

A.D. 70: The Resurrection

Introduction:

1) 2 Tim. 2:17f

- a) “The error, therefore, of Hymeneus and his two companions would amount to this: They taught that ‘the resurrection is past already,’ that there shall be no bodily resurrection at all, but that all that resurrection means is that the soul awakes from sin. This awakening from sin had already taken place with themselves, so they held, and therefore there could be no day in the future when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth from the grave (Jn. 5 28). *ISBE*, V. III, p. 1444, copyright 1939.
 - b) Cf. that to Samuel Dawson in *Essays on Eschatology*. “The resurrection which Moses and the prophets taught, all the apostles preached, and Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 15, is about restoration of fellowship with God, not about being raised from biological death.” Pp. 168, 169
“We established in the previous chapter of this volume that the resurrection Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 15 was not a resurrection of physical bodies out of holes in the ground, but the resurrection of Old Covenant Israel from the death of its fellowship with God.” P. 109
- 2) Realized Eschatology (the A.D. 70 Doctrine to some) has revived the old doctrine of Hymenaeus and Philetus. (Of course its advocates would deny that this was the doctrine of 2 Tim. 2).
 - 3) As we have noted, this teaching contends that after A.D. 70 there were no biblical prophecies left to be fulfilled. The coming of Christ, resurrection and judgment were over when God (through the Roman armies) destroyed Jerusalem.
 - 4) We have seen that the Lord is still going to come to destroy the world and judge its inhabitants.
 - 5) In this last lesson I want us to see that 1 Cor. does in fact teach what most have thought it taught all along; viz. the restoration to life of the human body.

I. THE RESURRECTION OF REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY.

1. Among REs there is some variation and even inconsistency.
2. Max King, father of this movement among churches of Christ, formerly taught that out of the death of physical Israel (destruction of the city and temple) the true Israel springs to life as a spiritual body.
 - a. Though he has released a revised edition, this idea will still be found among those influenced by his earlier work.
3. One thing all REs agree on is that **1 Cor. 15** does not deal with the resurrection of the physical body that was placed in the grave. (Nor does any other NT passage, according to them).

4. Today REs usually speak of the resurrection as the restoration of fellowship with God.
 - a. It is the reception of spiritual life.
 - 1) While this is clearly taught in **Eph. 2:1-6**, is this the only resurrection taught in the NT?
 - b. Sometimes it is said that the resurrection referred to the body of Christ (i.e. the church) receiving life as Jews and Gentiles flowed into it. (They emphasize that body is singular in 1 Cor. 15:35-45).
5. Dawson contends that...
 - a. Prior to A.D. 70 most of the dead were “dead all over” and the resurrection under consideration is giving life to the spirits of the dead.
 - b. 1 Cor. 15 is set against the background of Jew-Gentile conflicts and the only resurrection in questions involved the OT saints.
 - c. Paul preached the same resurrection taught in the OT, and that was a spiritual resurrection. **Acts 23:6; 24:14f; 26:6-8, 22f**
 - d. The apostle quoted **Isa. 25:8** and **Hos. 13:14** in 1 Cor. 15 and neither OT passage spoke of a resurrection of physical bodies.

II. THE RESURRECTION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15.

A. The Jew-Gentile Conflict.

1. Great example of taking a little truth and misapplying it.
2. The desire of Jewish Christians to bind circumcision (and other OT practices) on Gentile Christians was a problem in Acts 15 and is dealt with very sharply in Galatians and also in Romans, Ephesians and Colossians.
3. Some Gentiles may have looked down on Jewish Christians. **Rom. 11:17-22**
 - a. Though the context points to haughtiness toward unbelieving Jews. **11:23**
4. That being said, no evidence of a major problem with this in Corinth.
 - a. There were divisions, but Paul says nothing about doctrinal beliefs or a Jew/Gentile tension underlying them.
5. To place 1 Cor. 15 against the backdrop of the disputes over the Law is eisegesis. Corinth had a plethora of problems, but there’s no indication that this was a big one.

B. Bodily Resurrection.

1. For a doctrine that stresses “consistent” word meanings, it is striking that in 1 Cor. 15 you have Jesus physically come forth from the tomb, seen by many witnesses, and serving as the assurance that the remainder of the dead will be raised, but then they turn around and say the word resurrection means something different when it speaks of everyone except Jesus.

