

The Resurrection—Victory Over Death!

PLEASE NOTE: Build appreciation for Jehovah's provision of the resurrection. Emphasize the value of having strong faith in the resurrection hope. If you wish, you may use the provided artwork to illustrate the points indicated. This talk includes a video

DEATH IS AN ENEMY (3 min.) 4 minutes

Imagine watching a movie and this is what you see.

It's nighttime.

A person is walking alone down a dark alley .

They notice that someone is following them.

They start to run.

But the person following is faster and stronger. There is no hope.

Even imagining that scene can make us anxious.

Feeling alone, pursued by someone or something bigger and more powerful than we are, knowing that there is no place for safety is the stuff of nightmares.

In a way though, all of us are in that very position.

Our enemy, death is following behind every person here. (1Co 15:26)

We can't outrun it. We might fight it for a time, but it is a losing battle.

Because of this truth, many fear death,

Others who survive the death of someone they love often suffer terribly.

Vanessa from Australia said: *"I felt helpless when my older brother died unexpectedly. Months later I would suddenly remember him and feel sick, as if a knife were stabbing me deep inside. At times, I was also angry. Why did my brother have to die? And I felt guilty for not having spent more time with him."*

Death is very much an enemy, one that leaves painful scars on the hearts of the living.

Let's go back to the scene of the movie that we talked about earlier.

Our main character is running as fast as they can, and the person following them is gaining on them.

We feel anxious.

But just as it looks like there is no way out, they turn a corner and unexpectedly find two police officers,

They see what's going on and say, "Get behind us, we will protect you."

That changes the situation doesn't it.

Our anxiety goes away and we feel relief.

In the same way that we are being pursued by death.

Almighty God Jehovah, who is far more powerful than death.

In effect, he says, "Get behind me, I will protect you."

Jehovah promises that soon "death will be no more".

He promises a complete victory over death.

How does Jehovah provide a victory over death?

Can we really believe that it will happen?

How can knowing about this victory over death, change our lives?

We will answer each of these questions today.

(11 Minutes) 10:08

How does Jehovah provide a victory over death?

Read Acts 24:15.

And I have hope toward God, which hope these men also look forward to, that there is going to be a resurrection+ of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

A resurrection

What does that mean?

Literally the word means raising up or standing up.

This helps us to see how simple bringing someone back to life is from Jehovah's perspective.

What comes to mind when you think of standing up?

Is it something unusual? Is it something difficult for a healthy adult to do?

It's not is it? Most people stand up multiple times a day.

Just as easily as a healthy person stands up from a seat or raise up from our beds in the morning, Jehovah promises to stand up or raise up those who have died.

Do you know how many resurrections there are in the bible?

There are nine accounts of resurrection in the bible.

In only one of them, a human went to heaven.

That was in the case of Jesus who was raised up to heaven to rule over mankind, to restore mankind to what God originally purposed.

Evidently, very few go to heaven, and they go there with a purpose.

In eight of them the person came back to life here on earth.

In the bible, earthly resurrections are far more common than those in heaven.

What kind of a resurrection is described here Acts 24:15?

Well, let's look back at the verse again.

This is talking about a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous.

There are no unrighteous in the heavens.

This is talking about the earth.

Both righteous and unrighteous people will be resurrected to earth.

The "righteous" ones are those who faithfully served Jehovah while they were alive.

Who might fall into this group?

We might think of only super holy people who have done amazing things for Gods.

Maybe some kind of saint...

Phelicity Sneezby was a precious 12-year-old girl from Australia who was born with a heart issue.

As a girl she decided to dedicate her life to Jehovah and was baptized.

She then dedicating at least 70 hours a month to helping others.

“I wanted to give my all to Jehovah.” She said, “I like helping others because it helps me to feel good.”

Because of her health problems Phelicity lost her life at 12 years of age.

She didn't serve Jehovah for decades.

Because of her health, some might say that she really didn't do too much in comparison with others.

She faithfully served Jehovah with her life.

The righteous ones are any who faithfully serve Jehovah during their life.

It makes sense that Jehovah would want people like that to come back.

