

Will the Dead Be Raised?

Introduction:

- I. We live in a society that goes out of it's way to eliminate the unpleasant aspects of life (even the inevitable ones).
 - A. But death will not be avoided, and will demand our attention — even when we least expect it.
 - B. Even the philosophers of old could not avoid such a powerful topic: Plato taught — *“Must not all things at the last be swallowed up in death?”* (427 BC - 347 BC), *Dialogues, Phaedo*.
 1. The Bible has the answer for Plato.
 2. Paul, possibly with Plato's words in mind, quoted from **Isaiah 25:8**: *“Death is swallowed up in victory.”*
- II. Jesus taught that a human spirit survives the grave:
 - A. While rebuking the Sadducees, he pointed out God's statement to Moses in **Ex 3:14**: These scholars should have noticed that God asserted Himself to be the God of three dead men — and then realized those men must have still been living in some way.
 - B. Perhaps the most vivid was the circumstances surrounding the poor beggar named Lazarus (**Lk 16**).
 1. The rich man who also died carries on a conversation with Abraham. How do the dead do that?
 2. What Jesus relates is clearly a factual event. Even if you try to make this a parable, parables never transgress the boundaries of what is true in order to relate a story. Sowers sow seed. Fishermen pull nets to shore. Mustard seeds produce large plants in which birds nest.
- III. Does the Bible really teach that there will be a resurrection?

Body:

- I. **The Concept Was Not New to the New Testament...**
 - A. Although the word “resurrection” is never used in the Old Testament, it was not unknown to the ancient ones.
 1. In **II Kgs 8:5**, Elisha raised a young man.
 2. In **II Kgs 13:20**, a man was hurriedly thrown into the tomb of Elisha, and he came to life when he touched the prophet's bones.
 3. In **Job 14:7-12**, Job uses the analogy of a tree cut down.
 - a. It seems dead, but at the scent of water it throws up shoots. Then he says:
 - b. **Job 14:14f** *“If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait, Until my change comes. ¹⁵ Thou wilt call, and I will answer Thee; Thou wilt long for the work of Thy hands.”*
 4. **Job 19:25ff** *“And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. ²⁶ Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; ²⁷ Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes shall see and not another. My heart faints within me.”*
 - B. New Testament apostles and prophets recognized the knowledge of the ancients:
 1. In **Heb 11:17ff** *“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; ¹⁸ it was he to whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your descendants shall be called.’ ¹⁹ He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.”*
 2. **Ps 16:10** *“For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.”* (quoted by Peter in **Acts 2:27** concerning the resurrection of Jesus)
- II. **Jesus Proved His Power over Death...**
 - A. Jesus taught that the resurrection would be due to His influence.
 1. **Jn 5:25-29** *“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, ²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”*
 2. **Jn 11:25** *“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies’”*
 - B. He proved His assertion by raising the dead.
 1. **Jn 11:43f** *“And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’ ⁴⁴ He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’”*
 2. **Jn 12:9ff** *“The great multitude therefore of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests took counsel that*

they might put Lazarus to death also; ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away, and were believing in Jesus.”

III. **The Resurrection Is Mankind’s Only Hope...**

- A. Our only hope for justice:
 - 1. We know that no one escapes death. But if that is all there is to it, and the dead cease to exist, then death itself becomes an escape:
 - a. The murderer escapes into death, and no justice is meted out. Every unsolved murder is a cause for despair.
 - b. Countless thieves have enjoyed their spoils, and slipped away from justice into death.
 - c. Many child molesters, rapists, and kidnappers, evaded justice by dying.
 - d. Adolf Hitler found peace in death, along with countless other murderous, power grabbing tyrants.
 - 2. **II Th 1:6** *“For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you”*
 - 3. **II Th 1:9** *“And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”*
 - 4. **Rev 14:11** *Where the wicked are concerned, “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”*
- B. Our only hope for rest:
 - 1. **Heb 4:9** *“There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.”*
 - 2. What have you endured in this life? What’s the point, if this life is all there is?
- C. Our only hope for glory:
 - 1. **Phil 3:20f** *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”*
 - 2. **II Tim 4:7f** *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

Conclusion:

- I. The answer to our question is, “Yes, the dead will be raised.”
- II. With that answer, we have set the stage for our final lesson, “What Happens When Jesus Comes Again?”
 - A. It all begins with the resurrection, but know for certain that the excitement of that day will be unparalleled.
 - B. Are you ready for that day to come?