


# TIME SERIES



**A WESTGATE  
MONOGRAPH**

# LIFE

This is a genuine WBC production  authored by *Bob Coffey* and may not be reproduced or transmitted in any manner for financial profit

## INTRODUCTION

**This monograph is No.19 in the present series.** The general theme of this paper is resurrection but I have found that Resurrection in scripture is not an isolated theme as taught by Jesus. For instance, Jesus taught that He could not be seen simply as "the Resurrection" without being seen as "The Life" A reinstatement of apostolic teaching on resurrection and life is overdue and this monograph contributes towards that end.

I have set out relevant material on the Resurrection under the headings of :-

- 1 Christian Dogmatic
- 2 Resurrection riposte
- 3 Thinking it through
- 4 Conceptual leap forward
- 5 Awakening and Anastasis
- 6 Trumpet Call and Rapture
7. A description of Resurrection
8. Conclusions

The monograph drops the "intermediate state" idea along with the Greek philosophical category of bodiless spirits. On the other hand it presents *the better* hope of the spiritual body with detailed scriptural exegesis.

*Scribbler's jottings*

*Westgate, August 2013*

## **1 CHRISTIAN BELIEF**

*Biblical and apostolic doctrine deserves the consent of all Christian people. In respect of matters anent Resurrection I have made brave to set down in outline what might be considered essential to the common faith and what might be equally valid but not of the essence of accepted doctrine because of lesser perspicuity.*

### **CHRISTIAN DOGMATIC**

It is elementary to understand that Awakening and Resurrection have to do with Judgment and then the final estate of those judged. Christian dogmatic holds to:

1. The resurrection of the dead (including the Christian dead, the Jewish faithful of all ages and the unrepentant dead)
2. That Christ descended into Hades (in line with preparing judgment and warning the spirits in prison to live in the light of that judgment).
3. That Christ shall come again (to catch away His church in the circle of the trumpet call of God.)
4. That all Christians shall appear before the Bema of Christ to give account and to submit to His appreciation of our life and works.
5. That the rest of the dead appear before the Great White Throne judgment (This great assize differing from 4. above)

## **2. RESURRECTION RIPOSTE**

### **PAUL ON THE RESURRECTION**

A scriptural position needs to cover every base and preserve the bodily resurrection and the immediacy of immortality and incorruptibility and the difference of the spiritual body.

Whereas Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18 speaks of the saints who have recently died as "having fallen asleep" he is but repeating Jesus' term in respect of Lazarus. This idiomatic expression for death does not imply a Rip Van Winkel soul sleep over centuries. He further reassures them they ought not to be disturbed as if the Lord's return had already happened – because there are unmistakable accompaniments which certainly have not happened - namely "the Lord's loud command", "the archangel's voice", "the trumpet of God", "transformed bodies" and "a raptured church"

## **PAUL GOES BACK TO JESUS' WORD**

Something else he does say is valuable. He adds what he calls the LORD'S own word. This word of the Lord gives rise to the assurance that "we who are alive and remain" or survive shall not "prevent" or "go before" those who sleep. There is nothing written of the Peter-Paul discussions at Jerusalem other than what we read in 1 Corinthians 15 as it may relate to that interview.

## **PAUL AND THE RELAY OF HISTORY**

Before we leave Paul as he grapples with the issue presented by Thessalonica let us look again at the term he chooses for precedence – the word "prevent". This idiom means to "outstrip" as if any number of persons were running in a race or long distance event and then many under starter's orders later in a relay - (at the Parousia) would not catch up on or get ahead of the former batch of runners. There is no sleep here. Now if the dead in Christ who "were under starter's orders" so early made it home there are many issues that emerge, one is, Where are they – in Sheol – Paradise – the New Jerusalem – the Father's house? Another is "in what condition are they? Are they disembodied spirits? Have they obtained their body

that is for eternity? Are they sleeping or wholly inactive? If they arrived home incomplete will that be our equivalent state when we reach home?

