



GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI † DEO † GLORIA

BACK TO THE BASICS

A Study of the Essentials of the Christian Faith

Sermon Notes

The Bodily Resurrection, Part 2

Revelation 21:1-5

March 13, 2011

Revelation 21:1-5: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’” And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’”

- This morning we continue in our study of the doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Last week, I referred to a recent debate between John Dominic Crossan (of the Jesus Seminar) and N.T. Wright, in which Crossan made the following statement:

“Tell me what the implications are of a literal reading of the resurrection account. Tell me how a literal reading of Christ’s resurrection [i.e., a *bodily* resurrection] could change the world.”

- And so I ask you again this morning, **How would *you* address these statements?**
- In other words, what if Christ were crucified on the cross for our sins, but was never raised ***bodily*** from the dead? Or, what if He was only raised “spiritually?” Or as Crossan believes, in a “metaphorical” sense? What would it do to the Christian faith if it was discovered that Crossan’s beliefs were, in fact, true? **We continue this week in our search for a biblical answer.**

- I. The Reality and Nature of the Fall**
- II. The Need for Resurrection**
- III. The Nature of the Resurrection**
- IV. The Implications of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

I. The Reality of the Fall

II. The Need for Bodily Resurrection

III. The Nature of the Resurrection

IV. The Implications of the Resurrection

1. The Resurrection Reveals the Uniqueness of Christ and Christianity

2. Because the resurrection was bodily...it was REAL. It was historical. It actually happened.

3. The Resurrection confirms the Words of Christ and Scripture

4. The Bodily Resurrection confirms the Deity of Christ

5. The Resurrection reveals the Father's [public] acceptance of the Work of the Son – that the Father's wrath was fully exhausted and the Son is Vindicated!

6. Therefore, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ ensures our forgiveness and justification – all that was accomplished in Christ's obedience in life and unto death.

Romans 4:23-25: “²³But the words ‘it was counted to him’ were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”

- “The proof of justification by faith in Abraham’s case leads Paul back to the foundation of justification in the work of Christ (3:24-26). Christ’s death and resurrection are two aspects of one saving work. In the first part, Christ bore the legal penalty for our guilt. In the second, he rose from the dead, His resurrection confirming that His death was a sufficient and effective offering for sin, pleasing the Supreme Judge.”

The Reformation Study Bible

1 Corinthians 15:17: “¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”

7. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes the basis of our regeneration and future bodily resurrection.

Ephesians 2:5-6 states, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”

- Just as we will be raised *bodily* one day, as believers in Christ, we have now been raised *spiritually* – being brought from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Colossians 3:1 states, “¹Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

1 Peter 1:3 states, “³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

- Read also Galatians 2:20.

8. In His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ destroyed the Power of Death and gives every believer the hope of eternal life. Therefore, death no longer has the victory. As the Apostle Paul asks, in 1 Corinthians 15:55: “O death, where is your victory?”

John 11:25-26: “²⁵Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”

- Read Romans 6
- Read Ephesians 1:18-2:10
- Read Colossians 2:9-15; 3:1-4

1 Corinthians 15:54-57: “But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ‘O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“The atoning work of Christ, if it was to be effective at all, had to terminate, not in death, but in life.”

Louis Berkhof

- Physical death is the separation of the soul from the physical body. However, this separation no longer has permanent power over us, because, through the Resurrection, Christ joins the body and spirit together once more.
 - Not only this, through faith in Christ, not only will we be resurrected, but we will be glorified! That is, made morally righteous...perfect!
 - There are few things in life more freeing than knowing that the most anyone can do to us is (temporarily) destroy our body. I know so many Christians who are terrified of death; yet, this is why we have resurrection – that we would not fear death, for its sting has been taken away and destroyed!

“²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”
Matthew 10:28

9. Creation, to include the physical world, is good.

- God created everything *ex nihilo* – “out of nothing.” As a result, nothing is inherently evil. In fact, since God created everything, then creation is good.

“If death is the dissolution of this body, never to be reassembled, then death has succeeded in saying present creation is bad and is going to be abandoned. But resurrection says, ‘No.’ Present creation is good. It is corruptible and transient, not least because of sin, but God, having dealt with sin in the cross of Jesus Christ, will deal with corruption. And the result therefore must be the reaffirmation of the good creation, including the reaffirmation of human bodies.”

