

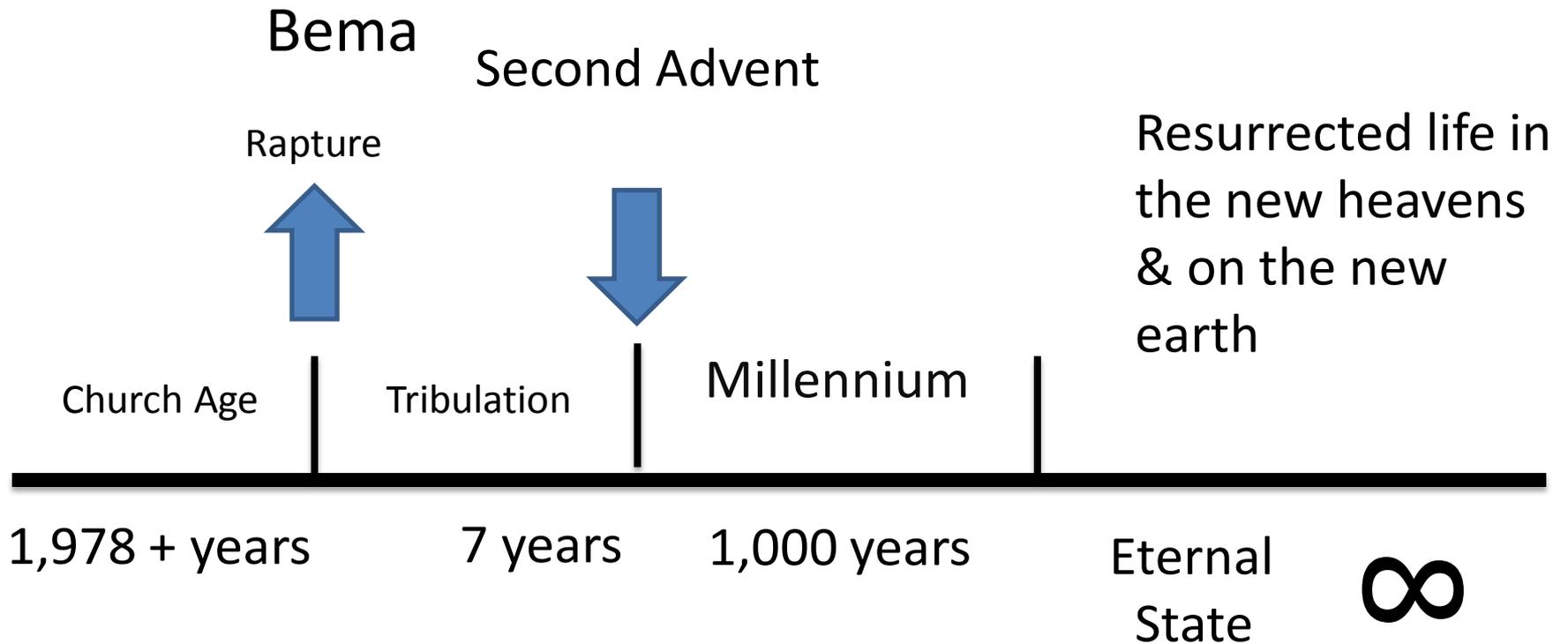
Any questions on our current series?

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also **give life to your mortal (τὰ θνητὰ) bodies** through His Spirit who indwells you.

These slides are available at
www.fbcweb.org/sermons.html
by Undershepherd Don Hargrove

Theological-Doctrinal Foundations : Eschatology (19)

Resurrection Life in the Eternal State



The Ultimate Hope: Resurrected Life in the Eternal State

Rev 21-22

- Most people—including many Christians—do not know what the ultimate Christian hope really is. Beliefs on “hope” after death range from some nature religion of being absorbed into the oceans of a wider world, into the wind and trees (e.g., “I am still with you”) to simply an ongoing blissful pure soulful ethereal life resting on clouds in heaven for eternity.

