



4/24/2022

Dear Students,

“God said, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ So he is the God of the living, not the dead.” (Matthew 22:32)

Last Sunday was Easter, when we especially celebrate Jesus's resurrection ([here's a helpful review video](#)). But actually every Sunday is about the resurrection, because that's why we have church on Sunday in the first place! Every Sunday is a reminder that Jesus rose from the dead.

But what does the resurrection mean for us? What does it tell us about the future?

Let's start by thinking about the future.

What do people think happens after you die?

We tend to think of "religion" as being all about questions like that, but interestingly, the earliest parts of the Bible don't talk about that very much at all. Of course there's no way we can *prove* what will happen after we die, but we can see the effects of different beliefs on people's lives now.

A lot of people think nothing happens. You die and just quit existing. This can have two different effects. To some people this just makes them so sad and depressed that in some ways they give up. The author of Psalm 88, for instance, is worried that death might put an end to his relationship with God:

Psalm 88:5, 10-12

They have left me among the dead, and I lie like a corpse in a grave.

I am forgotten, cut off from your care.

Are your wonderful deeds of any use to the dead?

Do the dead rise up and praise you?

Can those in the grave declare your unfailing love?

Can they proclaim your faithfulness in the place of destruction?

Can the darkness speak of your wonderful deeds?

Can anyone in the land of forgetfulness talk about your righteousness?

Other people think that if death is just nothing, they might as well do whatever they want, because in the end it won't really matter. The prophet Isaiah hoped people would repent when he predicted destruction coming to Israel, but that isn't what happened:

Isaiah 22:12-13

When all of this happened, the Lord All-Powerful told you to weep and mourn, to shave your heads, and wear sackcloth. But instead, you celebrated by feasting on beef and lamb and by drinking wine, because you said, "Let's eat and drink today! Tomorrow we may die."

Some people think that it doesn't really matter what happens after death, because being a good person and worshiping God and so on makes your life here good enough that you can just forget about all that. But does the Bible agree? If you behave well and live a good life, can you ignore what happens after death? Here's what Paul says:

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

12 If we preach that Christ was raised from death, how can some of you say the dead will not be raised to life? **13** If they won't be raised to life, Christ himself wasn't raised to life. **14** And if Christ wasn't raised to life, our message is worthless, and so is your faith. **15** If the dead won't be raised to life, we have told lies about God by saying he raised Christ to life, when he really did not.

16 So if the dead won't be raised to life, Christ wasn't raised to life. **17** Unless Christ was raised to life, your faith is useless, and you are still living in your sins. **18** And those people who died after putting their faith in him are completely lost. **19** If our hope in Christ is good only for this life, we are worse off than anyone else.

Following God doesn't just mean being a good person and having a nice life. If we are serious about being Christians, we will sometimes have to do things that make our life in this world harder instead of easier! Some people even end up dying for their faith, trusting that God will reward them somehow. Job is a good example of this kind of thought. where the only thing he can imagine after death is some kind of shadowy ghost existence underground somewhere. Job would have lived before the Old Testament was written, but he knows something about what God is like, so he figures somehow, some way, it has to all work out for justice and love:

Job 14:1, 7-10, 13-15; 19:25-27

1 Life is short and sorrowful for every living soul... **7** When a tree is chopped down, there is always the hope that it will sprout again. **8** Its roots and stump may rot, **9** but at the touch of water, it sprouts once again. **10** Humans are different—we die, and that's the end... **13** Please hide me, God, deep in the ground—and when you are angry no more, remember to rescue me. **14** Will we humans live again? I would gladly suffer and wait for my time. **15** My Creator, you would want me; you would call out, and I would answer... **25** I know that my Protector lives, and at the end he will stand on this earth. **26** My flesh may be destroyed, yet from this body I will see God. **27** Yes, I will see him for myself, and I long for that moment.

During New Testament times, the Sadducees, who included most of the priests who were in charge of worshiping God, also thought life after death was kind of a silly idea, and religion was only supposed to be about having a good life now. They didn't accept any parts of the Old Testament except the first five books, which don't talk about life after death directly, so they tried to trip Jesus up with a silly story about a woman who got married seven times, and thought that would be a problem for any future existence. But Jesus answers them from the very first Bible book, Genesis:

Matthew 22:29-32

29 Jesus replied, “Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God. **30** For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven. **31** “But now, as to whether there will be a resurrection of the dead—haven’t you ever read about this in the Scriptures? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said, **32** ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ So he is the God of the living, not the dead.”

Jesus isn't giving us specifics here, he's just saying we can trust God that there is a future for us after we die, because we know what God is like!

And that’s really our point today: **The resurrection is important because God loves you and doesn’t want your life to end. He raised Jesus from the dead, and he will raise you and me from the dead too. We can trust God that there is a good future for us after we die.**

Challenge: This week, find a way to tell someone else that God loves them too.

Prayer: *“Dear Father, thank you for raising Jesus from the dead. Thank you for raising me from the dead someday too! Please help me trust you with all of my future. Amen.”*