

***Title: Resurrection***

Text: Eph. 2:4-6

Date: August 7, 2011

Place: Decatur Church of God

Theme: Packed Bags

Leo Espinosa writes in the February, 2011, issue of Wired magazine about "why Hollywood always makes going to heaven look so unappealing":

Try thinking of a really *good* movie that doesn't play the afterlife for laughs. There isn't one .... The only cinematic visions of the afterlife that are worth [anything] are the ones that depict damnation. As long as your hero goes to hell, the audience stays engaged. Move the story upstairs, though, and God help you.

Hell has proven useful to filmmakers looking for spectacle or a great villain. But heaven, which would seem like a great source of the kind of happy ending Hollywood loves, simply lacks drama. (There's a reason the words "And they lived happily ever after" appear right after the credits—*happily ever after* is boring.)

Is that what you think?

Is the resurrection a subject that lights your fire or a subject that puts you to sleep?

This summer we have been talking about packed bags. We have stressed the importance of being prepared but all is lost if not for the reality of the resurrection.

***Ephes. 2:4-6***

*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup>And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,*

The resurrection was at the center of the message of the early church.

Two types of resurrection are dealt with in the New Testament; a spiritual and a bodily resurrection.

## I. The first resurrection.

- A. The first resurrection is new birth.
  - a. The moment you surrendered your heart to Jesus.
  - b. Before that you were dead in your sins.

\* The movie *Get Low* is the story of a 1930s Tennessee hermit, Felix Bush (Robert Duvall), who threw his own funeral party—while he was still alive. In a particularly poignant scene, Felix visits a local minister, the Rev. Gus Horton, requesting the pastor's help to arrange his funeral.

As he sets down a wad of cash in front of the pastor, Felix declares, "It's time for me to get low." When Rev. Horton asks what he means by that, Felix replies, "Down to business. I need a funeral." When the pastor asks who the funeral is for, Felix says, "Me."

Rev. Horton is bewildered by the request, but Felix presses forward, asking, "Well, what would you say [about me]?"

"Oh, eulogy. Well, ah, I don't know. What would you want me to say?"

"Say what you'd say right now to my face." Felix replies sternly.

"Mr. Bush, I don't know much about you," the reverend responds. "I've heard stories, but ..."

"What stories?" asks Felix.

"Stories, you know. People talk," replies the reverend.

"What kind of stories?" Felix asks.

"Well sir," the reverend answers, "my mother used to say that gossip is the devil's radio. What matters is when you come to the end of your life that you're ready for the next one. Now, have you made peace with God, sir?"

"I paid," replies Felix.

By "I paid" Felix means he has spent most of his adult life trying to atone for his sins. In particular, Felix is referring to an incident from forty years ago. Felix had an affair with a married woman; and when the woman's husband learned of the affair, the husband became enraged and ultimately murdered her. Felix blamed himself for her death and spent the next forty years depriving himself of a wife and children. Instead, he lived alone, deep in the woods, cut off from community and happiness, all in a futile attempt to pay the debt of this transgression. Now forty years later, after his long self-atonement project, he hopes that he's finally paid his debt.

But Rev. Horton wisely disagrees with Felix. "Mr. Bush," he replies firmly, "you can't buy forgiveness. It's free, but you do have to ask for it."

With that, Felix reaches and picks up the wad of cash and stomps out of the church.

### **Col. 2:13**

*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,*

- c. Christ made the difference but you do have to ask for it..

### **Col. 3:1**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

- B. So far we have a strong affirmed belief supported by early church fathers, Origen and Augustine, as well as, reformers like, John Calvin and Martin Luther.

## **II. In the gospel of John, Jesus speaks to the two resurrections.**

**John 5:24-29**

*"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. <sup>25</sup>I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup>For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup>And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.*

*<sup>28</sup>"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice <sup>29</sup>and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

- A. Jesus only addresses these two types of resurrection.
  - a. One is present, the other is future
  - b. One is spiritual, the other is physical
  - c. One is restricted to believers, the other includes everyone
- B. Notice what Jesus says...
  - a. Verse 24, "*he has crossed over from death to life*"
  - b. Verse 25, "*a time is coming and has now come*"

\* William Cox writes, "It would be difficult to imagine language plainer than this concerning what constitutes the first resurrection of the Christian."

The comments could not refer to the future. So what do they mean?

**Ephes. 2:1, 4-6**

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>4</sup>But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup>And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,*

**1 John 3:14**

*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.*

- C. So, the believer has spiritual life.
- a. Old things are passed away.
  - b. All things have become new.
  - c. He is now a citizen of heaven.
  - d. He has already begun to reign with Christ.
  - e. And has already been delivered from the power of the second death.

**1 Thes. 1:10b**

*...Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*

**Rev. 20:6**

*Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

\* Herman Ridderbos makes an enlightening statement: “It is not true that Christ first died for those who are His, who only afterwards also die and rise with Him, spiritually, mystically or ethically. No, when He died on Golgotha, they also died with Him, and when He arose in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, they were raised together with Him.”

\* Paul says it himself...

**2 Cor. 5:14**

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*

\* Paul isn't talking about the conversion of the faithful but rather to their being included in Christ's death.

### III. The general resurrection takes place at Christ's second coming.

A. All the dead of all time.

#### *Daniel 12:1-2*

*"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered. <sup>2</sup>Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

- a. Daniel's prophecy is in accord with the teachings of the New Testament.
  - i. Following a time of persecution of God's people.
  - ii. It will bring about a separation of the righteous from the wicked.
- b. The righteous and the wicked will be resurrected at the same time.
  - i. Martha speaks to it in the New Testament.

#### *John 11:24*

*Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."*

- ii. The early church knew and preached but one resurrection.

#### *Acts 4:2b*

*... The apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.*

B. The resurrection is to be heralded by the blowing of the last trumpet.

1. The last trumpet will be the signal for Christ to appear (Matt. 24:30, 31; I Thess 4:16).
2. The last trumpet will accompany the earthly phenomena surrounding the second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:29-31).
3. At the sound of the last trumpet, the wicked will mourn (Matt. 24:30).
4. At the sound of the last trumpet, the righteous will be taken to be with the Lord. (Matt. 24:31; I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess 4:16-17).
5. At the last trumpet, the righteous will be resurrected and given their new bodies (I Cor. 15:51-52).
6. At the last trumpet, the kingdom will be consummated (Rev. 11:15)
7. At the last trumpet, the wicked will be punished (Rev. 11:15-18).

\* William Cox says it this way, “all these things happen at one and the same time—and we should note they happen to the righteous and to the wicked simultaneously.”

**Conclusion:** As to the “graves being opened”, those who have died in Christ and dwelling with him in Paradise will receive their new bodies as will the saints living at the time of Christ’s return.

Those without Christ will experience eternal separation from God and eternal punishment.

What should we anticipate?

### ***1 Cor. 2:9***

*However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--*