

# Revisiting Resurrection

## General Considerations

1. As *True Man*, Jesus' resurrection testifies that human destiny is *physical* and *relational*.
  - a. The "heavenly hope" held out by God is the attainment of perfect *human* existence.
  - b. Because man is *image-son*, this human perfection is relational: it involves absolute *ontological* intimacy with God, i.e., complete *oneness* with Him. \* John 14; Col. 3:1-4
2. This truth flies in the face of the common notion of *heaven* as the goal of human existence.
  - a. Heaven is a biblical concept, but a *creational* one, in that it refers to God's existence in relation to His creation – not *where* He is, but *how* He is.
  - b. Thus heaven is a *relational* reality (as is also the case with hell as heaven's antithesis); it refers to one's relational proximity to God, not one's spatial proximity. \* 2 Thess. 1:9
3. These truths regarding "heaven" as the human destiny help to explain why and how *resurrection* is crucially central in the outworking of God's purposes for His creation.
  - a. Resurrection is the very substance of "heaven" as the human hope, for it is the human renewal that involves the essential and complete union of the human person with God.
  - b. The reality and necessity of resurrection shows that God's goal isn't forgiveness and reconciliation, but human renewal realized through incorporation into His own life.

*God's intent for humans isn't eternity in a place called heaven, but an absolute and everlasting union and communion that is the mutual indwelling of "I in you and you in Me."*

4. Thus the orientation of Jesus' instruction in the Upper Room: He wanted His disciples to understand His impending death in terms of its purpose and outcome, not its outrage, horror, and apparent finality.
  - a. His death would culminate with His resurrection from the dead, and that same destiny had been appointed for His disciples. They were to share in His resurrection.

*This resurrection wouldn't be resuscitation, but **new creation** – the obtainment of the consummate human existence for which man was created. \* 1 Cor. 15:35-49*

- b. And so the disciples needed to understand that Jesus wasn't leaving them, but coming back to them in a profound and completely unexpected way, never to leave them again.

*He would return to them to make His abode with them by indwelling and transforming them into His own likeness by His Spirit.*

*He was going to prepare a "room" for them in His Father's "house" and then come for them, which would involve bringing them into abiding, ontological union with the Father such that they, like Jesus Himself, would be in the Father, even as He would be in them. \* John 14:1-23, 17:14-23.*

5. Resurrection concerns “life out of death,” *but specifically in the sense of new creation. It isn’t resuscitation, but neither is it renewal to any sort of prior human existence.*
  - a. By His life as well as His death (John 11:24-25), Jesus condemned fallen humanness in Himself (Rom. 8:3), so that His resurrection was the emergence of a *New Adam*.
  - b. At the same time, this New Adam isn’t the recovery of the pre-fall Adam. *Jesus’ resurrection wasn’t man’s restoration to his initial created form, but man’s attainment of his ultimate identity and purpose which God had eternally determined for him.*
  - c. The Last Adam is ***eschatological man*** – *man of the Spirit*: man as taken up in the life of God so as to be comprehensively intimate with God.
  - d. And this Last Adam bears His own ***offspring***: *sons and daughters who are of and in the Spirit in the same way and to the same extent as He is, and so heirs of all He is heir to.*
6. But because resurrection is new creation, it has *creation-wide* significance.
  - a. Resurrection doesn’t apply to the non-human creation in the same way it does human beings, but the creation’s *renewal* – its experience of the new creation inaugurated in Jesus – presupposes, reflects and flows out of resurrection as a human phenomenon.
  - b. More specifically, the creation’s liberation from the curse and its renewal *stand upon* and *complete* resurrection as it originates in Jesus and then embraces the human race.

*Thus Paul insisted that the creation would experience its benefit from resurrection when God’s image-children experience the completion of their resurrection.*

***New creation in the physical realm (human and non-human) occurs at the same time, in that man’s completion in renewal enables the creation’s renewal. The reason is that new creation is relational, and the wider creation cannot be truly reunited to God until man, the image-son and mediator, is fully reunited to Him. \* Romans 8:13ff***

### **Practical Implications:**

1. We must think of ourselves and order our lives as those who have *already* been raised from the dead to share in Jesus’ resurrection. \* Rom. 6:1-11; Eph. 2:1-6; Col 3:1-11
  - a. We are the *beginning of God’s new creation*, not merely forgiven and cleansed people seeking to live better, more godly lives through God’s grace. \* 2 Cor. 5:14-21
  - b. Our godliness is the authenticity of *vital union and likeness*, not compliant “obedience.”
2. So our “heavenly hope” is our assured longing for the *consummation* of what already exists.
  - a. Our hope isn’t “going to heaven,” but our full *Christiformity*. \* 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 3
  - b. Our hope is the full attainment of our *sonship*, which is our complete conformity to the Image-Son who is resurrection and life. *So our mission in the world* – 1 Cor. 15:53-58.

***Thus the Table is the table of resurrection, and so it looks forward as well as backward.***

\* John 6:48-54; 1 Cor. 11:23-26