

The Resurrection

Steve Baisden

Resurrection as defined by Webster's Dictionary: "to raise from the dead, the rising of all human dead before the final judgment." This is the general understanding and idea that most people have about the resurrection; the literal physical raising of our dead physical bodies at the coming of Jesus in judgment.

The Bible speaks of the resurrection often. It speaks of it in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In the KJV it is mentioned 41 times in the New Testament and in the Old Testament it is mentioned often but not by the specific word resurrection. Phrases like: "ye shall stand in the end" "cause you to come up out of your graves" and "those that sleep shall awake" are used throughout the Old Testament and literally mean "resurrection". Resurrection is a major Bible topic and concern for any Bible student. Considering the frequency with which this word is used and emphasis placed upon it, it is vital that we allow the Bible to define what is meant by resurrection.

In the beginning when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, before death, there was no need of resurrection. Death had not occurred and therefore resurrection was of no concern or need. However, as time progressed and man sinned... death came. God made a law and a promise, in the day that they ate of the forbidden fruit, they would surely die (Genesis 2:17) ... literally in the Hebrew tongue it would read "a death ye shall die."

That day came when Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit and in that day, they did indeed die the death foretold by God! God did not lie. He did not change His mind. God made a promise and God kept His promise. **THE DAY THEY PARTOOK THEY DIED.** Please notice: they did not perish physically. They did not collapse onto the ground and their hearts did not stop beating. It was NOT a physical death, it WAS a spiritual death. They had died spiritually. Romans 6:23 says the wages of sin is death. Isaiah 59:1-2 says your sins separate you from God! This is the same type of death that Paul experienced in Romans 7:9. "...the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Paul said he died; yet, he was still there writing to the church at Rome. Yes, you are spiritually dead when you sin. Your sins separate you from God.

Those that refuse to accept what God said and take Him at His word will argue that the day Adam partook is the day that he 'began' to die physically and physical death was brought into this world by Adam's sin. First, this is a clear violation of what the text actually says "in the DAY" "ye shall die". Second, please pay careful attention and notice that it was Abel that introduced physical death into this world NOT Adam (Genesis 4:8). In fact, Adam outlived his righteous son Abel (Matthew 23:35) and lived to be 930 years old (Genesis 5:5). Third, Genesis 2:16 where God told Adam he could "eat" of every other tree? What would have happened to Adam had he not eaten at all? Just like you and I, he would have grown weak and eventually died! Adam had to eat or he would have died and this was before he died spiritually!

If you sin, then you die. It is that simple. But the opposite is also true. No sin equals no death! But wait a minute! Babies are without sin. They are innocent (Luke 2:23). Why then do babies sometimes die? Because physical death is not the result of sin! The wages of sin is SPIRITUAL DEATH, NOT

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PHYSICAL DEATH! Back to Adam and Eve for just a moment: If the death penalty pronounced from God was physical death, then why did Adam live 930 years and why did Abel a righteous man (Hebrews 11:4), die before Adam? No. It is indisputable the curse placed upon mankind by Adam for breaking Gods command to not eat of the forbidden fruit was SPIRITUAL DEATH, NOT PHYSICAL DEATH! And Jesus came to cure the death of Adam (Romans 5:12-19) 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." If we follow Adam we die, if we follow Christ we live.

In John 5:24-29, Jesus is speaking with the Jews and he is telling them that they were dead. In verse 24 He told them, if they would hear Him and believe on Him that they would not come into "condemnation." This word "condemnation" is the same Greek word translated in other passages as "judgment." And then Jesus told them they could pass from death to life. Did you catch that? He was speaking with living people and told them they were dead but could come back to life!

In verse 25 He told them " The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Yes, they could come back to life (i.e. resurrection) NOW!

In verse 26, He said "As the Father has life in himself so He hath given the son of man to have life in himself." What kind of life does the Father have in Himself? Jesus answered that in John 4:24 when He said that God was a Spirit! That was the life that was to be given!

In verse 27, God had given Jesus the authority to execute judgment, and that is exactly what Jesus was doing at that time! He was calling them dead and telling them they could live! The hour was coming but "NOW IS," He told them! They could at that time pass from death to life and not come into condemnation (judgment).