## **BARNABAS ALIGNS 1<sup>st</sup> CENTURY THOUGHT**

This writing emerges at the occasion of the death of James the Just AD 63-4 whereas the gospel of John even if it had an earlier Hebrew edition was issued at Ephesus circa AD 90. Faced with similar circumstances as Paul spoke into at Thessalonica *Barnabas* ( *alias* “*the Hebrew writer*”) *does not use specifics of resurrection but rather* our “catching away”, “the appearing of Christ” and “the anchor hope” of entering the New Jerusalem as his encouragement. He reminds those in earthly Jerusalem to “fix their eyes on Jesus” who is building his house – the people of God. He believes that teaching about resurrection and judgment is elementary or basic. (6.1-3). What he seems to be saying is that the early church should not become bogged down in wondering why saints die and wondering when the trumpet will sound for resurrection. Jesus is the one and only Melchisadek and in Him since the cross everything is complete including salvation, holiness and the eternal state of believers. The Spirits of just men are complete and like him in glorified bodies.

### **3. THINKING IT THROUGH**

All through the Resurrection narratives of Paul we are faced with huge verbs in the passive and indicative moods. In this context we have two bruisers to conjugate.

**Κοιμηθωμεθα** and **αλλαγησομεθα** (a) a weak future passive delivers the meaning “We will not all have fallen asleep” and (b) a future on the middle voice stem telling us that those gathered from heaven and earth at the trumpet “will all be changed”[1Corinthians 15.52].

Since the clauses in the subsequent text with the exception of a pause for breathe at the word "trumpet" carry on in one sentence to include two other big verbs we had best include them too. When the trumpet sounds the dead “shall have been raised” *εγερθησονται* incorruptible and we shall in that moment be changed. *αλλαγησομεθα* – that's it! Now the "future perfect" tells us that "raised" or “awakened” ones long since departed and though seen as changed at the point descend with Christ in that new body long since enjoyed in eternity.

## AVOIDING A THEOLOGICAL BLACK HOLE

Paul is very clear, "*If the dead are not being raised*", neither has Christ been raised"[Aorist indicative – "they themselves have just gone – perished!"] (1 Corinthians 15.16). This hypothesis leaves us with the depressing result and logical alternative that the dead are really lost. Moderns would put the argument like this – **the saints who have died since Christ are not raised (1) or not lost (2) but instead they are in “the”intermediate state(3).** *This rather contrived position is acutely weak, having neither the backing of Paul nor of biblical text - the Protestant cousin of the "purgatory" concept, a kind of scholarly casuistry reminiscent of scholasticism - of a sort that is better forgotten.*

## WHAT OF THE LONG FUTURE?

Paul’s words “**If this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved**” is a hypothetical question about a real issue beyond just the few days that ensue after death. As a tent-maker he is aware that some tents are worth repairing and some need replacement. Jesus raised Lazarus and the widow of Nain’s son and Jairus’ daughter. Tabitha was also raised and countless others before and since - but all shortly after

they died. The case of our Lord's resurrection is of a different order for His was already a divine seed and a perfect body which saw no corruption. Our bodies go to dust but that poses no problem for God. Paul can show what God does in this instance.

## **A HEAVENLY BODY PREPARED**

Paul answers that by saying "Someone will ask 'How are the dead raised?' 'With what body will they come?' How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed - wheat or whatever". **God gives it a body as He determines.** Paul cites the heavenly bodies as opposed to the earthly- i.e. angels and men. Passing from the earthly and mortal he then cites the sun moon and stars as different heavenly lights to portray how it shall be with the orders of living creatures angels and saints.

## **DAVID - MY MEMBERS ARE IN HIS BOOK**

Three millennia ago David understood that God is the ultimate keeper of the soul and of the record of what makes David, David. He said "I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness!" When we awake in His likeness we cannot improve on that state. Our new body is modeled on Christ's whose image we shall eternally bear and the errant genes of the genome, seed or original body which Paul alludes to yield to what pleases Him who is our Lord - including "eternal spring like life" and the retention of God designed individual features. We are not to think of a patched up tent but a new house for the spirit and soul - one renewed in glory, power and spirituality.

