***The Doctrine of Resurrection
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Turn this morning to Romans 8 in your Bibles, verses 22-25. This is the third segment on the subject of "Hope in the Future."

**Future Redemption of the Body**

We have found in this passage that the present old earth on which we now live will be largely released from the curse of God which was placed upon it because of man's sin. It will be released from this curse in the millennium, and it will be totally released from that curse in eternity in the new earth that God will bring into existence.

In the meantime, Paul points out that mankind yearns, as also does nature, for the day when the suffering and the death caused by sin will be removed. God has promised, indeed, to release both nature and man from the curse of sin beginning in the millennium and completing that release in the new earth.

God's promise to Christians of release from the curse is confirmed by the giving, Paul says, of God the Holy Spirit as God's pledge that He will indeed do this. He will indeed bring about this release. The Holy Spirit is the first fruits, it's a sample of what God is going to do in releasing us from the curse.

Now, the Apostle Paul points out that we Christians, like nature, groan inwardly with sorrow as we anticipate now our release from the curse of sin at the rapture. And so, in the latter part of verse 23 of Romans 8, we read, "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [that is, the redemption of our body]." "Even we ourselves" is emphatic in the Greek language. It is so positioned here in the Greek sentence that there is emphasis on the fact that we Christians ourselves are experiencing something which is described by the Greek word "stenazo." The word "stenazo" means "an inward, unexpressed feeling of sorrow."

Christians like nature sigh in pain while facing physical debilitation and death. It is so frustrating that we cannot keep the physical body working right. It is so frustrating that we cannot keep the mental processes stable. It is so frustrating that all of the relationships emotionally that we have with people get disrupted. The Word of God says we are what we are as the consequence of the debilitation of sin. It is because there is a curse upon us. It is because the sin nature is there; that is the problem.

In the Greek language, this word is in the present tense which means that this is constantly the feeling that Christians have. It is in the active voice, which means that this is our personal experience. We just wish that things could be better, and we look forward to the time that they will be for us physically and emotionally and in every respect. All of us undergo this kind of frustration of limitation. It is indicative, it is a statement of fact. And it says that this is within ourselves. Furthermore, we are told that we too, like nature who is groaning and like nature is waiting, we too are waiting.

And we again have that Greek word that we had before, "apekdechomai." "Apekdechomai" means "to expect eagerly." It is again that image of somebody who's stretching his neck out looking down the road anticipating the arrival of someone or something. Here, it is anticipating something very definitive that Paul is going to point out. We Christians who are under the suffering from the curse of sin in this world long for release from it, and we're looking down the road for that release to come.

It is again, in the Word of God, present tense, which means that this is our constant attitude. It is active; it is our personal desire. We'd all like to be freed from the debilitations of the curse. It is in the participle mood which means that a spiritual principle is being stated. And what we are looking forward to is our adoption which we have already studied in some detail. The "huiothesia." The "huiothesia." This word literally means the son placing in the father's family as an adult child with adult privileges. We are born as children into the family of God, and like earthly children, we do not have adult privileges until we grow to adulthood. But God says, "You are not only born into my family, but I make a legal action of adopting you," which all of the New Testament world understood what that meant, "That I am placing you with full adult privileges and rights in the family."

Ephesians 1:5 refers to this when Paul says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." So indeed, breathe a sigh of relief and of joy that God has brought you into His family not only as a child but also placed you into adult privileges. Faith in Jesus Christ places a believer into God's family by the new birth, and divine adoption of this child of God places him into full adult privileges.

Now, Christians are eagerly looking forward to the fulfillment of their adoption into full adult privileges in one specific way, the Apostle Paul points out. And that is, we groan without ourself, looking down the road eagerly for the full consequence of our adoption into the family of God as adult privileges, particularly the adult privilege which is now ours of the redemption of the body.

The word "redemption" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "apolutrosis." "Apolutrosis" refers to a releasing subsequent to someone having made payment. We call this a ransom. Here, the word refers to the release of the Christian's body as God's adopted child from the power of the sin nature and death. We are looking for one of the factors which belongs to our adoption: the release of our physical body from the power and the effects of sin. And so, he says, it is specifically the adoption of the body which is the standard Greek word "soma," referring to the physical body of the Christian.

Now, the release of the body from the curse of sin is something that Christians have longed for a long time, and the New Testament repeatedly refers to that. Here are a few passages: Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15, beginning at verse 15; 2 Corinthians 5:2-3. Now, when this takes place, this transformation is the thing of course that we are all interested in, and that redemption of the body, part of our adoption privilege, that takes place at the point of the rapture.

1 Corinthians 15:23 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. The redemption of the body here refers to the resurrection and the glorification of the believer's body. The Christian, like nature, wants to be free from the curse of decay and death. The Christian and nature someday are both going to be able to sing, "Happy days are here again."

**Biblical Doctrine of Resurrection**

So, that brings us to the serious question of this subject of resurrection. And it would be appropriate at this point that the biblical doctrine of resurrection would be explored to give us a little idea of what this redemption of the body, in terms of resurrection, is going to be like. Just what does it signify? This is an important item. Sooner or later, you're going to be faced with death. Sooner or later, your family's going to be faced with death. Sooner or later, this is the information you're going to need to carry you through, and if you don't have it ahead of time, you're going to be like a wounded animal whimpering there capable of coping with the event, not knowing what is taking place, and indeed, as the scripture saith, to be like the world without hope.

It is necessary to begin with the words that the Bible uses for "resurrection." There is a noun that it uses that looks like this: "anastasis." It has a verb form which is this: "anhistemi." Both of these words (and these are the words that are mostly used relative to resurrection of the body), both of these words refer to raising up something to an upright position, like raising a post to an upright position or raising a wall up to an upright position. It is also used, therefore, of arousing a person from sleep or of somebody standing up who is in a reclining position.

Here's a couple examples of that from scripture, a couple of examples out of many. Acts 12:7 said, "And, behold, an angel of the Lord came upon him [that is, Peter, who is here in prison], and a light shone in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, 'Arise quickly.'" And here, you've got this word "anhistemi." The angel telling Peter, "Stand up!" Same word which is used for resurrection because it's this beautiful picture of what is lying flat in death coming to an upright position of control. "And saying, 'Arise quickly.' And his chains fell off from his hands."

Another example that illustrates this is Matthew 9:9, "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the tax office: and He saith unto him, 'Follow me.' And he arose." He "anastasis;" he got up from a sitting position to a standing, upright position.

So, when we talk about resurrection, it means the body that is flat on its back dead getting back on its feet in full control. This noun is used of the physical resurrection, therefore, of those who are dead. We have this so used then in Romans 1:4, where we read, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Here, we have this word "anastasis," a noun used in this passage, resurrection, standing up from the dead. We have this verb "anhistemi" used in John 6:40 as an example of that, again, referring it to the concept of resurrection, of a body that's flat standing up. In John 6:40, "And this is the will of Him that sent me, that everyone who seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up [there's the word] at the last day." That is, they who lie flat in their caskets in the ground are going to be brought upright on their feet.

So, it's very clear what God means by the redemption of the body in terms of resurrection. There is one other word that is used in the Bible for resurrection, and that's the Greek verb "egeiro." "Egeiro" means basically the same thing: raising something to an upright position that is down flat. It is, therefore, again, used of the same concept of raising a person from a reclining to an upright position.

This word we have in Matthew 9:5-6 to illustrate it. Matthew 9:5[-6], "'For which is easier, to say." This is the paralytic man that Jesus is talking about. "For which is easier, to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?' But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) 'Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.''" The word "arise" here is this other Greek word "egeiro," telling him to stand up straight, pick up his bed, and move on out.

It is also used, therefore, of the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ and of believers. We have this illustrated in 2 Corinthians 4:14, "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus [there's the word, "egeiro"] shall raise up [there it is again] us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." So, here again is the picture of Jesus Christ being raised from flat on His back to standing upright in resurrection and for us the same. So, these three basic Greek words are what you'll find used in the New Testament to refer to the concept of resurrection which is the ultimate redemption of the body. It is the basic words used of bringing the dead back to physical life.

**Resurrection in the Old Testament**

Now, as you know, there was a great deal of Old Testament teaching about physical resurrection from the dead. The oldest recorded statement that we have in the Bible concerning the dead coming back to life is that dramatic passage in Job 19, beginning at verse 25, where Job says, "' For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my heart be consumed within me."

