

The Elementary Principles of Christ (6) – Resurrection

Hebrews 6:1-3

Introduction

1. The Hebrew writer lists **“resurrection of the dead” (Hebrews 6:2)** as an elementary principle of Christ.
 2. The simple volume of accounts and passages making mention of resurrection serves to demonstrate its importance.
 3. Resurrection is so fundamental to the faith that very little, if anything would make sense if it were not true.
 4. Resurrection plays an indispensable role in our growth in understanding scripture, and our growth in application of scripture into the image of Christ.
- I. What is the resurrection of the dead?
- A. The Keystone of the Gospel
 - a. The fundamental nature of this principle as expressed by Paul – **1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-19**
 - i. **(vv. 1-2)** – salvation conditioned on holding fast the word of the gospel.
 - ii. **(vv. 3-4)** – the gospel specified – resurrection of Christ.
 - iii. **(v. 12)** – claim of no resurrection in general.
 - iv. **(vv. 13, 16)** – no resurrection in general, no resurrection of Christ.
 1. **(vv. 14-15, 17, 19)** – then gospel preaching void, no substance in Christ beyond the temporary.
 - v. **(v. 18)** – no resurrection in general, no hope for the dead.
 - b. Resurrection was the prevailing topic of preaching:
 - i. Witness of resurrection of Christ – **Acts 1:22 (cf. John 15:26-27)**
 - ii. Spoke concerning Christ’s resurrection – **Acts 4:2, 33; 17:18, 32; 23:6; 24:15; 26:22-23**
 - iii. NOTE: The resurrection of Christ rests on the spiritual and scriptural foundation of the doctrine of resurrection in general – **1 Corinthians 15:12-13**
 - B. Resurrection in the First Century
 - a. The concept of resurrection from the dead was not a widespread view in the first century. Some of these contrary influences are what led to Paul’s need to correct the Corinthians.
 - b. Greek Rejection – **Acts 17**
 - i. **(vv. 16-18a)** – specifies two groups, and what Paul preached.

1. **Epicureans** – pleasure highest end of living, no future judgment – **cf. 1 Corinthians 15:32** – Epicurean maxim.
2. **Stoics** – self-denial highest end of life, but no immortality of the soul.
- ii. **(v. 18b)** – Jesus and the resurrection.
 1. **“gods”** (plural) – perhaps thought resurrection was a god.
 2. Indicative of the topics being distinct – not simply Jesus’ resurrection, but resurrection in general.
- iii. **(vv. 30-32)** – spoke of Jesus’ resurrection, mocked – resurrection of the dead (general skepticism).
- c. Jewish Rejection – **Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:8** – Sadducees say there is no resurrection.
- C. Resurrection in the Gospel
 - a. The elementary principle is not the resurrection of Christ – **Hebrews 6:2**
 - b. Paul’s correction of the Corinthians indicated their denial was of resurrection in general – **1 Corinthians 15:12-13**
 - i. Christ’s resurrection, in part, rests on a doctrinal foundation of resurrection – if such is not true, then He is not raised.
 - ii. **Acts 26:6-8** – Paul’s defense included such a notion.
 - c. Though Christ’s resurrection rests on the doctrine of resurrection, our resurrection rests on Christ’s resurrection which is not only the fulfillment of messianic prophecy, but also the beginning of the fulfillment of the ultimate resurrection – **1 Corinthians 15:16-19**
 - i. Christ is the firstfruits – **(vv. 20-22)** – others to follow.
 - d. Resurrection provides objective meaning for this life, rather than all being vain due to the end of all men:
 - i. **Ecclesiastes 3:11; 7:2** – eternity in hearts, end of all men (why is it good to reflect on death if that’s all there is?).
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 15:29-34** – baptism loses significance, no virtue in suffering for convictions, pleasure no matter how perverse should be pursued upon desire.
 - e. Resurrection is bodily, but the final resurrection (to which all resurrections in time pointed) is to a body of a different sort – **1 Corinthians 15:42-49**
 - i. This, to inhabit a different order (not one that is physical) – **(v. 50)**
 - ii. **2 Peter 3:12-13** – physical elements dissolved, new heavens and new earth (new order).
- II. The Resurrection of the Dead