## MADE FOR ANOTHER REALM

To understand the relationship of the new body to the New heaven and earth we need to move to the Apocalypse and to John's teaching under the careful instruction of an angel directed by Christ. To rise again after dying could easily become confused in tin pot theology with "re-appearing on *this old earth* as longer term or forever inhabitants after we have died." That is not what scripture teaches - as our bodies are renewed so our realm is to be the New Jerusalem - a city that will come down or emerge in the dimension in which our life is now set during the Millennium and thereafter will be the centre of the New Heaven and Earth when this earth is no more.

## ASPIRATIONS SATISFIED IN MEETING CHRIST

Becoming complete requires no intermediate states and two phase completion. Paul would not be content with the Greek view which abandons the concept of body altogether till Christ comes for His Church. Paul said "We groan longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed we will not be found naked." Paul describes this body not as a "SCHEME"(tent) but as an OIKIA

ACHEIROPOIETON (a house not made with hands) – in the case of saints gone on before it is *Eternal* so ipso facto it does not change when they appear with Him at the rapture - they are *in* and *encompassed by* his glory. This state and condition appertains "if this house is dissolved i.e. to those whose bodies are going to dust. It is further described as an OIKETERION - a beloved and fixed dwelling. So for no period subsequent to our death will we be naked spirits but ENDUSAMENOI "enrobed once for all (notice the *aorist* of God's single action) with our heavenly body neither at any subsequent time is mutation proposed for heavenly perons.



## PAUL ENVISIONS AN END TO WARFARE

All in Christ “shall have been made alive”. That is Paul’s word to Corinth as he deals with future time. It is necessary to conjugate ζωοποιηθησονται at to understand that Paul is looking forward to the completion and backward to the process. When our LORD returns at the Parousia the last church "TAGMA" or division that battled the devil in this long theatre of war will go home in triumph, then comes Jacob’s trouble and its glorious sequel the divine theocracy. By the time of the Lord’s return we will come back with Him in a new spiritual body and different physicality - with a body from heaven. Job said "**in my flesh**" or as the Hebrew *rsbm* might as faithfully and accurately be rendered "**without my flesh**" shall I see God. The enigma of resurrection did not phase the faith of Job long ago and as it was made plain for Thomas in the upper room as it will on meeting the Lord be solved for us.

## DUST TO DUST

Is it really dust to dust or is it dust to dust and back again? I think not. The death of this body is the end of mortality for believers. Adam was of the earth earthy-we are as the Second Adam-like the Lord from heaven. The “swallowing up of life” at the Lord’s coming for earthly saints is the gifting to the soul and spirit of a new body. We sow in weakness; we recover in power through *Anastasis – Life*. To go one question further "Is it set in stone that the saints who come with Christ must yet rise from their tombs on earth or will they come in glorious bodies as the Church Triumphant from heaven to rejoin the church militant at the meeting in the air?

## GREEKS HEAR AGAIN ABOUT RESURRECTION

The men of the Areopagus may not have given Paul a second hearing but Paul gave the Greeks a second course on the Resurrection in his classic passage within the first letter to the Corinthians. In the Corinthian Resurrection narrative of Paul we conjugate κοιμηθησομεθα and αλλαγησομεθα – a weak future passive and a simple future delivering the meaning *"We will not all have fallen asleep"* but *"We will all be changed"*. Paul continues *[at the trumpet sound] "the dead shall have been raised εγερθησονται incorruptible and we shall be changed."* αλλαγησομεθα – that's it! The change as it affects the church triumphant would appear to be **in the past** and as it affects the church militant it has to be **at the time** of the Rapture. The terms "in a moment" and "in the twinkling of an eye" associated with Paul's statement might a priori appear to confirm the idea that all are changed simultaneously, but is that so? Can we discard the "we shall have been awakened"? Does the instantaneous phraseology relate to the "Catching away" and the "changing of our lowly bodies" in the circle of the Rapture event or does it apply to earlier times when believers at death undergo identical change?

Does immortality or Life await the rapture? Does our incorruptible immortal body from heaven abide apart from our spirit like a garment in a wardrobe for glorified believers until that time? That is the absolute implication of the intermediate state analysis.

