

Resurrection – How It Will Take Place Luke 20:27-40

In the mid 1800's the song writer, Anna Bartlett wrote the much beloved hymn that refrains, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the bible tells me so". And yes, most of us have sung that hymn many times.

But some years ago, the pastor of a very large church in the Atlanta area gave a series of sermons that took issue with those words of that song, saying that it is not because the bible tells us so that we can believe that Jesus loves us, but rather, it is our personal experience with Christ that affirms that Jesus loves us.

And yes, to a lot of people that sounds as if it is an acceptable "truth" to believe. But in listening to several of this man's sermons on this subject, we quickly learn that he has gone to the extent of questioning the actual validity and the value of the scriptures given within our bibles as the source of our knowledge and understanding about the Lord Jesus, in effect bringing into question all that we know about the Lord Jesus, His birth, His death and His resurrection. And especially, bringing into question those precious words of 2 Timothy 3 that I quote for us so often that . . .

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

And also, the words of 2 Peter 1 that tell us,

²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

And as I have listened to several of this man's sermons, along with interviews and other published statements, I can't find where he takes any other stand other than this one, that this errant belief about the scriptures is "his truth", a misguided "truth" that he believes for himself, but also a "truth" that he will teach to others with "itching ears" who want to listen.

I'm reminded of a similar circumstance given in the Book of Galatians where some other people were trying to convince the people to believe another form of the gospel. There the Apostle Paul gave a stern warning saying,

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there

is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:6-9)

Let me say this again! Simply put, this man has chosen to believe that the scriptures are NOT the only inerrant, infallible source of knowledge and understanding concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, but rather it is each person's personal experience with Christ that validates and approves of who Christ is.

I would pray that what I'm saying about this man's teachings would not be accurate, but I fear that it is. It certainly is what he has said and what he has published and what he is teaching to the many thousands of church members who gather to hear his preaching each week.

Now why have I brought this man and his teachings to us today? It's because of the errant leadership that is being expressed to us here in the beliefs and the doctrines adopted by these Sadducees, respected religious leaders of their day, picking and choosing the scriptures that they want to believe and ignoring many of the other scriptures and leading others astray with their beliefs. Essentially, doing the same thing that this preacher that we've just spoken about is doing, discounting the validity and the value of the scriptures as they are given within this bible in favor of their own desired beliefs, their own desired version of "truth".

Let's pause for a moment and read our scripture passage given here in Luke chapter 20 beginning in verse 27.

²⁷ Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, ²⁸ saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. ³⁰ And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. ³¹ Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. ³² Last of all the woman died also. ³³ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

³⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; ³⁶ nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. ³⁷ But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' ³⁸ For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him." (Luke 20:27-40)

As a quick review, let's recall that in our most recent study, as we considered the beliefs of the Sadducees, we noted that according to these scriptures, the Sadducees had chosen as their doctrines to believe that there would not be a resurrection, and neither would there be any other form of an afterlife.

And we also noted that several modern day religious groups, the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses and others, hold similar views, that while they generally do accept some form of a resurrection, they reject the belief that there will be eternal damnation in hell as the penalty for sins committed while in this life.

Their concern seems most to have to do with a misguided human concept regarding the holiness of God and regarding what His holiness must require when it is confronted by the evils of sin, their beliefs getting worked out in such statements as, "I cannot believe that a 'just God' would inflict physical pain and torture upon His children."

So then, even though these religious groups might believe in a resurrection and some version of heaven that has some remote similarities to the clearly given biblical view, their beliefs about hell have no similarities at all.

And while we can't know all of the reasons why these religious groups have rewritten the scriptures so as to remove the penalties and sufferings of hell, it seems that at the heart of their decisions was the desire to eliminate accountability and retribution for past sins, giving them a "choose-your-own" alternative ending, one that provides them with some form of relief, or absolution or pardon.

Also, it seems that at the heart of such decisions is man's innate need to apply common human logic and intellect to a very "spiritual" matter of God. And

while that is something that can be done, it must be done with great care, else the result of our efforts will be just more of the “wisdom of the wise” that God strongly warns us away from in 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

The situations and the circumstances that most tempt us to apply our human logic seem most often to involve those matters that reside within the “gray” areas of our understanding, those things that are not specifically spelled out in “black and white” within these scriptures. And there are many, many of those.

And we are thankful when we are able to turn to the learned Bible Scholars, and Theologians and Apologists to help us fill in the gaps of our understanding.

But folks, may I say clearly and plainly, the “resurrection” is NOT one of those “gray” areas. Not at all! There is simply too much “black and white” explanation written within these scriptures about the resurrection for us to have very many questions at all.

