

**Fundamentals, Study 31. Death And The Resurrection (1 Cor 15:35-58)**

by BS Poh

o The resurrection of Christ guarantees the resurrection of His people to glory.

1. When death occurs, the soul separates from the body. The body will decompose, and return to dust, just as the body of the first man, Adam, was made from dust.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the body, which is physical matter, the soul is immortal (i.e. undying) spirit. Upon death, it returns to God the Maker.<sup>2</sup> The examples of burial in the Bible show that that is the proper way of disposing of the body, although cremation (i.e. burning) will not affect the resurrection (i.e. the raising up of the dead). The body, not just the soul, is also from God and must be treated with dignity. Burning is a sign of God's judgement.<sup>2</sup> (1. Gen 3:19; Acts 13:36; 2. Eccl 12:7; 3. 1 Cor 3:15; Heb 6:8; Rev 20:10)

2. The souls of the righteous are made perfect in holiness, to be with Christ, living in the light and glory of God's presence, and waiting for their bodies to be restored fully to them.<sup>4</sup> The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and darkness, reserved for the judgement of the last day.<sup>5</sup> There is no such place as *purgatory*, as taught by the Roman Catholic Church, where souls are purified by suffering for their sins for a time. The souls in heaven or hell are never released to roam on the earth at any time, as believed by the Taoists. There is no reincarnation (i.e. the soul being reborn as another person or creature), as taught by the Buddhists. (4. Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 5:1, 6-8; Phil 1:23; Heb 12:23; 5. Jude 6-7; Luke 16:23-24)

3. When Christ returns to judge the world, the believers who are still alive will not die but shall be changed.<sup>6</sup> An old car that is melted down can be remade into a new car. Similarly, all the dead shall be raised up with their own, same bodies.<sup>7</sup> God will gather all the constituent elements to reconstitute the bodies and reunite them to their souls for ever.<sup>8</sup> The bodies of the just shall be raised to honour, and made like the body of Christ.<sup>9</sup> The bodies of the unjust shall be raised to dishonour, with qualities suited to their shame, and reunited with their souls. The last traces of God's image would have been erased from them so that they are absolutely evil. The wicked will increasingly suffer in hell, while the righteous will increasingly grow in blessedness in heaven.<sup>10</sup> There will be no marriage in heaven, but we will be able to recognise one another.<sup>11</sup> Family ties will be transformed into the more splendid fellowship of the glorified saints. The handicapped will be given perfect bodies. The Lord, however, continues to bear the marks of His crucifixion, to remind us of His sacrifice for us.<sup>12</sup> (6. 1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:17; 7. Job 19:26-27; 8. 1 Cor 15:42-43; 9. Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; Phil 3:21; 10. Matt 25:29-30, 46; 1 Cor 15:49; 11. Matt 22:30; Rev. 21:4; 22:1-5; 12. John 20:27; 1 Tim 2:5; Rev 5:6)

4. While waiting for the day of judgement, there is no possibility of contact between those living on earth and those in heaven or hell.<sup>13</sup> Any attempt to contact the dead is sinful, and dangerous.<sup>14</sup> In the Old Testament, the attempt by Saul to contact the spirit of Samuel was contrary to God's law. If Samuel were truly raised, he would have rebuked Saul for the act. It was most probably an evil spirit who impersonated Samuel. We are to pray only for the living, and for those who are yet to be born, but not for the dead.<sup>15</sup> Some people teach *annihilation*, i.e. that the souls of the dead will

gradually disappear into non-existence.<sup>16</sup> This is contrary to the Bible's teaching, and makes the warnings of the Bible meaningless. (13. Luke 16:26, 30; 1 Thess 4:14; 14. Deut 18:10-12; Lev 20:6; 1 Cor 10:20-22; 1 Sam 28:11-19; 15. 2 Tim 2:1-7; 16. Matt 25:46; Jude 6-7)

= We have only one life on earth. Why not live it well, by faith in Christ?

### **Review Questions**

1. What happen to the body and soul when death occurs?
2. Give three reasons why burial is the proper way of disposing of the body.
3. What happen to the souls of the righteous at death?
4. What happen to the souls of the wicked at death?
5. What will happen to believers who are still alive when Christ returns to judge the world?
6. What will happen to the bodies of the just on the last day?
7. What will happen to the bodies of the unjust on the last day?
8. Why does the Lord continue to bear the marks of His crucifixion?
9. What may be said about any attempt to contact the dead?
10. What is wrong with the doctrine of *annihilation*?

### **Assignment/Discussion**

Some Christians believe in *trichotomy* instead of *dichotomy*. Consider the Bible passages used to support *trichotomy* and explain them from the perspective of *dichotomy*.

### **Memory Passage (John 5:28-29)**

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

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