In verse 28, Jesus now addresses the hour that was coming, and said that all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. Please notice at this point Jesus is talking about those who were "in the graves" He was NOT talking about those who were living. Those "in the graves" would come forth! Yes, the hour was coming when judgment would come, not for physical life but for the life that God had in Himself and the life He gave Jesus to have in Himself. Because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1Cor 15:50), Jesus was not preparing the world for a flesh and blood resurrection. He was preparing them for eternal life which could only be spiritual.

Verse 29 says they would come forth, some to the resurrection life and some to resurrection of damnation. No doubt this is reference to heaven and hell. No doubt this is the release and end of Hades where those "in the graves" were. In fact, the definition of Hades is "the place of the dead, place of the unseen or covered up." Hades, or as the KJV uses that word, "Hell" is translated, "Grave" in 1 Corinthians 15:55. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave [HADES], where is thy victory?" Yes, in John 5:29, Hades was going to be judged, and those who were there would go to heaven or hell! Jesus knew there was going to be a resurrection of the just and unjust, and He knew it from Daniel 12:2.

Jesus had said in Matthew 5:18 and Luke 21:20-32 that ALL things written in the law and prophets (the Old Testament) had to be fulfilled before the Law and Prophets could cease; and, He said it would all be fulfilled in that generation, particularly when they would see Jerusalem compassed with armies! This demands that the resurrection prophesied in Daniel 12:2 would have to take place in AD 70.

Now notice what takes place in John 11. Jesus' friend Lazarus had died physically. Jesus was in another town when he received the news of Lazarus's death. Upon hearing that Lazarus had died, Jesus returns to Bethany where Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha lived and where Lazarus was buried. In John 11:24, "Martha saith unto Jesus, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Martha was a Jew and knew there was going to be a resurrection in the last day. She would know this from the same passage that Jesus knew it from (i.e. Daniel 12).

In John 11:25 and 26, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Believest thou this?" Jesus immediately responds to Martha and lets her know that the prophecies of the Old Testament were being fulfilled before her very eyes. He (Jesus) IS the resurrection! Further, he that lives and believes IN Him shall never die and then Jesus asked "believest thou this?"

Several verses later we find Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead physically. In a discussion on Facebook, I had several preachers telling me that the raising of Lazarus was proof positive that Jesus came for physical resurrection and that these verses illustrate a future resurrection of the physical dead. Why? Because Jesus raised Lazarus physically. But here is the problem with that analysis: Lazarus died again physically!

Did you catch the power of that? Jesus said those who live and believe in Him would never die, but we then have one of Jesus' closest friends and one of His most faithful followers DYING AGAIN! Lazarus is not still here alive physically. He is not over 2000 years old. BUT he is still alive spiritually and will never die again! Therefore, there is NO NEED FOR A FUTURE PHYSICAL RESURRECTION for Lazarus! He is NOT DEAD!

In the debate, I had with John Chowning, John kept saying that it was heretical to say that Jesus died spiritually. Chowning claimed that Jesus ONLY died physically and that was the price He had to pay to redeem men from their sins. I responded to that by citing, among other things, Adam's death and that was the death that Jesus came to cure: spiritual death. Even more blistering to Chowning's position is the explicit Bible statements which say Jesus did indeed die spiritually! "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Jesus] was made a quickening spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45). Paul explicitly states that Jesus was made a "quickenning spirit." This MUST mean that Jesus' spirit came back to life and that it MUST have died in order for that to take place.

Also, note the words of Isaiah 53:10 "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin..." What was it that was made an offering for sin? This is talking about Jesus and it was His SOUL that was made a sin offering! No wonder while on the cross before physical death Jesus cried out, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matthew 27:46). It is plain. It is explicit. It is absolute. It harmonizes. It is "conservative." The Bible claims that Jesus' soul had to pay the price. Yet Chowning calls us heretics over this, while at the same time his good friends Ben Vick and Rusty Stark agree with us on this! Oh, consistency where art thou?

To drive this truth home even further, in 2 Corinthians 5:14, Paul said, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:" Do you believe that "all were dead" when Jesus went to the cross? IF you believe Paul, you do. BUT herein lies the kicker: if ALL WERE DEAD, then how did they crucify him? How did they hang him on the cross? How did they bury him IF they were "all dead"? IT MUST BE – MUST BE – that the only way they were dead was spiritually! There is no way around that, unless you are like brother Chowning and deny plain Bible teaching!

