

DOCTRINE OF RESURRECTION

I. Introduction.

- A. This doctrine is foundational to the gospel. 1Cor.15:3-4
- B. One cannot effectively separate this doctrine from the gospel without ultimately denying the person and work of Christ.
- C. Jesus Himself teaches that resurrection is the external and ultimate evidence that indeed He is equal with God as Messiah (Joh.5:18 cp. vss.25-29):
 - 1. Jesus' words must be understood and evaluated based on the purpose and context behind the discourse.
 - 2. The purpose of the discourse is in defense of His previous claim of equality with God (5:17), which the Jewish leaders react with hostility and further plans to kill Him. Joh.5:18
 - 3. While John the author does not record explicitly that the Jews are demanding proof of His Messiahship, it is understood as Jesus response as noted in 5:19a "*Jesus therefore answered/responded and was saying to them*", immediately follows and looks back at the context of John's commentary in vs.18. (*The aorist tense of "answered/responded" denotes that the complete discourse was delivered at one point in time while the imperfect tense of "was saying" denotes that it is the compilation of all He says that details the argument presented in His discourse.*)
 - 4. The discourse is divided into two primary parts:
 - a. Evidence of Messiahship as it externally is revealed through His Person and its resultant affect upon mankind who in turn will also externally reveal who and what He is. Joh.5:19-29
 - b. Evidence of His Messiahship as it is revealed through other external sources. Joh.5:30-47
 - 5. The first part of His discourse is divided into three main categories of evidence as highlighted by the words "*Truly, truly*" in vss.19, 24 and 25.
 - 6. He declares that the first order of evidence is found in His Person as it relates to His relationship to the Father and as revealed in His works (vss.19-20), and the prerogatives bestowed upon Him emphasizing imparting of life and judgment (vss.21-23).
 - 7. He secondly declares that it is through a faith system regarding His claim as Messiah that will determine which of His prerogatives that He will exercise towards mankind (vs.24).
 - 8. It is His third and final assertion that glues together the first two categories into a consummating and conclusive piece of evidence, under the Doctrine of resurrection, that will be externally revealed through all men as to His existence as the God-man (vss.25-29).

9. It is resurrection that is the external proof of the internal spiritual state of mankind, which in turn validates His claim of existence as the Christ.
 10. This evidence is in light of the evidence that Judaism of the time was looking for in Messiah i.e., a king, but **not** one who exercises authority over men in the spiritual realm, rather one who would **only** exercise a physical and political authority over mankind. Joh.6:15
 11. In other words, they were only looking for a political savior, not a spiritual Savior.
 12. This is why Jesus listeners “marveled” at His teaching in this regard (vs.28a).
- D. Like any fact that we might accept, bonafide testimony and witnesses must validate this fact. Deu.19:15; Mat.18:16

II. Vocabulary.

A. Hebrew vocabulary.

1. There is no specific term in the Hebrew language for resurrection, however the principle was understood among the Jews. Mat.22:23 cp 28, 31; Joh.11:21 cp. 23-24
2. One simple explanation for the fact that little concerning resurrection is recorded in the Old Testament (OT) is to be found in the principle of progressive revelation. (*Another example of progressive revelation is found in the “Mystery Doctrine” of the Church.*)

B. Greek vocabulary.

1. **anastasij** – Noun. Used 42x and is a compound from **ana**, (again) and **isthmi** (to stand); hence, to stand again, to stand up, to rise.
2. **anisthmi** – Verb. Used 112x. Means to rise up, to cause to rise up and is used of resurrection in certain contexts. Mar.8:31; 9:9,10, 31; 10:34 cp. 12:23 where this verb is used in connection with the noun, vs.25; 16:9; Joh.6:39,40,44,54; et al.
3. **exanastasij** – Noun. A hapax. Coupled with the prefix **ek** means to stand again out from and is followed by an ablative of source. Phil.3:11
4. **egeirw** – Verb. Used 141x. Means to arouse, to cause to arise, to wake from sleep and is used in many passages to refer to the act of arousing from the sleep of death. Ex. Math.27:52, 63, 64 et al.
5. **egersij** – Noun. A hapax. Derived from the verb **egeirw** and denotes a raising. Mat.27:53

III. Definition and description.

- A. Resurrection in its broadest sense is simply the action of raising someone from the dead.
- B. However, scripture differentiates resurrection from a raising temporally versus an eternal raising.

