



Behind Enemy Lines Training Saints

Written by an Inmate

Hope for the Resurrection (of the saints)

Brother Eric

9/12/24

1 Cor. 15:50-58

In the Christian faith, a lot of people, whether new to it or even if they grew up in the church, tried to gloss over God's plans for us after we die. Often, we're told that "we go to heaven", and we never really think much beyond that. While it's true that when we die we go to be with the Lord (Phil. 1:23, etc.), which theologians call the "intermediate state," the Lord is coming back and will make all things new – new heaven, new earth, and new glorified bodies for believers at the resurrection of the saints.

This resurrection is a central doctrine of the church since the first century and is included in both the Apostle's Creed ("I believe in ... the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting") and the Nicene Creed ("We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."). Christ was resurrected. Our faith is based on that. Christianity wouldn't exist without that fact. But Jesus was just the first of many. Paul calls Him "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). Jesus taught His followers that there would be a resurrection. In John 6:44, Jesus says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." And when Jesus tells Lazarus' sister Martha that he (Lazarus) will rise again, she replies, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Surely as Christ is risen, so shall we rise. This is a promise of God.

1 Corinthians 15 tells us a lot about this resurrection. Let's take a look at versus 50-58. [1Cor. 15:50-58] Matthew Henry comments, "death may seize a believer, but cannot sting him, cannot hold him in his power. There is a day coming when the grave shall open, the bands of death be loosed, the dead saints revive, and become incorruptible and immortal, and put out of the reach of death forever." Christ defeated sin at the cross, and He defeated death at the resurrection. When we believe in Him, that victory becomes our own.

Paul tells us a mystery here. But unlike (/like) some other revelations in the Bible, we won't know all the details until the time comes. We learn from our passage that it will happen in an instant. In a tiny fraction of a second, all believers who have ever died will be raised and transformed and have immortal, imperishable physical bodies. Any believers who are still alive at the time will also be transformed with them. Paul tells us more about this in 1 Thess. 4:15-17 ...

"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."

"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."

"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."

Like a seed that is planted in the ground can become something completely different like a flower, or like a caterpillar can entomb itself in a cocoon and emerge a butterfly, our

bodies, after being “planted” in the ground will rise up as something new and different and yet the same. In 1 John 3:2-3, John tells us, “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.” (& Paul in 1 Cor. 15-19 bear His image).

We will be remade with a body like Jesus’ after His resurrection. We will be the same person, recognizable as He was recognized by His followers. It will be a physical body – flesh and bone [Lk 324-39]. Jesus was seen and touched; He ate, talked. But it will be a body fit also for the spiritual realm. It will be a heavenly body imbued with God’s transcendent glory and have power and abilities beyond our comprehension. Jesus had the ability after His resurrection to appear and disappear at will. Some interpret this as walking through walls or possibly teleportation (i.e., moving between spiritual and earthly realms where time and space differ) ... Again, the details are a mystery for the time being ... It will be an immortal body. For us, there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more hunger (though we can eat) – the old will have passed away.

We don’t know the day or the hour when this will happen. There will be no preceding signs. It’s imminent and can happen at any time, so we are called to be ready like the parables of the servant awaiting the return of his master or the bridal party awaiting the bridegroom. Paul exhorts us to be steadfast and immovable – both essentially the same thing – in our faith since that is essential for salvation and our redemption. And our labor for the Lord is not in vain since we will be with Him for eternity. Our treasures and rewards are stored and await us in the life ever after.

There’s a lot more to the story, but we are called to encourage one another with this hope for the future. As the 19th century preacher J. C. Ryle put it, “If we have faith, we look backward to Christ dying on the cross, and if we have hope, we must look forward to Christ coming again.”



Let us pray ...

Heavenly Father, we thank You for all the men here today and pray for each one of them and their families and friends on the outside. We thank You for all You have done for us and all the wonderful and amazing things You have planned for us in the future. We place our hope in You. You are our strength and our refuge from the storm. We look forward with hope for the day we will be with You in glory. Until then, help us to remain steadfast in our faith and to always remember that nothing can separate us from your love. In Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen.