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THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 146
HEBREWS 13:20

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In our last study on the doctrine of reconciliation, we studied that phrase "Now the God of peace." The next phrase is "that brought again" and this is the aorist, active, participle of anago and it means to bring back, to restore. This aorist tense points to the time of the resurrection, the one moment of history which changed everything for all future time. The active voice refers to the fact that God raised Christ from the dead. It is a circumstantial participle and it refers to the verb coming up later "make you perfect." So, in this phrase we have, "Who has brought back or restored from the dead." Ek nekros is the ablative plural and means "from the deaths." It refers to the two deaths of Christ, his spiritual death for our sins and his physical death so he could experience resurrection and ascension. It literally means "out from deaths." And the next phrase should be translated "Jesus our Lord." Therefore, in this verse thus far we have, "In fact, the God of reconciliation, who had brought back out from deaths Jesus our Lord."

THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION

This is a change of pace in the life of our Lord that begins the strategic victory in the Angelic Conflict. He accomplished the purpose of his first advent by his two deaths on the cross. Being judged for our sins, he accomplished redemption, reconciliation and propitiation. But this is just the beginning of what he came to do. Through the resurrection, God is going to accomplish many other things.

It brought to an end the Jewish Dispensation.

It ushered in the Church Age.

It forever settled the outcome of the Angelic Conflict.

It guaranteed a resurrection body for every believer.

It authenticated all the promises God made in the Bible.

It set the stage for Christ's second advent.

1. DEFINITION.

Resurrection is the bringing back of humanity from the grave. The resurrection didn't effect deity, for deity doesn't die and cannot die. But once one is brought back in resurrection, he is not subject to corruption.

Be sure to understand the difference between resurrection and resuscitation. ONLY ONE UP TO NOW HAS EVER EXPERIENCED RESURRECTION. Lazarus, the little girl Jesus raised, the boy Elijah brought back from death were illustrations of resuscitation and were not classified as resurrection.

2. THE RESURRECTION IS A PART OF THE GOSPEL.

The boundaries of the gospel are very clearly delineated in 1 Cor. 15:1-4. When you go out to witness, you are not dealing with the fact of sin. Sin is a reality and must be dealt with in our lives, but it is not a part of the gospel.

The gospel has definite boundaries. So, you are out of bounds, so far as the gospel is concerned, if you begin to deal with the sins of the individual before they have been saved. The only sin you can actually deal with in the sinner's life is the sin of unbelief. Once you get that settled, then you can begin to deal with individual sins. The gospel includes the fact that Christ died for our sins. It is true that all have sinned and it is true that each of us was born spiritually dead. We have an old sin nature which we inherited from Adam. We are also sinners by our own acts of sin, but this is not a part of the gospel. The fact of sin in the life is bad news. "All have sinned" and "The wages of sin is death" are true but this is not the gospel. The gospel is the announcement that Christ died for our sins. Christ did it all for us on the cross and there is nothing we can do to be saved but to believe in Christ. There are two other parts to the gospel and that is the fact that Christ was buried and that he rose again. These are the three great parts of the gospel.

3. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A THEOPHANY AND A CHRISTOPHANY.

This is very important doctrine but many do not know these things because they have never been taught.

A theophany. This is an appearance of Jesus Christ prior to his first advent which began at Bethlehem. Jesus Christ appeared countless times in the Old Testament as the angel of Jehovah. Occasionally he appeared as a man. He was the wrestler who threw Jacob down at Bethel. Jacob had never lost a wrestling match until this time, but when he went in the ring with Jesus Christ, he came out limping and limped for the rest of his life. Jesus Christ was the visitor to Abraham's tent.

A Christophany. This includes the appearances of Jesus after his bodily resurrection, before he ascended. Like Mark 16:9-14 and Luke 24:13-43.

4. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS A PART OF THE STRATEGIC VICTORY OF THE ANGELIC CONFLICT. (1 Cor. 15:20-25)

5. THE RESURRECTION WAS NECESSARY FOR THE PERPETUATION OF THE DAVIDIC LINE. (Romans 1:3-4, 2 Tim. 2:8)

Jesus came as a son of David to fulfill a promise. He came to offer the Jews their king. The crucifixion without the resurrection and the ascension would mean that God does not keep his word. But Christ will fulfill the Davidic Covenant. God put his whole character on the line when he said, "No matter whether you are good or bad, I'm going to give you a son who will reign on the throne of David forever." God has kept his word in every instance. If God doesn't keep his word in every spot, then he doesn't keep it in any spot.

6. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE BASIS FOR THE BELIEVER'S CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE. (1 Peter 1:3-5, 1:21)
We have coming up in the future a resurrection body exactly like the one the Lord has. He is the firstfruits and this is our guarantee that we will have one like his.
7. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST INDICATES A COMPLETION OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTIFICATION. Romans 4:25, "Raised on account of our justification." He had to be raised if our justification is real.
8. IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST IN HIS RESURRECTION THROUGH THE BAPTISM OF HOLY SPIRIT MOTIVATES US ON TO THE SUPER GRACE LIFE.
Romans 6:4. Tactical victory is the heritage of the believer priest.
1 Cor. 15:57-58. The resurrection of Christ made it possible for the Royal Family to move into a new dispensation. We are now in union with Christ and are not only family of God but are Royal Family. God gives the victorious Christ some plunder and that plunder is Royal Family. There was no royalty until Christ was seated at the right hand of God and now we are that royalty. This is why the life and death and burial and resurrection and ascension and session of Christ is so meaningful.
9. THERE ARE TWO CATEGORIES OF RESURRECTION IN SCRIPTURE.
Believers--Daniel 12:2, John 5:24-29, 1 Cor. 15:20-22, Rev. 20:6 and 13. This is for believers only and is called the first resurrection.
Unbelievers--Matthew 25:41, 1 Cor. 15:24, Rev. 20:10 and 15. This is the last judgment.
10. THE FIRST RESURRECTION HAS FOUR GROUPS.
Not all believers are resurrected at the same time. All unbelievers are judged at the great white judgment throne and sent to hell, but all believers get their resurrection bodies before that time.
The first resurrection occurs over a long period of time.
 1. Christ the firstfruits. (1 Cor. 15:20-24)
 2. Rapture of the Church at the end of the Church Age. This includes the dead in Christ and the living. (1 Thess. 4:16-17)
 3. The Resurrection of Old Testament saints at the end of the Tribulation. (Dan. 12:13, Isa. 26:19, Matt. 24:1, Rev. 20:4)
 4. Resurrection of Millennial saints at the end of the Millennium.This is a battalion review and all pass in review in this order. It takes thousands of years for the completion of this first resurrection.

11. THE AGENTS OF THE RESURRECTION.
 - a. God the Father. (Col. 2:12, 1 Thess. 1:10, 1 Peter 1:21 and our passage in Hebrews 13:20)
 - b. God the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:24, Romans 1:4, 8:11, 1 Peter 3:18)

12. THE RESURRECTION IS NECESSARY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE PLAN OF GOD THE FATHER.
 Isaiah 53:10, "Prolong his days" means resurrection.

Next in this passage we have one of the great titles for Jesus our Lord. He is called "That great shepherd of the sheep." The greek is toi poimena ton probaton ton megan and it means "The shepherd of the sheep, that great one."
 The Lord Jesus is not only King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and he is not only that Great High Priest, he is God, the unique person of the universe, with hypostatic union. He is also David's greater son who will rule Israel forever. He has many titles and many functions. But the one presented here is the one who supplies the needs of the Royal Family. You have to be a great shepherd to take care of royalty.