2. Jesus. **15:1-8** (cf. **Lk. 24:36-43**), **12f, 16, 20**
 - a. No doubt that His was a bodily resurrection and he is the firstfruits of the resurrection.
3. Paul identified himself with the Pharisees on the subject. **Acts 23:6-8**
 - a. Did the Pharisees believe that at the destruction of Jerusalem the OT saints would have their spirits revived and join the new spiritual Israel?
 - b. They, along with Paul, believed all would be raised for judgment. **Acts 24:15f**
 - c. When the Sadducees, enemies of the Pharisees, raised the question about marriage in **Mt. 22**, did they not indicate that the Pharisees believed some kind of body would be raised?
4. Dawson frequently chides those who don't see it his way for not knowing the OT prophets as we should, but he has ignored the NT commentary on a significant OT prophecy.
 - a. "Moses and the prophets knew nothing about a resurrection of physical bodies out of holes in the ground." Dawson, *Essays*, p. 128
 - b. I don't argue for "physical," but spiritual bodies. **1 Cor. 15:35, 42-44**
 - c. But to see that the prophets did speak of a bodily resurrection, let's turn to **Acts 2:22-32**.
 - d. The bodily resurrection of Christ was foretold by an inspired prophet and Paul said this resurrection was just the firstfruits, i.e. more would come. Cf. **Lk. 24:44-46**.
5. That body is singular in **v. 35**, et al, is a mere quibble.
 - a. If you spoke of bodies in the plural, it could signify that a dead person would be raised with multiple bodies.
 - b. The only bodies mentioned in this chapter are those of people, not the church or Israel as a collective body.
6. That which went into the grave, i.e. the body, will come forth. **Jn. 5:28f**

C. Use of Isaiah and Hosea.

1. NT writers often took the writings of the OT prophets and applied them to different situations.
 - a. Sometimes it was a "fitting" situation. **Mt. 15:7-9; Acts 1:20**
 - b. Paul did this with **Isa. 28:11f** in **1 Cor. 14:21f**.
 - c. Matthew did it with **Hos. 11:1** in **Mt. 2:15**.
2. OT prophets often spoke a deeper truth than they themselves could understand. **1 Pet. 1:10-12**
3. How does Paul use the citations from Isaiah and Hosea?
 - a. There may be a combination of the two.
 - b. Keep in mind that the context has been discussing the bodily resurrection. These quotations do not offset that teaching.

III. 1 CORINTHIANS 15: INCENTIVE TO GODLY LIVING.

1. The gospel is inseparably linked to the resurrection of Christ. **15:1-4**
 - a. They had heard and received it in the past (aorist), currently stood in it (perfect), and would continue to be saved (present) if they held fast.
2. While it seems no one there was denying that Christ was raised, Paul reviews the evidence. (15:5-11)
3. To deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny that Christ is risen and end all hope. **15:12-19**
 - a. Platonic philosophy denied that the body could be raised, but Paul argues that if the dead can't rise, then Christ couldn't rise and our faith is futile.
4. In 15:20-28 Paul reaffirms that Christ is risen and is therefore the firstfruits. Death will be destroyed.
5. In vv. 29-34 Paul asks why he and others have been risking their lives if the dead were not to be raised.
 - a. Includes a warning that this doctrine will affect morals. **15:32-34**
6. (Vv. 35-49) deals with what Paul calls a foolish question. **15:35**
 - a. He gives assurance that it will be a glorious body.
 - b. Here we have the natural, but then it will be a spiritual body.
7. And that leads to the great, stirring conclusion. **15:50-58**
8. That people have always seen something a certain way does not make it so, but there is a good reason people have always seen the promise of a bodily resurrection in **1 Cor. 15**.

Conclusion:

- 1) RE can sometimes be confusing, but I'm confident we have looked at enough to know it is not true.
- 2) The world will one day end (2 Pet. 3) and we will be raised to judgment. **Jn. 5:28f**
- 3) If not prepared this should be incredibly frightening, but if you are in Christ, it should comfort and inspire.
- 4) Which will it be for you?