

The Significance of Resurrection - Part 1

by Derek Prince

The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of our resurrection and a pattern for ours, showing that our bodies will be transformed into the likeness of his body.

Duration: 28:03

Scripture: Luke 16:22

Topics: "Resurrection Hope", "Eternal Destiny"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of resurrection, emphasizing the distinction between the body, soul, and spirit, and the significance of the resurrection of the body. It explores what happens to individuals after death, drawing from the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 to illustrate the persistence of personality, recognition of persons, recollection of life on earth, consciousness of present conditions after death, and the complete separation between the righteous and the unrighteous. The sermon also highlights the impact of Jesus' death and resurrection on the destiny of souls, the release of departed righteous souls, and the guarantee of our resurrection through Jesus.

Transcript

Music the meaning of the word resurrection. The Greek word that's translated means to stand up out of. So resurrection is standing up out of death and out of the grave.

In the scripture we've just quoted we saw that man consists of three elements, spirit, soul and body. It's important to understand that it's the body that dies and it's the body that will be resurrected. The spirit and the soul never need to be resurrected because they've never passed into death.

So we are talking about the resurrection of the body. This is very important. Now I want to deal a little bit this morning with what the Bible shows about what happens to people after they die.

I've discovered that this is a matter of universal interest. It doesn't really matter what nationality or what culture you belong to. Everybody is interested to know what happens after death.

And the Bible gives a pretty clear picture. And I'm going to try to outline this picture show how it will affect the resurrection. In Luke chapter 16 verses 22 through 26 Jesus gives us his picture of what happens.

And I want to point out that this is never called a parable. The parable, the word parable is not used in connection with this. We'll start with Luke 16 verse 19.

There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously or lived luxuriously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

Then he cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and likewise Lazarus evil things.

But now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this between us and you there is a great gulf fixed. So that those who want to pass from here to you cannot.

Nor can those from here from there pass to us. Then he said, I beg you therefore Father Abraham that you would send him to my father's house. For I have five brothers that he may testify to them.

Lest they also come to this place of torment. And Abraham said to him, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

And he said, No father Abraham. But if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent. But he said to them, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded.

Though one rose from the dead. And how true that proved in experience. Even when Jesus rose from the dead, those who did not believe Moses and the prophets, did not recognize what had happened.

That's a very solemn thought. Sometimes we expect some tremendous supernatural visitation. And say if that happens, we'll be convinced.

But God says, you have my word. That's all you need. If you believe it and obey it, it will take you through.

Now I want to point out certain features that are indicated by this story of the rich man and Lazarus. The five features. First of all, there was persistence of personality after death.

The rich man was still the rich man. Lazarus was still Lazarus. Neither of them lost their identities.

Now some people teach us that after death everything just fades away and there's nothing left. That's not scriptural. We continue in the same personality after death as we lived in in life.

Secondly, there was recognition of persons. The rich man recognized Lazarus and he recognized Abraham and Lazarus recognized the rich man. Third, there was recollection of life on earth.

Both the rich man and Lazarus could recall the circumstances of their lives before they died. Fifth, there was a consciousness of their present condition. The rich man was in torment, his tongue burning with fire.

Lazarus was in comfort and peace in the bosom of Abraham. And fifthly, there was a complete separation between the righteous and the unrighteous. Each of them had an appointed place and neither could cross from one to the other.

Let me add, let me say those five things again because they're very, very important. And they contradict a lot of theories that are being put around today. Number one, there was persistence of personality.

No loss of identity. Number two, there was recognition of persons. Number three, there was recollection of life on earth.

Number four, there was a consciousness of present conditions after death. And number five, there was a complete separation between the righteous and the unrighteous. Now what happened to those who died, before Jesus himself died and rose from the dead.

Because that event bisected human history. And the destiny of souls before and after the death and resurrection of Jesus, is not the same. The death and resurrection of Jesus produced a change, actually in the whole universe.

It was the most decisive event in the history of the universe. And it affected what happened to those who died. Let's deal now with what happened before the death of Jesus.

We've seen already in this story of the rich man and Lazarus, that all departing souls passed into a place which is called in Hebrew Sheol and in Greek Hades. And the Greek word Hades means the unseen world. So all alike, whether righteous or unrighteous, passed into this unseen realm called Hades or Sheol.

This was a place of departed souls. But there were two completely separate areas, for the righteous and the unrighteous. And notice everybody was either righteous or unrighteous.

As I was saying yesterday, there's nothing in between. You can't be halfway righteous and halfway unrighteous. You've got to end up in one or other of those two places.

The area for the righteous is called Abraham's bosom. Meaning, I suppose, that Abraham was the father of all who believed, welcomed them there and comforted them. That's my understanding.