The “unrighteous” include those who died without being able to learn about Jehovah.

This is a large group of people.

Many millions if not billions of people have lived in times and places in history where no one knew about Jehovah.

Think of huge Civilizations like the Aztecs, Maya, and Incas of the Americas.

Many of these likely never had any idea of who Jehovah is.

Jehovah invites both of these groups to stand behind him and says, “Get behind me, death will never harm you again.”

“Stay behind me and you'll live forever.

How can the people who served Jehovah faithfully get the same reward as those who didn't do anything?

The resurrection they receive is slightly different.

We can illustrate this with the difference between people who have a driver's license and people who have a learner's permit.

On the road there are two groups of people that can legally drive.

There are those with a license.

And those with a learner's permit.

If you have a driver's license you've already proven that you understand the laws of driving and that you have the experience to do so;

If you follow the laws, you can drive anywhere they want.

The righteous are like those who have a license.

They've already studied Jehovah's laws and proven that they understand them.

Folks with a learner's permit can drive on the roads too,

But if they have some limitations until they have proven that they have the knowledge and experience to drive on their own.

In the same way, the “unrighteous” ones will need to learn Jehovah's laws and prove themselves “righteous” to get everlasting life.

Does this mean that everyone will be resurrected? No.

Jesus said in John 5:28, 29 only those who are in God's memory will be resurrected.

Jesus did not say all those who are dead.

This means that only those that Jehovah chooses to remember.

When we read texts like this, we naturally think about people we love.

You probably are thinking about them right now.

Will they be resurrected?

We don't know, Jehovah knows.

And we know Jehovah.

He is love.

He is a merciful God.

Far more so than any of us here.

We can trust that Jehovah will do the right thing.

Stop for a minute and think about what this means.

Stop and look at this picture.

Isaiah 26:19 doesn't just say that the dead will live. It says, "Your dead will live"

Who have you lost?

Put their faces in this image.

How will you feel when Jehovah, raises them up just as easily as we woke up from sleep this morning?

This is what Jehovah promises you today.

This is what Jehovah promises those who have died.

Look at the picture.

There is no fear.

The frightful emptiness, the terrible sense of loss, the heartbreaking sorrow that these people felt.

It's gone. Just as simply as the flip of a switch makes the darkness go away, Jehovah's promise of a resurrection is that simple and that easy.

The resurrection is a complete victory over death.

WHY CAN WE BE SURE THAT THE RESURRECTION HOPE IS REAL? (8 min.)

Can we really be sure that the resurrection hope is real?

Sometimes it can be hard for us to believe things that we don't understand clearly.

Imagine going back in time and trying to explain what a smart phone is to George Washington.

It's a little contraption that everyone carry's in their pocket.

You can talk to anyone in the world on.

You can even talk to and have it talk back to you.

It would be hard for him to understand.

The fact that he wouldn't understand doesn't make it any less real.

Almost everyone has a smartphone.

It is a reality.

In the same way, the resurrection is just so different from everything that we have ever seen that it can be hard to believe it.

But just because it's different from anything we've seen, doesn't mean that it's not true.

Let's look at a few verses from the bible that will help clear up our vision of the resurrection.

Read John 6:40

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who recognizes the Son and exercises faith in him should have everlasting life, and I will resurrect him on the last day."

Who wants the resurrection to happen?

"This is the will of my Father."

In other words, this is what Jehovah wants.

But everyone wants this, that doesn't move things closer to reality does it?

But Jehovah is different.

When he wants something to happen it happens.

Jehovah wanted the universe to exist, and we can see that it does.

He wanted mankind to enjoy the things in our home.

Who of us here doesn't enjoy a beautiful sunset, a delicious meal, the smell of sweet flowers?

When Jesus states, this is the will of my father, he is effectively saying, what Jehovah wants, he gets.

Jehovah loves people and has already taken steps to make the resurrection a reality as well.

Jehovah paid the highest price. He gave his son's life to make that happen. He's not going to walk away from that.

That'd be like us going to a jewelry store, picking out the most expensive thing in there, you pay for it and then walk out the door and leave it.

