

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

January 2016

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:2). Happy New Year! I pray that this year finds you closer to the Lord than ever before. He is good, and coming soon.

New Kids’ Korner: My children have designed a new section for the youth. They have kept the crossword and added a few items that I pray will be a blessing to all. If you have any comments or ideas, we would love to hear from you. We pray that this section will bless and encourage you in your spiritual journey.

The Resurrection and the Life

by Lynnford Beachy

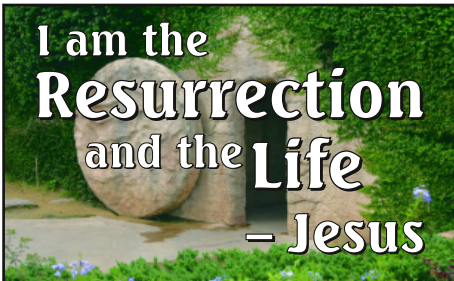
Jesus exclaimed, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

There is one event that, regardless of riches, status in society, or any other earthly advantage, will happen to everyone with very few exceptions; that is death. “For the living know that they shall die:...” (Ecclesiastes 9:5). To us it appears that death is the end of our future, and that would be true if it were not for God sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us from death (Hosea 13:14).

You see, there is more to the story than this temporary life we are living now. By His sinless life, death, and resurrection, Jesus bought us the privilege of having life after death. Jesus assured us, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18). Praise God! Jesus has the ability to revive us back to life. This is called “resurrection.”

Foundational Principles

The resurrection is listed as one of the foundational principles of Christianity



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(Hebrews 6:1, 2), and it was included as part of the gospel taught by Christ and His disciples. When the disciples "...spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:1, 2).

While Paul was preaching to the idolaters of Athens, "...certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18).

Paul then preached a sermon to these men of Athens, saying, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 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. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts 17:30-32).

Later, when Paul was arrested for preaching the gospel, his teaching on the resurrection caused quite a stir among his Jewish accusers: "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the

Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle." (Acts 23:6-10).

Paul confessed his belief in the resurrection and strongly warned against the teaching of those who deny it. He wrote, "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Timothy 2:16-18). Denying the resurrection, or even misunderstanding the timing of the resurrection, is enough to overthrow the faith of some. Paul placed a great deal of emphasis on understanding the resurrection. He recognized it as a key component of the gospel.

Two Resurrections

The Bible speaks of more than one resurrection. Paul wrote of faithful saints who "...were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35). There is a better resurrection

for those who are faithful to the Lord. Paul said "...that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).

Jesus explained, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves 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 damnation" (John 5:24-29).

This is where the judgment comes in. Those judged faithful will come up in "the resurrection of life," while the rest will come up in "the resurrection of damnation."

Timing of the Resurrections

Jesus explained, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). The resurrection of life will take place "at the last day." Jesus expressed this fact several times in this discourse. He said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him

up at the last day" (John 6:44). And again, regarding those who have eternal life, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54).

One of Jesus' disciples, Martha, spoke to Jesus about her dead brother: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).

It is very clear that Jesus taught the resurrection of life would take place "at the last day." As we have learned, if we think it happens before that, then it will overthrow our faith. When is "the last day"?

Paul taught, "But 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 [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Here we see that those who are resurrected "first" are those who are "dead in Christ." So the resurrection of life will take place first, and it will happen at the second coming of Jesus, when He comes in the clouds of glory.

When are the Righteous Rewarded?

Jesus encouraged us to feed the poor: “And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense [reward] thee: for thou shalt be recompensed [rewarded] at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14). Jesus said that the righteous will be rewarded at “the resurrection of the just.” He also explained, “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matthew 16:27). In the last chapter in the Bible Jesus said, “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

The faithful will receive their reward when Jesus returns to resurrect them. They will not receive their reward before they are resurrected at the second coming of Christ.

Wait a minute! What about all the faithful who have died in the past? Aren't they already enjoying the reward of heaven?

David is Not in Heaven

Peter explained, “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses....

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool” (Acts 2:29-35).

