

I am
the
Resurrection
and the
Life ...

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. [John 11:25,26]

The above words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to a woman named Martha who with her sister Mary and brother Lazarus lived in the small town of Bethany, near Jerusalem, and were loved by the Lord. However death had stricken the family leaving two grieved and sorrowful sisters. It was while confronting this situation that the Lord Jesus uttered one of His great I AM statements as recorded in the gospel of John.

No other being has any authority to make utterances such as above. Many deluded persons have made bold and vain claims about themselves in the annuals of time prompted by pride and haughtiness of heart, deceiving themselves and their many adherents. As we shall consider, the Lord Jesus proved His credentials for making such a statement and confirmed by all who receive this one and others, setting to their seal that God is true.

The Background of Resurrection

The Lord used this circumstance to teach Martha and all who would consider His words some important truths concerning experiences that we all must potentially face. Few would deny the prospect of physical death – we would be benighted if we did. Yet bodily resurrection from the dead is also a future reality for all who physically die. We die because of sin. In fact, we are all born in a

dead state as far as God is concerned ***“Dead in trespasses and sins”*** (Ephesians 2:1). There is another death the Bible emphasises beyond the physical that we will also have to face if we die ***“in our sins”***, the second death in the lake of fire. Mercifully, there is the prospect of entering into life both now and the hereafter not fearing the certainty of judgment for our sins. It is around these issues that the substance of this I AM statement is spoken.

Martha had confessed to believe in a future resurrection as an expectancy for her dead brother. The Lord in the face of her grief impressed upon her that the power of resurrection and ability to impart life was bound up in Himself alone, ***“I AM the Resurrection, and the Life.”*** For any who would question, this power was substantiated in the following moments when he called the dead brother by name out of the tomb ***“Lazarus, come forth”*** (John 11:43).

The Bodily Resurrection of Christ

The initial creation of the universe and its continual subsistence is on account of the essential power of the spoken word of God of whom Christ was the visible manifestation. It was by that same power He raised Lazarus and others from the dead during His short sojourn on earth. His authority however to make statements such as we are considering and right to offer sinners forgiveness and eternal life requires more than just His inherent power as God.

It rests firmly upon His own sacrificial death for man’s sin. He had declared previously concerning His own life: ***“I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again”*** (John 10:18). Those who deny that He died have a very poor appreciation of the character of God, the Person of Christ and the true purpose of His visitation to this planet. Sins effect and the separation it brings between individuals, in particular God and man, was clearly felt by Christ as He was touched by grief in that scene of death – ***“Jesus wept.”***

His death was distinct in that His sinless life was laid down voluntarily by the dismissing of His spirit on the cross. Similarly, the taking up of His life again by resurrection was in conjunction with His own power and that of God the Father who accepted His Son's offering on behalf of man's sin – ***“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”*** (Romans 4:25).

Unbelief in Christ's bodily resurrection is inexcusable as one has testified ***“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”*** (Acts 26:8). The sepulchre is empty there being many eyewitnesses who could declare ***“We have seen the Lord.”*** He ate food in their presence and they observed His ascent from the Mount of Olives. The reality of it empowered His fearful followers with boldness to preach a living and victorious Christ, enabling His glorious Gospel to spread out from Jerusalem.

Our Resurrection: Unto Life or unto Death?

Christ's resurrection affects us all for God ***“hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; ...”*** (Acts 17:31). The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of His activity in this matter when He declared that ***“The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”*** (John 5:28,29). The “good” indicates fruit proving the conversion experience. Those who truly repent and believe in the Son and His sacrifice will evidence a newness of life. Those that “have done evil” are the unrepentant and unbelieving.

Christ is a kind of firstfruits, the assurance of a great harvest of believing souls unto the resurrection of life. To the infidel however, He will be their judge. It is imperative to ensure that Christ is our Resurrection and our Life before we make our exit from this world.