This is probably the first book of the Bible written. It is the oldest statement we have concerning the plans of God, and here it is a clear declaration that there is going to be a resurrection. Job understood it very well when he was in his great misery and perhaps anticipating his own death because of the suffering that he was going through.

Abraham anticipated being resurrected and living in the New Jerusalem. In Hebrews 11:10, we read, "For he [that is, Abraham] looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It shows you how much God had explained to Abraham that someday he would create a heavenly city, a new Jerusalem in which Abraham would dwell. And Abraham, who never got out of tents looked forward to that dramatic place.

Personal resurrection was something that David, this man who was a man after God's own heart and who understood so much of divine viewpoint. David understood that there was such a thing as resurrection.

In Psalms 16:7-11, we read, "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my heart also instructs me in the night season. I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou permit thine Holy One to see corruption."

And here, as often happens in the Old Testament, David is speaking about himself - his own hope when he lies dead in the grave - that there is going to be a future for his body. And suddenly, he leaps over the centuries under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and he refers to Jesus Christ who is not going to be permitted to see corruption, and of course, this was the passage that the Lord later quote from in declaring that He would not stay in the grave to decay but that He would be raised again.

So, here is the hope of David, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Clearly, David was looking forward to the time of resurrection.

The hope of resurrection is very explicit in Daniel 12:2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel adds a factor that there is a double kind of resurrection: some to eternal death, some to eternal life.

And Isaiah reports the resurrection of Jewish saints so that the people of the New Testament who have Jewish background were very much aware of the fact that resurrection was in the plan of God. In Isaiah 26:19, this translation in the King James is not too good; it should read, "Thy dead shall live, my dead bodies shall rise." That is, the dead bodies of God's people. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." The dead are going to be raised. The earth is going to come back to restore them to life.

So, the Old Testament was very explicit about the teaching of the resurrection from the dead. This is why Martha could say to Jesus, when He said, "Don't worry about your brother Lazarus; he is going to live," and Martha says, "Well, yes, Lord, I know from Bible doctrine instruction in the Old Testament that he will be raised in the last day." And Jesus indicated, "No, that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the immediate presence." But, you see, Martha knew these scriptures and was very clear here that there was going to be a resurrection of the human body.

That was the very dramatic piece of information, because in the ancient world, the ancient cultures did not believe in a resurrection. And as you know, when the Apostle Paul stood speaking with the philosophers on Mars Hill in Athens, they listened to him until he mentioned the word "resurrection," and they all burst out laughing, and they said, "Ok, sonny, we'll come back and we'll listen to you another time." And they moved on to some other place in the forum to listen to somebody else speak. Once he mentioned resurrection, they considered him a fool. So, you must be aware of the fact that only in Israel, surrounded by these pagan nations, was there this concept of a body being brought back to physical life which was now dead.

And, of course, the Old Testament has many examples of the raising of the dead to extend their lifespan. Notice: to extend their lifespan and to die again. They were not raised as we will be raised: never to die again. You may pursue some of these on your own. There was the example of the son of the widow of Zarephath who was raised by Elijah in 1 Kings 17:17-24 [which] tells us how Elijah raised that lady's son back to life.

There's the Shunammite woman's son which was raised by Elisha in 2 Kings 4:17-37. And then, there was the man that they were hastily trying to bury, and they threw him into the grave which contained the dead bones of Elisha. And when the dead man hit the bones of Elisha, he came to life (2 Kings 13:20-21). It is these three events in the Kings passages that is referred to in the book of Hebrews in 11:35 when it speaks about women receiving their dead back from the grave. Hebrews 11:35 says, "Women received their dead raised to life again," and what it is referring to is these examples here in the Old Testament.

**Resurrection in the New Testament**

Now, in the New Testament, there were also examples of people who were being raised from the dead to have their lifespan expanded only to die again. They were not raised in glorified bodies. For example, Jairus' daughter was raised by Jesus Christ. In Mark 5:22-24 and 35-43, the time came when the girl finally died again. The young man of Nain was raised by Jesus Christ (Luke 7:11-15). Lazarus raised by Jesus Christ (John 11:38-44). Dorcas raised by Peter (Acts 9:46-41). And Eutychus, the man who fell out the window of the second story when Paul was preaching, hit the ground, was killed. Paul goes down, raises him back to life (Acts 20:9-12).

