

Understanding Resurrections and Eternal Judgment

The most dramatic time of your life is yet to take place. Not only for you personally through glorification as we saw in the last session but also for the whole of human history. Why: because Jesus will come again from heaven to earth.

Jesus's first coming was a quiet and humble one, entering this world as a baby and revealing himself to a few. His next entrance will be dramatic as a conquering King for the entire world to see. All who have died from the beginning of this age to the end will be resurrected. There are some differing views as to the timing of believers and non-believers resurrections but all firmly believe it will happen.

Following Jesus's return this age will come to an end and another age begins. The reality of the spiritual realm will come into full view. The devil and all his demons will be exposed and punished. The eternal destiny of all who have lived will be revealed. Everything about everyone's lives will come into judgment. Rewards will be given to those who believed and condemnation to those who chose not to. Everything hidden will be revealed. Those who believed in this age will enter the Kingdom of God. They will live for eternity in a dimension of life that is utterly wonderful. Biblical writers who had a glimpse of this found it hard to express in words. It will be a terrifying shock to those who chose not to believe, but an overwhelming joy and hope for all who chose to believe. Those who choose to live life without God will be given the fullness of their desire and experience its terrifying reality in a place called Hell. Those who choose to live life with God will experience the absolute wonders of the fullness of God in a final eternal age in a new heaven and earth (**Revelation 21:1**)

This session is about two of the most significant events connected to Jesus's return; Resurrection and Judgment.

Jesus speaks about his return in the following verses...

John 14:3

'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also'

Revelation 22:12

'And behold, I am coming quickly and My reward is with me, to give to every one according to his work.'

In the next verse an angel speaks to the disciples as they watched Jesus leave the earth and return to heaven.

Acts 1:11

'...Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'

Understanding Resurrections

This study will outline the main points that give hope to the believer and the hopelessness of those who choose not to believe.

In **Genesis 2:17** God declares that death will happen if Adam and Eve eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They did, and death came to all mankind. Nevertheless from this point a divine plan was set in motion to conquer death.

'...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'

These two passages from the Old Testament speak of the raising of the dead.

Job 19:25-26.

'For I know that my Redeemer lives. And He shall stand at last on the earth. And after my skin is destroyed, this I know. That in my flesh I shall see God.'

Daniel 12:2

'And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life. Some to shame and everlasting contempt.'

The death and resurrection of Jesus is central to God's divine plan to conquer death for all mankind. Jesus's death and resurrection is therefore central to the gospel message.

Jesus predicted his own death and resurrection.

John 2:18-21

'... what sign do you show to us since you do these things?' So Jesus answered and said to them "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said "it has taken 46 years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in 3 days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.'

Jesus showed himself after his resurrection.

John 20:19-20

'...Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them "Peace be with you". When He had said this he showed them His hands and His side...'

For those who believe, resurrection is a resurrection to eternal life. For those who choose not to believe, it is a resurrection of condemnation.

1. Resurrection for the believer**1 Thessalonians 4:16**

'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.'

2. Resurrection for the unbeliever**John 5:28-29**

'do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.'

Eternal Judgment

Having outlined the difference of resurrection for the believer and unbeliever, we will now look at the difference in the judgments each will receive

1. Judgment for the believer

Speaking to Christians Paul writes...

2 Corinthians 5:10

'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done good or bad'

The basis of judgment for the believer is not one of condemnation but one of reward. Paul compares this judgment to going through a fire. All that the believer has done whilst in the body will be tested through the metaphorical fire of God's judgment. As a consequence, what is of sin is burned up and what survives the fire of judgment are the works of faith done whilst in the body. These works of faith determine the measure of eternal reward that is given to the believer.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15

'If anyone's work which He has built on it endures He will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, He will suffer loss, but He Himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.'

2. Judgment for the unbeliever

The judgment of the unbeliever is also on the basis of what he has done whilst in the body; good or evil. However, in choosing not to believe in the death and resurrection of Christ, their sins have not been forgiven. Their judgment is therefore a judgment of condemnation. The degree of sinfulness will be reflected by the degree of condemnation in hell. Notice in the following passage that the judgment is based on the degree of light or truth given to them whilst in the body.

Matthew 11:21-22

'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.'

2 Thessalonians 1:9

'These will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.'

All of the above reflects something of the dramatic climax that is ahead. The amazing reality for you as a believer is that the eternal Kingdom of God awaits us where all the traumas of this life are no longer and are replaced by all the perfect Presence and blessing of God.

In the next and final session we will look at Eternity.

Suggested Further Study

Jesus's Second Coming