Here we learn that King David, the man who killed the giant, Goliath, has not yet gone to heaven. This would make sense if what Jesus said is true, that David will be rewarded at the resurrection of the just at the second coming of Christ. This is exactly what David believed would happen, for he wrote, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psalms 17:15).

We Shall be Changed

We will not be able to enter the kingdom of God in our current condition. We must be changed first. The Bible says, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:50-55).

We are currently mortal and corruptible. In this condition, we cannot

enter heaven. We must be changed first. When does this change take place? "...at the last trump." This is when Jesus will return (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16). We are mortal until we are changed at the second coming of Christ. Then, and only then, will we be able to inherit the kingdom of God; until then, all the dead are asleep.

Christ's Resurrection

The Sadducees had evidently been influencing the Corinthians with their denial of the resurrection, so Paul wrote, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 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. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:12-22).

Notice Paul's argument here. He said that if there is no resurrection from the dead, then all those who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished, and we

would only have hope in Christ "in this life only." The resurrection is our only hope of attaining a better life. If there is no resurrection, then our short time on earth is the end of the story for us. We learn from this that those who have fallen asleep in Christ are not alive anywhere. Instead, they are awaiting the resurrection when they will receive their reward. That is why "sleep" is such a perfect term for the condition of those who have died. They are asleep, awaiting the resurrection.

The Greek word, *αναστασις*—*anastasis*, translated, "resurrection," itself illustrates this fact, for it means "restored to life." This Greek word is used twice in the following verse: "Women received their dead **raised to life again** [*αναστασις*—*anastasis*]: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better **resurrection** [*αναστασις*—*anastasis*]" (Hebrews 11:35). If resurrection is "raising to life again," then between the time a man dies and the time he is resurrected, he is not alive. The resurrection guarantees that fact. That is how Peter could be so certain that David had not yet gone to heaven, because the presence of his bones in his grave proved that he had not yet been resurrected. When Jesus was resurrected, His body left the grave (Luke 24:22, 23), and He said that He had "not yet ascended to my Father..." (John 20:17).

Resurrection of the Wicked

If the dead are asleep until the resurrection, where are the wicked now, and when will they be resurrected? Peter testified, "The Lord knoweth

how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Peter 2:9). Peter explained the same truth about evil angels: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to [Tartarus – *abyss or pit*], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4). Both wicked angels and wicked humans are being reserved until the day of judgment to be punished. “That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath” (Job 21:30).

The wicked will not be resurrected until the time of their judgment. The book of Revelation describes two judgment scenes. One takes place in heaven, happens before the second coming, mostly angels are present, very few humans, and only involves the righteous (Revelation 4:2-4; 5:6, 7, 11; 6:9-11; Daniel 7:9, 10). This judgment takes place without the presence of the righteous. Thankfully, God will not mention our sins to us if we have confessed and forsaken them (Proverbs 28:13). “None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live” (Ezekiel 33:16).

The second judgment scene takes place on the earth, happens after the thousand-year millennium, all the wicked humans are there, and only involves the wicked (Revelation 20:11-15). The wicked are judged after the millennium. That is when they are resurrected. Revelation 20 gives us a lot of information about the two resurrections.

John explained, “This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:5, 6). The first resurrection is for the blessed and holy people. They will live and reign with Christ during the thousand-year millennium. “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:5). “The rest of the dead” are the wicked. They do not live during the millennium. Instead, they are dead, awaiting their resurrection. (For a thorough study on the Millennium, please contact us to request your free copy of our study entitled, “The Millennium.”)

Conclusion

The resurrection is an integral part of the gospel. The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead is the assurance that we also will be resurrected. The Bible says “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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9, 10).

