

*The*  
**RESURRECTION  
CONNECTION**



29<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship  
November 1-5, 2009

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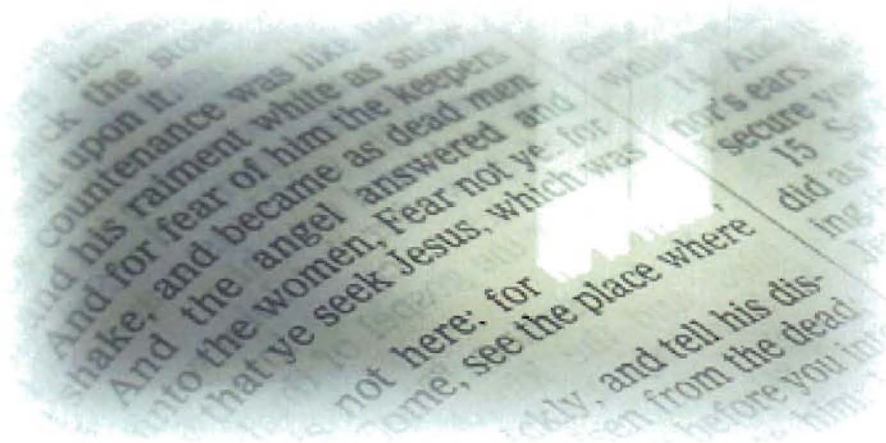
And the angel answered and said unto the women,  
Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which  
was crucified. He is not here: for **he is risen**, as he  
said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Matthew 28:5–6

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## The Significance of the Resurrection

*Roby Ellis*

29<sup>th</sup> Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12–19

*Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: <sup>14</sup> And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. <sup>15</sup> Yea, and we are found false 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. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: <sup>17</sup> And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. <sup>19</sup> If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

### **Introduction**

- A. Recent years have seen a steady increase in the number of critics (even among those claiming to be Christians) who question the miracles recorded in the Bible.
  - 1. They attempt to explain the parting of the Red Sea as a natural phenomenon.
  - 2. They try also to explain the miracles performed by Jesus and His disciples.
  - 3. Attempts have even been made to explain the resurrection by natural means.
- B. From even the earliest days in the history of the Lord's church, there have been all sorts of false ideas about the resurrection.

1. There were some who insisted that there was no resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12).
  2. There were others claiming that it was already past (2 Tim. 2:18).
  3. Paul addresses the resurrection in many of his letters in an effort to set the record straight on this subject that is paramount to the Christian faith.
- C. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he carries the speculations of doubters of the resurrection to their logical end and shows that Christianity stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

## **Discussion**

- I. The resurrection of Jesus rests at the core of the gospel message (vv 1–11).
  - A. The resurrection was part of Old Testament prophecy (vv 3–4).
    1. After His resurrection, Jesus explained to His disciples that His suffering and resurrection were fulfillment of prophecies concerning Him (Luke 24:44–46).
    2. When Peter affirmed Jesus' resurrection at Pentecost, he quoted from David, applying his words to Jesus (Acts 2:22–36, cf. Ps. 16:8–11, 110:1).
    3. When Paul preached in Thessalonica, he preached that the Scriptures made it necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead (Acts 17:3).
  - B. The resurrection is supported by tremendous evidence (vv 5–8).
    1. In this chapter, Paul catalogues several post-resurrection appearances, citing hundreds of witnesses (some named) and concluding with his own testimony.
    2. Apart from the circumstantial evidence for the resurrection of Jesus (which is quite convincing of itself), the eyewitness testimony of the

apostles proved incontrovertible (Acts 1: 22, 2:32, 3:15, 4:33, 5:30–32, 10:39–42) then as now.

3. Of all the miracles recorded in the Scriptures, none has been afforded a greater wealth of evidence in its support than the resurrection of Jesus.
- C. The resurrection was preached everywhere the gospel went (vv 1–2).
1. It was preached first at Pentecost, a little more than a week after Jesus' ascension into heaven (Acts 2:22–36).
  2. Peter and John preached the resurrection when a crowd gathered in the temple area when Peter healed a lame man in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:15).
  3. The preaching of the resurrection is what led the Sadducees (who denied any resurrection, Matt. 22:23) to arrest Peter and John (Acts 4:1–4).
  4. When the Sanhedrin reprimanded the apostles for preaching in the name of Jesus, they responded with an affirmation of the resurrection (Acts 5:29–30).
  5. Peter preached a resurrected Jesus to Cornelius (Acts 10:40).
  6. Paul preached concerning the resurrection of Jesus everywhere that he went, including Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:29–37), Thessalonica (Acts 17:3), Corinth (1 Cor. 15:1), and Athens (Acts 17:31–32).
  7. When Paul stood trial before the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, he stated that it was for “the hope and resurrection of the dead” that he was being examined by them (Acts 23:6–8).
  8. Paul spoke of the resurrection even before rulers like Felix (Acts 24:21), Festus (Acts 25:17–19), and Agrippa (Acts 26:6–8, 22–23).
- D. Our obedience to the gospel involves a reenactment of the resurrection.
1. The “house of God” (which is the church, 1 Tim. 3:15) is composed of those who have obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 4:17).

2. Paul reminded the saints in Rome, “Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Rom. 6:17).

i. The word translated “form” is τύπος (*typos*), elsewhere translated “figure” (Rom. 5:14), “pattern” (Heb. 8:5), or “example” (1 Cor. 10:6).

ii. It is from this word that we derive our word “type.”

3. This doctrine is that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again (1 Cor. 15:3–4).

4. We obey this doctrine in form when we, in His likeness, die to sin, are buried with Him in baptism, and are raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1–8).

5. Paul uses this same imagery in his letter to the Colossians (Col. 2:10–13).

E. We find the resurrection of Jesus at the very heart of the gospel from its initial proclamation from the mouths of the prophets to our obedience to it today.