**The Resurrection Experience of Jesus Christ**

So that, the Bible speaks about bringing dead people back to life. The Old Testament anticipated that. There were examples in the Old Testament of the dead being raised and the New Testament, the dead being raised to prolong their lifespan. But the kind of resurrection that we're talking about which is our right by adoption as sons and daughters of God is that which Jesus Christ experienced. That for which He is our pattern. So, let's pause at this point then to look at the resurrection experience of Jesus Christ.

First of all, you must understand that Jesus Christ experienced a genuine, physical death on the cross. Do not pass that off lightly. All of the great denominations have been either taken over or under attack by the liberal elements within their theological institutions, and those institutions are now teaching that Jesus Christ never really physically died, or if He physically died, He did not come back to life again. And I will not burden you this morning with the nonsensical substitutes for that: that He simply fainted from the enormity of the physical things that He experienced; that when he got to the tomb, He was simply with a low pulse and the coolness of the tomb brought Him back to consciousness; the explanations to elude the fact that He was physically dead.

May I point out to you that the soldiers who were responsible for the execution, responsible upon penalty of death themselves, certified that Jesus Christ was dead? If they had been wrong on that, their very lives would have been at stake. John 19:33, "But when they came to Jesus [the soldiers], they saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs." These men would not have lightly made a mistake. They were used to executing people.

This is further reiterated in Mark 15:43, "Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate marveled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph." So that the officer in charge of the soldiers also certified that Jesus Christ was genuinely dead.

The women who came to the tomb on Easter Sunday morning came with the spices in hand anticipating to find the dead body to embalm. Mark 16:1, "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him."

When the spear was thrust into the side of Jesus, John 19:34 tells us that blood and water came out which indicated a ruptured heart, so that there was no question that He was dead. He could not possibly have lived with that evidence of the internal condition. And as you know, when He was taken off of the cross, He was given no medical treatment; He was simply sealed up into the tomb. So, there is no question about the fact that Jesus Christ was properly certified as dead.

Furthermore, He Himself had predicted that He would die and that He would be raised again on the third day. Now, this, He said, was according to scripture. There was a scriptural analogy, and you will find this third-day analogy. We won't read these in detail. One of them is in Jonah 1:17. Jonah, three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. Psalm 16:9-10, Matthew 12:39-40, Luke 24:45-46, Acts 13:32-37 all connect the concept that He would die and be there for three days and three nights as per the scriptures of the Old Testament.

Now, because the disciples were themselves ignorant of the significance of this three-day analogy, they did not make the connection. So therefore, when Jesus was raised back from the dead on the third day, they were surprised. They couldn't believe it. John 20:9, "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." Now, where is the scripture? They didn't have a New Testament. It was Old Testament scripture that repeatedly indicated He would rise from the dead, and it was connected to a third-day event.

Well, the prediction of Jesus Christ about His own resurrection was explicitly clear on several occasions. And the reason He did that was to make it very clear that if He could predict His resurrection, and then indeed He was raised, then everything else He said also was verified. If indeed He would say, "Three days, I'm going to put this temple of My body back together again and rise," and then He didn't do it, you know that we could not trust anything else He had said about salvation, having provided our atonement. Everything would be in question.

In Matthew 16:21, we read, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Matthew 17:22, "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, 'The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again.' And they were exceeding sorrowful." So that, it's clear that the Lord Jesus Himself anticipated death, and He made it clear that He would override it.

And of course, one of the most dramatic evidences that this did take place was the fact that the tomb was empty. And the reason we need to take time to review some of these familiar truths about the resurrection of Jesus Christ is because what Paul is promising in Romans 8 is all dependent on this. If it is not true of Christ, you can forget it relative to yourself.