The famous protestant reformer and Bible translator, Willaim Tyndale, wrote in response to someone teaching the consciousness of the dead: “And ye, in putting them [the departed souls] in heaven, hell, and purgatory, destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection.... And again, if the souls be in

The Prodigal Son Returns

Find Nine Differences



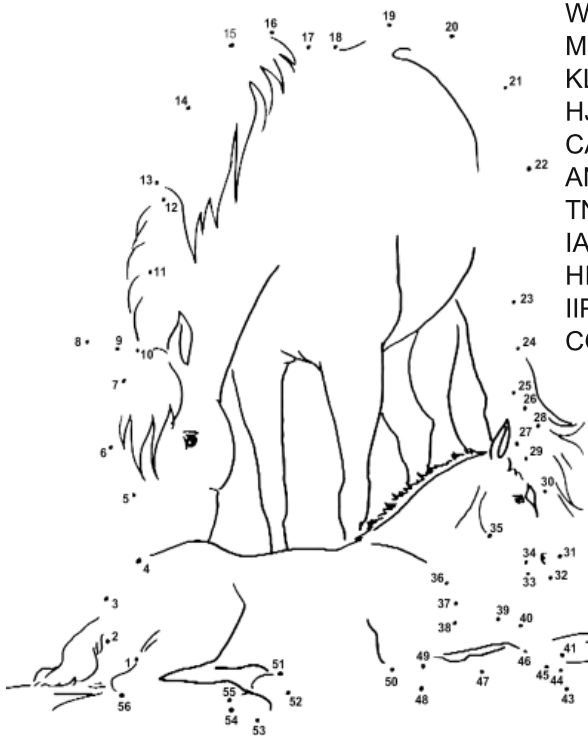
You may want to remove this sheet for your children!

Find the underlined words...

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22, 23)

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Unscramble the New Testament Books of the Bible

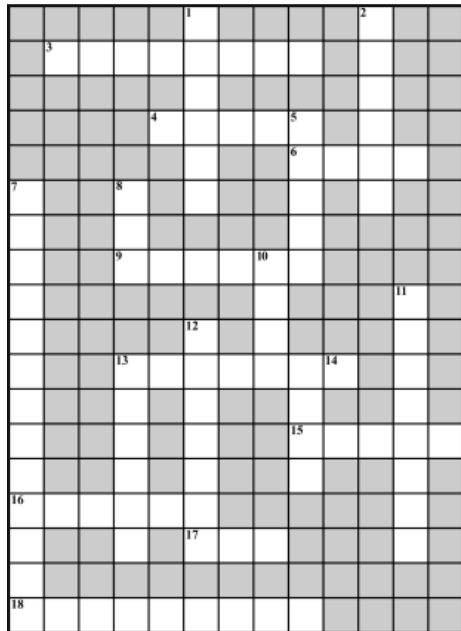


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Present Truth - Kids' Korner
Bible Study Crossword - Blessing by Zachariah Beachy

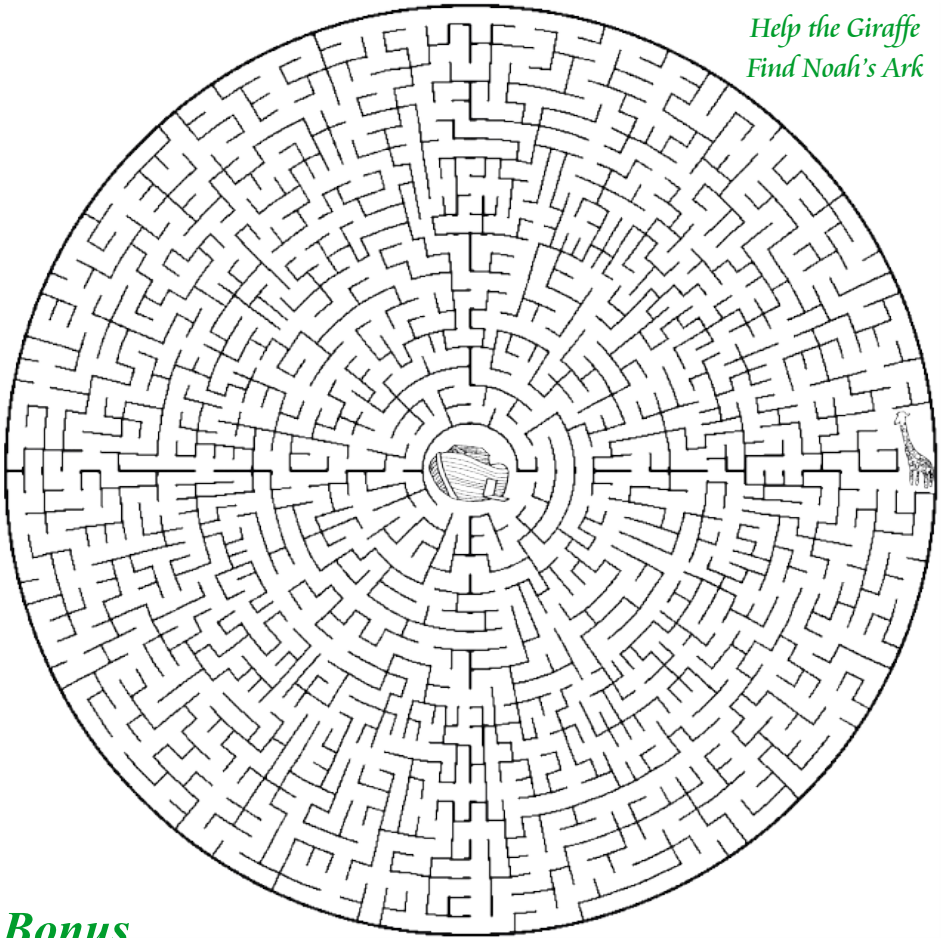
This crossword is not split into Across and Down sections—KJV is required.

