

Any questions on our current series?

1 Corinthians 15:53 For this (τοῦτο) perishable must put on the imperishable, and this (τοῦτο) mortal must put on immortality.

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Theological/Doctrinal Foundations : Eschatology (20)

The Interim State

3 Modes of Human Life

- 1) **Present physical life.** While the body contains the OSHGEN and decays daily, the believer is commanded to renew the inner life, 2 Cor 4:16.
- 2) **Interim State.** Temporary disembodiment. However, there is a temporary interim nonspatial spiritual body of sorts. The believer will enjoy conscious, intensified fellowship with JC, Philip. 1:23.
- 3) **Resurrected State.** The believer's soul will be reunited with his physical body which is transformed into an immortal indestructible physical essence, 1 Thess. 4:14-18.

1. The present decaying physical life and the need to be renewed and grow stronger DAY BY DAY.

- ✓ **2 Corinthians 4:16** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day (ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα).

2. Interim life. Non-spatial, non-physical, soulish life that enjoys fellowship with Christ (you take BD with you).

✓ **2 Corinthians 5:2** For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; ³ inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. ⁴ For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight-- ⁸ we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

3. Resurrection life. This is the life after life after death in our transphysical body. This is the Ultimate Hope. This begins at the Rapture and continues throughout eternity.

1 Corinthians 15:53-54 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even **so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep** in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel, and with the trumpet of God; **and the dead in Christ shall rise first.** ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (ἀρπάζω) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Preparation for Bible Class – Spiritual Life Foundations

#1 Salvation:

Acts 16:30 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ And they said, "Believe (aorist imperative) in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them that hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his *household*. ³⁴ And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

Preparation for Bible Class – Spiritual Life Foundations

#2 Daily Growth and #3 Maturity through BD

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed (θεόπνευστος) and profitable for teaching (πρὸς διδασκαλίαν), for reproof (πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν), for correction (πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν), for training (πρὸς παιδείαν) in righteousness (δικαιοσύνη); ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate (ἄρτιος = proficient), equipped (ἐξηρτισμένος = thoroughly made proficient) for every good work.

The job of undershepherd; the need for BD to be #1 priority of life; loser or winner believers; the pleroma.

Resurrection Special #20: Establishing the Resurrection through the Canons of Historiography

1. Review of those 4 certain historical facts, Mark 15:43, 46, 16:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:3-8. Uniqueness of Christianity is that it is accessible through history. Resurrection is one of the best attested facts of history—and the most important doctrine.
 - #1 – Jesus’ Burial by Joseph of Arimathea.
 - #2 – The Empty Tomb discovered by women.
 - #3 - Christ’s Postmortem Appearances.
 - #4 - Origin of the Disciples’ Belief in Jesus’ Resurrection. Origin of Christianity.

2. More background on resurrection. Note the comments of Elaine Pagels, in her chapter, *The Controversy over Christ's Resurrection: Historical Event or Symbol? (The Gnostic Gospels, 3-27)*:

“Jesus Christ rose from the grave.’ With this proclamation, the Christian church began. This may be the fundamental element of the Christian faith; certainly it is the most radical. Other religions celebrate cycles of birth and death: Christianity insists that in one unique historical moment, the cycle reversed, and a dead man came back to life! For Jesus’ followers this was the turning point in world history, the sign of its coming end. . .

Orthodox Christians since then have confessed in the creed that Jesus of Nazareth, “crucified, dead, and buried,” was raised “on the third day.” Many today recite that creed without thinking about what they are saying, much less actually believing it. Recently some ministers, theologians, and scholars have challenged the literal view of the resurrection. . . . But much of the early tradition insists that a man –Jesus– had come back to life. . .

What makes these Christian accounts so extraordinary is not the claim that his friends had “seen” Jesus after his death—ghosts stories, hallucinations, and visions were even more commonplace then than now—but that they saw an actual human being . . . Had they said that Jesus’ spirit lived on . . . their contemporaries would have understood. . . . “[the Gnostics] rejected the literal interpretation; some find it “extremely revolting, repugnant, and impossible” [that one would once again take on a physical body or meet a physical Christ]. . . .

The gnostic Christians rejected Luke's theory. Some Gnostics called the literal view of the resurrection the "faith of fools." . . . Gospel of Mary sees the Lord in a vision. . . Apocalypse of Peter saw Christ 'in an intellectual spirit, filled with radiant light.' What interested the Gnostics was not the past but the ability to see Christ in visions in the present."

