

RETURN from the DEAD

the resurrection of Jesus

Part 1: What If It's Really True?

INTRODUCTION – An Explosion of Life

**Matthew 11:4-5; 27:50-53; Mark 5:22-24, 35-43; Luke 7:12-15; John 11:1-44
1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**

RESURRECTION – What Does It Mean?

"Resurrection" is different than ASSUMPTION/ASCENSION/EXULTATION (being taken directly up to heaven like Elijah in **2 Kings 2:11**) or RESUSCITATION (being temporarily revived only to die later). Resurrection is the unified body and spirit rising to new life as part of God's new creation. The Jews anticipated resurrection for the righteous (**Daniel 12:2-3**) and also viewed it as a symbol of freedom from bondage and return from exile (**Ezekiel 37:1-14**).

RESURRECTION – What Does It Imply?

WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION SAY ABOUT JESUS?

His identity as the Messiah, the Deliverer, the Anointed leader of God's people was vindicated as was his way of freedom through sacrifice, service, and active compassion. Through Jesus, the way of love triumphed over the way of law, coercion, and compulsion.

WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION SAY ABOUT US?

"In Christ" we have been drawn into the new creation. "In Christ" we can begin living now the way we want to live for all eternity. "In Christ" we can partner with God to bring about the Kingdom, the new creation.

**Romans 6:1-11; 8:1; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 15:20-58; 2 Corinthians 5:17;
Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 2:4-10; Colossians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**

What does the resurrection say about THE WORLD?

Jesus is the "firstfruits" of the new creation long awaited for by Israel (**Isaiah 2:2-4; 11; 25:6-9; 42:1-9; 55:10-13; 56:6-8; 65:17-25**). Now the new world has come in part and Christ-followers are called to partner with God to bring it about in full.

Romans 8:19-22; James 1:18

The question is, how can we live like "new creation" people now?
How do we partner with and participate in the new creation today?

CONCLUSION – Living Between the Bookends

In the past is Christ's resurrection. In the future is ours. In the meantime, our job isn't just to remain sinless and wait for Jesus to rescue us out of this world, but to actively partner with Jesus to usher in the new creation, the Kingdom, God's new world.

1 Corinthians 15:58

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. After briefly reviewing this week's message, share one thing that most challenged, convicted, or encouraged you.
2. Discuss this quote from N. T. Wright in his book, *Simply Christian*: "*When Jesus rose again God's whole new creation emerged from the tomb, introducing a world full of new potential and possibility.*"

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

3. Let's return to studying one of the earliest written accounts of the resurrection of Jesus and the theological implications Paul draws from it for our own lives. Read **1 Corinthians 15:20-58** closely and, if possible, from more than one translation. a) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? b) What significance could there be in Paul describing death as being "asleep" in this chapter (**vv. 6, 18, 20, 51**)? c) How might some scholars use **vv. 21-22** to suggest that through Christ all people will receive eternal life? d) Do you think **v. 25** is describing a future action of Christ? Or is it something he is doing now already? e) What do you think **v. 28** means by saying the goal of history is "**so that God may be all in all**" (NASB)? f) Using Paul's analogy of a seed becoming something more, something else, but still being the same essence in **vv. 35-38**, describe how our resurrection bodies might have continuity and discontinuity with our present bodies. (Also think of examples of Jesus' resurrected body.) Could these features apply to all of creation?
4. But isn't the earth eventually supposed to be completely destroyed by God, according to **1 Peter 3:3-13**? How is **v. 6** a clue to understanding the kind of "destruction" Peter has in mind in this passage? (Also see **1 Corinthians 7:31; 1 John 2:17**.)

SO WHAT?...

5. Thinking again of **1 Corinthians 15** ... a) According to Paul in **vv. 31-34 & 58**, what effect should the resurrection of Jesus in the *past* and the promise of our own resurrection in the *future* have on how we live in the *present*? b) What issue raised in these verses do you need the most growth in? c) What are you going to do about it? Pray for each other concerning this.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, April 8 / 15, 2007