- “And I will make of thee a great _____, and I will bless thee,…” Genesis 12:2—**16 Across**
- “...the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the _____, and in the field.” Genesis 39:5—**5 Down**
- “Behold, I set before you this _____ a blessing and a curse.” Deuteronomy 11:26—**17 Across**
- “A blessing, if ye _____ the commandments of the LORD your God,…” Deuteronomy 11:27—**6 Across**
- “And a _____, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God...” Deuteronomy 11:28—**15 Across**
- “The LORD shall _____ the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto;...” Deuteronomy 28:8—**12 Down**
- “...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore _____ life,…” Deuteronomy 30:19—**1 Down**
- “Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy _____. Selah.” Psalms 3:8—**9 Across**
- “He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and _____ from the God of his salvation.” Psalms 24:5—**7 Down**
- “...the LORD commanded the blessing, even _____ for evermore.” Psalms 133:3—**10 Down**
- “The blessing of the LORD, it maketh _____, and he addeth no sorrow with it.” Proverbs 10:22—**14 Down**
- “A _____ man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.” Proverbs 28:20—**3 Across**
- “...I will pour my _____ upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Isaiah 44:3—**13 Down**



- “...there shall be _____ of blessing.” Ezekiel 34:26—**13 Across**
- “Bring ye all the _____ into the storehouse,... I will ...pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” Malachi 3:10—**2 Down**
- “The _____ of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?...” 1 Corinthians 10:16—**8 Down**
- God “...hath blessed us with all _____ blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3—**18 Across**
- “Out of the same _____ proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” James 3:10—**4 Across**
- “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise _____;... that ye should inherit a blessing.” 1 Peter 3:9—**11 Down**

Help the Giraffe
Find Noah's Ark



Bonus

How many times can you find the word "resurrection" in the first article? _____

Extra Credit: How many times can you find "resurrected"? _____

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heaven, tell me why they be not in as good case as the angels be? And then what cause is there of the resurrection?" [William Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* (Parker's 1850 reprint), bk. 4, ch. 4, pp. 180, 181.]

A misunderstanding of the condition of the dead can remove the significance of the resurrection, which can overthrow our faith (2 Timothy 2:16-18).

A famous pioneer of the Reformation, Martin Luther, claimed that the dead are "completely asleep" and do not "feel anything at all... they lie there not counting days or years; but when they are raised it will seem to them that they have only slept a moment." [Martin Luther, "Notes on Ecclesiastes," in *Luther's Works*, trans. and ed. J. Pelikan and ed. H. T. Lehmann (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1972), 15:150.]

The Bible says, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.... Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10). David wrote, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalms 146:3, 4).

According to the Bible, the dead are so asleep that they do not know anything. Their thoughts have perished. (For a thorough study on death and hell, request a free copy of, "What Happens After Death?" and "God's Love Revealed in Hell.")

Understanding that death is really a cessation of life will affect the way we live our lives because our faith in God's ability to transform us is tied to our understanding of the death and resurrection of Christ. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

Paul explained, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 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. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:1-7).