II. Several vital components of Christianity fall without the resurrection (vv 12–34).

A. If there is no resurrection, our faith is vain (v 14).

1. The word translated “vain” is κενός (*kenos*), meaning empty or worthless.

2. When one is baptized, he is buried with Christ and “risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12).

3. If God did not perform this “operation” (literally “working,” ASV) on Christ, there is no basis for our faith that He can wash away our sins or raise us up on the last day (cf. Eph. 1:18–20).
  4. If the resurrection of Jesus did not occur, then our faith—the basis of victory (1 John 5:3), justification (Rom. 5:1), and salvation (Eph. 2:8)—falls with it.
- B. If there is no resurrection, we are liars (v 15).
1. Paul had testified to thousands concerning the resurrection of Jesus, but if this never happened, he was attributing an act to God that He never performed.
  2. If Paul’s preaching was vain, then so was the Corinthians’ faith, because their faith was based upon the gospel he had delivered to them.
- C. If there is no resurrection, we are still in our sins (v 17).
1. The gospel by which they were being saved (v 2) rested on the fact that Jesus had died for their sins and was raised the third day (v 3).
  2. If Jesus remained in the grave, He could not go into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for our sins in the presence of God (Heb. 9:24).
- D. If there is no resurrection, there is no victory over death (v 18).
1. Whereas Adam brought death into the world by sin, Christ offered life to all when He became the firstfruits of death (vv 20–23).
  2. The resurrection is proof of God’s power over death (Eph. 1:18–20), which will in the end be destroyed along with Hades (ᾠδης, Matt. 16:18) in the “second death” (v 26, cf. Rev. 20:14).
- E. If there is no resurrection, baptism is meaningless (v 29).
1. When one is baptized, he is baptized for the sake of someone who is dead in sin (himself), whom God quickens with the same power He used to quicken Christ from the dead (Eph. 2:5–6, Col. 2:11–13).

2. If, however, Christ was not raised, one could be buried with Him, but he could not be raised with Him to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).
- F. If there is no resurrection, there is no group of people on the face of this earth that is worthier of pity than Christians (v 19).

### III. The resurrection embodies both mystery and victory (vv 35–58).

- A. There are some questions regarding the resurrection that remain to be answered.
1. No man knows the day of the Lord’s return (Matt. 25:13, 1 Th. 5:2).
  2. John wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).
  3. While we do not know all of the particulars concerning what manner of body we will have after the resurrection, we do know that it will be incorruptible, glorious, free from infirmity, and spiritual in nature (vv 42–44).
  4. We cannot inherit the spiritual kingdom in a fleshly body, for which reason we must be given a spiritual body (vv 50–53).
- B. The resurrection will mark the conclusion of victory in Jesus.
1. Paul says that it will be at this moment when death will be “swallowed up in victory” (v 54, cf. Isa. 25:8).
  2. Paul again connects this day to the resurrection of Jesus when he wrote to the Thessalonians concerning their recently deceased loved ones:  

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 (1 Th. 4:13–15).

- C. While we do not know when the end will come or how this glorious transformation will occur, we can be sure that the faithful will be victorious (1 John 5:3), and it's all because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### **Conclusion and Invitation**

- A. The Christian faith stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- B. Without the resurrection of Jesus, we are without hope, salvation, or victory, and all our acts of obedience and service are wrought in vain.
- C. The apostle Paul met the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:8) and could say with confidence,

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (v 58).

## **The Son-Ship of Jesus**

*Jeff Johnson*

Introduction:

*“Romans 1:4 - And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:”* Addressing the human side of Christ, Paul turns his attention to the divine side of Jesus Christ. He is “declared to be the Son of God with power. He (Christ) was declared to be the Son of God by “the resurrection from the dead.” Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be while upon the earth. The fact that He was “declared” by someone to be the Son of God suggests that the one who is doing the “declaring” is someone other than Jesus Himself.

The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone and foundation of the Christian religion. It is the resurrection of Christ that gives the gospel credibility, explains the virgin birth, Jesus Christ is indeed God come in the flesh; and without the hope of the resurrection, Paul said, ‘We are all men most pitiable’ (I Corinthians 15:19).

### **The Resurrection**

#### **The Proof of the Truth, and the Truth that it Proves.**

“(1 Cor. 15:12-20) Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: [14] And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. [15] Yea, and we are found false 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. [16] For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: [17] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. [18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. [19] If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

[20] But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

If there is no resurrection of the dead then, Christ is not risen. There is an emphasis on the word Christ in this passage, which is the Greek word for Messiah. The work of the Messiah was to die and be resurrected in order to provide the cleansed man safety from sin. If He did not come from the grave, then there is no hope.

If there is no resurrection then our preaching is empty. Paul sets forth some consequences, which follow if Christ has not been resurrected from the grave. The core of the Christian religion is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If there is no resurrection from the dead, then why preach? And if one preached not Christ, then his preaching is vain, it has no power, and will not produce something of meaning or worth. Christ taught that the one thing above all else, which would prove Him to be the Son of God, was the resurrection.

If there is no resurrection then our faith is also empty. If there is no resurrection, then why should anyone strive to live a moral life or make any sacrifice? If there is no resurrection, then there is no salvation. Therefore, to believe in Christ and all He has said, is to believe a lie if there is no resurrection.

If there is no resurrection we are found false witnesses of God. *The law said, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour (Ex. 20:16)*. A person does not tell a lie against or about another's neighbor. So then, would it not be just as bad, to tell a lie about God? To say God said or did anything which He has not said or done, is to speak a lie against God.

If there be no resurrection then our faith is futile and we are still in our sins! There can be no forgiveness of sins without the resurrection of Jesus. If the resurrection of Christ is a lie, then there cannot be the result of anyone having forgiveness of his sins. If belief in Christ does not yield forgiveness of sins and

thus the hope of eternity in heaven, then consider those poor Hebrews who gave up the law of Moses for Christianity. If there were no resurrection, then those Hebrews gave up their only hope of salvation.

If there is no resurrection then those asleep in Christ have perished. If there were no resurrection from the dead, then death would simply be the end. If such were the case, then why not live any way you want? When men live any way they choose, ignoring the directions of God, it is because they do not believe there will be a resurrection with eternal consequences for their actions in this world.

If there is no resurrection then we are of all men most pitiable. If there is no resurrection, then everyone should do whatever he wants to do, for there are no eternal consequences. If there is no resurrection, it is not only the future, which is lost, but also the present. If there is no resurrection, then what a pity for Christians to endure persecution for a hope which does not exist.

### **THE PROOF OF THE RESURRECTION**

There is an old saying “the proof is in the pudding.” All the proof we need about the resurrection is found in the Bible. Jesus died and rose again. God said it and that settles it! We see this proof, in the folded clothes, the empty tomb and in changed lives. (Luke 24:12) *Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the **linen clothes laid by themselves**, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.* When Peter arrived at the tomb, he went into the tomb and saw the things which are described in Luke 24:12. There was no use in staying at the tomb, for it was empty. Thus, as a result of the resurrection, there lives would be changed evermore. Even to those who would obey the gospel.

If the enemies of Christianity wanted to discredit Christianity, all they had to do was to produce Jesus’ body. There are so many theories that disclaim the

resurrection of Jesus Christ. They are: The Thief Theory, Hoax theory, Swoon theory, Hallucination theory, and the Spiritual body theory.

**The Thief Theory:** It is conceded that Jesus lived. A few have said he did not live, but He was an invention of some Jews who tried to create a Jewish national hero. Some even suggest that the body was stolen. If this was the case, Roman soldiers would have received the death penalty for allowing this to happen. At this time the disciples were fleeing for their lives, and no one would have stolen His body out of fear.