## 4. CONCEPTUAL LEAP FORWARD

When (In John 11) our LORD was gently teasing Mary's broken heart towards reliance on His dynamic authority in the context of the Resurrection of Lazarus toward a belief in a

reversal of corruption of flesh without immortality He issued the fascinating statement "I am the Resurrection and the Life". Mary like many Jews and Pharisees was convinced that Lazarus would "rise again" within the economy of the last day – literally "in the house of the last day". Our LORD brought her up with a start when He spelt out His power to raise the dead and said "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Christ proceeded to show the power that lay in His command and in the Father's consent.

At other times Christ startled His hearers by saying "God is not the God of the dead but of the living". He was constantly pointing out that as the Father raises the dead and that also the Son has this power in himself by consent of the father and by prerogative.

## **QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

Many Gentile theologians have stated that the Jewish believers abide in Sheol till after Christians are all raised. Where are Abraham and David? If Stephen is there why is Enoch not there too? Where is Elijah? Where is Enoch? Where are those who came from their tombs after Christ's resurrection and went into the Holy City and were seen of many in Matthew 27.53 (cf Matthew 4.5)? Was Paul caught up to paradise in the body or in the spirit? Certainly he heard words and experienced matters not for revelation. The evidence he adduced built on lack of difference in experience seems to confirm body life beyond and accords with his doctrine of awakening in Christ's likeness and being clothed upon by our permanent dwelling.

## **"VERY FAR BETTER"**

"Verily, verily, I am saying to you that the opportune time or proper or even "happy" time [ *t[ cf also ht[]* ] **will come** [ *tab*

*future indicative] and also has come and the dead [mytm - those" about to die" and" dying" as well as "those who have died"] will hear and obey the voice of the son of God and the obedient living will live – or will live on for ever”(John 5). He (the Father)has given... Himself **to belong to the Son to belong to Life belonging to Him** or to "tie up" life in Himself [The "three belongs" say categorically that the Son of God can create "spring" again in the lives of the dead – only it is an eternal spring-time]. Notwithstanding the continuing human nature of Christ He is the Plenipotentiary of life and judgment.*

## **THE VOICE OF CHRIST SUFFICES FOR LIFE FROM THE DEAD**

Our LORD continues "The hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and they who have heard will live on or as in eternal spring like life [ $\zeta\alpha\omega$ ]. "The hour has particular reference to the LORD'S atoning death and "Eloi eloi" atonement cry and the "Tetelestai" victory cry. That experience of the grief judgment and joy of life eternal and it is the key to understanding the cross - a theological approach which has been virtually lost to the modern church. [ $\omega\rho\alpha$  John 5.15, 7.30, 8.20, 12.23, 12.27, 13.1, 17.1) Our LORD does not rigidly relate the giving of Life from the Dead to the "catching away" nor is this promise tied to mortal Anastasis but it is related to His passion. Testimony lies here if any is needed that there are those who have heard the voice of Christ at their death are from the end of their lives here enjoying life in the presence of the LORD.

## **CHRIST'S POWERS ARE ABSOLUTE**

*Our LORD adds "As the Father has Life in Himself (in the circle of His own being) so He has provided for the Son to have Life in himself – and he has provided for Him to bring about and devise under his authority the judgment because (as firstborn) he is the heir of mankind. There is a close relationship between judgment and the resurrection.*

*We forget this connection too easily. It was after his atoning death that our LORD advised the ungodly imprisoned in Hell that as holder of the keys he would call them to judgment with which notice came the demand to live in the fear of God. In the same way He brought with Him to paradise those in Sheol. These actions underline the pivotal nature of the hour of which Christ spoke.*

## **A MYSTERY WRAPPED UP IN AN ENIGMA**

*The LORD develops the theme further in John 5. "Do not wonder at this(" he says, namely at the fact that Christ was given the remit of setting out the manner and order in which mankind will be judged. In this Judgment connection Jesus goes on to say "The hour is coming [Greek **ἐρχεται** "is coming"– imperfect) in which all that are in the sepulchres will hear his voice and will march out in procession (cf.*

*Paul's*

*TAGMA or orderly battalions) – those who have done ethical and good things under inspiration into **Anastasis of Life** but those who have acted according to their own mind and will and done "tawdry things" into **Anastasis of crisis** or condemnation. The fact that all will hear does not imply that all will hear at once but simply that none, good or bad, will fail to hear as is appointed. Nor was our LORD necessarily ruling out the fact that believers who died would be with Him where He ascended beholding the glory of the Father after His resurrection, in fact He was ruling it in. Nevertheless at*

