

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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The Second Death Has No Power

The people of Corinth, as are all of us, were on a journey through this life. The end of this journey became the subject of a great controversy concerning the resurrection of the dead. Some said that life ends with physical death, whereas others said that there is a resurrection and that life continues on after death. Paul addressed this controversy:

12 Now if the Messiah is preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? -1 Corinthians 15

Some of the Jews, most notably the Sadducees, denied the existence of a spiritual world and, consequently, taught that there was no resurrection of the dead. The Pharisees, on the other hand, taught that there is both a spiritual world and a resurrection of the dead:

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. -Acts 23

As a Pharisee himself, Paul believed in the resurrection of the dead:

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. -Acts 23

Therefore, even though he persecuted the Jews that had become believers in the death and resurrection of Yahshua (Jesus), his belief in the resurrection prepared Paul's heart for the life-changing event which he was about to experience. While Paul was still called Saul, he had a supernatural encounter with the Hebrew-speaking resurrected Yahshua, who appeared to him as a bright light:

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we had all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking to me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecute you me? *it is hard for you to kick against the pricks.*

15 And I said, Who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Yahshua whom you persecute. -Acts 26

This event changed the entire direction and purpose of Paul's life!

As an eye-witness of the resurrected Yahshua, Paul was chosen for a special purpose, which was to carry the name of Yahshua (Yah the Savior) to the Gentiles, as well as to kings, and to the children of Israel. Yahshua spoke to one of His disciples in Damascus concerning Paul:

15 But the Lord said to him, Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel to me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: -Acts 9

The other apostles of Yahshua had also been chosen to be witnesses of His resurrection:

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, to that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be made to be a witness with us of his resurrection. -Acts 1

Totally convinced that the resurrected Yahshua had supernaturally called him as an apostle, Paul taught the gospel through His name. He said it is Yahshua's resurrection from the dead by the power of the "spirit of holiness" that declares Him to be the Son of God:

1 Paul, a servant of Yahshua the Messiah, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised before by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Yahshua the Messiah our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: -Romans 1

The gospel that the apostle Paul was sent to preach was that, through faith in Yahshua as our Savior, we can be forgiven for our sins as we turn away from the darkness of the power of Satan unto the light of God. We can, therefore, be counted among God's children and inherit His promises:

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. -Acts 26

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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Because he knew that it was the power of the Spirit of God through the resurrection of Yahshua from the dead that declared Him to be the Son of God, Paul could speak boldly of the resurrection. Unless the Messiah is risen from the dead, then preaching the gospel is in vain:

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is the Messiah not risen:

14 And if the Messiah is not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. -1 Corinthians 15

If the Messiah is not raised from the dead, then the gospel is not true and our sins are not forgiven:

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not the Messiah raised:

17 And if the Messiah is not raised, your faith *is* vain; you are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in the Messiah are perished. -1 Corinthians 15

If this were the case, Paul says, then those that trust in the gospel are not only without hope, but they are more miserable than anyone else!

19 If in this life only we have hope in the Messiah, we are of all men most miserable. -1 Corinthians 15

But Paul was an eyewitness of the resurrected Messiah, who revealed Himself as a light from heaven!

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: -Acts 9

This is also much like that which was seen by John:

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his face was as the sun shines in its strength. -Revelation 1

Even prior to His death and resurrection, Yahshua had revealed His glorified body to some of His other apostles, as He was “transfigured” before their eyes:

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his clothes were white as the light. -Matthew 17

He also supernaturally showed to them the glorified spiritual bodies of others, namely Moses and Elijah!

3 And, behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with him. -Matthew 17

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Even though Moses had died a physical death (see Joshua 1:1) and Elijah was taken directly to heaven (see 2 Kings 2:11), both of their bodies were supernaturally revealed. Unlike natural physical bodies, such “spiritual bodies,” are raised incorruptible in power and glory:

42 So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. -1 Corinthians 15

While natural bodies are seen with physical eyes, spiritual bodies, which are eternal, are not seen unless they are supernaturally revealed (as with Moses and Elijah):

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. -2 Corinthians 4

Natural bodies are made of flesh and cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Only that which is also born of the Spirit can enter therein!

5 Yahshua answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. -John 3

Paul emphasizes this point:

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. -1 Corinthians 15

If we are born of the Spirit, then the same Spirit that raised Yahshua from the dead also lives in us. It is also this same Spirit that will raise us in life from our mortal bodies:

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Yahshua from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up the Messiah from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you. -Romans 8

Like the resurrected Yahshua, our spiritual bodies are incorruptible and immortal. Therefore, they do not die in the first death with our physical bodies, but are raised in victory over that death:

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. -1 Corinthians 15

As partakers of the first resurrection through faith in Yahshua, we are also victorious over the second death, which is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (see Revelation 20:14). It is powerless over us:

6 Blessed and holy *is* he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. -Revelation 20

Therefore, through our faith in Yahshua, the path that appears to lead to death is really the journey toward the victory over both the first and the second death, as we enter into the promise of everlasting life.