- The ultimate Christian hope is nothing less than a bodily resurrection life. Resurrection (in reference to death) meant only one thing in the ancient world: the revivification of the corpse where every dead cell in the body and brain came back to life, an indestructible physical life, a new trans-physical body that nonetheless is a continuum of the old body. This new physical life (life after life after death) will enjoy the new heavens & new earth which are diffused with the glory of God.
- **Revelation 21:23** And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

- The only reason interim state (the soulish, non-physical life between death and resurrection) is better for the Christian than his present physical life on earth is because he is with the Lord—he is able to enjoy a greater fellowship with Christ: far more conscious and intensified than he could enjoy now.
- The interim state is not the ideal state; it has certain limitations. It is a non-spatial mode of reality. Activities that require physical bodies will be impossible. Without eyes, ears, throats, tongues, and other sensory organs, we will not be able to interact with our surroundings in bodily ways. This will be offset to some degree by an interim spirit body of sorts.

- In the interim state the soulish life will dominate the believer's experiences. He will still be able to engage in soulish activities: believing, thinking, wishing, hoping, desiring, remembering, and enjoying glorified emotions.
- However, the Ultimate Christian Hope is the resurrection life throughout eternity, cf. Rev 22:1-5.

Preparation for Bible Class – Spiritual Life Foundations

Non-meritorious Faith from Start to Finish

Galatians 3:1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified? ² This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being matured by the flesh? ⁴ Did you experience so many (wonderful) things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works divine power in you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Also see Heb. 11:6; Rom 10:17.

Resurrection Special #19: Doing Historiography with those 4 Historical Bedrock Facts

1. Mark 15:33-16:8 with 1 Cor. 15:3-8 (Mark 16:9-20 is not part of the original ending—Pseudo-Mark.
 - #1 – Jesus’ Burial.
 - #2 – The Empty Tomb.
 - #3 - Christ’s Postmortem Appearances.
 - #4 - Origin of the Disciples’ Belief in Jesus’ Resurrection.

2. Compare/contrast canonical gospels with the Gospel of Peter:

“And in the night in which the Lord's day was drawing on, as the soldiers kept guard two by two in a watch, there was a great voice in the heaven; and they saw the heavens opened, and two men descend from thence with great light and approach the tomb. And that stone which was put at the door rolled of itself and made way in part; and the tomb was opened, and both the young men entered in. . . . And three men come forth from the tomb, and two of them supporting one, and a cross following them: and of the two the head reached unto the heaven, but the head of him who was lead by them overpassed the heavens. And they heard a voice from the heavens, saying, Hast thou hast preached to them that sleep? And a response was heard from the cross, Yes.”

3. While there are two ways of entering into the historicity of the bodily resurrection of Christ, only historiography can *demonstrate* historical proof of JC to others.
 - a) #1. Existential. Vast majority of Christians have not based their faith on the LJC on historiographical considerations. Perfectly valid.
 - b) #2. Historiographical. This is also legitimate and is much needed in our post-Enlightenment culture of faith in naturalism. Many continue to lose faith due to lack of answers. Rejection of philosophy has led many to think poorly about the Christianity and God.

- c) Apologetics on the resurrection focuses in on the historical methods of philosophy of history.
- d) Philosophy of history is a much neglected area of study not only in “religion” and philosophy courses, but also among professional historians. A search through the catalogues of courses and degree requirements reveal that few to no courses in the philosophy of history and contemporary historical method were offered by the departments of religion and philosophy at the eight Ivy League institutions. The only exception is Princeton Theological Seminary (CH 900 Historical Method).

4. The failure of Christians to understand and thus employ recognized historical methods has resulted in the church becoming increasingly fideistic like the cults and religions of the world.
5. The uniqueness of Christianity rests in the mediation of revelation through historical events. This is a great strength of Christianity as well as a potential vulnerability
 - ✓ In the gospels and Acts we have a great deal of mediation through historical events. These human authors were given great flexibility.
 - ✓ In the epistles and Revelation we have more direct revelation.
 - ✓ God did not mechanically dictate the Bible.