We have access to life (resurrection) even now through baptism (Romans 6:3-6, Colossians 2:12, John 3:3-5). If we have been resurrected, then we, like Lazarus, need not worry about any future resurrection! We are alive with the Lord and we NEVER have to die again. Jesus paid that price. "Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26)

Biblical resurrection is NOT how Webster defines it. It is NOT how the average person generally understands it. Biblical resurrection is how the Bible describes it! Physical death is NOT the Christian's enemy; it is a natural process that ALL must experience (1 Kings 2:2, Psalms 89:48, Ecclesiastes 1:4, 3:19-20). Spiritual death on the other hand IS the enemy! Paul would declare this truth in Philippians 1:21 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Paul was saying that when he died physically, he could go to be with the Lord. How could physical death be the Christian's enemy? Jesus did not come to resurrect us from physical death. He came to resurrect us from spiritual death, to raise us up in order to be alive with Him spiritually (John 3:3-5, Romans 6:3-6, Colossians 2:11-13, Galatians 3:27-28). [SB]

Behold He Cometh in the Clouds; and Every Eye Shall See Him

Holger W. Neubauer

Countless individuals both within and without the church cite Revelation 1:7 as proof positive that when Jesus returns every single person on the face of the earth will witness the event. In their minds, our position that affirms that Jesus returned when Jerusalem fell is falsified. Yet, John affirmed in Revelation 1:1 these things would “shortly come to pass” and that the “time was at hand” (Revelation 1:3). These time statements are repeated at the end of the book as well (Revelation 22:6,10). John affirmed the book of Revelation was “signified” or “symbolized” (Revelation 1:1). Could it be that the phrase “and every eye shall see him” has a deeper symbolic meaning? This writer affirms it does. Revelation 1:7 says, “behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” Notice please the statement, “behold he cometh with clouds.” The very fact that Jesus was coming with the clouds is evidence that he would not be seen by the naked eye. Clouds describe the fact that the presence of Jesus was shrouded. No one would see Him except by the signs that were about to come to pass. This fits the prophetic language of Isaiah as he pointed to the end of Old Covenant Israel when he said, “Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see” (Isaiah 26:11).

In Exodus 19:9 the Lord told Moses, “I will come to thee in a thick cloud.” The Lord's presence was shrouded by the cloud. Exodus 34:5 records, “And the Lord descended in the cloud.” The Lord's presence was again shrouded by a cloud. Isaiah 19:1 records these words, “the Lord rideth on a swift cloud.” There the Lord's presence was shrouded from the Egyptians as God punished their nation with the armies of Sargon of Assyria (Isaiah 20:1-5). In Matthew 17:5 the presence of Moses and Elijah was shrouded by a “bright cloud.” The cloud “overshadowed them” as the Lord spoke “out of the cloud.” The cloud shrouded the presence of the Lord but the presence of the Lord was clearly known. This is the idea that John is affirming. John also mentions “and they that pierced him” (Revelation 1:7), a clear reference to the Jewish nation that put Jesus to death. Now consider Matthew 24:30, “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Jesus affirmed what he just prophesied would come to pass in that generation (Matthew 24:34). Who would see the Son of man coming in the clouds? ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH! This is exactly the idea of “EVERY EYE WOULD SEE HIM.” Jesus said His coming would be “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:27). This shining from the east to the west would be true of a land but not of a globe. All in the land would see! This agrees perfectly with Revelation 1:7! Every eye would see Him! But how? Through the signs and the ultimate fall of Jerusalem! Isaiah said, “They will not see, but they will see.” Jesus also said, “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39). Jesus here foretold that those Jews would not recognize him without recognizing his people of His church. Jesus on another occasion said, “and ye see me no more” (John 16:10). Paul affirmed though they knew Jesus after the flesh, “yet now henceforth know we him no more” (2 Corinthians 5:16). He would only be seen through His words which were coming to pass!