Granted, yes, we must first be willing to fully accept these scriptures as being God’s inerrant, infallible truth. And there are many, as with this preacher in Atlanta that we just spoke about who do not accept these scriptures to be the only truth of God.

But if we do believe and accept that these scriptures are the only inerrant, infallible truth of God, then we will find chapter after chapter filled with plain and simple words that clearly declare that yes, there surely will be a resurrection, and then go on further to describe how the resurrection will take place.

One of my favorite writers, A. W. Tozer, uses the expression, a “plain man”, when he describes an ordinary person and their ability to comprehend ordinary matters. May I also use that same expression in this understanding about the resurrection by saying that any “plain man” or “plain woman” who has received Christ as their Savior and has the Holy Spirit abiding within them should be able to read these words of scripture and gain most all of the understanding they will need to know regarding the resurrection.

May we begin with the “plain truths” given to us in 1 Corinthians 15, beginning with an explanation about the resurrection of Christ. Why would that be an important place to start? It is because it is in Christ’s resurrection that the possibility of our own resurrection first takes place.

God requires that the Lord Jesus be the “First Fruits among many” who are resurrected. It was because of His resurrection that you and I are able to be resurrected.

Turn with me and follow along through the words given in 1 Corinthians 15! And yes, let’s please do accept these words as being the inerrant and infallible truth of God. Here, the Holy Spirit, speaking through the mouth of the Apostle Paul said,

¹ Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless (otherwise) you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

First, did you note carefully that in verses three and four that these scriptures use as their source authority other scriptures. Scripture validates scripture!

Oh dear Christian, this is the pure gospel, the “good news”, the best news that you and I could ever hope for, the good news that even though we be sinful and corrupt to the core, as each of us truly are, Jesus died for our sins. And in His death, He took both our sins and the power of our sin nature from us and took them all into hell, forever freeing us from the guilt and penalty and power of sin and self. Then on the third day, He was resurrected to life.

And then, listen to the reasoning that the Apostle Paul puts forth concerning the resurrection, beginning in verse 12. Listen!

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet. (1 Corinthians 15:12-27)

I love the way that God is so lovingly considerate of our weak and simple minds.

And then, here in verse 35, He simply and plainly spells it out for us so that we can understand. Listen, verse 35!

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body (1 Corinthians 15:35-38)

Consider what God is saying to us here. We do not plant a stalk of corn or wheat, but only a dead and dried out seed. But what it later becomes is miraculous, a stalk producing, thirty, sixty, a hundred fold.

Then listen further, verse 42,

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last

Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:42-49)

Isn't this delightful, that God would be so clear to us regarding such a deep and mysterious consideration?

Then listen on forward in verse 50!

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:50-54)

And as we said a moment ago, there are many, many more plain-spoken passages concerning the resurrection. May I read one more, this from 1 Thessalonians chapter 4! Listen.

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)

This folks is exciting and it is the real truth. Some of us here today may be these very ones who are caught up into the clouds to be with the Lord Jesus when He returns in His glory. I would love to be one of those.

Can't you just imagine it taking place, even right at this moment! I can!

But should such time not be now, and we instead breathe our last here in this life, if we have truly received Christ as Savior and Lord, while our bodies are committed to the grave and go back to the dust from whence we came, our souls and our spirits will go immediately to be with Christ in heaven.

Then, as we read a moment ago, afterwards, in what God calls "the fullness of time", our new and wonderful glorified, imperishable bodies will be resurrected, and will be reunited with our souls and spirits and glorified together with Christ in heaven where we will spend an eternity with Him.

Isn't this such a wonderful promise for us to look forward too?

But folks, listen, a consideration of the resurrection is not complete without also considering what is to happen to those who have rejected the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Their resurrection experience will be very different. A foreboding reality lies ahead for them.

Listen to what Jesus has to say in Revelation chapter 21!

⁶ And he said . . . "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:6-8)

For those people who want to avoid a final accountability and future recompense for their lifestyles and behaviors while in this life, it will not be as simple as rewriting their own alternative ending.

God still remains the Almighty, Sovereign God who surely will bring both His love and His justice to bear upon all men.

And yes, there surely will be a resurrection, for every one of us. And the Sovereign, Almighty God will have the final word in all that will take place. For those of us who have received Christ Jesus, we will have eternal life with Him in heaven. But for those who have rejected Christ, they will have an eternal death in the burning fires of hell.

Listen carefully as I close . . . These are the words of the Lord Jesus given to us in the final chapter of this bible, Revelation chapter 22. There He said,

¹² "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. (Revelation 22:12-17)

Pray with me!