- 3. More background on resurrection.** There's a huge range of beliefs about life after death in the ancient world, but biblical resurrection doesn't feature anywhere except Judaism and Christianity.
- ✓ Pliny, Aeschylus, Homer, Cicero, and all sorts of early writers say "Of course, we know resurrection doesn't happen."
 - ✓ However, all the while Judaism developed a specific theology about resurrection: that God's people would be bodily raised from the dead at the end of time. Resurrection was never a vague term referring to life after death.

- ✓ Resurrection was a very specific term for physical bodily life after life after death.
- ✓ In Judaism right after you die you're immediately in this holding pattern (Sheol, Abraham's bosom) or a waiting state for your new life called resurrection.
- ✓ The Christians were the only other group that believed in the resurrected literal physical life for everyone at the end of time.

- ✓ However, the early Christians also said it had happened to one person in advance. This was a novel idea. No Jew believed this before the resurrection of JC.
- ✓ In early Christianity “resurrection” became the center of everything. Christianity has no framework without it—cf. the origin of the church and content in the epistles. Something must have happened.
- ✓ In Christianity there is virtually no spectrum of belief about what happens after death.

- ✓ In Judaism there were a few different viewpoints on some of the details, and in the pagan world there were a great many, but in early Christianity only there is only one view of the resurrection. Early Christians disagreed with many things, but remarkably unanimous about the resurrection and how it plays out in the plan of God.
- ✓ This forces historians to ask a very simple question: Why did all the early Christians known to us, from the earliest times for which we have evidence, have this very new, but remarkably unanimous, view of resurrection?

- ✓ While the 4 accounts of the resurrection have different external emphases, they all agree on the resurrection.
- ✓ We also have the powerful testimony of the women. This is a fascinating feature of the narratives. Women were not credible in court of law. We can see Paul “airbrush” them out in the 50’s in 1 Cor. 15. A sample of the scorn this brought on Christianity by Celsus: “this faith is just based on the testimony of some hysterical women.” Further, to make Mary Magdalene prominent in all of them is only to shoot oneself in the foot—at least from an apologetic point of view.

- ✓ The resurrection of JC also served as a miraculous sign of the ultimate hope of the new creation.
- ✓ While the Jewish leadership had put all of their hope on political deliverance in this world, God demonstrated the true and ultimate hope through Jesus Christ.

4. **More background on resurrection.** 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 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.

5. Again, there are four bedrock historical facts which are accepted by virtually all critical historians.
- ✓ #1, The burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea.
 - ✓ #2, The empty tomb discovered by women.
 - ✓ #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 disciples' belief and the Church.

6. The curse of methodological skepticism.
- Based on the canons of historiography, there is only one rationale anyone could give for the rejection of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: rejection of the existence of God. That's it! However, *a priori* naturalism brings far greater 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!

7. 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.

8. 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?

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

Fact #1, Jesus burial

1. Jesus' burial by Joseph in a tomb after His crucifixion is early attested (cf. Mark).
2. Jesus' burial is multiply attested in several *independent* and early eyewitness testimonies (sources used by Matthew (27:59-60), Luke (23:53); and John (19:38-40), and early sermons in Acts, and 1 Cor. 15).
3. Joseph of Arimathea was part of the Sanhedrin who condemned Jesus. He was part of the highest ruling body in the land.

Fact #2 – Jesus Empty Tomb

1. The historical credibility of the burial story supports the empty tomb.
 - ✓ Since the burial is 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 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 historical. 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 not 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 liberal 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. 28:11-15. Did the Jewish authorities say He was in the tomb, or in a graveyard eaten by dogs (contra Crossan)? 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 why the majority of 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 assumption or 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. Give up "Judaism" and worship 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—e.g., naturalism!

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

1. Great explanatory scope. The resurrection of Christ explains why the tomb was empty, why the disciples had post-mortem experiences of seeing Jesus, 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. It is not ad hoc. It is not contrived; it only requires one hypothesis: God exists. Even that need not be an additional hypothesis if you already believe in God.

4. Plausibility. It is in accord with accepted beliefs. Christians readily accept that *naturally* dead men do not rise. Given His unparalleled life, wisdom, claims, and prophecy, the resurrection serves as divine confirmation. Christ was either God or a blasphemer.

5. Illumination Thus, it is in accord with accepted beliefs and provides illumination to all facts.
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.

- 1) Explanatory scope.
- 2) Explanatory power.
- 3) Less ad hoc.
- 4) Plausibility.
- 5) Illumination.
- 6) Best explanation—far outstrips all rival theories.