

Doctrine of Resurrection

I. Introduction

- A. This doctrine is foundational to the gospel; one cannot effectively separate it from the gospel without denying the person and work of Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-4).
- B. Jesus taught that His bodily resurrection was the ultimate evidence that, as Messiah, He was equal with the Father (Jn. 2:19, 5:18, 11:25; Rom. 1:4).
- C. He clearly taught the reality that there is an afterlife, a time when all people will be raised from the dead to enjoy or endure their eternal destiny (Jn. 5:25-29 cp Matt. 25:46).
- D. Adjusted believers in the Age of Israel understood this principle (Dan. 12:2).

II. Vocabulary.

A. Hebrew vocabulary.

1. While there is no specific vocabulary term for our word resurrection, it is clear that the principle was well understood among the Jews (Matt. 22:23; Jn. 11:23-24).
2. The Jews recognized this doctrine and used some very common words to relate the reality of bodily resurrection.
 - a. קִיּוּץ (QIYTS), 23X, to awake from sleep; in certain contexts it is used to denote the principle of resurrection (Psa. 17:15; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2).
 - b. קָוַם (QUM), used over 600X, to arise or stand up; Isaiah 26:19 uses this term to denote the truth of resurrection.
 - c. עָמַד (‘AMADH), used over 500X, to stand or stand up; used in Daniel 12:13 to indicate that Daniel would receive a bodily resurrection.
3. There are direct statements that the dead would come to life again, without reference to the time or manner (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; Hosea 13:14)
4. While we would acknowledge that the doctrine is taught in somewhat of an abbreviated form, this is simply the principle of progressive revelation in action.
5. Further, the concept may have been so familiar to the Jews that it was taken somewhat for granted.

B. Greek vocabulary.

1. ἀνίστημι, verb, a compound from ἀνα (ANA) and ἵστημι (HISTEMI); the term means to rise up or cause to rise up and is used of the resurrection in certain contexts.
 - a. ἀνάστασις, (ANASTASIS), noun, 42X, a standing or rising again.
 - b. ἐξανάστασις (EXANASTASIS), noun, hapax, coupled with the prefix εκ (EK), this term means to stand out from.
2. ἐγείρω (EGEIRO), verb, over 100X, to arouse, to cause to arise, to wake from sleep and is used in many passages to refer to the act of arousing one from the sleep of death.
 - a. ἐγερσις (EGERSIS), noun, hapax, a raising.

III. Definition and description

- A. Resurrection is simply the action of raising someone from the dead.

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- B. According to Webster, it may imply nothing more than raising (exhuming) a corpse out of the ground with no attendant thought of reanimation.
 - C. Theologically and scientifically, one must distinguish between the concept of a temporal raising (resuscitation) and an eternal raising (resurrection).
 - 1. It is a well-known fact that many have endured the reality of physical death, in both the ancient and modern world, and have been restored to life (1 Kings 17:17-23; 2 Kings 4:32-35; Lk. 7:12-15; Jn. 11:44; Acts 20:7-10).
 - 2. However, their resuscitation is only temporary; their continued state of life does not involve any permanent transformation of the mortal body, and they will die again.
 - D. Biblically speaking, resurrection is the action of God whereby those that have died physically have their body restored from whatever state of decay it may have endured since the time of their physical death.
 - E. Upon completion of the reassembling process, which is practically instantaneous, the original soul that inhabited that particular body, and which had departed at the point of physical death, is permanently reunited with the resurrected body (1 Cor. 15:52).
 - F. The exact nature of the resurrection body will be explained in a subsequent point; however, it must be recognized that the original, temporal, fleshly body is the basis for the eternal resurrection body (1 Cor. 15:42, 46).
 - G. While the very general phrase “the resurrection of/from the dead” is found repeatedly in the Bible, it is readily observed that there are two distinct classes of people in the resurrection.
 - 1. Believers/righteous/life (Lk. 14:14; Jn. 5:29; Acts 24:15).
 - 2. Unbelievers/wicked/judgment (Jn. 5:29; Acts 24:15).
 - H. While the general phrase “the resurrection of the dead” does not explicitly teach it, New Testament revelation makes it plain that there is not one resurrection for all humanity; resurrection will come in a particular order and at a particular time for every human.
- IV. Resurrection and the Old Testament.
- A. As we have noted, there was no technical vocabulary for the doctrine of resurrection in the Old Testament; however, that does not mean that Old Testament believers did not understand and embrace the concept.
 - B. Abraham, who lived some twenty centuries before Christ, utilized faith in this doctrine to pass the test related to the apparent sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22; Heb. 11:17-19).
 - C. Most interpreters recognize that Job clearly articulated his belief in the doctrine of bodily resurrection (Job. 19:25-27).
 - D. In the book of Daniel it is clearly and undeniably taught that God intended to raise the righteous and unrighteous from physical death (Dan. 12:2-3, 13).
 - E. Other adjusted believers expressed their confidence in the fact that God exercised control over life and death, and was free to reverse either process (Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6).
 - F. When real people were restored to life from the dead, this undoubtedly strengthened believers’ faith in the power of God over death (1 Kings. 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-35, 13:20-21).