- C.** For the purpose of semantics, theologically the raising of the dead is headed under the term's resuscitation and resurrection.
 - D.** Resuscitation is nothing more than raising a corpse from the dead with no attendant action of reanimation/rebirth.
 - E.** It is recorded in scripture and in our modern world of certain people who have died physically and have been brought back to life, such as Lazarus in Joh.11.
 - F.** However, their resuscitation is only temporal as their continued state of life does not involve any transformation of the physical body and they will die again.
 - G.** Resurrection is the action of Deity, whereby those who have died physically have their body reassembled from whatever state of decay it may have endured.
 - H.** Based on this new body that will be provided under resurrection, their new state of life is permanent and eternal.
 - I.** The exact nature of the resurrection body will be explained later, however it must be recognized that the original fleshly body is the basis for the resurrection body. 1Cor.15:42, 46
 - J.** Upon the completion of the reassembly process, which is practically instantaneous (1Cor.15:52), the original soul that inhabited that particular body and had departed at the point of physical death, is reunited with a new resurrection body.
 - K.** While the general phrase "resurrection of the dead" is often found, it is readily observed that there are two distinct classes of people in the resurrection.
 - 1.** Believers. Luk.14:14; Joh.5:29; Act.24:15
 - 2.** Unbelievers. Joh.5:29; Act.24:15
- IV.** Resurrection and the OT.
- A.** We have noted that there was no specific vocabulary for the doctrine of resurrection in the OT, however that does not mean that the concept and idea was unknown to students of the OT.
 - B.** Abraham, who live some 20 centuries before Christ employed his faith in this doctrine to pass the test of Gen.22 cp. Heb.11:17-19.
 - C.** Many interpreters recognize that Job understood and made reference to this doctrine. Job.19:25-27
 - D.** Daniel clearly and undeniably taught that there existed a resurrection of the unrighteous and the righteous. Dan.12:2-3,13
 - E.** Others in the OT expressed the principle that God controlled the power of life and death. Deu.32:39; 1Sam.2:6
 - F.** The actions of raising back to life those who had died undoubtedly strengthened the faith of believers in the almighty power of God over death. 1Kgs.17:17-24; 2Kgs.4:18-37; 13:21
 - G.** The instantaneous ascension of Enoch and Elijah, God taking them to heaven apart from death, clearly indicated that God's purpose for believers did not end in this life. Gen.5:22-24; 2Kgs.2:11-12

- V. The resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- A. The literal, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the subject of OT prophecy.
1. Explicit prophecy:
 - a) Psa.16:10 quoted by Peter in Act.2:24-36.
 - b) Psa.2:7 quoted by Paul in Act.13:33 cp. Heb.1:5
 2. Implicit prophecy:
 - a) The scenario of sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Gen.22
 - b) The ascensions of Enoch and Elijah. Gen.5:22-24; 2Kgs.2:11-12
 - c) The miracle at the tomb of Elisha foreshadowed the resurrection. 2Kgs.13:21,21
 3. Jesus Christ Himself referenced the miracle of Jonah and the whale to picture His death and resurrection as the conclusive sign to Israel of His claim as Messiah. Mat.12:39; 16:4; Luk.11:29, 30
- B. Christ taught that He would not be conquered by the power of death. Mat.16:21; 17:9, 22-23; 20:18-19; 26:29,32; Joh.2:18-22
- C. The historical and incontrovertible/indisputable facts surrounding Jesus' death, burial and resurrection place this event beyond legitimate question.
1. His death as documented by friendly and hostile eyewitnesses:
 - a) The apostle John. Joh.19:30, 35
 - b) His disciples. Luk.23:49; 24:18-20
 - c) His friends and family. Mar.15:40-41; Joh.19:26, 27
 - d) The centurion. Mar.15:39
 - e) A great crowd. Luk.23:48
 - f) The Jewish leadership. Mat.27:62-66
 - g) The soldiers sent to expedite death. Joh.19:33-34
 2. His burial.
 - a) Also the subject of OT prophecy. Isa.53:9
 - b) Joseph of Arimathea provided the tomb. Mat.27:57-60
 - c) The actual burial. Mat.27:59-60
 - d) Joseph and others knew the place. Mat.27:60-61
 - e) Joseph himself sealed the tomb with a large stone. Mat.27:60
 - f) The Jews posted a roman detail at the entrance of the tomb to prevent the disciples stealing the body. Mat.26:65-66
 3. His resurrection.
 - a) None of the disciple or the women who followed Jesus believed in His bodily resurrection.
 - 1) The disciples were hiding in fear. Mat.26:56
 - 2) The women went to the tomb expecting to find a dead body. Mar.16:1-8
 - 3) Peter was alone with his shame. Mar.14:72 cp. 16:7
 - b) The tomb was empty according to the women, Peter and John and the authorities. Joh.20:2-10; Mat.28:11-15
 - c) The grave clothes are tangible evidence against human tampering. Joh.20:2-10

