



St. Andrew**Academy**

What Christians Believe and Why It Matters

Week 8

“The resurrection of the body and the
life everlasting”

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Life-after-death in the Ancient World

- ❖ Was there “life-after-death?”
 - Yes! At death, souls left dead bodies.
- ❖ Where did they go?
 - To the world of souls and shades . . . Hades.
- ❖ “resurrection” (*anastasis* in Greek) meant one thing: death’s reversal
 - And . . . resurrection didn’t happen . . . The dead stayed dead!
- ❖ Death is a one-way street!

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Life-after-death for the Jews

- ❖ In most of the OT, life-after-death hardly rated discussion! Instead, the focus is on Israel's relationship with God and its restoration.
- ❖ As we get closer to Jesus' day, the echoes of resurrection grow stronger . . . but still the focus is on Israel, not the individual.
 - Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones coming to restored (physical) life in the desert is a vision of the restoration of Israel.
- ❖ Israel's centuries of oppression brought a concreteness to the whole notion of renewal and resurrection.
 - In later writings, such as Daniel and Maccabees, belief in the resurrection of the dead begins to take shape.

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Jews and Resurrection

- ❖ Led by the Pharisees, most (but not all) Jews of Jesus' day believed that:
 - God would again reign over his people and all of creation.
 - The coming of God's kingdom would create a world at peace, with God's people living in right relationship with God.
 - When God's kingdom arrived, all of God's people would be bodily resurrected – ***all*** and ***at one time***. For the Jews, this was about a renewal of the very physical creation, thus, the resurrection of very physical bodies was needed.

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The Arrival of Jesus

- ❖ Jesus began his ministry in 27-28AD. He came announcing the arrival of God's kingdom.
- ❖ For the next 2½ years or so, Jesus traveled throughout Galilee teaching and enacting the arrival of God's kingdom.
- ❖ On Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem as God's anointed one . . . but less than a week later he was dead -
- crucified on a Roman cross.
- ❖ Nonetheless, Jesus was resurrected (*anastasis*).
 - This meant that God's kingdom had come and the resurrection of the dead had begun. Jesus' resurrection is the culmination of Israel's hope not something completely new.

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The Claims of the First Christians

- ❖ About 22-25 years later, Paul writes at length about Jesus' resurrection in a letter to the Christians in Corinth, Greece. Evidently, some don't believe in the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus.
 - In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul claims that Jesus had been bodily resurrected, as could be attested by more than 500 witnesses!
- ❖ Paul writes that if Jesus was not raised from the dead, if it is a lie . . . then our faith is futile, we are still dead in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than any other people! (1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

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Jesus' Resurrection and Our Own

- ❖ Paul goes on in I Corinthians 15. Just as Jesus was resurrected, so shall we be resurrected!
 - This is not mere resuscitation, a returning to life, it is resurrection, passing through death to the other side – to stay.
- ❖ This the physical, bodily resurrection of us all that we affirm every week when we pledge the Apostles' Creed.
 - When we say we believe in “the resurrection of the body,” we are speaking of our own body, not Jesus' body.
 - Jesus first, then the rest of us. Jesus' resurrection will not have been unique. Just as Jesus was raised, so shall we be raised.
- ❖ What sort of body?
 - The Bible doesn't tell us much. Jesus ate. He walked. One could touch his body. Once, he even seemed to appear in a closed room.
 - But the most important change is that spoken of by Paul: we will be changed in the “twinkling of an eye,” from “perishable” to “imperishable,” from “mortal to “immortal.” It is transformational – continuity and change.

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The Stages of Your Life

- ❖ birth
- ❖ life
- ❖ death
- ❖ life-after-death
 - We will be “with Christ” (see Luke 23:43; John 14:2; and Philippians 1:21-24)
- ❖ life after life-after-death
 - this is resurrection of the body *not* immortality of the soul

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The Creed has been headed somewhere

Father > Son > Spirit

Creation > Cross > Church

The end is not an event, but a person

It isn't "then what?" but "then who?"

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The Bible as a six-act play

Act One Act Two Act Three

Creation → Fall → Israel →

Act Four Act Five Act Six

Jesus → The church → Renewal of creation

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Revelation: New Creation!!

- ❖ Now (Chapter 21), John sees the new earth and the new heavens – the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven
 - This is all very physical! This is the renewal, restoration, and redemption of all creation. Obviously this is a huge burst of creative activity on God's part. "Creation" has been one of the key biblical words and concepts from Genesis 1 forward.
 - This is a time of great comfort – all the powers that have opposed God and God's ways are gone. Even death is gone.
 - The one on the throne is making all things new! He offers the thirsty the water of life. Who is the water of life (John 4:13-14)?
 - But lest we forget where we have been, we are reminded that God's new city is meant for the faithful and will not be enjoyed by those who have opposed God.
- ❖ At the "end," sits Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega.

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Reflections on resurrection

- ❖ The key is not to reconsider the resurrection in light of history and science, but to reconsider history and science in light of the resurrection.
- ❖ The resurrection tears down all the walls we try to erect between secular and sacred, political and spiritual, faith and science, etc.
- ❖ The resurrection shatters any notion of autonomy. If bodily resurrection is the "end," then we know that we cannot save ourselves.
- ❖ We need to always remember that resurrection/salvation and judgment go hand-in-hand.
- ❖ The way to enter the Bible is to begin with the resurrection, reading backward and forward. All things are possible.
 - Yes, love can be that great. Yes, we humans are God's treasure. Yes, God's creation is good.
- ❖ Learn to see the world through resurrection eyes. A transformed heart leads to transformed vision – and vice versa.

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What does the creed do?

The creed narrates the Christian story.

The creed gives us a lens to aid our interpretation of Scripture.

The creed helps us to see the world for what it is.

The creed guides Christian practice.

The creed prepares the worshiping people.