



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : "THE LAST THINGS"

Study 6 : "Resurrection" - September 10, 2006

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INTRODUCTION : to the series

The "Last Things" is a Series on God's ultimate purposes for his people and his creation. The Series will pick up on the main themes through the Scriptures; themes which find their ultimate fulfilment when Jesus returns to the world. Then the whole of creation is renewed, his people are "clothed with immortality," and God reigns supreme.

INTRODUCTION : to Study 6

The Scripture Reading for week's study was 1Th4:13-5:4. When Jesus returns :

... the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive ... will be caught up together with them ... and so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Th4:16-17

Christians who have died will be resurrected, then those alive at the time will be caught up with them - the implication is that they will be "resurrected" without dieing!

Paul's intent, while teaching the FACT of the resurrection, is to assure his readers that Christians who have died will not be disadvantaged in any way when Jesus returns. (See 1Th4:13-15)

Today's Reading from 1Cor15 gives the missing detail about the PROCESS of the Resurrection at the time of the Lord's coming for both the living and the dead.

... flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ... We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet ... the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed 1Cor15:50-52

A. RESURRECTION : FORESHADOWED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament understanding of what happens when people die is not COMPLETE. It could not be, because, according to 1Tm1:10, it is Jesus :

... who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light ...

Study 9 : "What Happens When We Die?" (October 1) will explore the Old Testament understanding in some detail, but a summary will have to do now - the Old Testament is testimony more to the fact of continued existence after death rather than to its nature.

While there is no systematic "theology of resurrection" in the OT, there are four isolated verses that clearly foreshadow the teaching of the NT (debate in Jesus' time raged; the Pharisees believed in "resurrection" but the Sadducees did not (Ac23:6-10)) :

"The LORD brings death & makes alive; he brings down to the grave & raises up - Samuel's mother, Hannah; 1Sa2:6

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God Job 19:26

But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy ... the earth will give birth to her dead. Is26:19

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Dan12:2

Ezekiel 37 - a vision of the valley of dry bones restored as a living army: a promise that Israel would return from exile and fulfilled in the early 6th Century BC. The language is metaphorical, but contains the striking statement in v12 : I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel (See also Ps22:29 & Is25:6-8 - Messianic verses that are clearly resurrection passages "in hindsight")

B. RESURRECTION : BASED ON HISTORICAL FACT

The historical fact of Jesus' resurrection is **ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL** to the Christian faith.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins ... that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day ... and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. from 1Cor15:3-11

If Jesus remains dead, then our Christian Hope is **BASELESS** and no resurrection for ANYONE

If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless ... (and) your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1Cor15:16-20

As we will see, Christians did not believe in :

a return to life in the **SAME** type of body as before ("Here we go again! suffering & dieing") or setting **ASIDE** a body to enjoy disembodied bliss. (Playing harps in the clouds?)

but in the gift of a **NEW** body with different properties and abilities, fit for **ETERNITY**.

Where did this idea come from? The answer the early Christians themselves give is that Jesus of Nazareth was bodily raised from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. It is Jesus' own resurrection that has given **FORCE** and **SHAPE** to the Christian hope.

"I stand on trial for my hope in the resurrection of the dead." ... "It is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today." Paul, on trial, in his defence : Ac23:6 & 26:6

From Study 1 - Consider the resurrection of Jesus as a seminal piece of the future, dragged back in time so that we may live in its light now and expect its reality to be ours in the future.

Unlike optimism, Christian hope doesn't opt out when faced with harsh realities. The reason for the realism of Christian hope is the fact that it is cast in the mould of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

C. THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY

1. WE WILL HAVE :

a. **IDENTITY** : we will be recognisable "as us" (but with hair, and without wrinkles and ?)

Jesus himself came up & walked along with them; but they were kept from recognising him. Lk24:15

b. **SUBSTANCE** : our bodies will be "spiritual" - but that does not mean they will not be "real" - we will not be "spirit beings."

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." Lk24:39

2. OUR BODIES WILL BE :

a. **INCORRUPTIBLE** : beyond the reach of change or decay.

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable 1Cor15:42

b. **GLORIFIED** : our bodies already are incredible, but nothing like the new model. Words are unable to give adequate description, so Paul is reduced to comparing our old and new bodies to the differing "brightness" of the earth and the sun.

... the splendour of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendour of the earthly bodies is another. So it will be at the resurrection sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. from 1Cor15:40-43

c. **ADAPTED** for eternity, without the limitations of our present experience.

it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 1Cor15:43b

Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them. Jn20:26

d. **SPIRITUAL** : best understood as "always obeying and honouring God.." Not "without bodily form or substance." (See 1b. above)

it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body .. so it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being" the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ... The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven ... And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. from 1Cor15:44-49