N.T. Wright

- **Christ came not only to redeem all the Father had given Him, but to redeem the physical created order as well.**

- We must, then, be very careful when we say that we are “saved” for it begs the question, “Saved from what?” And the truth is that we are saved from the wrath of God that is due our sins. **We are NOT saved from this world that God will one day abandon (for He will not abandon His Creation). Christ is coming again not to annihilate this present Creation, but to transform it and make it forever new!**
- After the Fall, God did not decide that He would simply abandoned this present Creation.
- So often when we as fallen and imperfect people sit down to create something, we rarely “get it right” the first time. In fact, imagine sitting down to write a paper or paint a picture. We start, look at what we’ve done, decide we don’t like it, trash it, and start over. We continue this process until we produce something we are at least somewhat pleased with. **Yet God is not like this.**

- **He created once, and He will one day redeem His fallen Creation.**
- Furthermore, since God created **all things, whether visible or invisible, spiritual or physical**, then **all things are good**.
- God said this before the Fall (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12), and after it. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:4, “**Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.**”
- Therefore, since God created all things, **nothing is inherently or intrinsically evil**.
- Furthermore, as God’s representatives, the only creatures created in His image, we should see ourselves as stewards of His *good* Creation.

<p>10. Christ’s bodily resurrection reveals that Christ’s death and resurrection will be the cause of the redemption of all of Creation!</p>

- If Christ was resurrected only spiritually, it would have reflected **an abandonment of His fallen Creation**.
- This, therefore, would have demonstrated that Christ was either unable or unwilling to redeem that which had fallen because of man’s sin.

“When Adam sinned God cursed the ground because of him (Genesis 3:17-19), so that it brought forth thorns and thistles and would only yield food useful for mankind by painful toil. But Paul says that ‘the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God’ (Romans 8:21). He explains that this will happen when we receive our resurrection bodies – in fact, he says that the creation is somehow longing for that day – Romans 8:19, 22-23.” Wayne Grudem

- This understanding gives us the foundation needed for a unified, Christian worldview – a lens through which to view all of Creation and all truth.

“A Christian worldview involves three fundamental dimensions: the original good creation, the perversion of that creation through sin, and the restoration of that creation in Christ.”

Albert Wolters

<p>11. Christ came to redeem all of us, not just our souls.</p>

- Christ was fully God and fully Man. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man.
- Furthermore, when He was raised ***bodily***, His flesh was glorified, demonstrating that our flesh will be redeemed and glorified as well.

“When Christ redeemed us he did not just redeem our spirits (or souls) – he redeemed us as whole persons, and this includes the redemption of our bodies. Therefore, the application of Christ’s work of redemption to us will not be complete until our bodies are entirely set free from the effects of the fall and brought to that state of perfection for which God created them...It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like his own.”

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

12. Because of the Resurrection, we have Unspeakable Power to Live

Samuel Willard writes, “It is true that Christ conquered all on his cross: there the battle was fought and there the victory was gained. But that victory was made into a triumph in his resurrection. Now his enemies fled, quitting the field. *Psa. 68:1*, ‘Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those also who hate him flee before him.’ He made a conquest of death itself, and it lay dead at his feet. Christ would never be known as a conqueror, except for this. If death had held him as her captive, where would his victory be?”

Ephesians 1:18-20: “¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,”

- **The power that raised Christ from the dead is available to believers today!**
- This power was evident in the Apostles.

John Stott states, “Perhaps the transformation of the disciples of Jesus is the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection...”

- In his book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell quotes Harvard attorney Dr. Simon Greenleaf, “It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact.”

- The Apostle Peter writes, in *1 Peter 1:3*, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

- Consider the testimonies of some of the Apostles (taken from *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*):

- Philip was born at Bethsaida and lived a humble life. After the resurrection, he “labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom in A.D. 54. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and crucified.
- Matthew, before becoming a follower of Jesus Christ, was a taxcollector.
- “The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia.” In Ethiopia “he suffered martyrdom, being slain with an halberd (an axe-like weapon) in the city of Nadabah, A.D. 60.”
- James the Less, the brother of Jesus, was once a skeptic, refusing to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. However, after the resurrection, James was the author of the epistle ascribed to his name. At the age of ninety-four he was beat and stoned [to death] by the Jews.
- Andrew was the brother of Peter and preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross in the shape of an X.
- Peter, who once fiercely denied any association with Jesus Christ, suffered a martyr’s death as well. According to tradition [Jerome], he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner his Lord was.

- **Each one of these saints had one thing in common – they were personally and absolutely convinced that Jesus had risen bodily from the dead. Because of this conviction, each one of them were willing to do anything, go anywhere, and even die any way for their Risen Savior. Because of their commitment to Christ, God used them to “turn the world upside-down” – They knew the power that raised Christ from the dead.**

- May we, too, have the same conviction and passion.