Since our Lord was raised from the dead men have attempted in various ways to account for the fact that the body of Jesus was stolen from the tomb. If His body was raised to life, no one can deny that Jesus is the Son of God. If anything else happened to His body, He was not the Son of God.

**The Swoon Theory:** This theory poses that Jesus died. It is said by those who hold this theory, that He did not really die, but only became unconscious. The theory holds that while Jesus was in this swoon, and was placed in the tomb by those who thought He was dead. It is said that He soon revived and rolled away the stone, went past the guards, and then to His disciples.

Think of a man in the condition of Jesus when He was placed in the tomb! The body of Jesus was beaten and bloodless. How could He have survived in these circumstances?

**The Spiritual Body Theory:** Some say that the body of Jesus was still in the grave after the third day, or that it had been stolen. It is said that the disciples hope to see Jesus arise that they were impelled to announce that He was alive, but only alive in spirit.

This theory ignores the fact that the disciples did not expect Christ to reappear in body or in spirit. It ignores the fact that the disciples preached that the body of Jesus did not see corruption; they preached that Jesus was raised bodily, and that they had seen him following His bodily resurrection.

**The Hoax Theory:** Bribed servants of Caesar first told that the disciples of Jesus stole His body. Celsus, tried to account for the fact that the body of Jesus was gone from the grave on the third day with the same story the Roman soldiers were

bribed into telling. The soldiers told that they were asleep when the disciples got the body out of the grave. If the soldiers were asleep, how did they know what happened? If the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the grave, they invented the story (Hoax) about Jesus' resurrection. So, why would they have done such a deed? Why would they have invented such a story? They would have nothing to gain in doing so, but all to lose.

It would be difficult to get over five hundred people to go along and not reveal the hoax. Who would die for a lie? Maybe for error, but not a lie.

**The Hallucination Theory:** It is affirmed by some that the disciples saw their Lord after His death only in visions. It is said since Paul compared his vision of Jesus on the road of Damascus, the disciples, therefore, only saw Jesus in a visionary sense.

Those who draw this conclusion ignore the fact that Paul argued a bodily resurrection of Jesus in First Corinthians chapter fifteen. It is improbable that five hundred people would have the same vision.

### **Eyewitness Testimony And the Truth that it Proves**

An eyewitness in any court can show proof if a person is innocent or guilty. In the case of the resurrection there were many eyewitnesses. There were two angels at the tomb, Mary, other women, John & Peter, Eleven disciples, two men on the road to Emmaus, and let's not forget the five hundred (Matthew 26-27, Mark 15-16, Luke 24, John 19-21).

**The resurrection proves the Deity of Jesus** (Matthew 12:39-40, Romans 1:4). **It proves the sufficiency of Christ death** (*Romans 4:25*) *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* **It proves our future resurrection** (*1 Cor. 15:18*) *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.* **And, it proves our future judgment** (*Acts 17:31*) *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Do you have hope in the resurrection? *(Romans 6:3-8) Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? [4] Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [5] For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: [6] Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. [7] For he that is dead is freed from sin. [8] Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

Do you have hope in the resurrection? Have you been united with Christ in baptism, so you can be resurrected with Him?

# THE RESURRECTION AND SALVATION

*Eddy Craft*

**TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:1-2** Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. I find it quite interesting that every step in the plan of salvation is connected to the resurrection of Christ.
- B. We can be sure about our salvation because of the power exhibited by God in the resurrection of Jesus., *“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, [20] Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:19-20).*
- C. This is what makes our acts of obedience of great importance and not just action.
- D. Lets take a closer look at just how our salvation is connected to the resurrection.

## **I. THE RESURRECTION CONNECTION:**

- A. The Son ship of Jesus is connected to the resurrection of Christ, *“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).*
- B. God’s grace is connected to the resurrection, *“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).*



- C. Hopes connection to the resurrection, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* (1 Peter 1:3).
- D. The gospel’s connection to the resurrection, *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; [2] By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.[3] For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4] And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”* (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

## II. RESURRECTION CONNECTION TO THE PLAN OF SALVATION:

- A. The plan of salvation is connected to the resurrection:

**Belief:** Rom. 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

**Repentance:** Act 17:30-31 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

**Confession:** Rom.10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

**Baptism:** 1 Pet 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

**Being faithful:** 1 Cor. 15:13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

B. Have you obeyed this gospel?

### III. BECOMING A CHRISTIAN DEPENDS ON YOUR ACCEPTING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST:

A. Your attitude toward the resurrection of Christ will determine where you spend eternity.

B. What about you?

### CONCLUSION:

A. God has provided all we need:

- a. Power of salvation through the Gospel (death burial resurrection).
- b. Power of his faithfulness (promise and oath).

B. What else would we need? God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3).

## THE RESURRECTION CONNECTION—AND WORSHIP

Dave Miller

The idea that all people are obligated to conform their thinking and their actions to the teaching of Jesus Christ is not a popular notion these days—even among Christians. Many desire to **feel** religiously authentic and pleasing to God, but few think that acceptance by God is predicated upon their own conformity to divine legislation. In fact, those who urge people to be conscientious about compliance with the details of God’s Word are decried as “legalists” (see Miller, 2003). Of course, this antinomian spirit is in direct conflict with the thrust of the Bible from beginning to end. God always has expected people to conform themselves to His stipulations (Ecc. 12:13). Obedient human response is a manifestation of one’s **love** (John 14:15; John 15:14; 1 John 5:3).

The New Testament conveys specific information regarding the “what, when, how, and why” of worship and its relationship to the resurrection. Particularly with regard to the observance of the Lord’s Supper, Sunday carries tremendous significance. Nevertheless, most within Christendom have depreciated that significance as it relates to frequency. To them, one may partake of the Lord’s Supper once each month, quarter, or year. Of course, Scripture is in conflict with this thinking (Brownlow, 1945, pp. 168-175). The biblical view is that God intends for the church to observe the Lord’s Supper every first day of the week, i.e., every Sunday. Sadly, a more recent wrinkle of innovation is the insistence that the Lord’s Supper may be observed on days of the week **other** than Sunday (e.g., Atchley, 1989; Hood, 1990, p. 15; Mayeux, 1989, 46:6). But what does the Bible teach?

### SUNDAY AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

Shortly before His death, Jesus observed the Old Testament feast of unleavened bread. In the process, He instituted the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20) and told His disciples that this “communion” (1 Corinthians 10:16) would be observed in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29). The bread and the fruit of the vine were to function as symbols for the body and blood of Jesus that soon would be offered on the cross as the sacrifice for the world. But what did His actions have to do with the resurrection and the first day of the week? More specifically, when is this practice of observing the Lord’s Supper to be done? On **Sunday**? **Every** Sunday? **Only** on Sunday?