- 1) A vandal would not be so neat.
 - 2) They were lying as though the body had removed itself and had taken off the head wrapping last.
 - d) The angelic manifestation is the only reasonable explanation for the behavior of the guards. Mat.28:2-4, 11ff
 - e) The broken seal on the grave and the removal of the massive and guarded stone indicates Divine agency. Mar.16:3-4
 - f) Post resurrection appearances are further proof of the bodily resurrection of Jesus.
 - 1) To Mary Magdalene. Joh.20:14
 - 2) To other women coming from the tomb. Mat.28:9
 - 3) To Peter. Luk.24:34
 - 4) To the disciple on Emmaus road. Luk.24:13ff
 - 5) To the 11 minus Thomas. Joh.20:29-24
 - 6) To the 11 plus Thomas. Joh.20:26-29
 - 7) To the disciples by Lake Tiberias. Joh.21:1ff
 - 8) To the 500. 1Cor.15:6
 - 9) At the ascension. Act.1:3ff
 - 10) To Paul. Act.9:3-6; 1Cor.15:8
- D.** Apart from the resurrection, what was it that transformed the disciples from a group of cowardly men who were in hiding for fear of death into men who were willing to take on the Jewish leadership and ultimately the Roman Empire?
- E.** These proofs are advanced and have never been effectively discredited and are of such a nature as to be called “*many convincing proofs*” in Act.1:3.
- F.** These things are matters that are surely and plainly known and are indubitable/undeniable/too evident for doubt proofs that would stand up in any court of law.
- G.** False theories advance to explain away Christ’s resurrection.
1. The swoon theory that supposes that Christ did not die physically, but merely passed out from fatigue and exposure.
 - a) Refuted by direct eyewitness testimony of His death.
 - b) Refuted by the condition of the burial wrapping.
 - c) Refuted by the size and weight of the stone.
 - d) Refuted by the fact that there is no evidence of any kind to document His later death.
 - e) This makes Christ a liar.
 2. The theft theory originally concocted by the Jewish leadership. Mat.28:11-15
 - a) Was spread widely among the Jews.
 - b) Refuted by the fear and cowardice of the disciples.
 - c) Refuted by the inability of the women to get into the grave.
 - d) Refuted by the grave clothes in the tomb.
 - e) Refuted by the centurion guards established to protect from this occurring.

3. The hallucination theory states that all resurrection appearances were individual or mass hallucinations.
 - a) Hallucinations are illusory or imaginary perceptions generally caused by drugs or a disorder of the nervous system.
 - b) The disciples were not imaginative and consistently evidenced a pattern of taking things on a literal, physical basis.
 - c) They were hiding in fear with no suspicion that Jesus would appear again.
 - d) Hallucinations are subjective and very individual and do not explain the variety of circumstances, locations and number of people whom eyewitnessed the same thing.
 - e) Even after people said they had seen Jesus, no one was convinced and all remained incredulous and believed only after personal proof.
4. The wrong tomb theory speculates that the women went to the wrong tomb and this accounts for the fact that it was empty.
 - a) The women had been with Joseph when the body was buried. Mat.26:61
 - b) This was not a public cemetery, but a private burial plot that was somewhat secluded.
 - c) If they went to the wrong tomb, why did the Jews not go to the correct tomb and produce the body?
 - d) Are we to believe that the soldiers were guarding the wrong tomb and that the Jews had sealed the wrong stone? Mat.27:65-66
5. Conclusions:
 - a) All of these theories arise from unbelief in an attempt to discredit what is obviously stated in the Word of God.
 - b) They do not explain away established, eyewitnessed and verifiable historical facts.
 - c) No one has ever produced the body.
 - d) They do not explain the sudden transformation of the disciples from cowards hiding in fear, to men who were willing to risk their lives for His name's sake.
 - e) Would you risk your life to perpetuate a hoax?

VI. The order and purpose of resurrection.

- A. Jesus Christ was the first man to ever be resurrected and this fact has both theological and practical implications. 1Cor.15:20 (Rights of primogeniture/first born)
 1. His resurrection is God's stamp of approval on His Divine Sonship. Rom.1:4
 2. Jesus Christ is the first person to enjoy resurrection and as such, this gives Him preeminence in all things. Rev.1:5; Col.1:18
 3. His resurrection is central to the gospel. 1Cor.15:4, 17-19
 4. His resurrection is the basis for His immortality. Mat.28:18, 20b