13. Through the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ we see that no plan of man can ever thwart the plans of God.

- When we read the biblical testimony of the arrest, trials, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, we see the forces of man conspiring against the plans of God.
- The Jewish / religious machine was one of the most powerful institutions in Jerusalem in the first century. The Jews plotted and schemed to arrest and convict Jesus.

- Not only this; however, but the Roman [Gentile] government also played its part, for it was responsible for the actual crucifixion of Christ. Rome was the most powerful institution in the world at this time.
 - Therefore, with the powerful Jewish hierarchy as well as the Roman government against Christ, we learn that “the whole world” was against Christ.
 - Yet, even with the temporary “success” of the world in crucifying Christ, the resurrection declares that **in the end God always wins, for nothing – not even the most powerful institutions in the world – can thwart His plans.**

14. We are able to live <u>all</u> of our lives to the glory of God.

- ❖ As Christians, many of us have **compartmentalized our lives** so that we view our religious lives and our secular lives separately. Our work during the week, *unless of course we are a pastor*, is seen as separate and distinct from our lives on Sunday. We live one way during the week, and another on Sunday. We do not live unified lives. In fact, when pushed on the issue, many of us will admit that we in some way view spiritual pursuits and occupations – such as teaching a Bible study or serving as a Pastor – as superior to those that are more “secular” – such as a public school teacher, a lawyer or an accountant.
- However, the bodily resurrection of Christ **destroys such a false dichotomy**. Christ redeems the spiritual and the physical, such that every aspect of the Christian life is holy. And so, when we begin to view the world through a biblical understanding of **Creation, Fall and Redemption**, we are set free to live lives of purpose now! And so it is with us, because of the **Redemptive Work of Jesus Christ**, **all** of our lives have meaning, even that which is “secular.”
- Therefore, because of the Bodily Resurrection of Christ, we can declare with the Apostle Paul that “**Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God to the Father through him.**” (Colossians 3:17).
- The bodily resurrection actually gives meaning and purpose to the more “secular” or “physical” aspects of our lives.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems that many Christians believe that this world is a sinking ship and that we are simply waiting for our Savior to come and rescue us out of it before we perish with it. However, the bodily resurrection declares that this is NOT the case. Furthermore, this gives meaning to our work, for Christ did not come to save us from our work; rather, He came to redeem the dignity of our work. |
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- In his 2006 book, *Loving Monday: Succeeding in Business Without Selling Your Soul*, successful businessman John D. Beckett describes a dilemma he faced when he began in business nearly forty years ago:

“How should I relate my faith to my work? As I looked about, I saw very little evidence that people of faith were carrying their faith into their work. Their two worlds were disconnected. To be honest, I had to admit I was no different. Sundays were Sundays, with the rest of the week largely detached, operating by a different set of rules. *Can these two worlds that seem so separate ever merge?* I wondered. As much as my conversion had begun a process of transformation in my mind and spirit, I realized there was a wide gulf in my thinking between this new dimension of faith and how it applied to my work. True, I saw that certain Scriptures could bring guidance or comfort to work-related situations. But, by and large I found myself in two separate worlds. Significant growth was taking place in both (in my *mind* and *spirit*) – but largely unrelated.”

- Beckett continues, stating that when he discovered the implication of Christ’s bodily resurrection, he began to view his work “as having great worth to God.” As “a business person, I was no longer a second-class citizen, nor did I need to leave my Christian convictions and biblical values outside the office entrance when I headed into work on Monday morning.”
- This dilemma is something that is all-too-common among Christians today. We so often struggle with how to relate our **sacred** lives to our **secular** ones (as if such a distinction actually exists). How do we relate our faith in Christ to the “daily business” of life? Or, to put it as John Beckett does, how do we relate *Sundays* with *the rest of the week* in a manner that is meaningful?
- If we, as Christians, were honest with ourselves, most of us would likely not express much confidence that a “secular” profession or pursuit is as important or significant in the eyes of God as a “sacred” one.

This is likely because we have limited the benefit of Christ’s work to that of individual salvation (which is indeed important) rather than embracing His grand work of Redemption. Yet, when we study the doctrine of the Bodily Resurrection, we learn about Redemption.

- However, this problem, this dilemma, is nothing new.
 - According to the Augsburg Confession (written in the 16th century), prior to the Protestant Reformation, “Christianity was thought to consist wholly in the observance of certain holy-days, rites, fasts, and vestures. These observances had won for themselves the exalted title of being the spiritual life and the perfect life.”
 - The Roman Catholic Church’s views on the sacraments and priesthood made it nearly impossible to view life outside of a monastery as anything other than second-class. This led to a deep **secular** / **sacred** divide where certain aspects of life were considered secular and without true significance, while other activities

related directly to the Church (i.e., the practice of the sacraments) were viewed as **sacred**.