Now what happened to Jesus when he died? Jesus was a perfect man. He too had spirit, soul and body. And there's a different statement made about each of those three elements in Jesus personality.

In Luke 23 and verse 46 we find out what happened to the spirit of Jesus when he died. Luke 23 verse 46. It says, And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice.

And I believe what he cried out was, it is finished. He said, Father into your hands I commend my spirit. And having said this, he breathed his last.

He died, he expired. So his spirit was commended to the Father. Now there are some things that I can't explain.

I can make these statements that there may be areas in which I cannot give you a further explanation. What happened to the soul of Jesus? In Acts chapter 2, when speaking on the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted Psalm 16, as an experience of Jesus and not of David the Psalmist. And he says, David spoke in Psalm 16 concerning Jesus, these words.

I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad, because moreover my flesh will also rest in hope, because

you will not leave my soul in Hades. So the soul of Jesus went down into that realm of departed spirits.

It's also stated in 1st Peter 3, 18 and 19. 1st Peter 3, 18 and 19. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

Being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit or in the Spirit. By whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient. When once the long-suffering of God waited in the doors of Noah.

So Jesus went down into Hades. And there are details of this which I cannot explain to you. But I can tell you what the Bible says.

He made a proclamation. This translation says he preached. But it's the word to proclaim.

It does not mean necessarily that he preached the gospel. But he made a proclamation. My guess is, he said from now on, I'm the ruler in this place.

I have the keys of death and of Hades. And you are answerable to me, for everything that goes on from now on. That's just my theory.

It may not be right. Now meanwhile, Jesus' body was laid in the tomb. In John 19, verse 40 and following.

We read what happened after he died on the cross. Jesus 19, John 19 verse 40 and 42. Says then they took the body of Jesus and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

They would wrap a body in strips of linen. But they would include a great quantity of spices. Because the body would be expected to decompose and give out a stench.

Now the place where he was crucified, there was a garden. In the garden there was a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus.

And we don't need to go any further with that. We also read the account of how after the resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles and the women went to the tomb. They all knew where he, his body had been buried.

But they didn't find him there, praise God. So what happened to the total personality of Jesus? He committed his spirit to the Father. His soul descended into Hades and he made a proclamation there.

And probably did a lot of other things. And his body was laid in the tomb. But when he rose, his total personality was again united.

He was a complete person, spirit, soul and body. Now what happened through the death and resurrection of Jesus affected the universe. It also determined the destiny of souls at death.

From that time onwards, since the resurrection of Jesus, the destiny of the righteous is not to go into Hades. It has a different and a much more glorious destiny. Let me see, give you two examples.

When they stoned Stephen and he was at the point of death. In Acts chapter 7 verse 57 and following. Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran at him, that's Stephen with one accord.

They cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, Lord Jesus

receive my spirit.

He knew that his spirit was to go directly to Jesus. This is the change that has taken place, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, Lord do not charge them with this sin.

And because Stephen prayed that, Saul of Tarsus could be saved. If Stephen had not released him from his guilt, he could never have been saved. That's a wonderful thought.

But I want to emphasize, that for the true believer who has been cleansed in the blood of Jesus and lived faithfully for God. The destiny at death is that the spirit ascends directly to Jesus. Paul also refers to this in Philippians chapter 1. He says he doesn't know which is, which to choose.

Shall he continue to live here or shall he go and be with Jesus. And this is what he says first Philippians 1 verse 23. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. So Paul was absolutely confident that if at that time he died, he would be with Christ. That is one great change affected by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Another thing that happened, and there are some things that I can tell you. But I can't fill in all the details because I don't know them. Is that the departed souls of the righteous, who were in the bosom of Abraham, were released.

Let's look at that in Ephesians chapter 4. And this is quoting Psalm 68. And it's speaking about the resurrection of Jesus. Therefore when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.

Now my understanding, and many Bible commentators will understand, that he led captivity captive, was he released the souls of the departed righteous. And took them with him up to heaven. You see they could not be released until the penalty for sin had actually been paid.

God accepted them as righteous, because they had put their faith in a sacrifice that had not yet taken place. They were looking forward to the promised sacrifice. But until the sacrifice had actually been offered, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, they could not be released.

But after he had sacrificed himself, he went down into Hades. And at some point, and some way, he took them with him. That's how I believe.

They had been the captives of sin, and of death. But he took captivity captive. They became the captives of Jesus, and of righteousness.

Which to me, is exciting. Now the next thing that's very, very important, is this. The resurrection of Jesus, is the guarantee of our resurrection.

That is, if we are totally committed to Jesus. In Colossians chapter 1, verse 18. Speaking again about the resurrection of Jesus.