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- G. The instantaneous transformation and ascension of Enoch and Elijah, when God took them to Heaven apart from physical death, clearly indicated that God's purpose for believers did not end in this life (Gen. 5:22-24; 2 Kings. 2:11-12).
- V. The resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- A. The literal, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the subject of Old Testament prophecy.
1. Explicit prophecies that declare that God would raise Messiah from the dead.
 - a. Psalm 2:7 is quoted by Paul in Acts 13:33.
 - b. Psalm 16:10 is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:24-36.
 2. Implicit prophecies.
 - a. At least two other Psalms reference the resurrection, confirming the fact that death was not the final destiny (Psa. 49:15, 86:13).
 - b. Psalm 22:19-22 is quoted in Hebrews 2:12 and both contexts deal with the reality of victory over death.
 - c. The prophecy of Psalm 118:22-23 is quoted in Acts 4:11 in the direct context of their murder of Messiah.
 - d. Isaiah 53:10-12 deals with the glorious destiny of Messiah following his physical death in verse 9.
 - e. Jesus declared that the miracle of Jonah and the fish was a prophecy that pictured His death and resurrection; this was to serve as the conclusive sign to Israel that He was their Messiah (Matt. 12:39-40).
- B. Jesus Christ dogmatically asserted the fact that He would not be conquered by the power of physical death (Matt. 16:21, 17:9, 22-23, 20:18-19, 26:29, 32; Jn. 2:18-22).
- C. The incontrovertible, historical facts surrounding Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection make this indisputable fact beyond legitimate question.
1. His death, which was documented by both friendly and hostile witnesses.
 - a. The apostle John (Jn. 19:30, 35).
 - b. His disciples (Lk. 23:49, 24:18-20).
 - c. His friends and family (Mk. 15:40-41).
 - d. The Roman centurion (Mk. 15:39).
 - e. The large crowd (Lk. 23:48).
 - f. The leadership of the Jewish nation (Matt. 27:62-66).
 - g. The Roman soldiers that were sent by Pilate to expedite the deaths of the three crucified men. Jn. 19:33-34
 2. His burial.
 - a. This aspect, over which Jesus Christ obviously had no control, was the subject of Old Testament prophecy as well (Isa. 53:9)
 - b. Joseph of Arimathea provided a new tomb, eliminating the general method of disposing of the bodies of criminals (Matt. 27:57-60).
 - c. The actual burial is recorded in Matt. 27:59-60; it followed the certification of death, the obtaining of the body, the cleaning, and the wrapping of the body in burial wraps.
 - d. It was done hurriedly since the Jewish Sabbath, which began at sundown on Friday evening, was not violated (Lk. 23:53-56).
 - e. The place of burial was well known to Joseph and the women that followed the body (Matt. 27:60-61).

