

# The God Who Raises the Dead

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-11

*The Apostle Paul writes from Macedonia to the Corinthians around 56 AD after leaving Ephesus*

8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

## Great pressure

### ▲ Hardships

2 Corinthians 1:8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia.

### ▲ Heaviness

2 Corinthians 1:8 We were under great pressure,

### ▲ Helplessness

2 Corinthians 1:8 We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure,

### ▲ Hopelessness

2 Corinthians 1:8 We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death.

## God's power

### ▲ Educational experience

2 Corinthians 1:9 But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God,

### ▲ Extreme examples

2 Corinthians 1:9 But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

### ▲ Extraordinary emancipation

2 Corinthians 1:10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us.

### ▲ Exceptional expectations

2 Corinthians 1:10 On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

## Grateful praise

### ▲ Many praying

2 Corinthians 1:10 On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers.

### ▲ Mighty prevailing

2 Corinthians 1:11 the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

### ▲ Much praise

2 Corinthians 1:11 Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.



# Some NOTES REGARDING the RAISING of the DEAD

## 1) Almighty God is Creator of all that exists and of life itself. God breathed into man the breath of life that caused him to become a living being (Genesis 2:7).

- ▶ Human life, then, is in God's hand. It can only be given by God, and therefore it is sacred and precious. God created mankind in his own image (Genesis 1:27).
- ▶ Thus, Christians proclaim the sanctity of life and despise the sins of murder, abortion, suicide, and euthanasia—and hatred.

## 2) Human life is brief. Scripture declares that life is like a vapor (James 4:14), like a flower of the field (Psalm 103:15), like the withering grass (1 Peter 1:24).

- ▶ Human life is a preparation period, a short time to prepare for an endless eternity. An Old Testament prophet cried, "Prepare to meet your God!" (Amos 4:12).
- ▶ Man is destined to die and then to face God (Hebrews 9:27). Thus, death will come to every human as long as Jesus delays his coming (1 Corinthians 15:51).
- ▶ And for the believer, death is an immediate entrance into God's heavenly presence (2 Corinthians 5:8). The Apostle Paul declared, "To die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).
- ▶ Paul further explained that "as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6).
- ▶ It is incomprehensible, then, that a believer who is "away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8) would want to return to that previous state.

## 3) Eventually, the bodies of all humans who have ever lived on earth and died, both good and evil, saved and unsaved, will be raised from the dead (Acts 24:15).

- ▶ First, the bodies of dead Christians will be raised when the living church is raptured. This rapture and resurrection may happen at any moment (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- ▶ Then, the bodies of the Lord's two witnesses, martyred during the Tribulation on earth, will be raised from the dead amidst the Tribulation (Revelation 11:11).
- ▶ Then, the bodies of Christians who have died during the Tribulation will be raised at Christ's second coming, seven years after the rapture (Revelation 20:4).
- ▶ Finally, the bodies of the rest of the (wicked) dead, will be raised at the end of Christ's thousand-year reign on earth to face final judgment (Revelation 20:5,12-13).
- ▶ Old Testament saints believed in this eventual resurrection of the dead (Job 19:26; Daniel 12:2), though their understanding was limited.

## 4) The raising of the dead in this age is rare. It is the exception, not the rule.

- ▶ Even those raised from the dead in Scripture eventually died again and went out into eternity (except, of course, for Jesus himself).
- ▶ The Bible provides nine specific examples of these temporary resurrections from the dead.
  1. A widow's son at Zarephath during the ministry of Elijah – 1 Kings 17
  2. A Shunammite woman's son during the ministry of Elisha – 2 Kings 4
  3. A man whose body touched Elisha's bones – 2 Kings 13
  4. Jairus' daughter during the ministry of Jesus – Matthew 9
  5. A widow's son at Nain during the ministry of Jesus – Luke 7
  6. Lazarus at Bethany during the ministry of Jesus – John 11
  7. Saints raised in Jerusalem at the moment of Jesus' death – Matthew 27
  8. Tabitha (Dorcas) at Joppa during the ministry of Peter – Acts 9
  9. Eutychus at Troas during the ministry of Paul – Acts 20
- ▶ During his earthly ministry, Jesus sent out the twelve, instructing them to "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons" (Matthew 10:8).

## 5) The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was unique.

- ▶ Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again, "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).
- ▶ As the Son of God, Jesus participated with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in his own resurrection from dead.
- ▶ Jesus said (John 10:18), "No one takes *my life* from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again."
- ▶ The apostles preached about Jesus that "God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2:24; Acts 3:15; Acts 10:40; Acts 13:30; Romans 10:9).
- ▶ Paul wrote that if the Holy Spirit "who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you," he "will also give life to your mortal bodies" (Romans 8:11).
- ▶ The Father has committed resurrection authority to Jesus the Son. Jesus announced, "The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and...live" (John 5:25).

## 6) When God sees fit, He can and will and does raise people from the dead. Such resurrections no doubt have specific purpose in the Mind of God.

- ▶ God, who is omniscient and omnipotent, could prevent death in any case, thus eliminating any necessity for resurrection.
- ▶ Thus, resurrections from the dead may very well fall into the following categories in the purpose of God (we suspect, we do not presume to know):
  - ✓ Unbelieving dead may be raised to spare them, mercifully, from hell and to provide witness to the living of the reality of eternity;
  - ✓ Believing dead may be raised to provide witness to the living of the reality of eternity;
  - ✓ The dead may be raised as a sign to the living of God's sovereign power over death;
  - ✓ The dead may be raised as an accompaniment to the preaching of the Gospel to demonstrate the authority of Jesus Christ as God's Son;
  - ✓ The dead may be raised as an expression of God's compassion to the grieving living.

## 7) When God raises the dead, it's a demonstration of his supreme, sovereign, supernatural power to conquer death and breathe life and hope into any situation.

- ▶ Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:9, "In our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead."

## Acts 19 – Paul in the Province of Asia (at Ephesus)

Acts 19:1 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples <sup>2</sup> and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." <sup>3</sup> So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. <sup>4</sup> Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." <sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. <sup>7</sup> There were about twelve men in all.

<sup>19:8</sup> Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, <sup>12</sup> so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

<sup>19:13</sup> Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." <sup>14</sup> Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. <sup>15</sup> [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" <sup>16</sup> Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

<sup>19:17</sup> When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. <sup>18</sup> Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. <sup>19</sup> A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. <sup>20</sup> In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

<sup>19:21</sup> After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." <sup>22</sup> He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

<sup>19:23</sup> About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. <sup>24</sup> A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. <sup>25</sup> He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. <sup>26</sup> And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. <sup>27</sup> There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

<sup>19:28</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" <sup>29</sup> Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. <sup>30</sup> Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. <sup>31</sup> Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater. <sup>32</sup> The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. <sup>33</sup> The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. <sup>34</sup> But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

<sup>19:35</sup> The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? <sup>36</sup> Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. <sup>37</sup> You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. <sup>38</sup> If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. <sup>39</sup> If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. <sup>40</sup> As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." <sup>41</sup> After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly. <sup>20:1</sup> When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia.

## 1 Corinthians 15 – Paul in the Province of Asia (at Ephesus)

<sup>1</sup> Corinthians 15:32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained?