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**The Resurrection 2013**

Christ is risen, risen indeed! What does that mean? Before we race into a discussion of the resurrection I want to be sure that we understand the difference between three words; angel, resuscitation and resurrection. These are words that if you're not careful you won't read Scripture right in certain areas, and people tend to be sloppy, so let's clarify vocabulary a moment.

The first thing about resurrection is that it's not becoming an angel. No person has ever become an angel. Angels are different. Angels have what we would call a spirit body. They do not have a physical body as in resurrection. Now, temporarily, angels can manifest themselves in physical bodies. Apparently they showed up and ate steak with Abraham; two angels moved the stone that covered the tomb in the NT, one about knocked Peter's block off in prison. So evidently they can temporarily materialize and interact with the material universe. Angels are ministering spirits, but angels are not the same as resurrection. Another capability angels have is the ability to morph into flames of fire or wind, and be God's messengers; apparently God gave the Law at Mt Sinai through angels who appeared as flames of fire. So angels can appear as men and they can also morph and appear as fire. Angels have strange transformation ability. But generally speaking they have what we call a spirit body. So be careful not to think of the resurrection body as an angelic spirit. That was the issue with Thomas. He thought what the other apostles saw was just Jesus' spirit, like when Elijah and Moses showed up with Jesus at the Mt of Transfiguration; they didn't have physical bodies, but they were clothed, they appeared in some kind of intermediate spirit body. That's not the resurrection body. That's a spirit body that departed people have until the resurrection. But in the resurrection the body has physical mass, it can be touched, a spirit body doesn't have physical mass, can't eat, drink, etc...but the resurrection body can.

The second thing about resurrection is it's not resuscitation. Resuscitation is the idea of CPR, that we restore breath to the present body but that body will die again. That would be an example in 1 Kgs 17 with the widow of Zarephath. Her son died and Elijah prayed and his breath returned to him. Another example would be in Acts 20 when Paul taught the word of God all night long and a man named Eutychus fell out of the second story window and died, Paul laid down on him and his life returned. These are resuscitations, not resurrections; they may be foreshadowings of resurrection, they may illustrate some things about resurrection, but they are not resurrections. They are miracles and they demonstrate God's power over life and death, just like the resurrection is a miracle, but they are not resurrections. The point of resuscitation is that the person would eventually die again because the resuscitated body is still a mortal human body, miraculously changed, and the spirit reunited to the body, but nonetheless mortal. The resurrection body is not mortal.

The third thing is the resurrection body and the Scriptures assert that resurrection is not a spirit body like an angel or a resuscitated body like Eutychus, but rather it's a transformation of the present mortal body into an immortal body. This the Scriptures assert to have already occurred in history, and it wasn't Muhammad, it wasn't Confucius, it wasn't Joseph Smith, it was the Lord Jesus Christ. That's one of the uniqueness's of Christianity; we follow a risen savior not a dead religious leader. And in that resurrection His body was transformed. The same body that was crucified on the cross to satisfy God's justice, the same body that was laid in the tomb was transformed so that the body was not there but the linen head-covering was there, all neatly folded and laid to the side to demonstrate what? That His body wasn't stolen; thieves don't clean up the place, they get out as fast as possible. But Jesus took his time when He rose, folded up the napkin neatly and walked out. And when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the twelve (Thomas was not there) they all doubted, they couldn't believe that it was Him so he ate, he drank, they touched Him, they saw the scars. We would say, scientifically today, His resurrection body had mass that weighed something, it took up space. It wasn't just a ghost. Ghosts don't eat and drink. Yet it also had new abilities - it could appear and disappear, it could pass through walls. So it had similarities to the present body but it also had differences. We don't really know its biology, chemistry and physics. The

resurrection body is a black box so far as it's composition. But at least what is known about it is that it's open to empirical perception by all our present senses and it's indestructible. And most importantly it's the first fruits of more to come. Christ is the first fruits of those to come.

So angelic spirits, resuscitation and resurrection; those are three vocabulary words, we're talking about resurrection. The Bible asserts that resurrection happened, it was observed empirically, Jesus appeared multiple times, showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs during a period of 40 days.

Now let's turn to 1 Cor 15. 1 Cor 15 is the classic passage on resurrection in the NT. When you have an event like the resurrection, it has to be interpreted in the biblical frame of reference. So you have an event, in this case the resurrection, but that resurrection did not occur in a void, it occurred inside the context of Scripture. If you look at it all by itself and interpret it you'll draw your own conclusions and misinterpret it. That's not how history works. And that's what Paul is pointing out in verse 3, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*, <sup>4</sup>and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures*." Notice Paul says, before we talk about the resurrection we talk how prior Scripture predicted these things, that He would die "according to the Scriptures" and He would rise again, "according to the Scriptures. What Scriptures? The OT, that's all they had at the time. He says that's where the story of resurrection begins, it doesn't start with Jesus rising in a void, it starts with the OT prediction and then when we come to Jesus' resurrection we interpret it inside the framework of those OT passages. So what did the OT teach about resurrection?

There are many passages on the resurrection in the OT, some implicit, others explicit. Three passages we will look at teach it explicitly. The first passage is Job 19:25. Job was written early, just after the Flood, and it's clear that very early on in history resurrection was understood. Verse 25, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. <sup>26</sup>"Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; <sup>27</sup>Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another." In verse 26, "from my flesh I shall see God." Not from a spirit, from my flesh. Humans have a spirit too but this is talking about seeing God from his flesh. Verse 27, "my eyes will see." The resurrection body has eyes, it can see. Job held that at

the last, observe the timing, at the last day, so this is at the end of history, the resurrection is conceived at this time of history as occurring at the end of history. That's a key because what it means is that when Christ was raised the end of history had come. Now God is declaring to all men everywhere that they repent.

The second passage is Isa 26:19. And Isaiah writes to a generation of Jews that was living in difficult times, they needed hope, everything was collapsing around them so he makes this statement in verse 19, "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits." So again, a very strong resurrection verse, corpses will rise out of the earth and reunite with their spirits, and it gave hope to that generation of Israel.

The third passage is Dan 12:2 and this was given to Daniel when he was an old man, he had served politically through several administrations in Babylon and now he was serving in Medo-Persia. In sketching an outline of end-times events the angel says, verse 2, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt." This introduces the idea that there are two sides to the resurrection, all believers, yes, but all unbelievers too; believers unto everlasting life, unbelievers unto everlasting contempt. And from an unbelieving point of view that's what's so chilling about the resurrection. The resurrection is a very scary doctrine for most of the human race because it says you are forever going to be locked into a conscious, bodily, existence that is everlasting suffering and the most terrible thing about it is that's the destiny you have chosen. Those who have received Christ, those who have believed on Him will be resurrected unto life, because they have given up on good works and they've said that if I'm ever going to be pleasing to God it's going to be because Christ's righteousness is credited to my account through faith in Him. For those who have said I'm going to do it myself thank you. God will say fine, do it yourself, but you will be faced with the horror of living in a resurrected body of death, forever and ever, that can never be destroyed, but can feel pain, etc...with no relief. And that's a horror. So Dan 12:2 shows us there are two sides to the resurrection; a resurrection to life *and* a resurrection to contempt and everyone ends up in one place or the other. That is why the gospel is so tremendously important, today is the

hour of grace, today is the day of salvation; tomorrow, there is no guarantee of tomorrow.

So Job 19:25, the resurrection is at the end of history, that gives us the timing, Isa 26:19 gives encouragement to those who are to be resurrected unto life and Dan 12:2 says there are two sides to the resurrection, unto life and unto condemnation. So the resurrection is not new with Christ in the NT. When Christ rose it was not out of the clear blue, the OT already predicted it and so we are interpreting it inside the OT predictions.

When we come to the NT and have the first resurrection in history, the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have a new kind of human walking around, an immortal one, interacting with mortal ones. He ate with them, drank with them, talked with them, and was touched by them. So what does it mean that a resurrection has occurred in history? Let's look at a quote from George Eldon Ladd. Ladd captured a very powerful implication of Jesus' resurrection when he pointed out, "Jesus' resurrection is not an isolated event that gives to men the warm confidence and hope of a future resurrection;" What does he mean by that? He means there are two sides to resurrection; one side of it is confidence and hope, but the other side is a horror, it's a resurrection unto eternal damnation. He goes on, "Jesus' resurrection...is the beginning of the eschatological resurrection itself." What he means is that when Christ rose from the dead it is the beginning of the end of the world as we know it. Because remember what Job said? Resurrection occurs at the end of history. So if Christ is already risen from the dead then we have already entered the last day of history. We're not looking for the last days; the last days already began with the resurrection of Jesus. This is why there's an urgency to believe the gospel. Dr. Ladd goes on, "If we may use crude terms to try to describe sublime realities, we might say that a piece of the eschatological resurrection has been split off and planted in the midst of history. The first act of the drama of the Last day has taken place before the Day of the Lord." What does he mean a piece of the resurrection has been split off? He means Jesus has been raised before everybody else has been raised. But what's next? Everyone else is going to be raised and they're going to face judgment. Judgment concerning what? What they've done with Jesus Christ. Who do you say Jesus Christ is? And you better be careful how you answer that question because the answer reveals not who Jesus Christ is but your orientation to who He is. He is utterly unique. His claims are utterly unique.

He is virgin born so He's without sin, He was born into hypostatic union, as the eternal God He took to Himself true humanity, so He's undiminished deity united with true humanity, yet He's only one person, one person but with two natures, both Creator and creature. He's kenotic meaning that though He possessed all divine attributes He set aside the independent use of His divine attributes so that He knows what it is to be tempted as we are, yet he was without sin so He could have lived forever. He gave up His life on the cross to satisfy God's righteous anger against our sin. He did this for you, He did this for me, He took our sin in His body to die for us that He might give us in exchange His life through faith, simply receiving Him, putting our trust in Him. He rose from the dead to demonstrate that He satisfied perfectly the Father's righteous anger. Name one other religious leader that ever did that for you? Name one other religious leader who rose from the dead? Nobody ever even claimed it. Nobody else did any of the things Jesus Christ did. He is totally unique. Now what are you going to do with Him?

The first act of this dividing of men has already occurred with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We live in a day of grace; here we are in 2013, from AD33 to AD2013 it's been a time in which men can repent, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved. We live in a time when you can still change sides, but this time is rapidly coming to a close and when it does the time of judgment comes. And whatever you've done with Jesus Christ at that moment will determine your eternal destiny. There are no changing sides at that point. You're locked in forever.

I want you to pause for a moment and just reflect that when you think of Christ's resurrection, that you realize that the end of this universe has already begun and the inauguration of the next universe has already come. He's the first part of the new creation, the new heavens and the new earth that's yet to come; it already exists in at least one human body right now, today, at the right hand of the Father. There's no question about whether God is going to create a whole new world, He's already begun to create a whole new world with the resurrected Jesus Christ.

And other people are going to be added to that new world. What kind of person will inhabit that new world? People that are resurrected like unto the resurrected Christ. He's the first fruits with a guarantee of more to follow. No other religion or philosophy of history can point man to what the new world



will look like. Communism, for example, makes stupendous claims of the future 'redeemed' classless society in a new world, but it cannot offer today an actual concrete example of the kind of person who will live in that society." "Biblical Christianity alone can point to the kind of person who will live in the new world, a person like the resurrected God-man King."

Turn to Acts 17. We want to show that with the resurrection of Christ a titanic shift has occurred in history. History before the resurrection and history after the resurrection are radically different. Acts 17:30-32 Paul is using the resurrection in this address to the Athenian's and notice how he places it inside a framework of history. Verse 30, he says, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance," i.e. the civilization that rose out of Noah, the Gentiles, "God is now declaring to men," in other words, He didn't do this before, this is new, He's declaring now to all men "that all everywhere" all culture groups, all linguistic groups, this is a universal gospel claim...that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way. How would a person off the streets respond to this? You can't say that. Why, every culture has their own beliefs and you shouldn't go around telling people your beliefs are right and theirs are wrong. Well, I didn't tell them that. Paul told them that so go argue with him. Jesus Christ is the one who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by Me." I didn't say that. So don't blame me, I didn't write this book, I'm just telling you what it says. If you ask me you ought to be happy there is a way. If you understand the holiness of God you understand God was not required to make a way to Him. He didn't have to do that. He's not obligated to you. He's not obligated to me. He's not obligated to anyone. We're all obligated to Him and we fell short on our obligation. We stole life and we're all under capital punishment. That He voided a way out, that's grace. That He sent His own Son to take your place in the execution chair, that's grace.

So yeah there's one way, one way for all cultures, for all language groups. They've been living in ignorance ever since the rebellion after Noah and the tower of Babel, the whole of human civilization has suppressed the truth and fallen into ignorance, and He is now declaring that all men everywhere should repent. Why? Verse 31 "because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." What's the context of resurrection? Judgment. When does judgment occur? At the end of

history. As Job said, the last day. So what does judgment mean? It means men are accountable for their actions. It means there's going to be an evaluation. This is the ultimate evaluation. This is your life evaluation, "What did you do with Jesus Christ?" I hope you're ready to answer that question. And it's put in connection with resurrection, that scary doctrine, that doctrine nobody wants to talk about. Oh people want to talk about Easter eggs all day long. There's nothing offensive about Easter eggs. What is offensive is resurrection because it means a peer of the human race is sitting on His throne waiting to judge. And so as I'm reminding you of the resurrection I'm reminding you that you are going to face Him. It's unavoidable. Everyone is going to be judged. Everyone is going to have to give an account for themselves. And people don't want to hear that. So what do they say? Verse 32, "Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer," see, this is the mocking crowd, they try to laugh it off, oh, I don't believe that. Ok, fine. Does it work? Does it make people feel better? For a while. But deep down they know. Deep down they know they're not getting away with anything. Deep down they know they will face the judgment.

Did Paul fail in his evangelism? No. He no more failed than you do when you witness to members of your own family that are the hardest ones to witness to. You feel thwarted, you feel defeated. How many of Jesus' own brothers and sisters believed in Him while He was still alive? From what we can tell, the only report in the NT is they doubted Him. What's the matter; He didn't live a Christ-like life in His own family? Surely not. It was because people dead in transgressions and sins and there's a work of the Holy Spirit that has to happen through the preaching of the word, that has to happen before a person can believe in Christ. The point is that when you see the resurrection in Scripture it's a scary moment because it reminds us that judgment is coming and we will have to give an answer.

To get the full force of what we're saying here turn to Luke 16. What we're saying is that there's a split coming in the road of humanity and when that split occurs, that is where your future is permanent. In other words, at that point you can never ever, ever, ever be changed again, no more falls and no more grace and no more gospel and no more just as I am's, permanent existence in one place or the other. The resurrection seals the doom of the



damned and it seals the security of the saved. And never shall the twain meet. It is a very sobering truth when it's considered.