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- f. Joseph sealed the entrance to the tomb with a large stone that was not readily moved (Matt. 27:60).
- g. The Jews insisted that Pilate post a Roman detail at the entrance of the tomb in order to prevent the disciples from stealing the body and perpetrating the hoax that Jesus had risen from the dead (Matt. 26:65-66).
- 3. His bodily resurrection.
 - a. None of the disciples or the women that had followed Jesus Christ throughout His ministry believed in His resurrection before the fact.
 - 1.) In fact, the disciples were quite antagonistic to His very clear teaching that He would be delivered up to the Jews, be crucified, and raised on the third day (Matt. 16:21-22; Mk. 9:9-10; Lk. 18:31-34)
 - 2.) Following His physical death, the disciples had no confidence in His resurrection and were hiding in fear for their lives (Matt. 26:56; Jn. 20:19).
 - 3.) The women that had taken the responsibility for preparing the body for burial went to the tomb early Sunday morning, fully expecting to find the dead body (Mk. 16:1-8).
 - 4.) Peter was alone with his shame; having no faith in the resurrection of the man he had betrayed (Mk. 14:72, 16:7).
 - b. According to the eyewitness testimony of Peter, John, the women, and the Roman guard detail, the grave was empty on Sunday morning. (Matt. 28:11-15; Jn. 20:2-9).
 - c. The grave clothes in the tomb are tangible evidence against human tampering. (Jn. 20:5-6).
 - 1.) A vandal would not have left the tomb in such neat condition, but would have been moving quickly to avoid detection.
 - 2.) The grave clothes were lying as though the body had simply passed through them and had taken the head wrap off last.
 - d. The empty tomb and the angelic manifestation are the only reasonable explanations for the behavior of the guards (Matt. 28:2-4, 11ff).
 - e. The broken seal and the removal of the massive, guarded stone indicate a superhuman or divine agency (Mk. 16:3-4).
 - f. Post-resurrection appearances are further proof of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - 1.) Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:14).
 - 2.) The other women coming from the tomb (Matt. 28:9).
 - 3.) Peter (Mk. 24:34).
 - 4.) The disciples on the Emmaus road (Lk. 24:13ff).
 - 5.) The eleven minus Thomas (Jn. 20:19-24).
 - 6.) The eleven with Thomas present (Jn. 20:26-29).
 - 7.) To the disciples by Lake Tiberias (Jn. 21:1ff).
 - 8.) To the five hundred (1 Cor. 15:6).
 - 9.) His appearance at the ascension (Acts 1:3ff).
 - 10.) To Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3-6; 1 Cor. 15:8).
- D. Apart from the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, one must answer the question as to what transformed the disciples from a group of cowardly men, who were hiding for fear of death, into men that were willing to take on the Jewish leadership and ultimately the Roman Empire?

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- E. These proofs have been advanced, never have been effectively discredited, and are of such a nature as to be called “many, convincing proofs” (Acts 1:3).
- F. These proofs are widely and plainly known; they are indubitable (too evident for anyone to legitimately doubt), and are proofs that would stand up in any court of law.
- G. False theories that have been advanced to explain away the resurrection.
 - 1. The enemies of Jesus Christ and the apostles could provide no effective response to refute the absolute reality of the resurrection.
 - a. When Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost, there was no response to his dogmatic assertion that God had raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:32, 37).
 - b. When presented with the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the intellectuals in Athens verbally derided Paul but could not refute his claims. (Acts 17:32).
 - c. As Paul told Agrippa and Festus, the resurrection was based on words of sober truth, and the overt proofs were evident since this had not been done in a corner (Acts 26:24-26).
 - 2. The swoon theory postulates that Jesus Christ did not physically die on the cross, but merely passed out from fatigue and exposure, woke up in the cool tomb, revived, and escaped.
 - a. This is refuted by direct eyewitness testimony of his death.
 - b. It is refuted by the condition of the burial clothing.
 - c. The size and weight of the stone placed over the tomb makes this impossible.
 - d. The Roman guard would have certainly noticed His escape, which they did not.
 - e. There is no evidence of any kind to document His death at a later time.
 - f. He convinced the disciples that He had been raised from the dead, when He had not, making Him a liar.
 - 3. The theft of the body theory, originally concocted by the Jewish leadership (Matt. 28:11-15).
 - a. This was spread widely among the Jews.
 - b. However, it is quickly refuted by the reality that the disciples were acting in cowardice and fear; they were not in a mental state to conduct so dramatic a theft under the noses of the Roman guards.
 - c. It is further refuted by the inability of the women to get into the grave (Mk. 16:3-4).
 - d. Again, a thief would not have left the grave clothes in such a neat fashion.
 - e. The most telling flaw is the Roman guard, placed at the tomb by the Jewish leadership, preventing anyone from stealing the body.
 - 4. The hallucination theory states that all resurrection appearances were individual or mass hallucinations.
 - a. Hallucinations are illusory perceptions or experiences with no external cause or reality, generally caused by disorders of the nervous system, which are brought about through external causes (drugs, alcohol, etc.) or result from physical problems with the nervous system.
 - b. The disciples did not manifest an imaginative nature, and consistently evidenced a pattern of taking things on a literal, physical basis.
 - c. They were hiding for fear of their lives and had no suspicion that Jesus would ever be seen again.