- As German Reformer Philip Melancthon wrote, “This error greatly tormented devout consciences, which grieved that they were held in an imperfect state of life...They admired the monks and such like, and falsely imagined that the observances of such men were more acceptable to God.”
- Yet, the Reformers, while seeking to reestablish the centrality of Scripture in the life of the church and the lives of individual believers, also sought to eliminate the **sacred / secular divide** in the lives of the “average churchmen.”

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to British theologian Allister McGrath, it was John Calvin “taught that the individual believer has a vocation to serve God in the world – in every sphere of human existence – lending a new dignity and meaning to ordinary work.” |
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- Unfortunately, it seems that in the church today, though, we are back to where we were prior to the Reformation with respect to our view of the relationship between the secular and sacred. As John Beckett stated, “**Sundays were Sundays, with the rest of the week largely detached...**”
- **As Christians today, we live compartmentalized lives, often wondering why we are so ineffective in engaging a culture that is hostile to the gospel. In fact, if we were honest with ourselves, we would struggle greatly defending the dignity of the work of, say, an accountant versus that of a pastor or missionary. We are stuck in secular / sacred chasm.**
- Yet, with a biblical understanding of resurrection, we can **reclaim the “sacredness of the secular” for the Christian.**

15. Finally, the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates that God <u>will</u> make all things new.

- At the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, He will, once for all, make all things new!
- **This is the message of Resurrection:**

NOTHING – NO ACTION, NO MISTAKE, NO TRAGEDY IS IRREPARABLE, FOR GOD WILL MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!

- Consider the “newness” of the Resurrection:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Tomb

Matthew 27:59-60: “And Joseph [of Arimathea] took the body [of Jesus] and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb...”

- This truth is significant because Christ’s death and subsequent resurrection would usher in a new hope whereby the grave no longer had the power over death.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Week

Luke 24:1: “But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.”

- This truth is significant, as it points back to the Creation account, for in six days God created and on the seventh day He rested.
- Now Christ has been raised on the first day of the week, symbolizing the inauguration of the New Creation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Creation

- Because Christ rose on the first day of the week, He is the Head of the New Creation – the Second Adam through whom the Old Creation will be redeemed.
- The life, burial, and resurrection of Christ ushered in “the New Creation.”

2 Corinthians 5:17: “¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Heaven and New Earth

- As we have seen, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Christ will not come to destroy this present creation and start over. He will not destroy this creation only for us to live spiritual lives in eternity. Rather, He will come to transform this creation and our bodies in order to live in the New Heavens and New Earth for all eternity.
- And, the glory of the New Heaven and New Earth is that everything will be new; however, nothing will get old. Everything is always new.

<p><u>Revelation 21:1</u>: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”</p>

- Since the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the grave is no longer something to fear!
- **Finally, the message of the bodily resurrection is that through the redemptive work of Christ, this decaying, old, and worn out world will be made new again.**
- **There certainly nothing like things that are NEW: the wonder of a newborn baby, the smell of a new car, the feel of new clothes, the look of a new home, the excitement of a child with a new toy.**
- **Yet, the Resurrection declares that Christ will come and make all things NEW!**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Day

Matthew 28:1: “Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week...”

- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ certainly ushered in a “New Day” so to speak.
- In fact, after the resurrection and Pentecost, believers would no longer worship on the old Sabbath (Saturday, or the last day of the week), but would worship on Sunday, the **Lord’s Day**, the first day of the week.
- **A New Day has truly dawned!**

<p>As N.T. Wright concludes so eloquently: “The message of the resurrection is that this world matters! That the injustices and pains of this present world must now be addressed with the news that healing, justice, and love have won...If Easter means Jesus Christ is only raised in a spiritual sense – [then] it is only about me, and finding a new dimension in my life. But if Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead, Christianity becomes good news for the whole world – news which warms our hearts precisely because it isn’t just about warming hearts. Easter means that a world where injustice, violence and degradation are endemic, God is not prepared to tolerate such things – and that we will work and plan, with all the energy of God, to implement victory over them all. Take away Easter and Karl Marx was probably right to accuse Christianity of ignoring problems of the material world. Take it away and Freud was probably right to say Christianity is wish-fulfillment. Take it away and Nietzsche probably was right to say it was for wimps.</p>

Revelation 21:1-5: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’” And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’”