

# *MORE SEED & BREAD, ISSUE NO. 301*

## **A CASE FOR RESURRECTION**

By Andrew Brown

When brought to the test, Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac (Gen. 22: 16). Abraham reasoned, **God is able to raise people [Isaac] even from the dead** (Heb. 11:19). He knew that Isaac needed to be alive for God's promises to be fulfilled. Abraham, a man loved by God, believed resurrection was God's method for reversing death. The Old Testament gives accounts of resurrection that demonstrate God's ability and plan to use resurrection: Elijah raised the widow's son (1 Kings 17:17-24), Elisha resurrected the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4:18-37), and a dead man was raised when he touched the bones of the dead Elisha (2 Kings 13:21). In the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel encountered the enemy death (Ezek. 37). Like Abraham, he had to truly believe God's promises to the dead patriarchs. The Lord confronted Ezekiel's doubt: **Son of Man, can these bones live?** (Ezek. 37:3). All the patriarchs, a pile of dry bones to the naked eye, will be raised. In this vision, Ezekiel witnessed life-breathing, death-reversing resurrection. All of Israel stood before Ezekiel alive. Ezekiel saw resurrection in action and could say with certainty as Paul did, **Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?** (Acts 26:8). This answers Job's hypothetical question, **If a man dies, will he live again?** (Job 14:14). Job knew of resurrection. **Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, and Whom my eyes will see and not another** (Job 19:26-27). He knew God would call him out of death to see Him with his own eyes in the flesh.

Resurrection is consistent through the New Testament. In the proclamation of the Kingdom, resurrections were performed to show forth what would come in that future time. Jesus sent out the apostles with power to raise the dead (Matt. 10:7-8). Lazarus' resurrection was an exclamation point in the Lord's ministry. **This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God** (John 11:4). Lazarus was not in heaven, but was "sleeping" in the state of death: **Our friend Lazarus has**

**fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep** (John 11:11). He told Martha, **Your brother will rise again** (John 11:23). Death had momentarily won the victory. It did not matter how long Lazarus was dead, for God created man from dust in the beginning. God has numbered our hairs and, regardless of how long we sleep in death, He will put us together again with glorified bodies. The rebellion against God is what brought the "sting of death." The results of death made Jesus weep. Jesus reversed this curse, **I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies** (John 11:25). As with Lazarus, life is not given immediately.

The believer's salvation rests on the Lord's death and resurrection. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day (1 Cor. 15:3-4). **Though He slept in death, our Savior is alive! He is not a dead Savior** (1 Cor. 15:20). **I am the first and the last . . . the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore** (Rev. 1:17-18). Death could not contain the Author of Life, and because He rose we too will rise. The mythical phrase the "resurrection of the body" does not appear in Scripture. Resurrection of the dead is the Biblical term. The Christian "hope" has been hijacked from the myths of Greek philosophy. Plato's view of the soul's immortality contaminated the true hope of resurrection, transferring it to a false hope of "instant glory" in heaven at death. Christianity has nearly lost the truth of resurrection. People embrace the comfort of thinking they will be alive in heaven regardless of resurrection. They celebrate the enemy death. There is no need for resurrection if believers are currently in heaven. Resurrection is unnecessary if the body is cumbersome and some have been in heaven thousands of years without it. Satan began the lie that man is immortal by saying, **you surely will not die** (Gen. 3:4). Man is not immortal. The Bible speaks of dead souls, not immortal ones. Do not steal this from Jesus **who alone possesses immortality** (1 Tim. 6:16). Jesus imparts immortality to believers after resurrection when the mortal are clothed with immortality (1 Cor. 15:53-54).

The Lord Jesus was actually dead. He was buried. He was raised. Contrary to man's biased traditions, the Bible will not demonstrate a person living anywhere apart from a body. Furthermore, the Scriptures talk of resurrection, not reincarnation or resuscitation. Jesus did not go to heaven or "hell" at death. He

did not enter heaven until after His resurrection (John 20:17). Then He entered bodily as did Enoch and Elijah. When raised, Jesus had a glorified body. **See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have** (Luke 24:39). Jesus was not a spirit; His resurrected body was physical. He could be touched and ate food: **Have you anything here to eat?** (Luke 24:41). Luke, the physician, diagnoses the same dead man on the cross as risen to life. The power of seeing One who had been dead, yet was certainly alive, brought doubters to believe. The testimony of their own eyes was proof to His followers, and even to some enemies. James, the Lord's unbelieving brother, became a believer after His resurrection. When confronted by the risen Savior, Paul believed. Paul referenced eyewitness testimony and unashamedly exalted resurrection in his teaching. The Athenian "scholars" had no place for resurrection and badly misunderstood Paul 's message claiming, **He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities, because he was preaching Jesus and Resurrection** (Acts 17:18, TRV). Paul magnified the resurrection so much they thought he deified it. Festus mockingly concluded that Paul's "insane" message was about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive (Acts 25:19). This view contradicted the common view of death.