5. His resurrection is necessary for His future:
 - a) Position in the Church. Col.1:18
 - b) Activity in regard to the Holy Spirit. Joh.16:7
 - c) With regard to Israel. Isa.9:7
 - d) With regard to the nations. Psa.2:8-9; Rev.12:5
 6. Practically, His resurrection as evidence of His Claim as Messiah, is the basis for our confidence that we too will bear evidence of His claim in our own resurrection. 1Cor.15:12-19
- B.** Second in order of resurrection comes the Church.
1. This event is known as the rapture. (*See Doctrine of the Rapture*)
 2. All Church Age (CA) believers will be ushered into their resurrection body at one time. 1Thess.4:16-17
 3. Some believers will not undergo physical death, but will be transformed just following those who have died. 1Thess.4:15; 2Cor.5:10
 4. The Royal family will be judged at the Bema Seat, rewards distributed and will return to heaven with Christ. 1Thess.4:17-18; 2Cor.5:10
- C.** At the end of Daniel's 70th week (Dan.9:24-27), all OT believers will be resurrected at the 2nd Advent. Mat.8:11; Dan.12:13
1. This includes all believers from the time of Adam until the Church Age as well as those who become believers during the final seven-year period known as the Great Tribulation. Rev.20:4-6
 2. They will enjoy the Millennial reign of Christ as promised in various OT passages.
- D.** While not explicitly taught in the New Testament, it is logical to conclude there will be believers in their natural body that have either died or remain until the end of the Millennial age. They too, will receive their resurrection bodies as determined and revealed in the future regarding God's plan for them and before the dissolution of the first creation.
- E.** The final resurrection in order is that of all unbelievers.
1. All unbelievers are resurrected at one time. Rev.20:12-13
 2. This occurs after the Millennium and the Gog and Magog rebellion, and immediately following the dissolution of the original creation. Rev.20:7-10 cp.vs.11; 2Pet.3:10, 13
 3. It is called the Great White Throne judgment, emphasizing the righteous nature of God's activity. Rev.20:11-12
 4. All who appear here are unbelievers and they will spend eternity in their resurrection bodies while being tormented day and night in the lake of fire. Rev.20:14-15
 5. The judge is Jesus Christ with emphasis on His humanity. Joh.5:22 cp. vs.27

VII. The resurrection body.

- A.** The resurrection body of all believers is patterned after the resurrection body of Christ. Rom.8:29

- B.** It is created out of the existing body. 1Cor.15:35-53
 - 1.** People recognized Jesus when He wanted them too, indicating the resurrection body has the ability to reflect an appearance not substantially altered from the temporal body. Joh.20:16-18; 21:12
 - 2.** His resurrection body bore the marks that His physical body had borne. Joh.20:20
- C.** While it is a spiritual body, it is real and tangible. Luk.24:30
- D.** It is a body capable of eating and drinking, but does not need nourishment in order to survive. Luk.24:42; Rev.22:1-2
- E.** This body is capable of space travel, not needing atmosphere to breathe in order to survive. Act.1:9; 1Thess.4:16
- F.** It is capable of tremendous speed and Jesus makes the trip from heaven to our upper atmosphere almost instantaneously. 1Thess.4:16-18
- G.** It is not subject to time, space, etc., but is capable of materializing and dematerializing at will. Luk.24:30-31, 36
- H.** It is not subject to decay, the aging process, disease, pain or death. 1Cor.15:42-43, 53; Rev.20:6
- I.** It is without an STA/OSN. 1Cor.15:43-44
- J.** The individual nature of the resurrection glory that each body will possess varies in magnitude, based on spiritual growth and application in time. 1Cor.15:41

VIII. Various observations and applications based on the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of mankind.

- A.** The resurrection of Christ not only indicates God's stamp of approval on His person and work as portrayed through His humanity, it is the beginning of His exaltation as Lord and Christ. Act.2:24-36
- B.** In Jesus' resurrection we have the Divine guarantee that all believer's sins have been effectively removed and +R is theirs by faith. Rom.4:25; 1Cor.15:17
- C.** It is the believer's guarantee that they will receive a resurrection of life versus a resurrection of judgment. Joh.5:24-29
- D.** Therefore, His resurrection forms the basis for the believer's confidence in his or her own resurrection. 1Cor.15:12-19
- E.** The fact of our future resurrection should encourage us to Ph₂ production of Divine good. 1Cor.15:58
- F.** The reality of resurrection provides comfort in our testing, including the most serious of testing, death. 1Thess.4:18; Rev.2:10
- G.** In resurrection we have the promise of being united eternally with those we love who too are in Christ. 1Thess.4:14, 17
- H.** Resurrection in its fullest capacity of both life and judgment is the conclusive and external evidence given and provided for all men that Jesus of Nazareth was exactly who He claimed to be. Joh.5:18ff

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me shall live even if he dies."
John 11:25*