*the final judgment the wicked will be raised to appear before God (cf the great white throne) and the dead in Christ will have been raised (cf. Today in paradise, The marriage feast and The Bema).*

## **ANTINOMY**

*There are apparent antinomies in these statements, that is, events that seem to defy one another in a manner that does not subscribe to the understanding of the Resurrection or awakening of saints as a prelude to the Rapture nor to the treasured notion of a single Day of Judgment for saints and sinners. I suggest the following resolutions.*

## **THE MARCH OF SAINTS INTO LIFE**

*The victory benefits of the death of Christ for saints are **not** from a close reading of scripture to be presumed to be subject to postponement until all those in the graves hear the voice of the Son of Man. Hebrews speaks categorically of "Spirits made complete". The scripture appears to proof text the converse - that the benefits of Christ's redemption including "immortality of the soul" and a "house not made with hands" or "body from heaven" are given at death. This view I find irresistible and those who challenge it on the sole grounds that Hebrews 12.23 affirms an intermediate state where "the (bodiless or partially soul less) spirits of just men are made perfectly holy" an article of faith need to realise that the Perfection or completion involved in **τελειος** is typically **corporeal** and not **moral** in general usage.*

*Besides - our immortality is guaranteed by the deposit of the Holy Spirit. (2Corinthians 5.1-5). If it is objected that the dying saint does not hear the voice of Christ or enter immediately in fullness into His presence one has only to look at Acts 7.54-56 with Philippians 3.14 "the upward call" of*

*God and Hebrews 3.1 to realise this is just not so. Is the tender voice of Christ in death not as effective in appointing us to inherit our "body from heaven" as the **KELEUSMATI** or "loud command" of 2 Thessalonians 4.16? Further detail on the "March of saints into **Anastasis** of Life" may be found under the short study on **PRINCIPIA OF RESURRECTION** in relation to the "body from heaven" and "the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens"(cf. Chapters 6 & 7).*

## **THE BEMA JUDGMENT**

*That the companion apocalyptic literature of John spaces the treatment of the righteous dead at the Bema from the assize to which the unrighteous are called by a thousand years creates a further antinomy. [Apocalypse 20.5 and 11-15] The Bema judgment of saints may equally be related to their home-call and because the "hour" for God's saints instances dramatic immediacy and marks out redemption or redemption of the body. All we need to know is that the believer receives his or her reward or rebuke prior to the wedding banquet and that this bears no immediate time-conjunction to the judgment of the great white throne is so certain it could almost be made an article of faith.*

## **JUDGMENT ALL INCLUSIVE**

*Just as the hour of Christ's suffering to atone with its decreed purpose and the filling up of that suffering in the church has spanned millennia so the hour of judgment in its preparation and execution must be understood to extend from the visit of Christ to Hades through the sessions of the "Bema judgment" to the time of the Great White Throne - during which period or interval no-one and no created being will escape the*

*awesome appearance before Christ in judgment of one form or other-neither man nor angel nor demon.*

## **5. AWAKENING AND ANASTASIS SOME MAY SAY CHRISTIAN FAITH IS QUEUE JUMPING**

*Christian belief is in Christ "The Resurrection and the life". We believe we shall be "clothed upon" with immortality and "the house made without hands in heaven" "reserved for the believer" (2 Cor5.1 ff) in the voice and home-call of Christ who said to Daniel "You will rest and at the end of days you will "awake" to receive your allotted inheritance." But it was our LORD Jesus Himself who also encouraged Miriam, the sister of Lazarus to the forefront of faith and belief in "awakening" with the words "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Paul also assures Christian believers that to be absent from the body is to be present with the LORD. However, like Paul, we have no desire to be unclothed but clothed upon and so at departure to make sweet arrival and live better in that body prepared which is implicit in our heavenly heritage.*

This shall my song in eternity be  
O what a wonder that Jesus loved me  
Jesus loved me Yes Jesus loved me  
Jesus loved even me.  
When by His grace I shall look on His face  
That will be glory - be glory for me