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- d. Further, hallucinations are very subjective and individual phenomena; they do not explain the variety of circumstances, locations, and numbers of people that said they observed the same thing.
 - e. Even after many people said that they had seen Jesus, no one was really convinced; people tended to remain incredulous and believed only when presented with personal, persuasive proof (Jn. 20:25).
 5. The wrong tomb theory speculates that the women went to the wrong tomb, explaining why it was empty.
 - a. The women had been with Joseph when the body was buried and clearly knew the location of the tomb (Matt. 27:61).
 - b. This was not a public cemetery; it was a private burial plot that was secluded and had limited access.
 - c. If they went to the wrong tomb and claimed that Jesus had been raised from the dead, the Jews could easily have gone to the correct tomb and produced the dead body.
 - d. This theory would suggest that the Jews had sealed the wrong tomb and that the Roman soldiers were guarding the wrong tomb!
 - e. It is contradicted by the words of the angel when he told the women to “come, see the place where He was lying” (Matt. 28:6).
 6. Conclusions.
 - a. All of these theories arise from unbelief and are an attempt to discredit what is plainly stated in the Word of God.
 - b. These theories do not effectively explain away established, verifiable, eyewitness accounts of the facts.
 - c. Perhaps the most telling problem with all these theories is that no one has ever produced the dead body.
 - d. They offer no explanation as to the sudden transformation of the disciples from cowards, hiding in fear, into men that were willing to risk their lives for His name.
 - e. They do not explain the origin of the Church and 2000 years of Church history, throughout centuries of opposition.
 - f. The reality is that only very strange, deranged people would risk their lives to perpetuate a hoax.
- VI. The order and purpose of resurrection.
- A. The general notion that there is one resurrection is incorrect.
 - B. Based on a careful, systematic study of the Word of God, it becomes apparent that there is a definite order that is established for the number of resurrections that take place.
 - C. Jesus Christ was the first man to ever be resurrected, and this fact has both theological and practical implications (1 Cor. 15:20).
 1. Jesus Christ is the first person to enjoy resurrection and, as such, this gives Him preeminence in all things (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5).
 2. Under the doctrine of primogeniture, the firstborn male in any family had the exclusive rights of inheritance, the right of ruler ship in the family, the rights as the family priest, and the right of the double portion (Gen. 27:29, 48:22; Heb. 5:5-6).

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3. His resurrection is God's stamp of approval on His Divine Sonship (Rom. 1:4).
 4. His resurrection is central and foundational to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:4,17-19).
 5. His bodily resurrection is the beginning of and basis for His immortality (Matt. 28:18,20; 1 Cor. 15:53-54; 1 Tim. 1:17, 6:16).
 6. His resurrection is necessary for His future:
 - a. Position as head of the Church (Col. 1:18).
 - b. Fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16-17; Ps. 89:3-4).
 - c. Activity with regard to the sending of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:7).
 - d. Activities with regard to His people Israel (Isa. 9:7).
 - e. Actions toward the nations (Psa. 2:8-9; Rev. 12:5).
 7. Practically, His resurrection forms that basis for our confidence in our future resurrection and inheritance in the eternal Kingdom (1 Cor. 15:12-19; Rom. 8:11, 16-17; 1 Pet. 1:3).
 - a. The reality of His and our bodily resurrection has the further practical value of encouraging us in terms of Divine good production (1 Cor. 15:58).
- D. Second in order comes the resurrection of Church Age believers (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
1. This event is known as the rapture, and it involves the instantaneous resurrection all believers from the day of Pentecost until the bodily return of Christ.
 2. The rapture begins with the raising of all dead Church Age saints, followed by the instantaneous transformation of the physical bodies of living believers into immortal, resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:51-53).
 3. The Royal family will then travel to a meeting of the Lord in the air, where each one will be judged at the Bema seat, receive whatever rewards they have coming (SG₃), and return to the third Heaven with Christ (2 Cor. 5:10, 1 Thess. 4:17, Rev 22:12).
 4. It is necessary for us to receive our resurrection before those believers that lived in the age of Israel (Heb. 11:39-40).
- E. At the end of Daniel's 70th week, all Old Testament believers will be resurrected at the Second Advent, the bodily appearance of Jesus Christ on planet earth (Dan. 12:2a; Jn. 5:29a; Rev. 20:4-6).
1. This includes all dead believers from the time of Adam until the Day of Pentecost, as well as those that will become believers and die during the final seven years of human history, Daniel's 70th week.
 2. Some will become believers during Daniel's 70th week, manage to survive the horrendous judgments of that time, and enter the Millennium in their earthly bodies, repopulating the planet (Matt. 25:31-34; Rev. 20:7-9).
 3. Those that had died will receive their resurrection bodies at that time, fulfilling many Old Testament and New Testament prophecies (Gen. 12:1-4; Isa. 26:19; Lk. 11:28-29).
- F. The final resurrection in history will encompass the bodily resurrection of all unbelievers.
1. This is the day/hour in which all unbelievers will be raised from the dead and provided with a resurrection body (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29).
 2. Following the dissolution of the original creation, all unbelievers of human history, beginning with Cain, will be summoned to appear at the Great White Throne to be judged (Rev. 20:11-15; 2 Pet. 3:10,13).