Paul says, he, Jesus, is the head of the body, the church. So Jesus is the head, we believers are the body. He's also the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.

That in all things he may have the preeminence of the first place. So he is the firstborn from death. He's the head of a totally new creation.

He's the head of a new race, the God-man race. In which the nature of God and man are combined in one person. Now he's the head of the body.

He's the firstborn from the dead. And the resurrection is compared to a birth out of death. And this is such a beautiful picture.

In a natural birth, normally what part of the body emerges first? The head, that's right. And when the head emerges, what do you know? You know the rest of the body is going to follow. And so the resurrection of Jesus, is the guarantee that his body will follow him in resurrection.

Now also the resurrection of Jesus in his body, is a pattern for ours. I hope you're getting excited about this. If you're not, I'm really not communicating.

You see Paul says in Philippians chapter 3 verses 20 and 21. For our citizenship is in heaven, that those of us who've been born again committed to live for Jesus. We live on earth, we're citizens of a country here on earth.

But our real citizenship is in heaven. And if you have a citizen of a country, you have to have a passport. Do you know that? So we have a passport, it's the blood of Jesus.

Our citizenship is in heaven. From which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice a mark of true Christians is that we are eagerly waiting for the Savior.

And then it says, who will transform our lowly body, that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself. Now that's the translation but it's not literal. And if I may give you a literal translation it makes something very vivid.

He will transform the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory. You see you may not realize it but you and I live in a body of humiliation. We've been humiliated because of sin.

But Jesus is going to change this body of humiliation into the likeness of the body of his glory. Isn't that exciting? This body is going to change. We'll look a little later at some of the details of the change.

But let me just point out one very relevant fact. In 1st John chapter 3, John says this. Verse 2 and 3. Beloved now we are children of God and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be.

In other words we haven't yet seen the kind of body we're going to have. But we know that when he is revealed we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is.

When he is revealed and we see him our bodies will be changed into the likeness of his body. But I want you to notice the next verse because it's very important. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure.

Now you may tell me that you're hoping for the resurrection. And it's not my business to argue with you. But if you are really hoping there's something you're doing.

You're purifying yourself. And what is the standard of purity? Jesus. Just as he is pure.

And if you tell me that you're looking forward to the resurrection but I see no evidence that you're purifying yourself. That you're seeking to make yourself more pure and more holy. I say you're probably self-deceived.

You aren't really looking forward. You're just using religious language. Because this is the mark of everyone who is truly looking forward to this exchange from the body of humiliation to the body of glory.

And let me read those words just again. Everyone who has this hope in him, Jesus, purifies himself just as he is pure. Do you have that mark? Is that evidence in your life that you are really expecting the return of Jesus? Now our body will be like his.

And we observe in the record of the Gospels that he was not limited by time or space. He could ascend to heaven, come down again. He could enter a room with all the doors closed.

He could appear in one form to one person, another form to another person. He had a very, shall we say, flexible body. And I believe we'll have a similar kind of body.

Now people say well what will that body be like? And Paul deals with that question in 1st Corinthians chapter 15. 1st Corinthians 15 verses 42 through 44. I'm sorry that's 35 to 38, excuse me.

1st Corinthians 15 35 through 38. But someone will say how are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? I'm sure most of us have felt like asking that. Foolish one, Paul says.

It's Paul who's saying it, not me. What you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And then he goes on with this example of the seed.

And what you sow, you do not sow the body that shall be but mere grain or mere seed. Perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases and to each seed its own body.

Now there are two things combined there. There's continuity and there's change. If you sow an apple pit into the ground you don't get an orange.

The nature of the seed determines the nature of the life that will come out of the seed. So there is continuity but there's also change. The apple tree that comes out of the apple pit is not really very like the pit.

So there will be continuity. You'll be the same but there'll be a tremendous supernatural change. What you sow determines what comes up but nevertheless what comes up is totally different from what was sown.

So our body is sown in burial into the ground as a seed. The same body will come forth but a totally different kind of body. Now Jesus was very careful to emphasize that when He rose it was the same body that had been crucified.

We look in Luke 24. The disciples were all scared, very much so when He first appeared. They couldn't really believe what had happened.

But Jesus said to them in Luke 24 verses 38 and 39 after His resurrection appearance why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your heart behold my hands and my side that it is I myself. In His hands and His side He showed them the evidence of crucifixion. He wanted to make very plain that it was the same body but transformed.

And then in John chapter 20 there's a further record of the resurrection of Jesus. It says He stood in the midst and said to them peace be with you. That's the traditional Middle East reading.

Now when He had said this He showed them His hands and His side. Why did He do that? To show them it was the same body that they'd seen crucified.

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