Contemporary Comments

"The Dead in Christ" | August 25, 2012 | Order Info


The results of the survey were as disappointing as they were surprising. A poll taken and published by Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University wanted to know if Christians still believe in the resurrection of the body. The results showed that the majority of Americans don’t believe. In fact, only 36 percent of the 1,007 adults interviewed answered “yes” to this question: “Do you believe that, after you die, your physical body will be resurrected someday?” Over half of the people—54 percent—said that they did not believe, while 10 percent were undecided.

When asked to respond to the survey findings, Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky said, “This reflects the very low state of doctrinal preaching in our churches. I continually am confronted by Christians, even active members of major churches, who have never heard this taught in their local congregations.” He added, “We have a lowest-common-denominator Christianity being taught in so many denominations that has produced a people who simply do not know some of the most basic Christian truths.”

As Seventh-day Adventists, we should be the leaders in teaching this truth! Two of our Fundamental Beliefs make it clear what we believe will happen at the second coming:

Belief #25 – “The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times.”
Belief #26 – “The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later.”

Paul had a reason for writing to the Thessalonians about this topic. Evidently they misunderstood what would happen to the dead in Christ at the second coming, thinking that only those who were alive would be taken to Heaven. Imagine their joy when Paul told them, “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” There was now hope! They would see their loved ones again!

Their hope is our hope. So we grieve differently than those who don’t have this hope. We say “good bye” only until the second coming. And while we wait, we must tell an uncertain world that the resurrection is indeed a reality!

~ nc

1. Albert Mohler
2. Adventist

How to Order Sharing Scripture

1. Order this week’s Sharing Scripture study guide for $1.49, click here.
2. Order the entire electronic 3rd Quarter Sharing Scripture for $8.75, click here.