

## Why was the resurrection necessary?

The resurrection of our Lord is a truly vital and extremely important doctrine. It is clear that Jesus' death was required to pay the price of our sin. Jesus took the sins of all the elect and suffered the full penalty of condemnation for those sins on our behalf. This is called 'penal substitution'. The resurrection is the corollary of this atoning sacrifice (i.e. a sacrifice that turns away God's wrath).

The resurrection confirms to us that God accepted this offering and that Jesus' blood has indeed washed away our sins. If Jesus had not been raised, we would have no certainty that God was appeased (1 Cor 15:17). Without the resurrection our faith is pitiable (1 Cor 15:19).

Christ's resurrection also confirms to us that we too will be raised (1 Cor 15:13, 20, 22; 1 Thess 4:14; Pt 1:3). Paul tells us that our new body will be: incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual (yet also material), heavenly, godly, living and immortal - full of eternal life (1 Cor 15:42-45, 48-49, 53). This bodily resurrection will be at the end when Christ returns (1 Cor 15:52; Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2). Therefore, we are exhorted to, '**be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord**' (1 Cor 15:58). The certainty of our future resurrection is secured by the historic fact of Christ's resurrection and is an encouragement to serve God with all our hearts.

But we must also understand that we have a measure of this resurrection now in our spirit. We are born again through the resurrection (1 Pt 1:3). The Christian life is not a mere doctrinal choice and an ethical discipline but a changed life. Believers are not human but are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). This is of the utmost importance to understand. We are not of the Adamic race any longer, but are new creatures in Christ. Our spirits and hearts have been organically changed (Ezek 11:19, 18:31) so that we are part of the Firstborn (Rm 8:29; Col 1:18); united with Christ and conformed to his image, and our spirits sit with Christ in God's presence (Eph 1:20). It is our spirits that '**were washed**' (definitively sanctified, 1 Cor 6:11). The new man is the creation of God, in the likeness of Christ (Eph 4:24) and the Christian walk by faith, in the Spirit of God, is a resurrected life. The world of sin around us is a realm of death (Eph 2:1; 1 Pt 4:6). This is why we shine as lights (stars) in the world (Phil 2:15). Understanding this new creation is vital to being clear on sanctification and walking by faith. Those who fail to understand this fall into legalism of various sorts. While our spirits were sanctified, our souls are being sanctified progressively (this is not the old nature, 1 Peter 1:8-9, 1:22, 4:19; Jm 1:21). This progressive sanctification results from choosing to put on the new man more and more faithfully over time and dying to the old man.

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