

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Chapter from 'Foundation Truths' By C L Parker. Read the full book here <https://www.clparker.com/covers/ft-cover.html>

Belief in the Resurrection of the body is implicit in all Bible history. It lay at the very root of the Patriarchal and Jewish theology. The promises of God, which had no fulfilment in the life time of those who believed them, could only be received and enjoyed after a resurrection from the dead; without it they were null and void.

This belief runs all through the Old Testament like a golden thread. Abraham believed in the resurrection of Isaac, the Patriarchs died in this hope; Elijah and Elisha saw the dead raised to life before their eyes; Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Job all spoke of it with confidence. It was the only hope of Martha in the hour of Lazarus' death. ([Heb. 11:9-21](#), [I Kings 17:22](#), [II Kings 4:34](#), [Job 19:25-27](#), [Is. 26:19](#), [Ez. 37:1-14](#), [Dan. 12:2](#), [John 11:24](#).)

Belief in the resurrection of the body was also the centre of our Lord's life. He spoke repeatedly and confidently of His own death and resurrection, and of what He would do afterwards. It was lack of this faith in His disciples which so bitterly disappointed Him, and was responsible for their own collapse.

Their own teaching after the Ascension of the Lord centred round His Death and Resurrection and physical return. The whole Christian position depended entirely upon its truth. For, as St. Paul said, if in this life only we have hope in Christ then we are miserable indeed. Faith to raise the dead persisted in the Apostolic Church, and the last book in the Bible ends with the plain vision of a Universal Resurrection of all the dead of all the ages. It is the only doctrine which can give meaning to a Creation which relentlessly slides into the darkness of frustration and death. ([Lk. 9:22-45](#), [24:25-27](#), [36-47](#), [Mk. 16:14](#), [Acts 2:22-36](#), [4:33](#), [17:32](#), [26:18-23](#), [9:36-42](#), [20:9-12](#), [Rom. 8:19-25](#) (compare Ecclesiastes), [I Cor. 15](#), [Rev. 20:13](#).)

There was, however, in the Bible a clear development of revelation concerning the resurrection of the dead.

1. The original design of God, foiled by the Fall, was that man should live for ever upon a perfect earth, their bodies being sustained in health by eating of the Tree of Life continually. It is evident that the Tree contained elements which maintained the body in perfect condition. ([Gen. 3:22](#), [Ez. 47:12](#), [Rev. 22:2](#).)

2. It was the action of God in cutting off the human race from this perfect food, which resulted in the universal death of the body. Nothing short of this diet will restore earthly bodies to their original health. ([Gen. 3:22](#), [I Cor. 15:22](#), [Rom. 5:12-14](#).)

3. The Bible speaks of the death of the body as an unmitigated evil. It is the greatest and last enemy of the human race. Not until its final defeat will perfect victory be enjoyed. ([I Cor. 15:22-28](#), [Rev. 20:14](#).)

4. Hades (Greek) or Sheol (Hebrew) was the name of the place to which the souls of those who lost their bodies went. It had two sides to it, as the Lord showed in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and between those two sides was a great gulf fixed. ([Is. 14:9](#), [Ez. 32:17-32](#), [Lk. 16:19-31](#).)

(a) In the one division were the believers in God. The darkness of their experience was relieved by their faith in the resurrection at the Last Day; so that they might be said to rest in hope, together with Abraham the Father of the believing. Yet dread even of this softened experience kept the Old Testament saints all their lifetime in bondage, and made the hour of death highly unwelcome, since the loss of their spirit cut them off from God, and the loss of their body cut them off from the world. At this Resurrection they would enter into the enjoyment of the promises of God in Palestine during the Millennium. ([Heb. 2:15](#), [Mt. 4:16](#), [Job 10:20-22](#), [II Kings 20:1-3](#) (contrast [Phil. 1:21-23](#)), [Lk. 1:79](#), [16:19-23](#), [Ps. 16:9-11](#), [Is. 26:19](#), [Ez. 37:1-14](#), [Dan. 12:2](#) (compare [Ez. 44:13](#).)

