

The Hope of the Church of the One Body

This lesson continues with Part 4 in the series on the hope of the one body. The church's hope is based on the "appearing" (Epiphany) of our Lord, Jesus Christ which places our hope far above the heavens where Christ is seated.

However, if you ask a Christian today where he would go if he died, most of the time you hear the response of "heaven" and they are thinking of the other appearing (Parousia), which is tied to Israel. It seems by and large, that is the confusion in the hope of Christianity today.

In Acts 23:6 "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

Here Paul brings up the hope and the resurrection of the dead. In fact, this is what most people would say is part of the end times. Specifically, Christians would list three events in this order: 1) the rapture (resurrection), 2) the tribulation (70th week of Daniel), and 3) the Millennium (the 1,000 year reign).



This lesson looks at this resurrection and also covers the "trumpets" that are in Revelation since they are intimately associated with the resurrection. The previous lessons have already looked at the hope of Israel as Paul declared in Acts 26:6-8

"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

It's fine to have a hope, but if you are dead, what good is that hope? What purpose can there be in a hope that has not been received prior to death unless there is something going on after death? That something is the resurrection. The resurrection is closely associated with the hope that has been given to Israel.

Resurrection is not a new subject in the Gospels. The previous lessons showed where in the Old Testament the hope of a resurrection was in place. The Lord said in John 5:28-29

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

John elaborates on this resurrection in the book of Revelation.

The Hope of the Church of the One Body

Revelation 20:1-6 (KJV)

- 1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
- 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,
- 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.
- 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
- 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.
This is the first resurrection.
- 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The first resurrection pertains to the faithful in verse 4, while the second resurrection happens at the end of the Millennium which is classified at the Great White Throne judgment which is explained in verses 7-15.

Revelation 20:7-15 (KJV)

- 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,
- 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.
- 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.
- 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.
- 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.
- 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.
- 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
- 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

The Hope of the Church of the One Body

- 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

The second resurrection is where everyone is judged according to their works. The second part of the hope that Israel had was heavenly and that pertains to New Jerusalem, which is described in Revelation chapter 21 coming out of heaven:

Revelation 21:1-3 (KJV)

- 1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.
- 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Paul expounds on this hope in Hebrews:

Hebrews 12:18-24 (KJV)

- 18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,
- 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:
- 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:
- 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)
- 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
- 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,
- 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Hopefully now, part of the table has been set so we can answer the questions of who, and what, and where and when this happens. Now let's look at how the trumpets from Revelation come into play when discussing the resurrection. Paul writes about this in two places from 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (KJV)

- 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
- 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
- 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

The Hope of the Church of the One Body

1Thessalonians 3:13 (KJV)

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

1Thessalonians 4:13-18 (KJV)

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.
15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The majority of Christians hope today is explained that they meet Christ in the heavens and come right back down with Him on the earth as it's described in these scriptures. Most of the Christians who think this way (that Christ is going to return and the saints are going to be "raptured" to meet Him in the air and then come back with Christ and reign here on Earth) are considered Pre-Millennialist.

Pre-Millennialist take one of three doctrinal positions on what timeframe they will end up being with the Lord:

1. Pre-Tribulation – Christ comes before the Tribulation
2. Mid-Tribulation – Christ comes after the first 3.5 years of the 7 year Tribulation
3. Post-Tribulation – Christ comes at the end of the Tribulation

By and large, Pre-Tribulation believers are overwhelmingly the majority of Christians today.

What is your position? Does this pertain to your hope?