Our faith in the power of God and the reality of Christ's death and resurrection directly affects our daily lives. Paul continued, "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we

shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:8-13).

If you have accepted Jesus Christ into your heart, consider yourself to be completely dead to sin. Your “old man,” that used to do those things you used to do, has died. You are a “new man”! “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Please make certain that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour and surrendered your life completely to Him, for “Christ in you” is your only “hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2). Enjoy your new life with Him shining in you! »

Bible Study Bookmarks

by Pat Kroeger

Can there be a Walking Dead?

The series of bookmarks that I have been working on has been a blessing from God. Through it, He gives me the opportunity to re-examine important points of doctrine, which in turn strengthens my faith. At the same time, it creates a way to witness equally to friends and strangers alike.

This newest topic is on death and what happens in the grave, and beyond. I’ve known for a while it would be an important topic to include simply because society demands it. Our culture has become obsessed with zombies and the walking dead. This is not harmless entertainment. Where did these ideas come from? They came from believing the lie that man

is like God—immortal (Genesis 3). No good outcome can come from it.

Thankfully, God has given us the Bible to teach us, but more importantly, He has given His holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. In knowing the truth, we are set free from lies, confusion, and sin. Knowing the truth gives us a closer relationship with the God of all truth, because truth is a Person, the Person of Jesus Christ (John 14:6). There is no greater blessing than to know the Truth—Jesus Christ, the Son of God! »

(This bookmark is printed on the following page. Contact us to receive your own color copies. Pat is in the process of preparing more bookmarks on various topics. *Editor*)

Can there be a Walking Dead?

Death. We fear it. We fixate on it. Mostly, we just don't understand it. To understand death we need to understand life and the One who created it (Job 33:4; Act 17:24-28).

On the 6th day of creation week God formed a body from the dust of the earth, but it was not until He breathed into it the breath of life that the body became a living being, the man He called Adam (Gen 2:7; 1:26-31; 5:2). Thus, body + breath = living being. The breath or the body alone was not Adam, but it was the union of the two that completed God's greatest creation. This formula for creating life applies when life ends: separate the breath from the body and it is no longer a living being (Gen 3:19b, Job 34:14-15; Ecc 3:20).

In the Garden of Eden God warned Adam and his wife Eve what would happen if they chose to separate from Him: "You shall surely die" (Gen 2:17). Because God is the only Source for life, there is no life (nor goodness) apart from Him (Ps 100:3; Luk 18:19). However, Satan wanted to claim the new creation for his own kingdom. He countered God's warning with the first lie ever recorded (John 8:44): "You shall not surely die," claiming they could live as God lives but without Him, and planting doubt about the righteousness and sovereignty of the Creator (Gen 3:1-5).

The greatest tragedy of history is that Adam and Eve chose to believe the lie (Gen 3:6). They doubted their divine Maker who had provided only good for them, aligned with Satan, and severed their connection with the Life Giver. They began to die the moment they broke away from God, but He had a plan in place and intervened to save them (Gen 3:15; Mat 1:23; 1Jo 4:9; 3:8; Heb 2:14).

Still, there were consequences. Man became at enmity with God and lost eternal life (Rom 8:7; Ecc 12:7). Thus, by one man the nature of sin came on every person, and because "all have sinned," all will die (Rom 5:12; 3:23). But God's plan of salvation breaks the enmity and restores righteousness and eternal life through the life and death of His Son Jesus (John 3:14-17).

But Satan's plan worked so well that he has continued his lie: "You shall not surely die."

What exactly then is death? The Bible describes death as a "sleep" (Ps 13:3; Joh 11:11-14; Act 13:36). Just as the living can fall into a deep sleep and not realize anything until morning, so the dead have no thought, no feelings, no reward (Ecc 9:5-6). When Adam died his body returned to the dust and his spirit returned to God. The record of Adam's life is preserved in the books of heaven until the resurrection (Joh 5:28-29; Dan 12:2).