## APOSTOLIC DIRECTION

To answer these questions, we must turn to the early church's practice as it occurred under the apostles' guidance. After all, Jesus specifically predicted that after His departure from Earth, the Holy Spirit would enable the apostles to implement the teachings of Christ in the establishment of the church and the launching of the Christian religion (John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15). Just prior to His ascension, He commissioned the apostles to preach the Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Hence, the New Testament reports what early Christians and churches practiced as a direct result of the teachings of Christ as mediated through the apostles. How churches observed the Lord's Supper and the resurrection, beginning in the book of Acts, is unquestionably a reflection of apostolic influence and inspired precedent. As McGarvey well noted:

It is axiomatic that the Lord, who instituted ordinances for observance in the church, knew the precise manner of their observance which would best secure the spiritual ends had in view; and consequently every loyal soul feels impelled to preserve them precisely in the manner of their first institution, when that can be ascertained.... [O]ur only safety...is to be found in copying precisely the form instituted by divine authority (1910, pp. 342-343).

## SIGNIFICANCE OF SUNDAY

In addition to the practices of the first Christians under the direction of the apostles, one must consider the significance of day Sunday. Does the New Testament assign any special meaning to Sunday? It most certainly does! One cannot help but take note of the fact that Jesus' resurrection took place **on Sunday** (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). After His resurrection, Jesus met with His disciples **on Sunday** (John 20:19, 26). Pentecost was a Jewish feast day (Leviticus 23:15 ff.), and it was on this feast day, ten days after the ascension of Jesus, that the church was established—**on Sunday** (see McGarvey, 1892, p. 19; Brewer, 1941, pp. 325-326). New Testament churches assembled **on Sunday** (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). They observed the Lord's Supper **on Sunday** (Acts 20:7). In harmony with Revelation 1:10, early Christians began calling **Sunday** "the Lord's day" (Swete, 1911, p. 13). How can even the casual reader miss this repetition?

Without a doubt, the day Sunday is infused with considerable religious significance—most of all as it relates to the resurrection.

### SATURDAY?

Further, one cannot help but notice the deafening silence of the New Testament with regard to any special significance attached to Saturday (or any other day). Other than Sunday, Saturday is the only serious contender for a day of religious significance. However, observance of the Sabbath was unquestionably a feature only of Judaism—not Christianity. This fact is especially weighty when one considers that the infant church was exclusively Jewish and initially reluctant to abandon Mosaic practice (Acts 11:19; 15:1, 5; 21:12).

The same is true with regard to early church history. While certainly not the deciding criterion for New Testament Christians, early church history confirms that a verse like Acts 20:7 is not an incidental reference. Observance of the Lord's Supper **on Sunday** reflects the general practice of both the first-century churches as well as post-first-century churches. For example, the *Didache*, written shortly after the close of the first century, speaks of Christians coming together each Lord's day and breaking bread (9:1-12; 14:1). In his *First Apology* (ch. 67), circa A.D. 152, Justin Martyr spoke of Christians meeting on Sunday and partaking of the communion (ch. 67). Milligan observed: "That the primitive Christians were wont to celebrate the Lord's Supper on every first day of the week is evident.... During the first two centuries the practice of weekly communion was universal, and it was continued in the Greek church till the seventh century" (1975, p. 440). Johnson summarized the post-first century data:

[T]he early church writers from Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, to Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Cyprian, all with one consent, declare that the church observed the first day of the week. They are equally agreed that **the Lord's Supper was observed weekly, on the first day of the week** (1891, 1:505, emp. added).

Some point out that Sunday was a regular workday to Jews (as distinguished from the Sabbath) with no **religious** significance. This is true. But the observance of Sunday in Christianity has nothing to do with the Sabbath under Judaism. Jews were required to "rest" (i.e., cease labor). No such requirement is attached to Sunday. The idea that Sunday is the "Christian Sabbath" is a notion of later Christendom—not the New Testament. The only requirement associated with

Sunday under New Testament Christianity is that Christians assemble to worship God and, specifically, to observe the Lord's Supper. No indication is ever given that work must also cease on Sunday. Burton Easton commented: "Sunday, however, was sharply distinguished from the Sabbath. One was the day on which worship was offered in a specifically Christian form, the other was a day of ritual rest to be observed by all who were subject to the Law of Moses through circumcision" (as quoted in Orr, 1939, 3:1920).

### DOCTRINAL LINK

The "resurrection connection" is brought sharply into view when one considers the doctrinal significance that interconnects the Lord's Supper and Sunday. Jesus' **death and resurrection** were connected intimately to **Sunday** observance of the Supper. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). One cannot even argue for a Sunday **assembly** without arguing for Sunday **communion**.

Moses reminded the Jews regarding the significance of the Sabbath: Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day (Deut. 5:12-15).

Notice that the Sabbath commemorated the Exodus—the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage. Sunday, in like manner, is the Christian's day of deliverance. The Lord's Supper is associated with this redemption and the very nature of the church. It is a corporate act and thus done by all members when the assembly comes together on Sunday. The Lord's Supper on any other day weakens its doctrinal significance (see Ferguson, 1976, pp. 59-62).

"Lord's day" in Revelation 1:10 parallels the expression "Lord's Supper" in 1 Corinthians 11:20. Both indicate Who instituted them and to Whom they belong.

Methodist lexicographer, Joseph Thayer, claimed that the expression “Lord’s day” refers to “the day devoted to the Lord, sacred to the memory of **Christ’s resurrection**” (1901, p. 365, emp. added). Again, Sunday and the resurrection are intimately connected.

## CONCLUSION

The words of Rex Turner bring this discussion to an eloquent close:  
The first day of the week is **Christ’s resurrection day**. It is the greatest day in all the annals of history. What could be more appropriate, therefore, than for the disciples to assemble on Christ’s resurrection day, the first day of the week, to break the bread and to drink the fruit of the vine in commemoration of Christ’s death, his atoning blood, his resurrection, and his promise to come again? He who contends that Christians may with equal propriety and authority partake of the Lord’s Supper on some other day than the first day of the week has not grasped the real significance of what took place on that certain first day of the week, nor does he recognize how that the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day (Revelation 1:10) (1972, p. 80, emp. added).

Did you catch that? Such a person “has not grasped the real significance of what took place on that certain first day of the week.” Indeed, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in conjunction with His atoning death, is the most cataclysmic, fantastic, significant event in human history!

