

**July 28, 2019**

## **The Resurrection of the Body**

1 Corinthians 15:20-26

15:20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

15:21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

15:23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

15:24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

15:25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

### **1. The World After Death**

” What happens if a person dies?” It is something everyone is interested in and want to know. So, various things are said about the world after death, but all are only imaginations. Many people speak of “the near-death experience,” but it is also based on the person’s memory and is not certain. It is because near death is not true death, and resuscitation is not revival. There is no one other than Jesus Christ who really died and was resurrected. The world after death can only be known through what He taught directly or through the apostles.

When a person dies, he goes to either a place of blessing or a place of suffering. Luke 16:19-31 has a parable of “The Rich and Lazarus”. This is a parable, but because the name “Lazarus” is used, it seems to be a story based on what was actually there. In the Catholic Church,

this Lazarus is called “St. Lazarus,” aside the brother of Martha and Mary is called “St. Lazarus of Bethany.” He is a “Saint.” It is surprising that poor man, who were covered with sores, and who survived only spills from the table of a rich man. I think that Lazarus’s soul, contrary to his miserable being, was filled with pure faith that relied on God.

Lazarus, after his death, was taken by the angels and went to Abraham’s side, but the rich went to the place of suffering. The rich man turned to Abraham and called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.” But Abraham said, “Between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.” Just as there is an impenetrable chasm between the living and the dead, there is a strict distinction between where Lazarus is and where the rich is, even in the same dead world.

Since this parable was spoken to the Jewish people, The place of light, blessing, and peace after death was was called the “Abraham’s side.” But Jesus called the same place “paradise” for the robbery which was crucified with Jesus. The robber received the promise of “paradise” when he repented and believe in Jesus on the cross. Jesus said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43). This robber has been working a lot of bad things up to now. He repented, but he can not do anything good for him who is dying on the cross. But Jesus put him in paradise, in response to the repentance and faith of this robber. “I can not do anything if I can come here. Even if I have faith or repentance ...” No

one can say this. It is never too late to have faith or to repent. Today is the day of salvation and now is the time of grace.

Paul and John had a glimpse of paradise alive (2 Corinthians 12:4, Revelation 4:1). John had the throne of God there, angels, elders, and countless people “clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” (Revelation 7:9 ) He says that he praises God and His lamb Jesus Christ. This may be called “the church of the heavens.” “Paradise” and “The Church of Heaven” are the same place. Those who have completed the journey of faith on earth in response to the redemption of Jesus Christ have moved to the “heavenly church.”

The Bible teaches that when a person dies, it does not end, but his soul continues after death. But there should be no peace away from Christ. The important thing is to stay with Christ when you live and after you die. Jesus promised his disciples. “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” The most important word here is “Where I am you may be also.” The Lord Jesus said, “Where you are, I am,” while we are on earth. Those who obey the Lord and stay with the Lord on earth can stay with the Lord even after death same as on earth. For anything, even death, can not separate us from the Lord.

## **2. The Resurrection of the Body**

Jesus Christ, who died and was resurrected, revealed us the world after death. Not only that, but the hope after the afterlife he confirmed.

That is “the resurrection of the body” and “the eternal life.”

This hope had been revealed to the people of Israel before Jesus came. People die and go to the world after death. But, they will not stay there forever. When the time of God’s judgment comes, there will be the fate of the dead. Daniel 2:2 says: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

When Lazarus in Bethany died, Jesus said to Martha, “Your brothers will rise again.” It meant that Lazarus would come back here now, but Martha took it in a general sense and said, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” (John 11:23-24). It was the faith that everyone in the faithful Jewish people had that the believers would revive in the “time of the last day’s resurrection.”

Judaism had Pharisees and Sadducees, and Pharisees believed in the resurrection and Sadducees did not. Although Paul was a Pharisee and believed in the resurrection (Acts 23:6-8), after meeting the resurrected Christ and being converted, he believed in the resurrection not only being taught by the law but also he could make it more certain by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Moreover, he understood that the hope of this resurrection is not only for the Israelites, but that even gentiles can be given to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

So, at 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul says that the resurrection of Christ is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” “The firstfruits” is a term that means that a large harvest will follow. The resurrection is not something that happened to Jesus alone, but it teaches that the resurrection of many who believe in Jesus will follow. The

resurrection of Jesus first proves that Jesus is the Son of God. Second, it saves those who believe in Christ from sin and death. And thirdly, those it guarantees that those who believe in Christ will resurrected in the body of glory and no longer die like Christ.

So when does this resurrection occur? That is the time of Christ's second coming. 1 Corinthians 15:23 says, "But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ." 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 writes that the dead in Christ will rise first. Then those who are alive will be changed the same as the resurrected ones without experiencing death. What happens at this time is depicted in 1 Corinthians 15:52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

When we confess in the Apostles' Creed that "I believe in the resurrection of the body," we recall here the part that "he will come to judge the living and the dead.". And, the time of the judgment of Christ, the time of the resurrection for the true believers. We are grateful to remember this truth.

### **3. The Eternal Life**

The apostle's creed confesses, "We believe in eternal life" after saying "the resurrection of the body," and ends with "Amen." That is because, in the Bible, it means the ultimate blessing that is finalized after God's judgment. In Matthew 19:28-30, Jesus said: "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses

or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first." It is expressed in the word "eternal life." It is expressed in the word "eternal life" what will be the highest reward at the judgment of Christ.

In Matthew 25:31-46, that judgment is very specific. And finally, the Lord said, "the righteous into eternal life." Here too, "eternal life" means the ultimate blessing.

So, in 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul says, "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life." Here, "eternal life" is drawn as a reward to the believers received in the coming world. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Eternal life," of course, is given by grace. We receive it by faith. But if you lose your faith, no one can be convinced of "eternal life." So, Paul says, "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life." I think this is a clear truth for those who know that the salvation is the "costly grace."

But at the same time, the Bible also teaches that believers have already been given eternal life. Jesus said, "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." (John 5:24) "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life." (John 6:47) Also, in his letter, John wrote, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

What does this mean? It is well understood if you know that there are three tenses of salvation in Jesus Christ; we have already saved in

the past, and we are being saved now, and we will be saved completely in the future.” The believer was forgiven of sin by the cross of Christ. Now we are protected from the power of sin by the resurrection of Christ. Soon, Christ’s second coming will save us from the existence of sin.

The life of the body diminishes with time. Even at 100% when born, it will be zero at the end of its life. However, “the eternal life” received from God is an increasing life, and even if the earth’s life is over, the believers will continue to be kept alive by “the eternal life.” It will be 100% in the second coming of Christ. No, it may be over 100 percent. We cannot express the glory in human language.

“We believe in the resurrection of the body, and the eternal life.” This confession of faith declares victory over our last enemy, death. The first generation Christians have been empowered, encouraged and comforted by the faith of the resurrection, even thinking of those who were martyred for persecution. Paul preached “the resurrection of the body” using the whole chapter of Corinth 15; “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58) “We believe in the resurrection of the body, and the eternal life.” This faith not only supports us in various sufferings, but also guides and strengthens us in good and peaceful times.

### **(Prayer)**

Father God. We thank you for making the hope of the resurrection of the body and the eternal life more clear and sure by the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ. Help and lead us to this hope, to live our daily

life for you powered by the hope and the life. We pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.