In Luke 16:19, this is one of Jesus' more startling teachings. People run around saying, well, Jesus was a nice guy, Jesus gave us some good ethics but if you really tie them down and make them read what Jesus actually taught they would be shocked. Jesus taught about heaven and hell, he talked about people burning in flames and that's not the little ethical Jesus they like to talk about. That's nasty talk. Why did Jesus go around talking like that? Because that's the way it is. It doesn't do anyone any good to go around talking like the world is a fairy tale. And here He is telling it like it is to the Pharisees who thought if someone had money that meant they were the blessed of God, and the Pharisees used a lot of gimmicks to con money out of people so they could assure themselves they were the blessed of God, but in reality they were only interested in the money, they were not interested in other people, they were not interested in the Scriptures. Nonsense. So understand that's the background of the discussion; if you're rich you'll be blessed, if you're poor, too bad for you. God is cursing you. So Jesus throws this at them. Verse 19, "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day." And by the way, one tiny piece of that linen cost ten ounces of gold, it came out of Egypt and it was extraordinary splendorous. This description is of the richest person on the planet. The blessed of God. Verse 20, "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores," the name Lazarus means God helps, he uses it in front of the Pharisees because it's irony. God helps this guy, the guy sits at the gate of the rich man just to eat scraps, what a loser, this is someone the Pharisees looked down their noses at because he is obviously the cursed of God and yet his name means God helps. How could that be? Verse 22, "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup>In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom." He's developing a picture that was first painted in the OT of a place called Hades or Sheol. The picture was that when a person dies they go to this place called Sheol. Sheol was the place of the dead and these people knew that when they died they would go to Sheol. What Jesus is doing is amplifying the picture of Sheol and saying; now you know there are two compartments in Sheol, don't you? And in between a great abyss. Unbelievers on one side, believers like Abraham on the other side. Surely the

rich man is in the best place, the blessing of God, he's a rich Pharisee. But it turns out it's the poor man that's in Abraham's bosom and the rich man is in flames. Is Jesus threatening the Pharisees? You bet He is. Is Jesus telling them their religion is wrong? Yes, He is. Jesus is saying, your belief system is wrong. Now in the story the poor man was in Abraham's bosom, the rich man was staring out across this great abyss and he could see the man over in Abraham's bosom but there was no way he could get over there. See, once you die there's no more changing sides, you can change sides up until you die, but when you die, that's it, you're on one side or the other, forever. So it's over for this rich guy and he cries out in verse 24, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus the bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.'" In other words, no more opportunity to change sides, that opportunity is for in this life only and then it's gone. So what verse 26 is getting at is that when you die there are no crossovers, you've made your choice, there are no second chances, it's fixed, you can't get relief, you can't change what you did, it's all over. So all that's left is verse 27, "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house—if he can't come over here and comfort me, do the next best thing, send him to my father's house, verse 28, 'for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' Here's a guy who says, I know what it's like here and I don't want you to be here. Verse 29, and this is what it really boils down to, "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' You know, they have the word of God, let them go read the word of God. But he said, verse 30, "No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!" 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'" What's the point? If you're not going to trust God on the basis of His own authority, and He's given you clear revelation in the OT that resurrection was coming, through Job, through Isaiah, through Daniel, through many, many prophets and if you're not going to come to faith based on what God has said then I can present all the empirical evidence in the world and it won't convince you at all. We can bring grandma up from the

grave and you would interpret it as, well, I knocked my head real bad last night or I had some bad Mexican food. Man manipulates data. Man interprets it in terms of his enmity with God. In fact it's an expression of his enmity against God. So I could levitate right here and it wouldn't mean a thing to you. The red-hooded monks of Tibet could do all kinds of levitation and it didn't mean they had the way, the truth and the life. If you won't be persuaded by the Scriptures then you won't be persuaded by some empirical evidence you see, but some experience you have. No, the word of God is where you get truth, not your experience, not empiricism, because those things can be manipulated by your imagination. But God has spoken and it is, and if you won't believe on the basis of what He has spoken then you're going to be in big trouble at the judgment and you're not going to like it.

Alright, the point I've tried to make from the Scriptures is that the OT predicted resurrection so when we come to the resurrection of Christ it has to be interpreted within the context of the OT predictions as the first act of the final drama of history. Such that right now there is a resurrected human being sitting as Judge and He is declaring to all men everywhere that they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. The end of this world has begun and the new world has dawned. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Believe today because the time is short and once you've lost the opportunity there are no second chances, you only get one shot at this. Who do you say that Jesus Christ is?

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