

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

RLJ-1319

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DECEMBER 4, 2011

PART 5: THE RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS

The New Testament did not exist when the Christians in Ephesus received Paul's letter that instructed them how to behave as believers in Christ. Most of them came out of idolatry where there were no morals and ethical standards. Suddenly, they were saved and didn't have the slightest idea what God expected of them. With this as a backdrop, let us begin to study chapter four of Ephesians.

THE BODY OF CHRIST

In heathen religions, there is no concept that believers in a deity can become part of the deity's body, nor is there any belief system that the believers are to be in unity with one another.

Paul began to tell the Ephesians to live a life that is worthy of their calling. **Ephesians 4:1**

New concepts such as lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and love were given to them. **verse 2**

As believers in Christ, they were to be in unity with one another. **verse 3**

There is only one body of Christ. **verses 4-7**

Paul expanded upon this teaching of one body in Christ, including the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in his first letter to the church in Corinth. **1 Corinthians 12:1-27**

WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS?

Paul wrote about the resurrection of Jesus and must have referred to some previous teaching he had done in Ephesus, because if we only read these verses, it is not entirely clear what took place. **Ephesians 4:8-10**

To clearly understand what Paul meant, we have to look at other verses in the Bible and Ephesians 4:8 is a quote from **Psalms 68:18**.

Jesus told the apostles that no man has ascended up into heaven except Himself, who at His resurrection ascended up into the throne room of God. **John 3:12-13; 6:62**

The Book of Acts was written by Luke, a physician and companion of Paul, who gave an eyewitness report of Jesus' ascension into heaven. **Acts 1:9-11**

The apostle Peter further explained it. **Acts 2:24-36**

So who were the captives? Where were they kept?



The Hebrew word for the place where the dead were kept is "Sheol." According to the Old Testament it was a place under the earth. **Numbers 16:28-34; Isaiah 5:14**

The answer is given to us by Jesus, who explained that Sheol had two compartments, one was called hell and the other was called "Abraham's bosom" or Paradise. **Luke 16:19-31**

When Jesus hung on the cross, He told the dying thief who repented that he would join Him in Paradise that day. **Luke 23:42-43**

SUMMARY

Before the resurrection of Jesus, no saved person was taken to heaven after death with the exception of Enoch and Elijah. **Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11-12**

There is no such thing as soul sleeping. From the time of Adam until the resurrection of Jesus, the souls of everyone who died were taken to Sheol and placed in Paradise or Hell.

After Jesus was resurrected, He took everyone living in Paradise as he ascended up into heaven to be with the Father. Paradise is today an empty place and has been empty for some 1,900 years.

When a believer in Christ dies, his body goes to the grave but his soul and spirit are immediately taken to heaven. **2 Corinthians 5:6-8**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?