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## CONFIDENCE IN THE RESURRECTION

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

David Pharr

1. Our debates with unbelievers center on numerous issues, especially biblical miracles—creation, Joshua’s long day, Jonah, etc. All of this is important and every infidel objection has been adequately answered. Most of us do not have the training to delve into all the contradictions raised by infidels, especially details of science. It should be remember, however, that just because I don’t have an immediate answer doesn’t mean there is no answer and we are thankful that we have God-fearing men of faith who are skilled in apologetics and “ready to give an answer . . .” (I Peter 3:15). Ultimately, however, it all comes down to the question of Christ’s resurrection. If God had the power to raise Jesus, why would anyone doubt the reality of any other miracle? If Christ was raised, then God is really God, Christ is truly alive, and the Bible is always right!
2. There are many texts that might be cited in regard to our hope of the resurrection (John 5:28f; 6:40; 11:25). One that especially comes to mind would be I Corinthians 15, the “Resurrection Chapter.” Some things to be considered there would be:
  - a. Belief in Christ’s resurrection is fundamental to the gospel (1-4, 13-14)
  - b. Eyewitnesses confirm Christ’s resurrection (5-8).
  - c. All the dead will be raised when Christ comes (20-26).
  - d. Our resurrection body will be a “spiritual body” (35ff).
  - e. Confidence in these things should make us “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (58).

3. But rather than trying to cover that and many other texts, let's look carefully at a powerful paragraph in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. Bible students realize that in the church at Thessalonica there was immature understanding of things pertaining to the Second Coming (cf. II Thessalonians 2:1ff). They were not confident concerning those who had died, or might die, before the Lord comes. This section answers that anxiety and assures us all that we can be confident that all will be raised.

I. Hope for eternal life is assured for those who are in Christ— *that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope* (13).

A. Those who are “without Christ” have no hope (Eph. 2:12). In Christ we have hope based on the promises of God (Titus 1:2).

B. This “hope” is not to be understood in the everyday casual use of the term (as a “maybe,” or a mere wish, i.e., “I hope we have chicken”; “I hope it doesn't rain”), but as a certain expectation based on the promises of God (Titus 1:2). In Bible usage, “hope” means a certain expectation. It may be that Christians are sometimes too timid about expressing that confidence. That confidence is not based on our personal goodness or accomplishments. It is based on the grace of God, the blood of Jesus, and the promises of the Bible.

(But, of course, having seen the reality of death and decay, we are tempted to question whether resurrection is possible. So we look to the next verse to find the answer:)

II. We can be confident of this hope because the God that will raise us is the God that raised up Jesus— *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him* (14).

A. Notice “if we believe.” Here is something to believe in when there is nothing else. (He was not a Christian, by his own admission. His son

was killed. He met me at the door with a glass of whiskey in his hand. He said, “I apologize for this, but it’s the only thing that is holding me together.”)

- B. Premillennialists suppose that “will God bring with him” means the saints will be coming from what they call the “rapture.” Their whole scenario regarding a secret coming of Christ, the rapture and tribulation, a restored earth, and numerous judgments is just so much fiction. The point made in the text is simply that God is going to bring to life those who were dead in Christ. It might be paraphrased: “shall God bring *from death* through [by means of] Jesus. It is not that they would *bring* them to earth *with* Jesus, but that they would be brought out of the grave as surely as Jesus was. The bringing is the resurrection, not returning from a so-called rapture. The point is that by means of Jesus they would be raised. This interpretation should be compared to II Corinthians 4:14 (“by Jesus”); I Corinthians 15:56 (“through our Lord Jesus Christ”).
- C. The point of verse 14, therefore, is that the resurrection of Christ is proof of God’s power. If he could raise one, he can raise all.
1. It is his resurrection that gives validity to everything in the gospel (Rom. 1:5; Acts 17:31).
  2. Thus we have the expression that Christ is the “firstfruits” (I Cor. 15:20, 23). It is sometimes asked, “Why is he the firstfruits when Lazarus and others had been previously raised?” Some will explain: “It’s because he was first not to die again.” But this misses the point. The allusion was to the Old Testament requirement that the firstfruits of crops were to be offered in sacrifice, which showed faith that as God had given

the first of the harvest, so would he give it all. Jesus is the first “sheaf.”

(The fact is that the resurrection of Jesus is the most provable event in history and this:)

III. This confidence is based on the word of the Lord— *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord* (15).

- A. This is how all preaching ought to be done.
- B. This hope is not a fairy tale, a fantasy, some dream (cf. II Pet. 1:16).
- C. Scoffers assume that the Bible is not proof enough, but its greatest miracle is certified by perfect eyewitness testimony (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 2:31; 10:39-42; 22:15; 5:29-32; John 20:30-31). These witnesses meet all the qualifications:
  - 1. They were competent.
  - 2. They were in a position to know the facts (Acts 1:3).
  - 3. They were not biased; they had not expected the resurrection.
  - 4. They were in perfect harmony with one another.
  - 5. They were reliable. They were willing to die for their testimony.
- D. So, someone says, “I don’t believe it,” what does that change about the facts?

(Remember that he says, “that you sorrow not even as others which have no hope.” Why? Because even in the sorrow of bereavement:)

IV. We can be confident that those who sleep in Jesus will miss nothing of ultimate importance— *that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep* (15).

- A. The Thessalonians anticipated the glorious coming of King Jesus, but apparently were concerned that any who died might be left out.

- B. The word “prevent” is better rendered “precede,” the point being that the dead would not be left behind, that the living would not have an advantage. (A practical and personal point from this is that while our deceased loved ones will not be present for the happy events we are now enjoying, they will not miss the event which will surpass all others.)

This is explained by the point that *“the dead in Christ 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 (16d-17).*

The dead in Christ rising first is not to suggest that there will be a second resurrection for others. There will be only one resurrection (John 5:28f; Acts 24:15). The resurrection will be on the “last day” (John 6:39ff). There can’t be another day after the last day. The same “day of the Lord” when the righteous dead are raised is when sudden destruction will come on the wicked (I Thess. 5:1-3; cf. II Pet. 3:10). (The “first resurrection” of Rev. 20:5f is not referring to the literal resurrection of the dead.) “First” should be understood as “before.” Before the living are caught up, the dead will be raised and all will go “together.”

(Our hope is based on the promise of Him who cannot lie. Titus 1:2. When and how will that promise be kept?)

Such confident hope will be realized in the glorious coming of our Lord— *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (16).*

Perhaps the “shout” will be like how Jesus shouted in the raising of Lazarus (John 11:43; cf. John 5:28f).

So much for the premillennial notion of a “secret coming,” or of the claim that he has already come invisibly. This is the noisiest verse in the Bible!

Other texts speak of what his coming will be for the lost (II Thess. 1:7ff), but this speaks of our hope as Christians.

### **Conclusion:**

All of this fits perfectly with the very familiar words of Jesus in John 14:1-3. *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Confidence or anxiety? “Let not your heart be troubled.”

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(Brother Pharr’s book, *Thy Kingdom Come*, includes studies related to the Second Coming, resurrection, rapture theories, etc.; published by Publishing Designs)

# JUDGMENT

*Curtis A. Cates*

## INTRODUCTION

Tremendously powerful and significant events have happened in the history of the world, such as the creation, the flood, the virgin birth, the life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, and the establishment of the Lord's church. Further, it seems there is no greater event to man [and this is not in any way to take away from Christ's redemption] than the great day of the Lord's second coming--indeed, we cannot conceive of how great that final day will be!