(b) In the other division were:—

1. The ignorant dead, who in the darkness of the disembodied state had no ray of hope of any escape from their miserable condition. The final resurrection will come to them as a wholly unexpected shock.

2. The enemies of God whose hearts are filled with expectation of fiery judgment and punishment. ([Ps. 73:18-19](#), [Ez. 32:17-32](#), [Mk. 9:43-48](#) (compare [Mt. 8:29](#)), [Mt. 25:41](#), [Jude 6 & 7](#), [II Peter 2:4-9](#), [Heb. 10:27](#).)

[See Diagrams 8, 8a and 8b](#)

5. Through Jesus Christ, however, came a mighty revelation, and also a great change in these matters.

(a) He revealed that against those who believed in Him the gates of Hades would not prevail at the death of their body. Since they retained

their spirit at death they would not be cut off from the presence of God, but, on the contrary, would enjoy the happiness of Paradise in the spirit, instead of entering the darkness of Hades. He brought life and immortality to light. ([John 11:21-26](#), [8:35-36](#), [39-40](#), [50-52](#), [Mt. 16:18](#), [Lk. 23:43](#), [Phil. 1:21](#), [Acts 7:55-60](#), [II Tim. 1:10](#), [II Cor. 12:1-4](#).)

[See Diagram 8c](#)

(b) He also revealed that unlike the Old Testament saints, who looked for an earthly resurrection in an earthly body in which they would enjoy earthly happiness, the Sons of God were called to mount up into Heaven and rule with Christ over the universe, and so would need Heavenly bodies like His. ([John 14:2-3](#), [Mt. 24:31](#), [47](#), [Heb. 3:1](#), [Eph. 1:18](#), [4:1](#), [I Cor. 15:35-54](#), [I John 3:1-3](#).)

[See Diagram 9—The Resurrection of a Son of God](#)

(c) The Millennium, therefore, or 1,000 years of Christ's reign over this earth with a rod of iron, was to begin with a double resurrection:

1. That of Israel in earthly bodies to live in Palestine.

2. That of the Royal Family in Heavenly bodies to reign over this earth from the Heavenly Places. ([Rev. 20:4-6](#), [Job 19:25-27](#), [Is. 26:19](#), [Ez. 37:1-14](#), [44:9-16](#), [Dan. 12:2](#), [Phil. 3:10-21](#), [Lk. 20:35](#), [John 6:40](#), [I Cor. 15:23-24](#), [I John 3:2](#).)

(d) After the Millennium was over and the last revolt had failed, and after Heaven and earth had passed away, would come the final resurrection of all the dead of all the ages, and after that the Last Judgment, in order that those whose names were written in the Book of Life might enter into the eternity of Peace in the new earth, and those whose names were not found therein might enter into the torment of hell for the same everlasting period of the Ages of the Ages. ([Rev. 20:11-21](#), [John 5:28-29](#).)

(e) This final resurrection of the dead and Last Judgment upon the Sea of Glass would be followed by, as it were, a glorious resurrection of the old Heaven and earth into the glory of the New Heaven, the New Jerusalem and the New Earth, in which would be fulfilled the promise of [Rev. 21:4-5](#).

Note on Resurrection

A study of [I Cor. 15:35-50](#) brings out the following points:—

1. That, whereas our present earthly bodies may entirely mislead our neighbours about the state of our souls, our resurrection bodies will correspond to our souls, and so will differ in glory.

2. That recognition, therefore, will be not solely of the body but more essentially of the personality, e.g., the distorted body of a hunchback will give way to the glorious form of a Son of God. Peter knew that he had been with Moses and Elijah, but he had not recognised their bodies! ([Lk. 9:33.](#))

N.B. Our Lord's resurrection body was for the purposes of recognition different from His ascended and glorified body, as shown in [Revelation 1:13-17.](#)