DOCTRINE OF CHRIST THE SHEPHERD

1. THE SHEPHERD OF SALVATION.
 (John 10:11) Here he is the good shepherd. He laid down his life for the sheep. This is how he solved the sin problem. He died spiritually and then died physically. In his spiritual death, he solved the sin problem and rejected human good. (Sins will never be mentioned at the Last Judgment because Christ died for their sins.
 (John 10:14-16) This is a picture of how the sheep recognized the voice of the shepherd.

2. HE IS THE SHEPHERD OF THE BELIEVERS IN TIME.
 Here he is called "The great shepherd" and he provided for the Royal Family members as they live the Christian life. He has many blessings for super grace believers.

3. THE SHEPHERD IN ETERNITY.
 (1 Peter 5:4) Here he is called the chief shepherd.
 The good shepherd in phase one.
 The great shepherd in phase two.
 The chief shepherd in phase three.
 When the chief shepherd appears is a reference to the Rapture.

The next phrase in this 20th verse is "Through the blood of the everlasting covenant." Therefore, let us look at the doctrine of blood.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLOOD

1. Blood is the seat of animal life. (Leviticus 17:10-14)
 Even nature warns you about eating blood. When you kill a big buck deer, you string him up and cut his throat and be sure to drain all the blood out of him. Then you remove the inner parts. Venison prepared in the right way is very fine, but if the blood is left in it, then it is terrible. Animal blood is terrible. The Bible says, "The life is in the blood" and this is referring to animals, never to man. Your life is not in your blood. Your life is in your soul and you will never die. Look for a moment at the lamb on the altar. The throat is cut and the blood flows out and the lamb is dead, and that's all there is to it. The life was in the blood. (Lev. 10:11)
 Here is the picture of the lamb being killed and the blood flows out. The man places his hand on the animal and confesses his sins and the lamb, in a picture, takes his sins and carries them away. The animal dies physically carrying away our sins (not actually, just in a picture of the deeper actual truth).

2. Animal blood was used in the Old Testament to represent the spiritual death of Christ on the cross. Christ died twice on the cross. He died spiritually and then he died physically. There is no analogy between the physical death of the animal and the physical death of man. Christ did not bleed to death on the cross. The physical death of the animal is analogous to the spiritual death of Christ. It is a representative analogy. One pictures the other. Animal blood was literal, but it represented the spiritual death of Christ. (Col. 1:20, Heb. 10:19, 13:20, 1 Peter 1:2)
 "Christ died for us" is a spiritual death. Sins of the world were poured out on him and he died for them.
 (Isaiah 53:9)
 Christ died for "peri" our sins, it was a substitutionary death. He died physically for himself, he died spiritually for us all.

3. The doctrine of redemption was communicated by means of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament.
 (Hebrews 9:22) This is animal blood being spoken of in this verse.

4. Christ did not die on the cross by bleeding to death, but by dismissing his spirit into the hands of the Father.
 (Luke 23:46, Matthew 27:50)
 Blood was still in his body after he was dead.
 (John 19:33-34)
 "This is my blood which is given for you" and this is his spiritual death.

5. The blood of Christ is part of an analogy between the physical death of animals in the Old Testament and the spiritual death of Christ on the cross.
(1 Peter 2:24, 2 Cor. 5:20)
6. The blood of Christ portrays four doctrines.
 - a. The doctrine of redemption. (Eph. 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19)
 - b. Justification. (Romans 5:9)
 - c. Sanctification. (Hebrews 13:12)
 - d. Expiation. (Rev. 1:5)
7. The blood of Christ is the basis for rebound.
Compare 1 John 1:7 with 1 John 1:9.
Plus our detailed study of Leviticus 4 and 5.

1 Peter 1:19 goes on to say, "As of a lamb without blemish." Word for lamb is amnos and means a nothing, a stupid nothing. Christ fulfilled every animal sacrifice. "Without blemish" means blameless. Jesus did not have an old sin nature. (Compare Genesis 3:15 with 2 Timothy 2:13-14. Not only did he not have an old sin nature, he lived without ever committing a sin.

The words "Without spot" is from Aspilos and this means in the thirty-three years he lived on the earth, he never committed a sin.