### **THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE FUTURE STATE**

Assuming that a fair date for the writing of 1 Corinthians is 57AD, and our LORD'S ascension was 27 years in the past and not many of the 500 witnesses of His resurrection had yet



died, only a few "had fallen asleep." Nevertheless Paul had already been faced with the concerns of new Gentile churches trying to think out what happens after death. He also faced the Athenians and Corinthians with their sophistication and in this Greek context gives his best explanation of the future state of believers. Paul's written doctrine of Resurrection sets out principles which are apt enough to form a nucleus of Christian teaching and belief on the subject of Resurrection especially when allied to the further refinement of 2 Cor.5.1-5

## SALVATION HISTORY

Timing plays a very important part in apocalyptic and indeed in general development of the plan of salvation through its Jewish roots in the bloodline of Christ. First there was Abraham and the patriarchs - then the remarkable Salmon family of Judah involving Rahab and later Boaz and Ruth. These earlier eras focused in time on the royal house of David. By far the most glorious moment of all was **the birth of our LORD** in Bethlehem. In the Gospel of John our LORD Jesus then focused all eyes on "the hour" of His **redemptive passion**. If there can ever be anything quite like that it is our **"out-redemption"** and its accompaniment, the Resurrection. We do well to enquire of what time and circumstance was Paul speaking?

## VITAL VERBS

All through the Resurrection narratives of Paul we are faced with huge verbs some of which, significantly, are in the past tense. In the Corinthian text we have the two verbs **κοιμηθησομεθα** and **αλλαγησομεθα** – a weak future passive and a future middle stem verb delivering the meaning "We will not all have fallen asleep" but "we will all be changed". As previously shown verbs used by the apostle in

the text seriously need to be studied and their implications are not, I believe, factored into theology. Paul states that when the trumpet sounds [those whose bodies have long dissolved] “will have been raised” **εγερθησονται** “incorruptible and we shall be changed”. **αλλαγησομεθα**. The action of these verbs tells us that those who are "raised" and those who are "changed" will join at the point of the "voice of command" and the trumpet call" – **some from earth and from Glory some! The former exactly match "those who march out of their graves into life" in John 5.28.**

## 6. THE TRUMPET CALL & THE RAPTURE

### THE TRUMPET BLAST SIGNALS DEPARTURE

In 57AD Paul wrote to Corinth. In 51A.D.he had written to comfort the church he founded at Thessalonica, a church convinced that Christ should have come again before dear believers from among them "fell asleep" so very clearly the issue of the growing distance from Christ's ascension was creating concerns of its own at a very early stage. Had Christ already come back and gone? The apostle tells the believers of Christ's return under the idea of the "last trumpet". Roman legions were well known for their "waking trumpet", their "preparation trumpet" and their "marching" trumpet, which was called "the last trumpet". When we reflect on v23 we do indeed have a "battle order" word. One day the church would march away but not into battle, rather away to heaven and home for "victory celebrations". He reminds them that at that time they would be changed and that falling away and antichrist must first come.

He says "We who are left around shall not prevent those that have fallen asleep for the LORD shall come with a "shout of command" "the archangel's voice" and "the trumpet of God."

He stresses that there are three hallmarks of the genuine return of the bridegroom – it is just not true that Jesus has arrived silently. He emphasises in the second 1 Corinthians 15 context that the dead in Christ "will have risen" first. Significantly in that context he twice mentions "surviving" Christians *περιλειπομενοι* who live until or at those days of the Trumpet. Such believers as are then alive will be caught up to "happen upon the LORD in the air." The Thessalonian marching concept can be coupled with the idea of "ranks" [1Corinthians 15.23] of believers" meeting Christ in the interim the final squad of Christians brings up the rear of a long line of those who leave earth for paradise as an ever growing stream as the grace of God that brings salvation extends over time to reach the nations.

## **FIRST GENERATION NOT THE FULL PLAN**

The first generation of Christians is traditionally thought to have divided the world between them to reach the utmost parts. They first set out to fulfill the plan of Jesus "This gospel shall be preached in the entire world" but they must have begun to realise there was an even grander long-term plan for the church among the nations.