We must not be deceived; Christ's return is a **reality**; He is coming back (John 14:1-6). His second appearing (Heb. 9:26-28) will surprise the scoffers (2 Pet. 3:1-14). Some teach that "Hell" is this life, the grave, or some such. Modernists reject the unseen, spirit world. But, the great day of the Lord's second coming, heaven, and hell are real (Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7); in fact, all mankind shall be judged (Acts 17:30, 31; Rom. 14:11, 12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Thus, it is imperative that we investigate, understand, and seriously contemplate what God in His absolute Standard, His inspired Word, reveals on "Final Things" [including the judgment] known as "Eschatology."

## MAN KNOWS NOT THE HOUR

There is coming a time when "Heaven and earth shall pass away," "But of that day and hour knoweth no one" (Mat. 24:35, 36). "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief" (2 Pet. 3:10). "Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mat. 24:42-44).

“The faithful and wise servant....is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find” doing the Lord’s bidding. However, the evil servant who “shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat. 24:45-51). Note the sad contrast between the wise virgins [who got to enter the marriage feast] and the foolish virgins [who were unprepared and were shut out]; “Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour” (Mat. 25:1-13).

### **CHRIST WILL RAISE ALL THE DEAD**

At the hour of Christ’s return, He will raise all the dead—at the same time. The Thessalonians were worried about their righteous loved ones who had died; would they miss the Lord’s glorious return? Indeed not, for the souls of those who had died in the Lord (Rev. 14:13) shall Christ bring with Him at His second coming, they shall be reunited with their bodies, and they shall rise from their graves (1 The. 4:13-18).

“Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28, 29). How shall the dead bodies arise? When the immortal spirit of a person leaves his or her body, that person dies; death is a separation of soul and body. Rachel’s “soul was departing (for she died)” (Gen. 35:18), Christ’s Spirit went to God when He died (Luke 23:46), the Lord Jesus received Stephen’s spirit when he was martyred, Paul’s spirit departed to be with the Lord when he was killed (2 Tim. 4:6-8; Phi. 1:19-24), et al.



When Christ returns, the spirits of the dead shall be reunited with their bodies (1 Cor. 15:35-50). As the body without the spirit is dead, so the body which is again inhabited with the spirit shall come back to life, shall be instantaneously changed into a spiritual, celestial, eternal body, and shall at the same moment shall arise from the dead—“in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:51-58).

### **THE UNIVERSE SHALL COME TO AN END**

At the time of the Lord’s second appearing (Heb. 9:16-28), all matter in the universe [which was created at the “beginning” (Gen. 1:1-2:3; Mat. 19:4; Mark 10:6)] shall be annihilated, cease to exist; “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10-12). Have we seriously pondered this?

No wonder, then, that Christ urges us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, and not upon the earth (Mat. 6:19, 20)! No wonder, then, that Paul urges us to “seek the things that are above” and to “Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth” (Col. 3:1, 2)! Think of the folly of the rich farmer, who preached to himself that “things” [rather than his eternal, immortal soul] were his most valuable possession (Luke 12:13-21). This earth and the universe are but temporary, and our very lives here are but temporary; the things which **really** matter are everlasting (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Question: Where are we placing our trust? Dear reader, are we trusting in the material? Do we think we will live on earth forever? Do we think that Christ will not return? These are very serious questions! The universe could—and very possibly might—end in our lifetimes.

### **CHRIST SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD**

Contrary to the teaching of many religionists, Christ is not coming to establish His kingdom; He is ruling now as King over His kingdom. In fact, He was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven to reign on David’s throne at

the right hand of God; that reign began on Pentecost of Acts 2 (Acts 2:29-36). Those who were obedient to the apostles' doctrine on Pentecost were added by the Lord to His church/kingdom (2:37-47); they, as the Colossians, were translated from Satan's realm into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13, 14). Christ shall reign as King on His throne until His second coming, at which time "he shall deliver the kingdom up to God"—Paul called that "the end" (1 Cor. 15:20-28). Note that Daniel prophesied that Christ would ascend to heaven to receive the kingdom (Dan. 7:13, 14); Paul says that when He returns, Christ shall deliver the kingdom to God (cf. Eph. 5:25-27). That exactly contradicts the teaching of the premillennialists—which avers that Christ is not now reigning but shall yet reign on earth for a thousand years. The Bible knows nothing about but clearly teaches the opposite of that bizarre man-made doctrine.

Neither is Christ going to appear the second time to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin; He offered Himself as the Lamb of God and shed His precious blood the first time He appeared (Heb. 9:26, 28). He shall appear the "second time, apart from sin," after which He shall judge all human beings (9:27).

When "all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good [will come forth] unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28, 29). "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory [as Judge]: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left..." (Mat. 25:31-33).

The wicked will be punished, and the righteous will be given rest (Rom. 6:23; 2 The. 1:6-9). John described Christ as sitting upon "a great white throne" before whom all who have ever lived will be judged (Rev. 20:11-15).

## **THE JUDGMENT THRONE SHALL BE “GREAT” BECAUSE OF THE JUDGE**

John was very impressed by “him that sat upon it.” God “hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30, 31). Hope can be found only in a living Christ, who is the Lamb of God; “he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14)! “God hath made him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Woe be to that person who does not submit to Christ’s rule and receive His mercy, grace, and forgiveness in this life: “Kiss the son, lest he be angry [righteous indignation], and ye perish in the way, For his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him” (Psa. 2:12). Let us recognize that Christ “is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).

Christ came to earth to appear as the Lamb of God, sacrificed for us on the cross (John 1:29; Heb. 2:9-18); however, at the last great day He shall be our Judge. Someone illustrated it thus: In childhood, an older boy saved the life of a younger one. Later when the younger boy [now a young man] appeared on trial for having committed a grievous crime, he recognized the judge. He pleaded for mercy thus: “You are the one who saved my life,” to which the one on the bench replied, “I was then your savior, but now I am your judge.” We must not put off submitting to the Lord, because ultimately He will be our Judge.

## **THE JUDGMENT THRONE SHALL BE “GREAT” BECAUSE IT WILL BE WHITE**

“White” indicates purity and justice--righteous judgment. Notice Paul’s statement: “...henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day” (2 Tim. 4:8). Christ, like God the Father, is absolutely “no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34, 35); God and Christ are

altogether pure, holy, and impartial. Unlike some human judges, Christ will not be able to be “influenced,” but His judgment will be exactly according to what each person has done in the body, whether it be good or bad (Rom. 14:11, 12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

The ancient of days [God] is pictured thus: “...his raiment was white as snow” (Dan. 7:9). The Son of man is described thus: “And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow” (Rev. 1:14). The description of the faithful Christians in Sardis was, “But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy” (Rev. 3:4). See also Revelation 7:13, 14.

