

THE SURPRISING RESURRECTION HOPE

Introduction – People throughout human history have speculated about what happens after they die. Some saw nothingness after death, while others saw immortal souls living a heavenly existence, or a process of reincarnation. The Greek word *anastasis* is translated “resurrection” in the Bible and means a re-embodiment of the soul. Therefore, the Christian hope is in life after life after death .

A. What is of first importance in the gospel of Christ?

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

1. Paul was not the originator of this gospel. He passed on what he had received at his conversion only a few years after Jesus’ resurrection.
2. Christ’s crucifixion and burial was the first stage of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

3. Christ’s resurrection, followed by numerous appearances, is the second stage of the gospel.

Acts 17:32

Acts 23:6-8

4. The bottom line is “Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed” (1 Corinthians 15:11).

B. Resurrection was not a popular concept in the first century, nor is it now in the 21st century. Most contemporary Christians believe only in a disembodied spiritual life in heaven after death, rather than a later resurrection to live in a new heaven and new earth.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

1. Because of the popular notions about life after death in the Greco-Roman world of Corinth, some denied the resurrection hope.
2. If there is no resurrection:
 - a. our preaching and faith are useless
 - b. the apostles are false witnesses about God
 - c. your faith is futile and you are still in your sins
 - d. those who have already died are eternally lost
 - e. “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Corinthians 15:19)

- C. The background to Paul's writings are Genesis 1-3 and the scriptural promises of God that he would defeat all his enemies and reign forever.

I Corinthians 15:20-28

1. The proof of the resurrection hope promised by Scripture is the surprising resurrection of Jesus after his crucifixion and burial.
2. God created human beings in his image so that they could rule over creation and subdue all opposition to God's reign.
3. Where we failed, Jesus fulfilled this promise as a true son of man. He is still in the process of subduing the enemies of God (Psalms 8:1-9).
4. We have all died by participating in Adam's sin. Because of Christ we are being made alive.
5. The last enemy to be destroyed is the death that was a curse resulting from Adam and Eve's rebellion.
6. In the end even Jesus will be in submission to God so that God's original purpose may be accomplished.

Conclusion – The results of denying the resurrection hope is a meaningless life followed by condemnation. Affirming the resurrection gives purpose to our lives now even in the most difficult moments and gives us hope stretching into eternity.

Discussion Questions

1. What do people believe happens to others when they die?
2. What is the unique hope of resurrection?
3. How does this give us hope no matter what we may suffer in this life?
4. What is the surprising message of the gospel?