If death is the gateway to eternal life, why was Jesus resurrected? It is a twisted belief that says people are not dead when they die, blending death and life. Life and death are opposites. Resurrection is God's method for bringing the dead back to life. The angel spoke to the women at the tomb, **Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here; but He has risen** (Luke 24:5-6). Jesus is alive because He's risen. Without resurrection, **we are still in our sins** (1 Cor. 15:17). **If the dead are not raised, (then) not even Christ has been raised...**(1 Cor. 15:16). Christ's death and resurrection are linked together. Without resurrection, Jesus would still be dead (1 Cor. 15:16). All die because of Adam's sin, but all will be made alive because of Christ (1 Cor. 15:22). **There shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked** (Acts 24:15). Without faith many will die the second death in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Then death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:54).

Paul's expectation was not out-of-body life in heaven but life through resurrection. He strove to **know Him and the power of His resurrection** (Phil. 3:10). Without resurrection, those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished (1

Cor. 15:18). An impossible statement if believers are immediately in heaven when they die! The dead return to the dust as God declared (Gen. 3:19); without resurrection they would remain dust. Believers are to be pitied without it (1 Cor. 15:19). **If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die** (1 Cor. 15:32; Eccl. 8:15). Paul agrees with Ecclesiastes. He links the concept "under the sun" to "without resurrection." Without resurrection all remain in death. If you are not resurrected, your faith is worthless (1 Cor. 15:14). These verses are perplexing to those who hope in the instant glory of heaven. Do not let the Bible's hope be hijacked from you. Resurrection needs its proper place in the foundation of truth.

Adam's race had been brainwashed by believing Satan's lie about death. Rather than accepting widely held mythical-based traditions, our understanding of death must be defined by the many details found in God's perfect Word. **Sheol cannot thank You, death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your faithfulness. It is the living who give thanks to You, as I do today** (as Hezekiah prayed to God, Isa. 38:18-19). Only the living can praise and thank the Lord. Only those living have awareness and hope. **For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything** (Eccl. 9:5)...**There is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol (the grave) where you are going** (Eccl. 9:10). David knew this fate and believed the truth about death. Through inspiration he wrote, **What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your faithfulness?** (Psa. 30:9). Dust cannot praise the Lord. Truth regarding death fills the pages of the Bible, yet it is ignored and twisted. Job and Ecclesiastes are slandered, yet their teaching regarding death is consistent with the entirety of the Bible. Orthodoxy remains willingly ignorant, choosing the false comfort of fables over God's precious truth. The multitudes blindly follow their blind leaders.

Jesus Christ is the example of God's method to bring us to life with Him. He died and He rose from the grave never to experience death again. **As Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection** (Rom. 6:4-5). The miserable results of death are all around us. The anticipation of Scripture's resurrection gives us hope. Christ has conquered death, and because of this the believer will too! **An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and will come forth** (John 5:28-29). As the days

pass, death draws nearer, but [God] will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21).

The Sadducees rejected the idea of resurrection (Matt. 22:23), but claimed to accept Moses' writings. They incorrectly thought Moses did not talk about resurrection. To "prove" their point, they conjured up a story. Jesus masterfully put their trickery in its place by quoting Exodus 3:6: **I am the God of Abraham . . . He is not the God of the dead but of the living** (Matt. 22:32). Jesus taught that although these men were dead their resurrection is certain in God's mind; they are as good as alive to Him. Yet preachers today try to use the Sadducees' trick, twisting the truth to say the dead are alive apart from resurrection. They bring up misunderstood and out-of-context passages and separate them from the full scope of the Bible. They err because they know not the Scriptures. Let us not imitate the Sadducees but rather be willing to stand on the side of God's truth even if it causes us to differ from the multitudes blindly following tradition. The Bible has much to say on resurrection, calling it **an elementary teaching** (Heb. 6:1-2). To the inspired men who heralded it and those who listened and believed, it was elementary. Today, resurrection is not understood. Its significance is nearly lost in the fluffy fables and misrepresentations of death that have muddied many minds. Let us search for what God has actually taught in His glorious Word and be found believing it. Resurrection is the only hope for the believer in Christ. (*New American Standard Bible* used throughout.)

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