



Death & Resurrection:

Bodies, Souls, & Christian Hope

Schedule



- February 7: The Resurrection of Christ. Part II
- February 14: The Kingdom of God (Heaven) Now... and finally.
- February 21: The Christian Funeral

Review

What do you mean heaven is not the goal?

Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

Heaven... the intermediate state.

John 14:1-3 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

Why Bother?

Why this emphasis on resurrection?

If the distinction is:

Heaven & Life Eternal vs Heaven, Resurrection, Life Eternal

Don't you end up in the same place?

Salvation means, of course, rescue. But what are we ultimately to be rescued from? The obvious answer is death. But, if when we die, all that happens is that our bodies decompose while our souls (or whatever other word we want to use for our continued existence) go on elsewhere, this doesn't mean we've been rescued from death. It simply means we've died.

(Surprised by Hope, 194)

Emphasis Matters

Resurrection reminds us of a few important elements of the life of faith.

1. This is God's Gracious Activity

- A. When you die – YOU ARE DEAD.
 - 1. What is God going to do with a dead you?
- B. Heaven is not natural progression
- C. You are not immortal (You are not God)
- D. You are not “deserving”

2. We are more than just “Spirits” -

3. God's creation is good

- A. God's Salvific work extends beyond human kind.

All Creation will be redeemed...

- Romans 8:18-23 ¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Picking up where we left off.

Jesus Died

To talk about Resurrection you need a dead person.

Jesus died.

1. Witness of the Women, Witness of the Soldiers, Witness of the bystanders.
2. Too strange of a story to make up.

What did God, the Father, do with a dead Jesus?

Dead People do NOT Live again...

“We could cope – the world could cope – with a Jesus who ultimately remains a wonderful idea inside his disciples minds and hearts. The world cannot cope with a Jesus who comes out of the tomb, who inaugurates God’s new creation right in the middle of the old one.”
(Surprised by Hope, 68)

John 20:24-28

- ²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."
- ²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

N.T. Wright Explains

“Thomas, like a good historian, wants to see and touch. Jesus presents himself to his sight and invites him to touch, but Thomas doesn’t. He transcends the type of knowing he had intended to use and passes into a higher richer one.”

“What I am suggesting is that faith in Jesus risen from the dead transcends but includes what we call history and what we call science.”

“This kind of faith, which like all modes of knowledge is defined by the nature of its object, is faith in the Creator God, the God who promised to put all things to rights at the last, the God who raised Jesus from the dead within history, leaving evidence that demands an explanation from the scientist as well as anybody else.”

“As I understand the scientific method, when something turns up that doesn’t fit the paradigm you’re working with, one option at least, perhaps when all others have failed, is to change the paradigm – not to exclude everything you’ve known to that point but to include it within the larger whole.” (Surprised by Hope, 71-72)

From an intellectual perspective resurrection is at least a plausible explanation for Thomas' experience of the Crucified Jesus.

What about us?

- 1 John 3:2 ² Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²² for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Intermediate time – then resurrection

- Referring to Polkinghorne NT Wright says:
“God will download our software into his hardware until the time when he gives us new hardware to run the software again.” (163)

What is the intermediate time like?

- Debated
 1. Sleep
 2. Conscious awareness spent appealing to or worshiping God

The Portrait of Jesus

Jesus appears as a human being with a body that is in some ways quite normal and can be mistaken for a gardener (John 20) or a fellow traveler on the road (Luke 24).

Yet the stories also contain- ... definite signs that this body has been transformed. It is clearly physical: it uses up (so to speak) the matter of the crucified body; hence the empty tomb. But, equally, it comes and goes through locked doors; it is not always recognized, and in the end it disappears into God's space, that is "heaven" through the thin curtain that in much Jewish thought separates God's space from human space.

What about my imperfections?

“All we can surmise from picture of Jesus’ resurrection is that just as his wounds were still visible, not now as sources of pain and death but as signs of his victory, so the Christian’s risen body will bear such marks of his or her loyalty to God’s particular calling as are appropriate.” (Surprised by Hope, 160)

Why do I need a physical body?

- “Forget those images about lounging around playing harps. There will be work to do and we shall relish doing it. All the skills and talents we have put to God’s service in this present life – and perhaps too the interests and likings we gave up because they conflicted with our vocation – will be enhanced and ennobled and given back to us to be exercised to his glory.” (Surprised by Hope, 161)

Implications of the Resurrection

Jesus was raised from the dead in a new and imperishable body.

Jesus is still embodied – more solidly perfectly embodied than we are – but generally absent from this present world.

-Is it Jesus in your heart or the Holy Spirit?

The Ascension

The mystery of the Ascension is just that, a mystery.

Some things we can say:

- The Ancients were not locked into a 3 tier thinking about the universe.
- When you “move up” in the company does it mean you are changing floors?
- Jesus Ascended (moved up) to the Right Hand of the Father.
- Jesus maintained his new embodied form.

The Ascension

“What we are encouraged to grasp precisely through the ascension itself is that God’s space and ours – heaven and earth, in other words- are, though very different, not far away from one another.”

“God’s space and ours interlock and intersect in a whole variety of ways even while they retain, for the moment at least, their separate and distinct identities and roles.” (Surprised by Hope, 116)

Sacraments

“I have come to believe that the sacraments are best understood within the theology of creation and new creation, and of the overlapping of heaven and earth...

God's future has burst into the present...

sacraments are not just signs of the reality of a new creation but actually part of it” (Surprised by Hope, 272)

Holy Communion

Jesus has a physical body – ordinary elements

This is my BODY given FOR YOU!

What does this mean?

Could God actually encounter us, forgive us – touch us?

The Ascension

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

For Next Week

The Kingdom of God/The Kingdom of Heaven –
Now and Not Yet.

- How is the resurrected Jesus at work?
- What can we hope for?
- How can we live?

What does it mean for the world to be redeemed?
Jesus as Judge – good or bad news?