But will not Jesus return in “like manner” (Acts 1:11)? Absolutely, shrouded by the cloud! Let us carefully look at Acts 1:9-11, “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a CLOUD received him out of their sight.” Then the two men in white apparel said, “this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Jesus went into heaven by means of the cloud. The cloud took Jesus out of their sight. The imagery is the same. The Lord would be shrouded by the cloud. If someone leaves his friends wearing jeans and a polo shirt and then boards a plane but is promised to come back in the same way, would we conclude that the friend is returning in jeans and a polo shirt or that he was returning in a plane? Just be honest. Our friend would obviously be coming back on a plane. The same imagery of being shrouded by

the cloud is found when the two witnesses “ascended up to heaven in a cloud” (Revelation 11:12). In this same verse, we have the Lord's words, “Come up hither” (Revelation 11:12). There, after Jerusalem fell, heaven was opened and the dead were judged (Revelation 11:18,19).

The name of the book of Revelation is from the Greek “apokalupsis.” This word refers to the revealing or unveiling of Christ. The book begins with the statement, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1). The same Greek word is found in Luke 17:30 where the Lord said, “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” In the very next verse Jesus said, “In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back” (Luke 17:31). Luke 17:30,31 is a clear reference to Jerusalem's fall. Jesus was revealed in Jerusalem's fall. But, Jesus was revealed in the Revelation. Therefore, the fall of Jerusalem is synchronous with the Revelation and they refer to the same exact event. Jesus words were proven to be true as every stone of the temple was removed (Matthew 24:2). This event is corroborated in Revelation 11:1-8 as the temple is measured and the Great city that was about to be judged is identified as the place where Jesus was crucified. This coming would be seen in the sign (Matthew 24:3). The great coming of the Revelation was the coming of Jesus in the clouds as Jerusalem fell, and Heaven was opened and dead saints would hear the voice of God say, “come up hither” (Revelation 11:12). All of these events were shrouded by the cloud. Thanks be to God that Jesus returned in the clouds and now heaven is open to all the saints. [HN]

Q&A: The Judgement and Every Knee

Editor

Question: How can the judgment day already be past when the Bible says every knee should bow and every tongue will confess the name of Jesus?

Answer: The above concept that envisions a physical resurrection of every dead body to make a coerced confession that Jesus is Lord comes largely from Philippians 2:10,11 which says, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

First, we notice of course that it is God's will that we should confess that Christ is Lord. Romans 10:10 says, “and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” But who makes this confession? Christians are the ones that have confessed Christ as the eunuch did before he was baptized by Philip (Acts 8:37). It is God's will that all should be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Therefore, it is God 's will that all should confess Jesus as Lord. This the idea behind Philippians 2:10,11.

Second, we should consider the use of the word “should” as it is used twice in these verses. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Is it possible for a believer to be lost? Yes (Galatians 5:4). It is however God's will that believers should be saved. This is the meaning of should in the above passage.

Third, this verse is actually a citation from Isaiah 45:23,24 which says, “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee should bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” Isaiah is prophesying about a time to come when one would possess righteousness and strength in the Lord. Isaiah is prophesying about a time in which all those saved would bow their knee to the Lord and confess his name. Isaiah 45:21 says, “a just God and Savior; there is none beside me.” Isaiah 45:25 says, “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified.” This passage is speaking of the coming kingdom in which all of its members would be justified in the Lord by bowing their knees and confessing their Lord. Isaiah was prophesying about every faithful member of the church who would submit to the authority of Jesus. To many are willing to tip their hat to Jesus, but not bow the knee! [Editor]

Birth Pangs

Scott Klaft

Having been asked to write this issue's Editorial article, I will take the tone of an opinion-page correspondent as I address my topic. But, please keep in mind that, while all people have a "right" to their opinion, the exercise of such a "right" does not affect the *rightness* or *wrongness* of that opinion. Fact – substantiated by evidence – and objective truth is what really matters, and what we all *should* be aiming for as the basis of our opinions.

In the "study of final things" (i.e. eschatology) there are a number of different viewpoints – what we might call, "schools of thought." From the onset of what the churches of Christ call the Restoration Movement in the early 1800's the predominant school of thought was Pre-millennial in nature; and it was hardly challenged as the movement progressed. Pre-millennialism is what modern denominations view as "the Rapture." It's an extremely fantastical, purely fictional, mix of obtuse literalism and ignorance being imposed upon the biblical doctrine of "final things". It wasn't until the mid-1900's that the churches of Christ broke away from that tradition. In its place was adopted a less extreme, but yet future-looking, school of thought called, "A-millennialism." This is what is popularly taught today in the churches of Christ.

