

Vicarious Sacrifice: The Session: Concluding Comments; The Resurrection Body: Believers' Resurrection Body Will Be Like that of Jesus, 1 John 3:2; 7 Characteristics of the Resurrection Body; It Becomes Operational at the Rapture; Details on the Rapture, 1 Thess 4:13

- (51) All of these situations will wax worse and worse until the Tribulation begins and then it will shift into high gear only to be stopped by the Lord Himself.
- (52) Jesus Christ is now absent from this earth; He is presently seated at the right hand of the Father and will remain there until it is time for Him to put His foot on the neck of His enemies.
- (53) During His absence, we are to take on the thinking of the Judge, acquire His thinking, retain it in our *kardías*, and apply it on a daily basis.
- (54) Our daily modus operandi must be defined by this principle: Live life horizontally as if the Rapture would not occur in your lifetime, but live your life vertically as if the Rapture might occur today.
- (55) Should the hour arrive soon, the Lord will return to the first heaven and we will be taken up into the clouds to meet Him in the air, "and so we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
- (56) Whenever that hour does arrive, we will be supplied with our own resurrection bodies. This is our ultimate sanctification, a body that possesses eternal life that will be forever free of the sin nature.

The Resurrection Body:

1 John 3:2

- (1) Both the ascension and session of Christ occurred in resurrection body, therefore, these events and those that we have noted in His post-resurrection ministry give us a tutorial on some of the characteristics of our future resurrection bodies.
- (2) The basic principle regarding our resurrection body is stated by the Apostle John in:

1 John 3:2 - Believers, we are now children of God, and what we will be in eternity has not yet been revealed. We know, however, that if He should appear in our lifetime, we shall be like Him physically because we shall see Him just as He is. (EXT)

- (3) We have been able to "see Him as He is" in our post-resurrection passages and from them we are able to draw some concrete conclusions about the capabilities and characteristics of the resurrection body.
- (4) Jesus did not appear unusual to Cleopas and his associate whom He met on the Emmaus Road.
- (5) He taught the two men doctrine and was invited to have supper with them. They did not recognize Him until He broke the bread. Once they did, Jesus vanished from their sight:

Luke 24:30 - When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them.

v. 31 - Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

- (6) Another characteristic of the resurrection body is its ability to move through barriers, for example, the walls of the stone tomb in which he was buried and the door to the meeting room occupied by the disciples.

- (7) The Pharisees wanted to insure that no shenanigans occurred that would leave the impression that Jesus had been resurrected, so they appealed to Pilate to seal the tomb:

Matthew 27:65 - Pilate said to them, “You have a guard [κουστωδία (koustōdía): a Roman detachment]; go, make it as secure as you know how.”

v. 66 - And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal [σφραγίζω (sphragizō)¹] on the stone.

- (8) Yet, on the Feast of First fruits, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the grave to be told this by the angel who had rolled away the stone:

Matthew 28:5 - The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

v. 6 - “He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.”

- (9) On the two occasions when the Lord joined His disciples in their sequestered meeting place, first on the night of the resurrection and, secondly, one week later, He walked through a bolted door:

John 20:19 - When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut [κλείω (kleíō): “to prevent passage at an opening; to shut, lock, bar.”²] where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

John 20:26 - After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut [κλείω: **bolted**], and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”

- (10) On each of these meetings He displayed His stigmata, first to the eleven and secondly to Thomas (John 20:20; 27).
- (11) Stigmata are the scars left by the spikes in His wrists and feet and by the Roman soldier’s sword. Whether our bodily wounds will be retained on our resurrection bodies is unknown.
- (12) When meeting with the disciples on the first occasion, He expressed a remarkable aspect of the resurrection body in:

Luke 24:39 - “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for spirit does not have flesh and bones [σάρξ (sárx) & ὀστέον (ostéon)] as you see that I have.”

Jesus’ resurrection body ... was a body of flesh, essentially identical with that in which Jesus was buried, bearing the scars of the wounds inflicted upon it at the crucifixion and capable of taking food.