Death then is not a state of being. Death is the absence of the state of being alive. Both the righteous and wicked dead sleep unconsciously in the grave unaware of their condition (Ecc 9:10; Ps 146:4; 6:5; 115:17; Isa 26:14; 38:18-19). They neither become angels in heaven nor disembodied spirits tormented in hell. Our dearly departed are not watching us or interfering in our lives. God has given us peace to know that for now they are at rest, asleep in the grave, awaiting their future reward (Act 24:15). What determines that reward, be it eternal life or eternal death, is whether we have been born again and received the life of Christ Jesus or not (Joh 3:3; 1Joh 5:12).

It is at the Second Coming that the righteous receive their reward (Mat 16:27; Rev 22:12). The righteous dead are raised in perfect immortality when Christ returns the spirit of life, and they once again become "a living being": this is the first resurrection (Rev 20:6; 1Cor 15:51-57; Luk 14:14). These will join the righteous living to meet the Lord in the air (1Th 4:13-18). The wicked living are slain by the brightness of His coming and join the wicked dead (2Th 2:8; 1:7-9). Both continue to sleep in the grave; their reward is not for another 1000 years at the second resurrection (Rev 20:4-5).

"For **the wages of sin is death**; but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 6:23

There can't be a hellfire where the wicked burn throughout eternity. The reward of the wicked is not eternal life, not even in torment. Those cast into the lake of fire are forever separated from the only Source of life, destroyed, never to live again (Rev 20:15; 21:8). Eternal life is reserved as a gift for the righteous and received only in Jesus (1Jo 5:11). To live forever, we must accept Christ and be restored into the kingdom of righteousness, the kingdom of God and His Son.

Witness of the Resurrection

by Ellet J. Waggoner

The resurrection of CHRIST is to be the one theme of Christian preaching now as well as in the days of the apostles. We are to be reminded of it, not in the formal observance of a day once a year, which has never been commanded, but by going through the process daily.

This shows us how we, as well as the apostles, may be witnesses of the resurrection of CHRIST. For we are to be witnesses as well as they. A witness is one who tells what he knows, if he is a true witness. Otherwise his testimony is good for nothing. He is not to bear witness to what has been told him, but to that of which he himself is personally assured, by his own experience. If only one man knows a certain thing from his own personal knowledge, and he tells a dozen other men, and the whole thirteen then go into court and testify to that fact, there are not thirteen witnesses, but only one. The one man has simply repeated his testimony thirteen times. The case is no stronger for the testimony of the twelve men who repeated what had been told them. They might better have held their peace. So it is with the witnesses of the resurrection of CHRIST. He who tells it because somebody else has told him, is not a witness, and might better say nothing about it. If pressed closely, all that he can say is that somebody told him so.

But is it possible for anybody in these days to be able to give testimony concerning the resurrection of CHRIST, of the same nature as testimony that is required in earthly courts? Most certainly. Can it be thought that GOD requires less positiveness in His witnesses than earthly judges in those who appear before them? Not by any means. How can they give such testimony? Simply by

knowing CHRIST, and the power of His resurrection. The question is, Does JESUS live, or is He yet dead? All know that He died: may we know that He is alive again? Most assuredly. The experience of the Apostle Paul may be that of every one. The Jews said that CHRIST was dead, and Paul affirmed that He was alive. They are brought before the court on that point. How does Paul demonstrate that CHRIST is now alive? Thus: "I am crucified with CHRIST; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). That is sufficient. That is as good testimony as could be given in any court. A man is said to be dead. I say he is alive. The question is, "How do you know?" and I reply, "He lives at my house, and is my constant companion." That is the evidence to-day to the world, that CHRIST is risen from the dead. On this testimony alone can unbelievers be convinced.

The Christian's hope, therefore, is seen to be a certainty, and not a doubtful thing. If they know that CHRIST is risen, they know just as well that they too will be raised from the dead. Thus CHRIST has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. The Gospel makes known CHRIST as the risen SAVIOUR, who is alive for evermore. His life is manifested in the mortal flesh of those who believe on Him. They pass from death unto life with Him. Nevertheless they are mortal. To sleep in the grave is their sure lot, unless prevented by the coming of the Lord. But as they live by faith, and not by sight, they hold fast their faith. So, whether waking or sleeping, their life is hid with CHRIST in GOD. The Spirit of GOD which is given them is their life, and their assurance of

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