Unfortunately, that school of thought, too, is an error. It is, in my estimation, a relatively benign error, but an error nonetheless; one that hangs a veil of ignorance over much of the Bible. Not intending insult to anyone in particular, there appears generally to be three main problems in the brotherhood that keeps it bound to the promotion of this error: 1.) Ignorance of the Old Testament prophecies and the nature of their fulfillment; 2.) Reliance upon unreliable and vague, extra-biblical evidence for the dating of the book of Revelation; and 3.) An irrational insistence upon a subject matter change in the middle of Jesus' Olivet Discourse found in Matthew 24 and 25.

In my own observation, when even of one those things begin to be corrected, a shockingly large number of previously difficult passages are soon easily understood. Pieces of the puzzle fall nicely in place. But, just as when the church was working through subjects like baptism, creeds, clergy/ laity, and even when leaving Pre-millennialism, there is great resistance.

Attempts to study with some are occasionally met with hostility. There are desperate and hastily considered arguments offered in the distressed hope of hanging on to the conception of a future "coming of the Lord" – to wipe out the material universe, to end the progress of time, to reanimate the fleshly body out of their graves, to transform those fleshly bodies into an eternal form; and, all to be accompanied by a somewhat nebulous description of a universal judgment scene. That is what we have been taught for decades. That is *not*, however, what the Bible teaches.

All of those passages from which we have been taught that system teach very different things, and apply to a very different time, already being fulfilled. It is a hard pill to swallow – we understand, having had to face swallowing it ourselves. But if we are going to let scripture define its own terms and go only where the Bible leads, we will see the Lord's intent was to bring His Divine will to completion with the events surrounding the A.D. 70 end of Judah.

Among the many responses, we often hear is the retort that the coming of Jesus is supposed to be "as a thief in the night," and – extrapolating from an incorrect notion of the meaning of Matthew 24:36 - that it would have "no signs," implying that the signs Jesus discussed in Matthew 24:4-34 about His coming in the punishment of Jerusalem somehow precludes His coming "as a thief." We do not deny the illustration of the "thief in the night". It is very clearly used in relation to Jesus' coming again in 1st Thessalonians 5.

What those referring to that passage are forgetting is the second illustration the apostle used in that connection. Consider:

1 Thessalonians 5:1 ¶But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Yes, the thief illustration is intended to express the surprise *certain ones* would have at the Lord's coming. In this coming, they will be presuming their own "peace and safety," but the Lord would be bringing "destruction." That destruction will come upon them "as travail upon a woman with child." The pains of a woman giving birth also come without warning; but not without expectation, not without any signs that it might occur. What sort of look would you expect when you try telling any woman who has given birth, or is expecting to give birth, that they had no signs it would happen?

In fact, that is the sentiment with which the apostle continued his admonition to the church in Thessalonica:

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

He tells them this "coming of the Lord" that is likened to a thief *should not* have the same effect on them, the Christians *in his time*. He fully expected them to witness the event. It would only surprise those who were in "darkness." This is in full accord with Jesus' words in Matthew 24:36 – 25:46 that they would not know "the day or the hour" when Jesus would come again, but that they should maintain vigilance of watchfulness. He told them *what to watch for* in previous verses, and thus the Christians would not be overtaken as a thief.

Paul's words in 1st Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:5 are quite literally drawing on Jesus' Olivet discourse in Matthew 24, 25 (paralleled in Mark 13, Luke 17 & 21). He even tells us so: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord..." (1Thess. 4:15).

Accepting this may be difficult. It may be painful in some sense. But there is something else an expectant mother can tell you about those birth pangs. It is worth every effort when it stops hurting. The brotherhood needs to go through another revolution of change when it comes to its "study of final things." But we promise you, the joys of recognizing the amazing gift and opportunities our Lord and King now offers us by forgiving sins and restoring to us fellowship with the Infinite Source of all life, the Almighty Father, will all be worth the effort. [SK]