Who would do that?

That doesn't make any sense.

In the same way, Jehovah has already made full payment by giving his son to make everything new.

He wants it, because he wants to remove our pain.

Jehovah has already paid so much. He's not going to walk away from what he's already paid for.

That's why that statement, it is the will of my father, adds so much confidence to our faith in the resurrection.

I will resurrect him on the last day.

What do we learn here?

Jehovah will use Jesus to resurrect people.

How does this help us be sure that the resurrection is real?

Jesus has already performed a resurrection from the dead and he's done it more than once!

Let's talk about one example in John chapter 11.

Jesus had 3 very close friends that lived in a town close to Jerusalem.

Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

One day Jesus gets a message that Lazarus is very sick.

By the time he gets to where his friends live. Lazarus was already dead and placed in a tomb for four days. (vs 39)

Four days

It wasn't just that he had become unresponsive.

After four days, the decomposition process is already well underway.

His body would be considered well beyond repair in any hospital today.

Jesus finds Mary and Martha heartbroken and crying.

Jesus himself, sees their pain and is heartbroken as well.

John 11:40 [Show picture]

Jesus said to her: "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" ... He then said a prayer... 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice: "Laz'a-rus, come out!" 44 The man who had been dead came out with his feet and hands bound with wrappings, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them: "Free him and let him go."

In the time that it took for him to say three words, "Lazarus, come out!"

Jesus had already repaired the organs and cells that had decomposed.

He had restored a lifetime of memories.

He had cured Lazarus of whatever illness that he previously had.

And gave him his life back.

What does this prove to us?

Jehovah has given Jesus the power to resurrect people at will.

Just as simply as we can put together the right ingredients to make a meal.

It's so simple we do it every day, multiple times a day.

And he could bring someone back to life in the time it took to say three words...

Why did Jesus choose to perform this resurrection?

For at least two reasons.

One was to remove the sadness of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus's friends.

Friends, he loves you, he sees your pain too and he wants to do something about it.

Another reason can be found in vs. 40.

"To see the glory of God".

One translation puts this as, "the wonder of what God can do."

In other words, Jesus was showing us a fundamental truth.

"Isn't it amazing what Jehovah can do? He can do this whenever he wants to."

What do we learn from this account?

Jehovah and Jesus want to remove our pain and sadness.

Victory over death is something Jehovah can do whenever he wants to.

You know though, it's very difficult to build faith in something like the resurrection in just a few minutes.

How can you build faith in the resurrection? Let's look at what helped two people to build their faith.

VIDEO (3 min.)

Studying the bible and studying God's creation helps us to build faith in the resurrection.

Any Jehovah's witness here today has done that, and will be happy to help you do that too.

Talk to somebody after the meeting. You won't regret it.

Faith in the resurrection will change your life.

It is not a dream, it is real.

Let's read **John 11:25,26**

Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life.+ The one who exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life; 26 and everyone who is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all.+ Do you believe this?"

Even though he dies, will come to life.

How does this one small statement change things?

It means that life is more than just 70-80 years. There is much more.

That means that we don't need to stress about lost opportunities, a life that may not turn out to be what we wanted.

This statement means that if we or someone we love faces, terminal cancer, heart disease or some other horrible thing, even if the worst should happen, we remember Jesus words. "Even though he dies, he **will** come to life."

The truth is, there is much more to learn about the resurrection than what we can discuss in just a few minutes of a talk.

The bible talks about life without end on a paradise earth. With no sickness, no war, in total peace.

We invite you to join us on March 24 to commemorate Jesus' death and learn more about the hope of everlasting life.

It's true, Death is an enemy.

But what have we learned today?

Jehovah will provide a complete victory over death by means of the resurrection.

We know that it will happen, because it is what Jehovah wants, and what Jehovah wants he gets.

Additionally, Jesus proved to us that it is possible by already doing it.

In fact, it is something so simple that Jesus can bring us back to life in the time that it takes to say three simple words.

This is not a dream brothers and sisters. It is a reality.
And this reality will change your life forever.