## **WHAT OF THE DEAD WHO HAVE DIED IN THE LORD?**

One gets the impression Paul expected the Parousia much sooner than two millennia plus later - this time factor brings with it the issue of what happens to the saints who die before the rapture or up to a thousand years later? Are their *souls sleeping* as the 7th day Adventists surmise? Are they *in a holding intermediate state* adduced by Protestant biblical scholars? Are they already in Paradise? Are they *disembodied spirits* like the spirits in prison whom Jesus visited

immediately after He died in Sheol? As we go further let us look at how the Apostle Paul explains the concept of "being clothed upon" with our body which is from heaven.

## **7. A DESCRIPTION OF RISEN LIFE**

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-54**

#### **(1) A CHANGED BODY**

*We have little option but to believe that the body of Christ was changed much as ours may be at His coming. The Protestant Orthodox Fathers taught that Christ took to himself "a true body" like ours but we learn from the Psalmist that it did not suffer corruption and we learn from the N. T. text and indeed from Zechariah the prophet that it bears the marks of His crucifixion. Christ's body was terribly marred though scripture gives us to understand that it was incorruptible – "Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption" (See Psalm 16.10, Acts 2.27,31 & 13.35). Paul assures us that we can expect to be clothed with our body from heaven – 2 Corinthians 5.4. This is guaranteed and not subject to surmise. When the bible tells us that this body returns to dust (Gen. 3.19, Job 34.15, Ps 104.29, Ecc.12. 7) and the spirit to God who gave it we are not to infer that this dust reconstitutes in the present precise anatomic and atomic structure.*

#### **(2) NEW FLESH**

*Our LORD said "Flesh and blood cannot inherit eternal life". We are not headed for an eternity of cuts, blood pressure, anemia and transfusions. Nor are we going to experience a welter of skin conditions that flesh is heir to. Conversely, Jesus said "A Spirit has not flesh and bone as you see I have". There is the proof that we shall have both skin and bone. The*

*character of the skeletal infrastructure of the "new body" is one mystery and the nature of the skin another. Perhaps the apostles would have been able to tell us more but we must live by faith till then content that "without my flesh" in its decaying mode I shall see God.*

### **(3-4) GLORY AND HONOUR**

*We are told we shall be as the angels. They are described as shining creatures. It is believed that Adam and Eve lost something of the aura of originality when they sinned. Something of the sort may lie behind Paul's comparison with the stars. Daniel<sup>12</sup> gives us further strong grounds for believing that there will be a new radiance about the heavenly body. It will possess "glory" **δοξα** and shed its dishonour **ατιμια** nothing of its sorry state and indignity will remain - it will be all "honourable".*

### **(5) IMPERISHABLE (42)**

*Our present body decays and is also subject to seduction which very often leads to physical undoing. We shall be awakened imperishable **αφασια** – both "uncorrupted" and "incorruptible" Augustine put it – "Non posse peccare" – we shall sin no more.*

### **(6) POWER INSTEAD OF WEAKNESS (43B)**

*Daily we are reminded of the "weakness" of our present bodies. When Paul says that we shall pass away in weakness but be awakened in power (15.43) he is fully aware of that feebleness of frame that precedes death – that sluggishness of mind that develops in later days and the disease and faintness that comes with age and decline. He stressed that we shall wake with bodies characterised by a dynamism that is maintained.*

## **(7) SPIRITUAL**

*It is at this point we encounter the density of Paul's argument for a very different body.*

*He tells us that Adam was our Father by procreation but he was not a "Spirit life-maker." We have first borne similitude to Adam in being Physical – a word which is indicative of the "animal nature" of Homo Sapiens – of our utter dependence on "breathing" and our very determined "will" selfish "desire" and unruly "passion."*

## **(8) CHANGED**

*We shall not sleep in death (passive), some believers will remain alive on earth till Christ comes. Nevertheless we shall all be changed (indicative). Paul is saying that those immediately changed will greet those long since in Christ's presence and all alike will undergo change into His image. This is called "an open secret". The word **αλασσω** is not a mix - and - match word, it means we will have "received one thing in place of another" not a bit of both. In this like those who barter one commodity for another we give away our old body for a new body. At the Rapture or when we are called to Christ in order of passing to Glory (**ταγμα**) this takes place with immediacy.*

