

We have many, many scriptures that refer to raising the dead and resurrection, not the least of which is the risen and ascended Christ. (I found upwards of 180 that refer to resurrection.) Samuel is the first (we read of) to have been brought back from the dead but only to speak briefly to the doomed King Saul, and return. Before that we have Enoch translated without seeing death, a witness to the awaited rapture of those in Christ who are alive when He comes for His Church. The earliest believers desire(d) "a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city," Hebrews 11:16; "a city that has foundations," Hebrews 11:10. Both Elijah and Elisha raised people from the dead. Jesus and some of the apostles did too.

The following is a rather brief but dependable review of the subject from A New and Concise Bible Dictionary, published by G. Morriss over a century ago.

“Resurrection”

"This may be said to be the fundamental principle of God's dealings with man in grace, seeing that man is through sin under the judgment of death." The expression, 'The general resurrection' is found in works on theology, and is explained as meaning that the dead will all be raised at the same time; but this idea is not found in scripture. The Lord speaks of a resurrection unto life. 'The dead in Christ' will be raised at the coming of the Lord Jesus, 1 Th. iv. 16; and John speaks of the *first* resurrection, and adds that 'the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.' Rev. xx. 5, 6. The term 'first' designates rather the *character* than the time of the resurrection, it will evidently include only the saved; 'the rest' being simply raised for judgment.

"It will be seen in Romans viii. 11, that the resurrection of believers is of a wholly different order from that of the wicked: the saints will be quickened by, or on account of, God's Spirit that dwells in them, which certainly could not be said of the unconverted. The resurrection of the saints is also distinguished from that of the wicked in being, like that of the Lord and of Lazarus, 'out from among (*ek*) the dead.' Mark xii. 25. It was the earnest desire of Paul to attain this. Phi. iii. 11 (see Greek).

"The resurrection condition is in the strongest contrast to that after the flesh. That which springs from the seed sown in the ground appears very different in form from the seed sown, though absorbing the substance of the seed. 1 Co. xv. refers only to the resurrection of the saints, as may be seen in vers. 23, 24. There were those at Corinth who said that there was no resurrection (ver. 12); and on the other hand it appears from 2 Ti. ii. 18, some held that the resurrection had

already past, that they had in fact reached a final condition!

"Few distinct intimations of the resurrection are found in the O.T., though the idea of it underlies all the teaching. Job may perhaps have learnt it (chap. xix. 25-27), and when the Lord rebuked the Sadducees He taught that resurrection could be gathered inferentially from God speaking of Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob long after they were dead. He is God of the living, not of the dead. Mark xii. 26,27. Martha spoke of the resurrection as a matter of common orthodox belief, John xi. 24; which is also implied in its being said that the Sadducees did *not* believe in it.

"Isa. xxvi. 19; Eze. xxxvii. 1-14; and Dan. xii. 2, are often quoted as testimony to resurrection; but these passages are figurative and refer to Israel being raised up as from their national decease (the consequence of their departure from the Lord, Isa. i. 1-4), when God will again bless them on the earth. It is an important fact, however, that the figure of resurrection is used."

“Resurrection of Christ.” This is the great central fact on the testimony of which the structure of Christianity has been reared. If Christ be not risen, there is no salvation, since sin would still be reigning by death in universal sway. But Christ, who was made sin, is risen and is at God's right hand, a manifest proof that atonement has been made, and that God's righteousness has been vindicated. The result has been the sending of the Spirit from the Father. Abundant evidence was given to the disciples that Christ was risen from the dead. He appeared again and again, ate in their presence, and gave opportunity for identification. Evidence of the fact was also borne to the Jews by the apostles in the power and by the gifts of the Spirit, Acts iv. 10, confirming what they had themselves seen and heard and the testimony of the scriptures. The resurrection of Christ is the keystone of the faith of the Christian; at the same time it is the assurance on the part of God that He has appointed a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness. Hence it has a voice to all.

"It has been asserted that the accounts given of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus in the gospels are discordant and irreconcilable. This is not the case: it has been overlooked that Luke xxiii. 54-56 refers to Friday evening, before the Sabbath, and Mat. xxviii. 1 refers to Saturday evening, after the Sabbath: the women return after viewing the sepulcher and finish their preparations, according to Mark xvi. 1."

From A New and Concise Bible Dictionary,
published by G. Morriss, London

(underlining mine)

In addition to Job mentioned above, Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead so he would live and father the promised descendants.

Hebrews 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

A thousand years later David, whose child produced by His sin with Bathsheba died, says:

2Samuel 12:23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

The truth of His resurrection, ascension and return is essential to the Doctrine of Christ declared in John's second epistle to be critical to identifying whose fellowship is to be avoided. If we do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ crucified we have no saving faith, for repeatedly scripture affirms this belief to be essential to salvation.

John 5:24 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.

Romans 10:9 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.

1Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

The wonder of it is not only in a dead person being raised but that we shall all have changed bodies for eternity with the Lord. This is our hope, a hope which is not yet realized for when it is we will not need hope any more. Our bodies have

been bought with a price¹ and are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit² who is the earnest of our inheritance.³ We await the rapture when we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.⁴ When changed then our bodies will be fully redeemed.

1Corinthians 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

¹1Corinthians 6:20.

² 1Corinthians 6:19.

³Ephesians 1:13-14.

⁴1John 3:1-3

By Ron Canner, February 25, 2004

