

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE



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LESSON 13 • Resurrection

WEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPER

Genesis 42-44, Philippians 1-2
1 Corinthians 15

The word "resurrection" means coming back to life again. It must have been the most wonderful event in the history of the world, when Jesus Christ came out of the grave after being dead for three days.

When His disciples saw Him, they just couldn't believe their eyes. They thought it was a spirit, but Jesus said to them. "Behold My hand and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, 'Have ye here any meat?' And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them" (Luke, chapter 24, verses 39-43).

At last, they were convinced that He was really alive again. God had given Him eternal life. We read of Jesus saying - in Revelation, chapter 1, verse 18, "Behold, I am alive for evermore."

Jesus will raise His followers

Jesus taught His disciples that they, too, would be raised from the dead. Look again at the verse which we have just quoted. Jesus said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (or, the grave) and of death." (Revelation, chapter 1, verse 18).

Now, if you have the key to a door, it means you are able to open it. Jesus has the keys of the grave. This is a way of saying that He has power to open the graves, and set free those who are buried there.

This power has been given to Him by God. Read in John's gospel, chapter 5, verse 20-29. Notice particularly verse 21, which says, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will."

To quicken is to bring to life; and God has given Jesus the power to bring men and women back to life again.

A hope shared by all faithful men

Men of God throughout the ages have died looking forward to the day when they would be raised again. Paul tells us of some of these, that they "...died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 13).

Further on he speaks again of these men, who "...received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews, chapter 11, verses 39-40).

We see from this verse that the gift of eternal life is going to be given to all true worshippers of God at the same time.

The early Christians also looked forward to this time. When one of their number died, they spoke of him as having "fallen asleep" because, just as men wake up after sleeping, so the disciple would be "awakened" from the dead. In the 15th chapter of I Corinthians, which you have read, Paul says of the 500 disciples who saw Jesus after His resurrection, "some are fallen asleep" (verse 6).

When will the Resurrection take place?

Nearly 2,000 years have passed since Jesus was raised from the dead. When is He going to raise those who have "died in faith"? The apostle Paul answers this question for us. He says in I Corinthians, chapter 15, "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" (verse 22-23).

We have seen already that Jesus Christ is coming back to set up the Kingdom of God and reign over the whole earth. When He comes to do this, He will raise the dead. Then those who have been faithful will be given eternal life, and will enjoy the great privilege of helping Jesus to rule the earth, as we read in Revelation, chapter 5, verses 9-10. Here we read the words of a song they will sing in that day.

"...Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

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Some will be alive when Jesus comes

What of those who are still alive when Jesus comes back? Jesus said that, when He comes, He will, "...send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew, chapter 24, verse 31).

In I Thessalonians, chapter 4, verses 14-17, Paul tells us a little more about this. He says, "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 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: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the cloud, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The dead will be raised, and the living will be gathered together, and all will appear before the Lord Jesus. Before He gives them eternal life, there must be a judgement - but you will hear more about that in your lesson next week.

Read again I Corinthians, chapter 15, verse 51-58. Here the apostle speaks of the time when the faithful Christians will be given that great gift of eternal life, or - as he calls it here - immortality.

As we look forward to that time, the apostle Paul tells us to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Some points to remember

1. God has given Jesus power to raise the dead.
2. He will do this when He comes back to the earth again.
3. He will at the same time gather together those "in Christ" who are still living when He comes.
4. To those who have been faithful, He will give eternal life, and they will live and reign with Him.