So, let's take a look on that third day. Easter Sunday morning comes along. Here's the tomb which has been guarded by the Roman soldiers and which bore upon it the official seal of the Roman Empire. To break that seal is to be guilty of a capital crime. The punishment of that was execution. Nobody would dare do that. The soldiers themselves would not have dared to permit anybody to do that, for they themselves would have been executed. So, there was maximum security.

Yet, Matthew 27:62 says, "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, 'Sir, we remember that that deceiver [referring to Jesus] said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead:' so the last error shall be worse than the first.' [It was the leaders of Israel, the Jewish people, who had murdered Jesus who said, "Now, we don't want somebody stealing His body and pretending it's been raised from the dead." So,] Pilate said unto them, 'Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.' So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."

They themselves, the leaders of Israel, saw to it that the soldiers were there and that the tomb was sealed. And yet, the seal was broken, the tomb was empty, the stone was rolled away by an angel.

In Matthew 28:2, we read, "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Now, if you've ever been to Israel, been to the Garden Tomb, it is very fascinating to be able to look right down at the door and there's that room about, oh about almost a foot wide or so, where the very stone stood, that huge rock that was circular that they rolled against the entrance and which the angel came and rolled back.

Now, the angel, of course, did not roll the stone back in order to permit Jesus Christ to go out of the tomb. We'll see why a little later that was not necessary. It was so that we and the rest of the world and the people at that time could look into the tomb and see that it was empty.

Here was a tomb guarded by soldiers having the seal of the Roman Empire upon it. Nobody in his right mind would dare seek to break that security, and yet, the angel comes along, knocks the stone over. The soldiers and everybody else undoubtedly on the scene horrified to look inside and discover that that body isn't there.

And of course, when you walk into the garden tomb this day, you will see the same thing there. You see the place where the body laid. It's a good seven feet long, plenty of room. You see the little headrest, and you know there's where Jesus Christ lay. And suddenly, they looked in and they saw what you see: nothing, the place empty. The stone was rolled away in order to let us look in. And it was the result of what God the Holy Spirit had done under the direction of God the Father.

1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit." God the Holy Spirit bringing Him back to life.

The angels immediately confirmed to the disciples and to the women that this is what had taken place. In Mark 16:5-6, we read, "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man [that is, an angel] sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were amazed. And he saith unto them, 'Be not amazed: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid him.'"

And of course, they could look over at the place where they laid Him, and one of the most amazing things that they saw when they looked at that place was the grave clothes. And the thing that struck them as odd immediately was that the grave clothes which had been tediously wrapped around Him were not even unwrapped. They were just as if they were an inflated balloon that went flat. What was around the head was separate from the rest. The grave clothes were just there, very clearly evident that whoever was in those wrappings didn't even bother taking them off but just floated right out of them, which now gives you the first clue to several things we're going to look concerning Jesus Christ as to what you will be able to do. Because what is true of Him in resurrection is also true of us.

John 20:3[-7], "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple [that is, John], and came to the sepulchre. So they both ran both together: and the other disciple [being younger] did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; and went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and he went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lying there, and the cloth, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes [as if all scrounged together], but wrapped together in a place by itself [just left where the head had been resting]."

The angels of the living God confirmed to the early disciples that Jesus Christ, the One who was crucified, the specified, was now alive. So, indeed, here was a resurrection but different than any resurrection in the history of the world before: a person now resurrected to a body which could never die again, a body which was released from all of the effects of the curse upon nature.

**Confirmed Accounts of the Resurrection**

The resurrection was confirmed after the crucifixion by ten recorded instances that we have in the Bible. First of all, Jesus appeared alive to Mary Magdalene. John 20:11-16, 18. When Mary saw Him, she wanted to touch Him. Jesus said, "Don't touch me. I haven't gone up to my Father yet."

And apparently, when Mary left, Jesus Christ went into the heavenly throne room and presented Himself, and on the basis of His blood, authenticated the sacrifice that He had made and the payment that He had provided and then came back down so that later that evening, when He came into the room where the ten disciples were gathered and they were amazed and couldn't believe that he was there and wondering if this was a spirit being, Jesus says, "Come on up here and touch me. See that I'm real. I'm not a ghost." That morning to Mary, He said, "Don't touch me." That evening, they could touch Him because His presentation in heaven had been completed.

