galatians 1:4 (KJV)**

<sup>4</sup> Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

<sup>x</sup> **Philippians 4:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

<sup>xi</sup> **John 16:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

<sup>xii</sup> **Acts 16:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,

<sup>xiii</sup> **Acts 26:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

<sup>xiv</sup> **Ephesians 1:19-20 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

<sup>xv</sup> **Psalms 16:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

<sup>xvi</sup> **Philippians 3:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

<sup>xvii</sup> **1 Corinthians 15:41-42 (ESV)**

<sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. <sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

<sup>xviii</sup> **Romans 8:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope

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<sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

<sup>xix</sup> **Revelation 7:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

<sup>xx</sup> **Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

<sup>xxi</sup> **2 Peter 3:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

<sup>xxii</sup> **Isaiah 11:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Romans 8:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope

<sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

<sup>xxiv</sup> **Isaiah 11:6-9 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. <sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>xxv</sup> **1 John 4:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **John 16:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

<sup>xxvii</sup> **Revelation 19:7-8 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **John 17:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.