6. There are four bedrock historical facts or strands related to Christ's death which virtually all critical historians continue to accept.
- ✓ #1, The burial of Jesus.
 - ✓ #2, The empty tomb.
 - ✓ #3, The disciples' experience of seeing the Risen Lord. Multiple witnesses: individuals, group appearances, believers, unbelievers, enemies, skeptics over an extended period of time.
 - ✓ #4, The origin of the Church.

7. According to the objective standards of historiography, there is only one rational reason anyone could give for the rejection of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: rejection of the existence of God. That's it! However, a *a priori* naturalism brings far more problems: creation ex nihilo, the soul, freewill, morals, values, dignity, meaning of life, body-mind problem. No one can consistently live with the ramifications of atheism—and no one ever has!

8. If Jesus did not rise bodily from the grave, then Christianity is a fairy tale that no rational person should believe.

- In this case Christianity would be no better than believing in Santa Clause. People might love to believe in what Santa represents, but they do not believe in him.
- If Jesus was not raised, then we should not believe in Him or worship Him—though many might still believe in some of the things He stood for.

- Millions of people make Christianity into something to help them with their problems or be better people—all the while rejecting the living resurrected Lord and His mind—Bible doctrine. All because they value KD (emotionally tied to KD) more than Christ!
- Failure to recognize this leads to degeneration of any church into some sort of lonely hearts club—nothing more!
- What is more important justification or truth? Are you passionate about truth? Or is all about your own bacon?

9. There are 4 historical bedrock facts that must be explained by any adequate or credible hypothesis on Jesus Christ:

#1, Jesus burial.

#2, The discovery of His empty tomb.

#3, His post-mortem appearances.

#4, The origin of the disciples' belief in His resurrection.

10. The best (and only credible) explanation of these four historical facts is that Jesus rose bodily from the dead. Given the biblical background, it takes more faith to deny the resurrection than to accept it—as evidenced by all of the ad hoc implausible theories.

11. Historical argument for Jesus' resurrection involves 2 steps.

#1 - What are the facts to be explained?

#2 - What is the best explanation of those facts?

12. Today the relevant historical facts are largely agreed upon by critics.

13. Historical scholarship over the last half century.

- ✓ There have been revolutionary changes since the 1940's-50's when it was widely believed that the accounts were legends shaped by the early church.
- ✓ The post-mortem appearances were thought to be hallucinations by the disciples' fervent faith.
- ✓ Today, these positions have largely been abandoned within the scholarly community. Today majority of *critical* scholars (who do not believe the Bible is God's Word) believe: 1) burial by Joseph of Arimathea, 2) empty tomb, 3) on multiple occasions different people and groups experienced Jesus as being alive, and 4) origin of the church due to the fact that the disciples came to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead despite every predisposition to the contrary.

Fact #1, Jesus burial

1. Jesus' burial by Joseph in a tomb after His crucifixion is early attested (Mark)
2. Jesus' burial is multiply attested in several *independent* and early eyewitness testimonies (sources used by Matthew, Mark and John, early sermons in Acts, 1 Cor. 15).
3. Joseph of Arimathea was part of the Sanhedrin who condemned Jesus. He would not have been invented by Christians. He was part of the highest ruling body in the land. He was well known.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

1. The historical credibility of the burial story supports the empty tomb.
 - ✓ Since the burial is fundamentally accurate, the site of Jesus' tomb would have been known to Jew and Christian alike. But in that case, it would have been impossible for resurrection faith to survive in the face of a tomb containing the corpse of Jesus.
 - ✓ Paul's testimony provides early evidence for the historicity of Jesus' burial, 1 Cor 15:3-5. The tradition here gets us back to A.D. 30.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

- ✓ The burial story was part of pre-Markan Passion source and is therefore very old.
- ✓ The story itself is simple and in its basic elements and lacks theological reflection or apologetic development.
- ✓ Joseph of Arimathea is a historical person. The probability of this being a Christian fictional account where he, a member of the Sanhedrin who condemned Christ, doing what is right for Jesus is inexplicable given the hostility toward the Jewish leadership responsible for Jesus' death. Multiple independent attestation.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