### **THE JUDGMENT THRONE SHALL BE “GREAT” BECAUSE OF THE STANDARD**

When all mankind shall stand before Christ to give account, the standard by which we are judged will be God’s infallible law. Those who lived in the Patriarchal Dispensation will be judged by that law, those in the Mosaic Dispensation by the law of Moses, and those of us in the Christian Dispensation by the law of Christ (Rom. 8:1, 2; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Jam. 1:25; 2:12; Tit. 2:11, 12; 1 John 3:4; Rom. 1:5; Heb. 5:8, 9; Isa. 2:2, 3; et al.). This is not unlike our courts, in which one is judged by the laws of the land.

No one will be judged by his opinion (Pro. 14:12), or by one’s culture, or by one’s conscience or sincerity (Acts 23:1; 26:9), or by the creeds and doctrines of men (Rom. 10:1-4; Mat. 15:9; 2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:6-9). If we shall be judged by a denomination man-made creed, by which one shall we be judged? Why the warning by Paul in Colossians 2:8? When Christ opens up the books at the judgment, will that include the manuals, disciplines, “articles of faith,” and other creed books? No. The Word of God will be the standard of judgment (John 12:48; Rom. 1:16; Rev. 20:12, 13; Mat. 7:21-23; et al.).

## THE JUDGMENT THRONE SHALL BE “GREAT” BECAUSE ALL WILL BE THERE--YET WE WILL BE JUDGED AS INDIVIDUALS

Never before will such a crowd have been assembled—all nations; no one will be omitted! “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne” (Rev. 20:12). Those of us who have seen the teeming millions of souls in the largest cities on earth have never seen anything that remotely in the least way resembles that throng of people. You, dear reader, and I will be among them!

None will be able to escape into the crowd, or get lost, or talk his or her way out of being judged. At that day, neither earthly wealth, nor power, nor prestige, nor pedigree, nor who we know, nor intelligence will matter, AT ALL!

God will notice and remember you—and me. One might “get lost in the system” here—but not there. You, as I, shall be divided from others—perhaps members of our own families; “...and he shall separate them one from another” (Mat. 25:32); judgment will be on an **individual** basis. The one-talent man could not say, “Look, Lord, at what we did: this fellow gained **five** other talents; this one gained **two** other talents. Then put my **one** with their talents; *we* have fifteen talents!” The Lord said, “Thou wicked and slothful servant” (Mat. 25:14-30). Each shall be judged on his or her own works (Mat. 12:38-45). Yes, we are in families here on earth; however, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Eze. 18:20). We are members of congregations as Christians, yet we shall be judged as individuals. “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is” (Rev. 22:12).

## THE JUDGMENT THRONE SHALL BE “GREAT” BECAUSE THE SENTENCE WILL BE FINAL

The very thought of finality is a serious matter to contemplate. Thanks be to God that we can respond to God’s grace and to Christ’s invitation as long as there is time and opportunity (Mat. 11:28-30; Acts 2:38-41); and yet, we can delay to our own eternal destruction. When this life ends for us, we will never have another opportunity; there is no second chance (Luke 16:19-31). In eternity, anticipate the remembrances of God’s goodness and grace, of having numerous Bibles at one’s fingertips, of the Bible classes and sermons one could have heard—and perhaps did hear, of all the pleadings of loving parents, or of a faithful wife, or of a preacher, or of another Christian friend. Anticipate never again hearing the song “*Jesus the Loving Shepherd*,” or “*O Why Not Tonight*,” or “*Just As I Am*,” or “*God is Calling the Prodigal*,” or “*Almost Persuaded*”!

Dear reader, I am either a “sheep” or a “goat.” If I die as a sheep, that is the way I will face Christ in judgment; if I am a goat, that is the way I will face Christ in judgment. The same is true with you—and with everyone else who has ever lived. Whether I die as a sheep or as a goat, that will determine my **eternal destiny**. Where will I spend eternity? The choice is in my hands—sheep, or goat; heaven, or hell. Solomon stated that “...man [you and I] goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about the streets” (Ecc. 12:5).

The archenemy of you and me, Satan, tries to convince us that our manner of life and where we spend eternity does not matter—BUT, it is a matter of extremely grave consequence. IT **DOES MATTER**! Believe me, I do not want to be separated forever from my wife and children, from my father and mother, **or** from my God and my Savior; but, Christ will separate the sheep from the goats, and eternal death is the final, hopeless, unending separation from our infinitely loving Creator. “This is the second death, even the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14).

## **THE JUDGMENT THRONE SHALL BE “GREAT” BECAUSE OF ITS REWARDS**

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render [reward, KJV] unto every man according to his deeds” (Mat. 16:27). The reward to the disobedient unbelievers shall be hell: “eternal punishment” (Mat. 25:46), “death” (Rom. 6:23), “the lake of fire” [eternal dying, death, separation from God] (Rev. 20:15), “lose his own soul” (Mat. 16:26), “eternal destruction from the face of the Lord” (2 The. 1:6-9), “unquenchable fire” (Mark 9:43), “where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (9:48).

However, thanks be to God that there is the wonderful, great, indescribable alternative reward to the obedient believers: “eternal life” (Mat. 25:46), “many mansions” (John 14:1-6), “the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10), “not be hurt of the second death” (2:11), “blessed,” “rest from their labors,” “works follow after them” (14:13), “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17), “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 8:11), “shall go to” the innocent/righteous dead (2 Sam. 12:23; 1 The. 4:14, 17), “gathered to his people” (Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 49:33), hear “come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom” (Mat. 24:34), “God himself shall be with them” (Rev. 21:3), “the Lord God, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof” (21:22), eternal abode of those “that wash their robes [in the blood of Christ], that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city” (22:14), et al.

### **CONCLUSION**

Great is the value of the immortal soul; each of us is possessed of that soul. How serious to you, or to me, is the fact that your soul, my soul, is worth more than the entire world? The rich farmer preached to himself that physical “things” were most important; very sadly, he preached himself into hell (Luke 12:13-21). On the other hand, the prodigal son preached the truth to himself about the urgent

needs of his soul; he preached himself back home to his father's house (15:11-32). It pays both in this life and in the life to come to do right. It is the height of folly to sell our spiritual birthrights for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25:27-34)!



## HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION

### I Peter 1:3

*Wayne Miller*

Intro. A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was—boy quickly responded, “Eighteen to nothing—we’re losing!” Man said, “Wow, that must be discouraging!” Without hesitation the little guy, “Why should I be discouraged, we haven’t been to bat yet!”