¹ “A door was sealed by stretching a cord over the stone which blocked the entrance, spreading clay or wax on the cord, and then impressing it with a seal” (D. Miall Edwards, “Seal,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], 4:2709).

² Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 546, s.v. “κλείω,” 1.

Luke's minute study and precise description of its characteristics are appropriate for a medical man, from whom one may expect "something like the fullness of a medical diagnosis."³

- (13) It is startling to realize that the resurrection body has the similar characteristics to the body of corruption, but still has the capabilities to move through barriers, to vanish, and to move through intergalactic space at warp speed.
- (14) At the ascension, our Lord was lifted up vertically and out of sight of the apostles in:

Acts 1:9 - And after He said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

- (15) All of these things are characteristics of Jesus' resurrection body. We are left with the impression from 1 John 3:2 that our resurrection body will be just like His.
- (16) Our resurrection will occur at a point yet future but imminent which means that no prophecy must be fulfilled before the Rapture may occur.
- (17) Since there is no prophecy in the Church Age, the believers of the first century expected it to occur in their lifetime:

1 Corinthians 4:5 - Do not go on passing judgment before the time [the Evaluation Tribunal], but wait until the Lord comes [Rapture of the church] Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness [invisible impact of doctrine applied] and disclose the motives of men's heart [gold, silver, precious stones or wood, hay, stubble]; and then each man's praise will come to him from God [escrow blessings].

- (18) Obviously the Rapture did not occur in the first century or in any subsequent century, so far. But we do have detailed information about events associated with the Rapture.
- (19) There are two passages that provide details on the Rapture, both by Paul, and they are recorded in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15.
- (20) From these two passages, we discover the details about our translation from body of corruption to the perfect eternal body of resurrection.
- (21) The Gospels passages we have already studied that describe our Lord's post-resurrection activities give us insight into the functionality of the resurrection body.
- (22) We now observe the application of some of these assets which become operational at the Rapture.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 - But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. (NASB)

- (1) The believers at Thessalonica are ignorant about what happens to a person following physical death. Their grief following a loved one's death was similar to the mourning experienced by the heathens whom Paul rightly expresses, "have no hope."
- (2) Paul begins his assessment with a personal desire about what he does not want these people to become entangled.

³ J. A. Schep, *The Nature of the Resurrection Body: A Study of Biblical Data* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 134.

- (3) It starts with the negative conjunction οὐ (ou): “But,” followed by the present active indicative of θέλω (thélō): “I do not wish.”
- (4) The present tense is aoristic indicating that the action is completed at the moment it is expressed, also referred to as an instantaneous present.
- (5) Paul indicates his desire that no believer remain ignorant about the afterlife of a departed loved one which obviously many of the Thessalonians currently are.
- (6) The word “uninformed” is the present active infinitive of the verb ἀγνοέω (agnoéō): “ignorant.”
- (7) Regardless of the situation, ignorance is never an advantage to anyone. Knowledge is power. The more you know, the better prepared you are to deal with the challenges of life.
- (8) Why do people mourn? Because they have no hope! Paul’s desire is that the believers of Thessalonica acquire knowledge that will dispel their ignorance and conquer their fear.
- (9) The Epistle of First Thessalonians is among the earliest of the New Testament books. Written c. A.D. 51, it was probably preceded only by the Book of James and Paul’s Letter to the Galatians.
- (10) A brief synopsis of the Zeitgeist of Thessalonica helps give us the circumstances that caused the Holy Spirit to inspire Paul to write this Epistle.

On his second missionary journey (c. A.D. 49) Paul and his companions, Silas and Timothy, came from Philippi to Thessalonica and founded the Christian church there. The congregation was largely Gentile-Christian (1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2:14).

The church grew swiftly both numerically and spiritually. In fact, so gratifying had been their progress that Paul describes them as exemplary for the saints in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thessalonians 1:7f.).⁴

⁴ Charles M. Horne, “Thessalonians, First Epistle,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenny (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 5:722.