A. Conversion

- a. Conversion speaks of newness, change, and life from the dead – **2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 4:3; Ephesians 2:4-6**
 - i. This is not simply dependent on resurrection for language, but spiritual reality.
 - ii. **Ephesians 1:19-20; 2:1, 5** – Our actual spiritual resurrection was dependent upon the reality of Christ's, which is by Divine power.
- b. No resurrection – **1 Corinthians 15:16-17** – Christ is not risen, still in sins.
- c. Conversion is resurrection which is united with Christ's resurrection – **Romans 6:3-5**
 - i. Repentance and baptism/conversion – **Acts 2:38; 3:19**
 - ii. Baptism and resurrection – **Colossians 2:12**
 - iii. New birth – **1 Peter 1:3** – through resurrection.
 - iv. Salvation – **1 Peter 3:21** – through resurrection.
- d. Resurrection marks a transition point in time which should remind us of the blessed privilege and responsibility of new life – **Romans 6:7-14**

B. Transformation

- a. Ultimately, the resurrection is future – **Acts 24:15**
- b. Our spiritual resurrection and redemption anticipate a final resurrection and redemption – **Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:13-14**
 - i. **Firstfruits of the Spirit** – those who have obeyed the Spirit's gospel and been freed from sin and death, resurrected.
 - ii. **Believed and sealed** – obeyed the gospel and marked as belonging to God, namely by being raised together with Christ.
 - iii. **Ephesians 1:14** – HS is the "down payment, earnest" (NKJV, fn) of our inheritance.
 - 1. We have received something in respect to our final inheritance from the Spirit.
 - 2. The rest is future in the resurrection – **1 Peter 1:3-5**
- c. The general resurrection will be universal, and impartial – **John 5:28-29** – i.e. you don't have to do anything to be raised, all will be.
 - i. Life or condemnation is conditional.
- d. The resurrection is something to be attained to – **Philippians 3:7-11** – know power of resurrection, but to attain to the resurrection.
 - i. One is known now, the other is something that is future (**vv. 20-21**) – transformation of body to be conformed to Christ's – resurrection to life in heaven where our citizenship is.

- ii. Power of resurrection – in our salvation in Christ, and the transformative power until the final transformation.
 - e. The fundamental principle of the resurrection drives spiritual transformation – **1 John 3:1-3**
- C. Hope
- a. Hope is an integral part of the Christian life, and is dependent on resurrection – **1 Peter 1:3-5** – descriptors of the resurrection body, salvation in reference to the finality of the resurrection.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 15:19** – there would be nothing to confidently expect in Christ outside of this life if He were not raised.
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 15:32** – there would be no reason to sacrifice or abstain if the dead do not rise.
 - b. The context of the discussion of the elementary principles in Hebrews involves the importance of hope, and the foundation of resurrection:
 - i. The discussion of Christ's connection to Melchizedek prompted the writer's admonition – **Hebrews 5:10-11**
 - ii. His warning of apostasy is tempered with confidence of salvation for them given their resolve to imitate the faith and patience of men like Abraham – **Hebrews 6:11-13**
 - iii. Having mentioned the hope (confident expectation) which comes with the immutability of God's counsel, and His promise, he connects the hope with the resurrection and ascension of Christ – **Hebrews 6:19-20**
 - 1. The presence behind the veil is heaven itself which He entered after being sacrificed on the cross – **Hebrews 9:24-26** – death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, the Most Holy Place.
 - 2. **Anchor of the soul** – stabilizing us while in the mortal form.
 - 3. **Forerunner** – indicative of the hope of each Christian to follow Him and be where He is.
 - a. **Hebrews 2:10** – bringing many to glory (resurrection), captain (*archēgos* – “strictly one who goes first on the path; hence leader, prince, pioneer,” ALGNT)
 - b. His resurrection and ascension gives us the hope of our own – **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**

- c. His resurrection places Him in position to ensure our hope – **Hebrews 7:23-25** – save to the uttermost.

Conclusion

1. Because of the foundation of resurrection of the dead, we can not only be assured of Christ's resurrection, but we can know our life has meaning, transformation is important and possible, and we have the hope of our own resurrection.
2. The foundation of ***"resurrection of the dead"*** is essential to growing in Christ.