I love the attitude expressed by the hope, confidence of the little guy. The question of hope faces all of us at some point in our lives.

\* Is there any hope for the married couple who seem to wind up at same dead end of unresolved conflict again and again?

\* What about the person who has fallen victim to alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography?

\* Or for a single mom who works a full-time job by day, serves as mother and father at night, wondering, how long can I keep this up?

\* Or the person who battles depression and anxiety?

Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt your hope was in vain? Someone has said: “Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue at all. As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is mere flattery or platitude; it is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength!”

For the child of God there is no only hope, but according to I Peter 1:3-5, it is a radical hope! This hope does not rest on humankind but on the living God—the God who raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory, so our hope and faith can be in Him. Without the resurrection there would be no Christianity! The hope produced by the resurrection is a living and active reality that produces the life of hope in which the eternal power of God is at work.

Notice 3 things about this living hope that makes a difference in life:

**I. OUR HOPE COMES FROM AN ETERNAL PERSON.**

A. That person is the resurrected son of God—Jesus the Christ!

1. No wonder that John writes—“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come—Rev. 4:8.”
2. This hope does not find its anchor as product of human wishing, not contingent upon time bound world.
3. This living hope is based, founded upon the resurrection of JC.

B. It is encouraging to see this eternal person is:

1. Pre-existent of us. He existed before time began, there before the stars were hung in the heavens, before Adam became the first man—Jn. 1:1-3, 14.
2. Present with us. Mt. 28:18-20; Heb. 4:14-16.

C. Jesus always has and always will exist. He is our source of hope!

**II. OUR HOPE COMES FROM AN ETERNAL PROMISE.**

A. This beautiful and powerful promise is found in John 14:1-4.

B. Jesus has been preparing a place called heaven for nearly 2000 years and what an incredible place He has for us. It will be paradise, a place of:

1. Prominence. It is in the presence of God Almighty—Rev. 22:3-5.
2. Plenty. Jesus said place of “many rooms, mansions” giving us the impression of vast place where every child of God belongs.

3. People. Saved people of every nation, race, age, faithful saints of old—Heb. 12:1.

C. The promise is to be with Him forever—what hope that gives us—because He is resurrected to right hand of God—Heb. 1:3.

### **III. OUR HOPE COMES FROM AN ETERNAL PLAN.**

A. From the fall of man in Genesis 3, God had a plan for fallen man. God will is salvation not damnation—I Tim. 2:4.

B. This plan always involved His only begotten Son—Gen. 3:15; Rom. 5:8.

1. Amazing thing about the plan is Jesus died for us when we were enemies, far away from God.

2. God put His love on the line by allowing Jesus to die in our place.

3. If there is anything that should give us hope in this life—here it is—God allowed Jesus to be sacrificed while we were still sinners!

CONCLUSION: Biblical, radical hope is powerful for us today. This hope changes our lives, transforms how we think, how we act, helps us see the world through eternal lens—II Cor. 4:16-18.

Someone has said: “Men see only a hopeless end, but a Christian rejoices in an endless hope!” Our situations may not change around us, but our hope can, because real hope, radical hope, resurrection hope is not about changing what is going on around us but allowing God to change what is going on in us!

As Christians, we are: Heirs of salvation.....

God’s adopted children....

Heirs of the kingdom....

Our inheritance is reserved, fully assured—there will be no disappointments! Our hope is secure in the knowledge of an inheritance that can never perish, fade, or spoil—it is kept in heaven for us! When the Christian race has been run, the fight has been fought, and the faith kept, our radical hope will hold true and faithful child of God will be fully rewarded!!

# Biblical Viewpoints Update

*Roby Ellis*

## Bringing You Up to Speed

In recent years, we have been telling you about many exciting new developments relative to the production of BV. Digital technology has opened a number of doors for us, and we believe this technology is helping us to produce the program at a more professional level than we ever could have achieved before. It has also provided a better medium for storing the programs that air each week. Since the first digital production of BV aired on October 7, 2007, we have built a digital library of more than 100 programs. Unlike before, when our programs were stored on VHS or DVD, these programs can be reproduced upon request without any loss of video quality.

## A Change of Venue

At the beginning of 2009, we were given a tremendous opportunity to move the program from WKPT (on which the program had aired since its inception) to WJHL. This became possible because the 8:00 time slot on Sunday morning was vacated by a religious program that had been on the air for several years. You are probably aware that brother Joe Galloway hosts TV Sunday School, which airs Sunday mornings at 8:30 on WJHL. When Joe learned that the 8:00 spot would soon be available, he informed us at a taping session, and after careful investigation of costs and benefits, our elders decided to make the move at the first of the year.

Our move to WJHL has benefited us in a number of ways. First, we have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of people in the community who tell us that they view the program regularly. Second, it allows us to advertise TV Sunday School, and vice versa. While with WKPT, we could not advertise one another's programs since they aired on different stations. Now not only do we appear on the same station, but also back-to-back, filling the entire hour from 8:00 until 9:00. We look forward in years to come to being able to conclude our local edition of BV with these words: "Stay tuned for TV Sunday School!"

We are also pleased to report that we have added another region to our viewing audience this year. At the request of brother Terry Townsend, we began sending a few programs last year to Dayton, Ohio (where Terry now preaches). After testing the waters in that area for a few months, the brethren at the Northridge congregation decided to air the program on a weekly basis. With this addition, BV can now be viewed in at least six states: Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Mississippi. We hope there will be many more congregations in the future that will express a desire to broadcast BV in their area as well.



*The Northridge Church of Christ is now broadcasting Biblical Viewpoints in Dayton, Ohio.*

## New Faces

We have also been pleased to welcome a new member to our recording staff in 2009. For several months now, we have benefited greatly from the assistance of brother Tommy Johnson, who began working as evangelist for the Mountain City congregation in February of this year. Tommy's work ethic and knowledge of computers have made him a tremendous asset to us, especially on the digital side of our production. In addition to his work behind the scenes, Tommy has appeared on four programs that aired in the summer and fall. We greatly appreciate his efforts and the willingness of the eldership at Mountain City to allow him to help us in this work.



*Tommy Johnson, evangelist for the Mountain City Church of Christ*

We should also express thanks for the other members of our recording crew: Milton Mathers (Stoney Creek), Charles Huff (Pleasant View), and Jeff Johnson (Erwin).

## The Road Ahead

As a part of our ongoing efforts to make BV better, plans are underway to begin construction on a new control room for our studio. Space for this room has been allotted from the room adjacent to the television studio. This will afford us not only needed space in the control room, but more importantly room to create better scenery for filming our programs. We are very excited about these developments and look forward to the potential that this will create.

As always, we wish to express our thanks to all of the congregations and individual members who help to bring Biblical Viewpoints into the homes of those who need the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that this program may continue for many more years to serve as a beacon in a world that is filled with darkness.

