

So Complete a Salvation

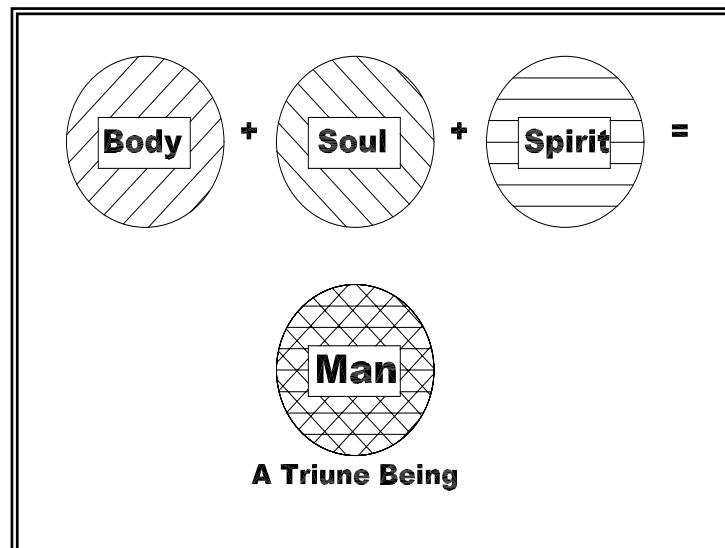
A Study in the Redemption of Man: Spirit, Soul, and Body

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“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Thes. 5:23).

As believers in Jesus Christ, we profess our faith and hope in Him as Savior and Lord. Faith expresses our complete confidence and trust that, as the Son of God, He is the true and only way to the Father and to eternal life. Hope expresses our assurance and anticipation of things to come – those things promised in Scripture relating to our redemption, eternal life, and divine fellowship.

This brief study lays a foundation for such faith and hope in Jesus Christ. It brings forth an understanding of salvation as a three-fold redemption process: spirit, soul, and body. Some have said that “man is a spirit who has a soul and lives in a body.” