

# Easter: The Resurrection

Key Verse:

**“Thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

1 Corinthians 15:57

Level 5 lesson 9

Extra: Write or explain to a friend the meaning and value of the resurrection.

**Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-58**

**Further: John 20**

Easter; for many people, is simply a public holiday. However, as with most public holidays, there is a reason for the celebration. Easter is when we celebrate probably the most significant event in the history of the world - the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION** (1 Corinthians 15:12-22) While some scoff at the thought of Jesus rising from the dead, no fact of history is more thoroughly proved! In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul does not try to prove it logically or scientifically. After all, he was an eye-witness - He had seen the risen Lord himself! While he does mention some others who also saw Jesus after His resurrection, Paul’s focus is to demonstrate that Christ’s resurrection is a defining belief, vital to the reality of our Christian faith.

It is as much a part of the Gospel as the fact Christ died for our sins. (v3-8) In fact, anyone who denies the resurrection of Christ cannot be a Christian (Romans 10:9,10). If Christ remained in the grave, then He was obviously not the Son of God as He claimed, but a mere man. A dead Christ - no matter how wonderful His life or teaching - could save nobody, and the Christian’s faith in Him would be sadly misplaced.

However, Paul wrote that Christ died for our sins, and “was raised again for our justification.”(Romans 4:25) Our Lord’s resurrection proved that God had accepted His sacrificial death on our behalf; therefore, if Christ did not rise, there can be no forgiveness, we are still in our sins. (v17)

Jesus warned in John 16:33, that Christians can expect trials and troubles in this life. Paul also warned we may be persecuted if we try to live a godly life.(2 Timothy 3:12)Now, if a Christian is expected to struggle along on his own with tribulation and persecution in this life, and has no future life to look forward to - what is the point in being a Christian? If this were so Paul wrote, Christians “are to be pitied more than all men!”(v19)

If there is no resurrection, then Christianity really has nothing to offer and is a cruel hoax! There would be no hope, no joy, in such a life. Either Christ arose and all who believe in Him will arise also. or else Christ did not

rise and neither will anyone else! However, the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of every believer are inseparably linked; the first guarantees the second!(v20-22) The personal experience of countless thousands of Christians, in the years since Paul and the other Apostles were transformed by the power of the risen Lord, give powerful testimony to the truth of the resurrection. As the songwriter has put it, “You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart!”

**ORDER OF THE RESURRECTION** (1 Corinthians 15:20-28) Paul pictured the resurrection as a time of harvest. He wrote of Christ as the ‘first fruits’ of those who have died, a reference to the ‘Feast of First Fruits’ in Leviticus 23:9-14. This was when the Israelites would take a sheaf of the ripe grain and offer it to the Lord as a sample and pledge of the entire harvest. In the same way, Christ’s resurrection is a sample and pledge of the great harvest of resurrected believers which will be reaped when all who are in the grave will rise to eternal life. Paul writes that this will happen in a specific order. (v23) An interval of time is now elapsing between the resurrection of Christ and the first ‘harvest’ when Jesus returns for His own and ‘the dead in Christ shall rise.’ There is also another resurrection of the unbelieving dead, not mentioned by the apostle in this account, which occurs later. (see Revelation 20:5)

**METHOD OF RESURRECTION** (1 Corinthians 15:35-58) The day is coming, when God will raise all believers in Christ, dead or alive, to new and everlasting life. Those who are alive when Christ returns ( 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) will be transformed ‘in the twinkling of an eye.’ This resurrection of believers will fulfil a prophecy made long ago by the prophet Isaiah: “He (God) will swallow up death in victory.”(Isaiah 25:8) People think death is victorious over mankind, but the New Testament assures us that Christ has broken its power. Paul wrote that “the sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the Law.” People fear death. They realise in their hearts they are sinners, condemned by the righteous Law of God to eternal separation from Him in Hell. As Christians, this “curse of the law” has been removed by our Redeemer, who “became a curse for us.”(Galatians 3:13) Death may still claim the believer in Christ, but it cannot destroy him. He will stand one day before God “clothed in His righteousness” in a new resurrection body, forever beyond the reach of death. No wonder Paul concludes, “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”(v57)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. What is Paul’s focus in this lesson?                                 | ..... |
| 2. Is the resurrection important to you? Why?                           | ..... |
| 3. What did our Lord’s resurrection prove?                              | ..... |
| 4. What prophecy did Isaiah make regarding the resurrection?            | ..... |
| 5. What would be the consequences if Christ did not rise from the dead? | ..... |

My Name is ..... Age .....

# The Birth of Samuel

Key Verse:

**“For the Mighty One has done great things for me, Holy is His name.”**

Luke 1:49

Extra: What do you think about Hannah’s promise?

Level 5 lesson 10

## Read 1 Samuel 1

Further reading: 1 Samuel 2:1-11

The Bible is full of interesting characters, and in 1 & 2 Samuel we find several including Samuel, Saul, David and Jonathan. Samuel was the last of Israel’s judges and one of its first prophets. God had His hand on this man’s life, even before he was born, as today’s reading shows.

**HANNAH’S PROBLEM** Elkanah had two wives, which was not an uncommon thing in Old Testament times. One wife, Peninnah, had children, but the other Hannah, had none. Elkanah loved Hannah, more than Peninnah, and this caused great friction and strife in the home. He showed his preference for Hannah by giving her a double portion of the sacrificial food, when he went to Shiloh (where the Tabernacle was) to sacrifice to the Lord.

Naturally, Peninnah became bitter and jealous. She made Hannah’s life miserable, continually mocking her because she was childless. Poor Hannah was terribly upset and sad about this. She would often weep and at times even refused to eat. Elkanah did his best to comfort her, assuring her of his love, yet despite all this, nothing could satisfy Hannah’s desire for a child.

**HANNAH’S PRAYER** One day, while Hannah was worshipping at the Tabernacle in Shiloh, we read she “wept and prayed to the Lord.” In her prayer she made a vow to the Lord that if He would give her a son, she would then dedicate him to His service all the days of his life. As she prayed, Eli the old priest, watched her from where he was sitting. He could see her lips moving but couldn’t hear anything, as Hannah was praying silently from her heart. The old priest, thinking she was drunk, rebuked her, telling her to “get rid of your wine!”

Hannah was mortified to think the priest would think her a drunkard. No my Lord,” she replied respectfully. “I am a sorrowful woman. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord.” Satisfied with her explanation, Eli gave his blessing, telling her to, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him.”

Hannah’s fervent prayer and vow to the Lord was heard. Soon after returning home, we read the Lord remembered her and “she conceived and gave birth to a son.” She named him ‘Samuel’ which means ‘asked of God,’ in recognition that he was given in answer to her prayers.

The next time Elkanah and his family went up to Shiloh to offer the yearly sacrifice, Hannah did not go. Instead, she said to her husband, “After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will live there always.” This can’t have been easy for her, but Hannah was a godly woman; she was determined to honour her promise, and to give the son she had prayed for, wholly to the Lord.

**HANNAH’S PROMISE** Hannah would have cared for her son for several years until he was old enough to care for himself and be useful in the service of the high priest at the Tabernacle. We can imagine that it was not easy for her to contemplate parting with her first-born son and that those few years were very special to her. At last, however, the painful day arrived when she must part with him.

True to her word, she took him into the house of the Lord in Shiloh, with a freewill offering of “a bullock, some flour and a bottle (skin) of wine.” Once again, she stood before the old priest Eli. She told him she was the woman who some years before had prayed to the Lord for a son. The little boy at her side was proof of her prayer having been answered. She concluded with these noble words, “So now I give him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he shall be given to the Lord!” Eli, having listened to Hannah’s story, is deeply moved by her devotion to the Lord and joined her in worshipping God.

Then before leaving the Tabernacle to return home with Elkanah her husband, Hannah prayed the most wonderful prayer of praise and worship to God. You can read it in the first eleven verses of the next chapter. We will spend the next few lessons looking at the life of Hannah’s young son and how God continued to use him in the nation of Israel.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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|--|-------|
| 1. Why was Hannah’s life so miserable?   | ..... |
| 2. What vow did Hannah make to the Lord?                                       | ..... |
| 3. What blessing did Eli bestow upon her?                                      | ..... |
| 4. What was Hannah’s son’s name? What is the meaning of his name?              | ..... |
| 5. What did Hannah say as she stood before Eli to present her son to the Lord? | ..... |

# God Speaks to Samuel

Key Verse:

**“We must pay more careful attention therefore to what we have heard.”**

Hebrews 2:1

Extra: What do you think Eli should have done to avoid all this trouble?

Level 5 lesson 11

## Read 1 Samuel 3

Further reading: 1 Samuel 2:12-36

In this chapter we find the Lord speaking directly to young Samuel and giving him his first important task. And what a difficult one it was! Samuel had to tell Eli, the old priest, that God was going to punish his family.

**SAMUEL’S MENTOR** Several verses throughout our reading, show that Samuel had made good progress under Eli’s tuition and “found favour both with the Lord and men.” However, Eli’s own two sons Hophni and Phinehas, did not share their father’s faith in God and became a disgrace to him, and to the name of God. They began abusing their priestly roles to commit terrible sins, and their bad behaviour caused many people in Israel to follow their sinful example.

Eli spoke to them about this, but should have gone much further and severely punished them. Many parents today also, would rather ‘avoid conflict’ than fulfil their parental responsibilities. However, the repercussions of Eli’s failure to correct and discipline his sons is a solemn reminder to us all, of our duties as parents and as children, before God.

**SAMUEL’S CALL** One night, after Samuel had gone to bed in his room in the Tabernacle, he was startled to hear a voice calling him by name. “Samuel!” it said. “Here I am,” responded the boy. Slipping out of bed, he ran to Eli, thinking that it was the old Priest who had called him. But Eli told him, “I didn’t call you; go back to bed.”

Obediently, Samuel did so - only to hear the voice again calling, “Samuel!” Again, he left his bed and went to Eli. “Here I am,” he said, “for you did call me!” Eli again told him to return to his bed and go to sleep. So he lay down, only to hear the call for the third time, “Samuel.” Quickly he ran to Eli. Eli now understood what was happening; that God was calling the boy. “Go and lie down,” he told the young boy, “and if He calls you, say, “Speak, Lord; for Your servant hears.” [v9]

Samuel obeyed. Lying down he heard the voice a fourth time, “Samuel, Samuel.” Trembling he replied, “Speak – for Your servant hears.” The Lord then went on to tell the boy that He was going to do something in Israel that would cause a real sensation. In a few, solemn words the Lord revealed to Samuel that He was about to carry out the sentence of judgment which He had already passed on the family of Eli. (see chapter 2:30-34)

Despite a previous warning, Eli had continued to ignore the wickedness of his sons and the damage this was causing to the name of God and to His people Israel. Therefore, just as He had promised, the Lord would deal in finality with Eli’s house; no sacrifice or offering could put away its terrible guilt. What a solemn statement! Eli was to be punished for allowing sin to flourish and his sons for their wickedness. How unwise of them all, to treat sin so lightly.

**SAMUEL’S MESSAGE** In the morning Samuel got up as usual, and opened the doors of the Tabernacle. He dreaded having to pass on such a fearful message, especially to Eli, whom he no doubt was very fond of. Eli, however wanted to know the truth, and in God’s name demanded it from the young boy.

Samuel we read, told Eli “everything, and hid nothing from him.” It seems that Eli, in his heart, had somehow expected it; he was not angry or afraid. He knew that God was dealing in perfect justice, and so he said, “It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good in His eyes.” [v18] How sad that a servant of God should bring such disaster upon his own family, by his own failure.

This event marked the beginning of Samuel’s ministry as a prophet of God. Earlier in the chapter we read that “Samuel did not yet know the Lord: the Word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.” [v7] Now, in v20, we read, “All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.”

The Bible also records another very interesting thing about Samuel; “the Lord was with him as he grew up, and he let none of the Lord’s words fall to the ground.” (v19) Samuel didn’t let any of God’s words go to waste, or have no effect on him. What an example for each of us!

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Why did Phinehas and Hophni become a disgrace to their father and the name of God?

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2. What did Eli tell Samuel to say in reply to the Lord?

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3. What was the reason for the Lord’s judgment on Eli’s family?

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4. How did Eli respond to the bad news?

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5. What does the Bible record about Samuel at the end of the lesson?

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# Eli & his Sons: Their End

Key Verse:

**“A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.”**

Proverbs 13:1

Extra: What do you see as the cause of the tragedies mentioned in this study?

Level 5 lesson 12

## Read 1 Samuel 4

**FOOLISH COUNSEL** God’s judgment, predicted for Eli and his sons, was soon to fall. Israel launched an attack on their old enemies, the Philistines [v2] but the Philistines defeated them and left 4,000 Israelites dead on the battlefield.

In Shiloh, the elders of Israel were shocked. “Why has God allowed this to happen to us?” they asked. The terrible sins of the two ‘rogue’ priests and the people of Israel in general, seem to have ‘slipped their minds!’ However, their response is typical of many Christians in times of distress: they opted for ‘form over reality.’ Instead of confessing their sins and getting right with God, personally and as a nation; they decided to “bring the Ark of the Lord out of Shiloh that He may come among us, and save us from the power of our enemies.”

Sure, the Ark was a ‘sacred thing’ - a symbol of the glory and presence of the Lord - but they needed the ‘real thing!’ They seemed to regard the Ark as a ‘lucky charm’ and superstitiously thought it would somehow bring them victory.

This is like those today who, when in trouble, decide to attend church again or do something ‘religious.’ They want the ‘form’ of Christianity. God however, is only interested in the ‘reality’ - what is the condition of our hearts toward Him? Often in the O.T. we read where God was grieved that “the hearts of My people are far from Me.”

We need to be very careful of such attitudes creeping into our own lives. No sacred thing, be it ‘baptism,’ the ‘Lord’s Supper,’ ‘Communion,’ or ‘going to Church’ can save you or me. And it can never be a substitute for a healthy, righteous relationship with the Lord where we daily confess any sin in our hearts, and walk in the power of His Holy Spirit day by day. As we do this, it will prevent these other wonderful ‘things’ becoming mere ‘forms’ of Christianity, and make them a glorious reality.

**FEARFUL CONQUEST** So the Ark was brought into the Israelite camp and everyone gave a huge shout; surely this would bring victory! Even the Philistines were worried. They remembered what had happened previously when the Ark had been present with the Israelites; the terrible judgments that fell on their opponents. However, they resolved that their only hope was to, “Be men and fight!” So they did, as fiercely and ferociously as they could. It must have been a terrible battle, for we read that despite the presence of the Ark, there was “a very great slaughter.” Israel again suffered a humiliating defeat - only this time 30,000 men died - among them Hophni and Phinehas. Even worse, the Ark itself was captured by the Philistines!

**FINAL CRISIS** As all this was unfolding, Eli sat on a seat by the roadside, near the Israelite camp, fearful for the Ark of God. It seems, he had been over-ruled in the decision to take it from the tabernacle. Suddenly, a man rushed into the camp with the terrible news of the battle. Of course, it caused terrible wailing and grief. Finally, Eli is told the news, “Israel has run before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons are also dead!” This was bad enough, but then the messenger added, “and the Ark of God is taken!” These last words it seems, were what Eli had dreaded hearing the most. In shock, he fell backwards off his seat and died of a broken neck. Phinehas’ wife who was pregnant, went into labour at the news, and died giving birth. As she died, she named her newborn son “Ichabod” saying, “the glory is departed from Israel; for the Ark of God is taken.”

God’s judgment fell on Eli and his household, as He had promised. Let this be a solemn warning to us of the seriousness of sin, and the certainty of God’s final judgement on it. Friend, what are you trusting in to cover your sin before the gaze of a holy God? Don’t trust in the ‘forms’ of religion, but in the ‘reality’ of the living Saviour, Jesus Christ!

It is foolish to trust in anything else (however ‘sacred’) for salvation, instead of trusting in the Lord Jesus Himself and His sacrifice on your behalf at Calvary’s cross.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Why did the elders want the Ark?

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2. What grieves God’s heart?

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3. No sacred thing can be a substitute for what?

.....

4. What brought about Eli’s death?

.....

5. What should be a solemn warning to us?

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