So, to Mary Magdalene, he appeared; we have that record. Then, to another Mary, the one who is the mother to James and to Salome and some other women (Matthew 28:9). Jesus appeared to them. Then we're told that Jesus appeared to Peter alone (Luke 24:34). Then He appeared about evening time Easter Sunday to the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32). Then, He appeared to ten of the disciples that evening in the upper room, closed room (John 20:19-25).

Then, he appeared a week later to the eleven disciples when Thomas was not present (John 20:26-29). Then, He appeared to seven of the disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23), and then He appeared on one occasion to the apostles and to five hundred believers who were gathered together in one place in Galilee. Matthew 28:16-20 tell us about that. Then He appeared to James the half-brother of Jesus; 1 Corinthians 15:7 tells us that. And finally, the tenth record we have is that He appeared to the disciples at His ascension from Mount Olivet as He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:3-12).

So that, we have numerous, verifiable, eye-witness confirmations that the Jesus who had been crucified, who had been certified dead was indeed alive, and they have personally seen Him and personally dealt with Him.

It was the undeniable confirmation of the fact that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead that emboldened the disciples to turn the ancient world upside-down with their preaching of the salvation message. It wasn't any promises. It wasn't any hope. They were scared. They were intimidated. They were hiding until they saw Him alive. When they saw Him alive, they said, "That's it. Now we have nothing to fear! Now we have absolute confirmation of everything we've ever believed and ever hoped for. He is our true Messiah, and we have verified His resurrection."

From then on, they were unstoppable. They could not be silenced. The religious leaders of Israel could not hold them back, and the message of salvation could not be restrained by the might of the Roman Empire. Why? Because they had a group of Christians who knew what they were talking about who understood the doctrine of salvation and were able to proclaim it and did it without fear of the consequences.

The very fact that these Jews who constituted the early followers of Jesus Christ following the resurrection would abandon the Saturday Sabbath day and start worshipping on Sunday was a testimony also to the fact that Jesus Christ was indeed raised from the dead. Mark 16:2, 9, and Acts 20:7 indicate to us that when the New Testament Christians gathered, it was on the first day of the week.

Why did they do that? Because they had a new day. They were a new creation. They were a new group of believers. They were now the royal family of God, and they were totally distinct from the Jews. You see why this is serious, heretical error to bring anything from the Old Testament system of Israel into the era of the church? Why any ambitions, any hopes, any visions that were Israel's under its theocracy to be imposed upon the era of the church? The devastating satanic deception. We have a new era, and the early disciples immediately sensed that, and they said, "We must have a new day. Our day, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, will be the day of the Lord's resurrection." So, they switched to Sunday.

It is this resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that is the basis of the Christian's hope for resurrection himself in the glorified body which will be like that of the Lord Jesus. And when we say, "in a glorified body like His," that means that everything that we find to be true of Him after He was raised will now be true of us. John 14:19 establishes this connection, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also."

And in 2 Corinthians 4:10, the Apostle Paul reiterates that fact. 2 Corinthians 4:10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." The very resurrection life we are going to have is the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

You see, it was God's original plan in the Garden of Eden for man to live forever, for man to enjoy the environment that God had provided forever. It was never the plan of God that man should die. He was warned, Adam was warned that if he exercised the only sin that Adam could exercise, which was negative volition toward the commandment of God toward the tree, if he did that, he would die. But it was the original intention of God that man should never die, that they would bear children who would never die. The death of Jesus Christ has corrected the damage which was caused by Adam's sin which is resulted in the curse that we've been talking about that is upon nature and is upon all of us.

Now, without the death of Jesus Christ, the only thing that could have been done for mankind would have been to have been resurrected in sinful bodies to live in the eternal death of separation from God in hell forever, which is of course exactly what is going to happen to unbelievers. They will be raised as if Jesus Christ never died, as if He had never been raised. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who has made it possible for death to be forever swallowed up in victory, in the victory of the resurrection as 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 tells us.

Now, the next thing we want to pursue, as we will on our next occasion together, how it is that the Christian's body is going to be like that of Jesus Christ. The ultimate element of our adoption in the resurrection: the redemption of our bodies by resurrection in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. We will look at His resurrection experience as the great preview of our own.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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