

The Path - Basic Christian Doctrine

Day 13: Resurrection of the dead

We have been studying a list of six fundamental doctrines of Christ: the doctrines or teachings that Christ gave to his twelve to give to the world found in Hebrews 5:12-6:3. The fifth doctrine listed is the “resurrection of the dead”. This doctrine is one of the essential doctrines of the church. Apostle Paul explains why this doctrine is so essential in 1 Corinthians 15:12-22:

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found _____ witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Apostle Paul made several important points here:

1. We must believe in a resurrection of the dead if we believe that Jesus rose from the dead.
2. If Christ did not rise from the dead then the Apostles were false witnesses, because they knew Him well and testified that they had seen Him after His resurrection.
3. Our faith is vain if there is no resurrection of the dead, and we are still in our sins.
4. Those that are dead in Christ have perished because they trusted in a lie.
5. We are miserable: for we are living for and trusting in a false hope.

It is completely unbelievable that the Apostles lied to the world about the resurrection, and proceeded to give their lives for that lie. They had lived with Jesus three and one half years: they knew Jesus much too well to be tricked by an imposter. All of them proclaimed their testimony “He is risen”; and it was witnessed by the spilling of their blood.

Apostle Paul further describes the resurrection/rapture of the church in the latter days this way in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For 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 _____ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Please note that only Christians will be in the rapture. Apostle Paul explained that those who would be in the rapture would be: “we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.” He further described them as “the dead in Christ”. Non-Christians will be resurrected by Jesus Christ at a later time, as we will discover in the following scripture in Revelation 20:5-7:

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the _____ years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.”

Christians who are saved during the rapture will also be saved the same way that we are saved today. The Bible describes them as “blessed and holy”, and “beheaded for the witness of Jesus.”

“The rest of the dead” who are not Christians are not going to be resurrected until after the thousand years of peace, where Jesus Christ reigns upon the earth. “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” At the end of the thousand years of peace, while the devil is cast into the bottomless pit, there is going to be a war: the war of Gog and Magog. We read about this in Revelation 20:7, 8 ,9b:

“And when the thousand years have expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea ... and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.”

After this battle, the devil will be cast into an eternal hell. Then there will be a white throne judgement to judge all who are non-Christians. We find the description of this in Revelation 20:11-12:

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were _____ out of those things written in the books according to their works.”

Those who lived before Christ and those who were contemporaries of Jesus but did not follow him, and all those who were not Christians after the church was born are going to stand before God in this white throne judgement. We can either plea bargain with God before the judgement or we will face Him and our sins at the judgement. 1 Timothy 5:24 says: “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgement, and some men they follow after.”

Discussion

- 1. Why did the apostle Paul say that he and the other apostles would be false witnesses if there is no such thing as the resurrection of the dead?**
- 2. Why is our faith “in vain” if there is no resurrection of the dead?**
- 3. In what way will the rapture of the Christian be like the ascension of Jesus Christ?**
- 4. What do you think are the identity of “the books” that God will judge men by at the white throne judgement?**