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3. The fact that they are judged before the Great White Throne emphasizes the magnitude of their crimes against the Righteous Judge of the universe.
4. By definition, everyone that appears at this judgment are unbelievers, who will spend eternity being consciously tormented day and night (interminably) in their immortal bodies in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15 cp Matt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30).
5. The other book that is opened is the Book of Life, in which the names of all believers had been recorded.
6. Since their names are not to be found, they are judged from the “books”, which are the records of their deeds (Rev. 20:12).
7. The judge is Jesus Christ (Jn. 5:22,27; Acts 10:42, 17:31).

VII. The resurrection body.

- A. The resurrection body of all believers will be patterned after the resurrection body of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:21).
- B. It is created out of the physical body that you currently possess (1 Cor. 15:42-44).
 1. People recognized Jesus Christ after His resurrection, indicating that the resurrection body is one in which the appearance is not substantially altered (Jn. 20:16-18, 21:12).
 2. His resurrection body bore the same marks that His physical body had borne (Jn. 20:20).
- C. While it is formed from the physical body, it is a different kind of body that is spiritual, yet tangible and real (Lk. 24:39).
- D. It is a body that is capable of ingesting food or drink, but does not need nourishment in order to survive (Lk. 24:42; Rev. 22:1-2).
- E. Therefore, the resurrection body will have the ultimate capacity for life to enjoy the blessings of Heaven in unparalleled glory (Isa. 25:6; Rev. 19:7-9).
- F. This body is capable of interstellar travel and does not require any oxygen/atmosphere in order to function (Acts 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:16)
- G. The resurrection body is not subject to the physical laws of time, space, etc., but can materialize and dematerialize at will (Lk. 24:30-31,36).
- H. It is not subject to physical deterioration, to decay, the aging process, disease, pain, or death (1 Cor. 15:42-43, 53; Rev. 20:6).
- I. The resurrection body will exist absent an OSN, and will have the entire realm of Divine viewpoint (Heb. 8:10-11).
- J. The individual nature of each believer’s resurrection glory will vary according to the level of spiritual growth/divine good production (1Cor. 15:41; Rev. 2:26-27).

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

- A. The resurrection of Jesus Christ not only indicated God’s acceptance and approval of His person and work, it was the beginning of His exaltation as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:24-36).
- B. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ provides us the Divine guarantee that our sins have been effectively removed and that the righteousness of God is ours by faith (Rom. 4:25-5:1; 1 Cor. 15:17).
- C. The reality of the coming resurrection provides comfort in the face of our testing, including the most serious of testing—death (1 Thess. 4:18; Rev. 2:10).

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- D. With our resurrection, we have the promise that we will not be separated from those we love in Christ; it proves that death is not victorious (1 Cor. 15:54-55; 1 Thess. 4:14,17)
- E. The knowledge of our future resurrection should encourage us to continued excellence in terms of our Divine good production. 1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.”

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4/29/06