- ✓ Joseph's laying the body in his own tomb is credible due to the incidental details (e.g., putting "criminal in the new bench tomb").
- ✓ Jesus was buried late on the Day of Preparation. Given what we know from extrabiblical sources concerning the handling of executed criminals and burial procedures, the time of Jesus' interment, must have been on Friday.
- ✓ Observation of the burial by women is historical. Gospels report women as witnesses of the crucifixion, burial, and empty tomb. Multiple attestation plus the fact that it is likely that they were at all events. We also have their names.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

- ✓ The graves of Jewish holy men were carefully preserved. During Jesus' time there was an extraordinary interest in grave of Jewish martyrs and holy men, and these were scrupulously cared for and honored. Disciples had no inkling of any resurrection before the end of the world. Also makes plausible the women's lingering to watch the burial and their intention to anoint the body.
- ✓ No other burial tradition exists. If this is legendary, strange that there are no conflicting traditions.
- ✓ These considerations are why the majority of historical critics consider the burial of Jesus as historically as certain as anything can be.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

2. Paul's testimony implies the fact of the empty tomb (1 Cor 15:3-5, 35-50; Gal. 1:18). All of these passages imply an empty tomb. Where did Paul get such an idea?
3. The presence of the empty tomb narrative in the pre-Markan Passion story is evident from the fact that it is bound up grammatically/syntactically, and the abrupt ending without victory would not have circulated unless it was authentic.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

4. The use of “first day of the week” in Mark 16:2 instead of “on the third day” points to primitiveness of the tradition (cf. 1 Cor 15:3-5).
5. The nature of the narrative itself is theologically unadorned and nonapologetic (cf. *Gospel of Peter*).
6. The empty tomb was discovered by women. Why would the church humiliate its leaders? We also have their names.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

7. The investigation of the empty tomb by Peter and John is historically probable. It is attested both in tradition and by John himself. We also have the denial of Peter and likelihood of him checking out the women's stories. The absence of any evidence for the disciples flight to Galilee implies they are still in Jerusalem.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

8. It would have been virtually impossible for the disciples to proclaim the resurrection in Jerusalem had the tomb been empty. The empty tomb is a *sine qua non* of the resurrection. The notion that Jesus rose from the dead with a new body while His old body still lay in a grave is a modern conception. Jewish mentality would never have accepted a division of two bodies. Even if the disciples failed to check the tomb, you can bet the Jewish authorities would have. When the disciples preached the resurrection, the authorities stood helplessly by.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

9. The earliest Jewish polemic presupposes the empty tomb, cf. Matt. 28:15b. Note the response in 27:64. Did the Jewish authorities say He was in the tomb, or in a graveyard eaten by dogs? The earliest Jewish polemic was an attempt to explain away the empty tomb. This constitutes persuasive evidence that Jesus' tomb was in fact empty.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

10. The fact that Jesus' tomb was not venerated as a shrine indicates that the tomb was empty. This was customary for the Jews as they look forward to the resurrection. But there is absolutely no trace of veneration of Jesus' burial place. In light of the disciples' reverence for Jesus, the reason for this absence of veneration for His burial place was because His grave was empty.

*These 10 reasons are just a few the many reasons most critics hold to the empty tomb as an historical fact. There is simply no plausible naturalistic explanation available that accounts for the empty tomb of Jesus.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

On different occasions different individuals experienced appearances of Jesus as bodily alive from the dead. This is virtually universally acknowledged by critical scholars because:

1. The very early testimony of Paul shows that the disciples saw appearances of Jesus, 1 Cor 15; Gal. 1. This includes the very large number of 500 as well.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

2. The Gospel accounts of the resurrection appearances are fundamentally reliable historically.
 - Not enough time for legends to accrue significantly.
 - Controlling presence of living eyewitnesses would retard significant accrual of legend. You can bet that they knew what did and did not happen.
 - Authoritative control of the apostles would have helped to keep legendary tendencies in check.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