***Εν ατομα εν ριπη οφθαλμου εν τη εσχατη σαλπγγι** - **In a split second**- the atom being the smallest particle then known – [those then living] shall be changed. **In the twinkling** of the **eye** or swift sweep of the eye lash we shall be changed (future indicative). We shall all be comprehended in the swiftness of change - **all be in the circle** of those who are changed. Some from earth and from Glory some - but changed with exactly the same immediacy whether at death or at the rapture.*

## **(9) THE LIVING AND DEAD – MYSTERY OF WAKING & CHANGING**

*For the trumpet shall sound and the dead **shall have been raised** incorruptible and **we shall be changed** or have swapped what we have for what we shall be given. Paul is careful to show that the dead will have undergone their awakening or have entered their new state previously. He does not distinctly say "We shall all be changed at that moment" but what he does say is that we shall all be there at the rapture and in the circle of the "changed" ones. **The enduement of the Christian dead when we awake in His likeness is, as I understand it, just as that of the living that runs later in the race (1 Thessalonians 4).***

## **(10) INCORRUPTIBILITY & IMMORTALITY**

*The necessary "enduement" for the holy city centres on a verb in the aorist middle voice suggesting not two activities of the redeemed but one only. Thus if we are "clothed upon" as in 2 Corinthians 5 with our bodies from heaven we shall not, I think you will agree be re-clothed at the rapture. It might seem possible to argue from vv52-53 that those who live with Christ are **incorruptible but not immortal** but the single "when" **οταν** in verse 54 disables this argument. That "**when**" is charged with immense significance. Paul allies it to the time when he is unclothed and clothed upon.*

## **(11) VICTORY**

*When "**this corruptible**" and "**this mortal.**" shall be clothed in the capacity to remain beyond corruption and death then "**victory**" will be complete. Death will have been drunk like a beverage - gulped down like a city overwhelmed by*

*earthquake - sunk like a small boat or consumed like a talent of wool in a dress. Better still in the O.T. terms of Isaiah 25. 8 - He will "swallow up death". As the NSJ puts it He will be as a "conqueror" overwhelming a city and all opposition – completely and perpetually.*

## **(12) VICTORY – DEATH AND HELL ARE THE LOSERS**

*Where O death is your quarrel now – Where is your strife? Where is your big battle for man? Where, O death, is your sting? Where O Hades is your quarrel and strife and where has your battle got you? Sin is the sting, and law enforces it but by the gift of God's grace ours is "the" victory of all time – the final victory. The silence of Death and Hades to the question posed in this ancient text of Isaiah and in Paul's Corinthian text is deafening. They are no more. Christ has conquered.*

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

### **I BELIEVE:**

1. We shall receive an incorruptible body from heaven upon "awaking" in our heavenly inheritance.
2. We shall hear at death the upward call as the saints in Matthew 27.52 & at the rapture hear the voice of Christ's command.
3. The church triumphant will share with those who are changed when the trumpet sounds the fellowship circle of the trumpet encompassing the church triumphant & militant.
4. We shall not at any time be spirits without the soul affording us self-conscious attributes of memory conscience understanding and will – nor indeed after our clothing in heaven be without a true body as is appropriate to our continued likeness to Christ.



5. We shall "appear" before the Bema of our LORD at His call in a priority meeting with Him that has to do with His loving interest to hear us and to speak earnestly of our life's story as He discerns and appreciates it.

6. We shall occupy places prepared by Christ in the Father's house and behold Our Saviour in the New Jerusalem and the Paradise of God having our part in God's praise and glorious fellowship and preparation for the inception of the Millennium and the LORD'S wider administration of grace and justice.

7. We shall be as angels of God as to relationships whilst retaining humanity in our souls and like Christ we shall have both physical and moral incorruptibility and immortality.

Jesus said "I am the living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! I hold the keys of death and Hades."(Apocalypse 1.18)

*There's Victory in Jesus my Saviour for ever  
He sought me and He bought me with His own precious blood  
He loved me e'er I knew him and thus He drew me to him  
He plunged me for victory beneath the cleansing flood.*

*Scribbler's jottings  
Westgate 2013*