3. Particular resurrection appearances have historical credibility.
 - Appearance to women.
 - Appearance to Peter. This is in pre-Pauline tradition and granted by nearly all critics.
 - Appearance to the Twelve. This would prevent it from becoming a late invention. We have multiple attestation here as well.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

- Lake of Tiberias appearance. The disciples’ fishing (John 21) soon after Christ’s resurrection and commissioning them is unusual and bespeaks of early accurate tradition. We also have John as eyewitness.
- Appearance in Galilee as per instructed by the angels, Mark 16.
- The appearance to the 500 believers. Paul had firsthand contact with these people and appeals to them as eyewitnesses.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

- The appearance to James. Given his antipathy to Jesus during his lifetime, and his leadership of the church thereafter, his turnabout was most likely due to resurrection appearance. We also have Paul’s contact with James in Jerusalem in A.D. 36.
- The appearance to Paul. We have in Paul’s letters firsthand information concerning the appearance of Jesus to him, an event that transformed the life of this Pharisee.
- Multiple independent attestation of the private and group appearances.

Fact #3 – Christ’s post-mortem Appearances

4. The resurrection appearances were physical, bodily objective appearances of Jesus Christ. They were not visions. We see this in Luke and in Paul’s development of the doctrine of resurrection. The physicalism of the resurrection appearances are dominate in the accounts. Visions would not have caused the disciples to believe in resurrection; they would have only believed in his ascension.

Fact #4: Origin of the Disciples' Belief in Jesus' Resurrection

1. All agree that belief in the resurrected Christ lay at the heart of the earliest Christian faith.
2. The original disciples suddenly came to believe that Jesus was risen from the dead despite every predisposition to the contrary. They had no concept of a dying and rising Messiah, cf. the resurrection in the OT.
3. Without the resurrection they would not have declared Him as the Messiah. What else could explain the turnaround?

Fact #4: Origin of the Disciples' Belief in Jesus' Resurrection

4. Their leader was dead and they had no expectation of a dying and rising Messiah.
5. According to OT law, Jesus died as a heretic.
6. Sunday became new holy day.
7. Content of gospel was Jesus Christ.

8. Nevertheless, the disciples came to believe so strongly that God had raised Him from the dead, they were willing to die. What caused them to believe such an un-Jewish and outlandish thing? Why such a powerful transformation?
9. We have a total of 16 independent sources on the disciples' willingness to suffer for their belief in the Risen Lord.
10. All of this historical data begs for an explanation.

Two Steps in Historiography

1. What is the historical data?
2. Taking the data to best explanation. The best explanation is that God raised Jesus bodily from the dead. It is the only hypothesis that passes all historical tests or canons. All other theories fall short and continue to be abandoned by scholars. None of the naturalistic theories are plausible. The only reason that one can give for the rejection of the resurrection of Jesus (we are not even attempting to prove that God raised Him) is *a priori* rejection of the existence of God—naturalism!

The “Hypothesis” of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (from an historical perspective)

1. Great explanatory scope. The resurrection of Christ explains why the tomb was empty, why the disciples saw post-mortem experiences, why the Christian faith came into being.
2. Great explanatory power. The resurrection of Christ explains why the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, and why people repeatedly saw Him alive. It explains their willingness to be tortured and murdered for this faith.

3. Plausibility. Given His unparalleled life, wisdom, claims, and prophecy, the resurrection serves as divine confirmation. Christ was either God or a blasphemer.
4. It is not ad hoc. It is not contrived; it only requires one hypothesis: God exists. Even that need not need to be an additional if you already believe in God.

5. It is in accord with accepted beliefs. Christians readily accept that *naturally* dead men do not rise. Thus, it is in accord with accepted beliefs.

6. It far outstrips all rival theories in meeting the canons of 1-5 above. Consider the theories that continue to be abandoned for the last 200 years (hallucination, stolen body). This is precisely why all other theories have not attracted wide scholarship and most “pop” theories have been almost universally rejected.

All other theories fail miserably to meet the canons of history as to the best explanation.

- a) Explanatory scope.
- b) Explanatory power.
- c) Less ad hoc.
- d) Plausibility.
- e) Illumination.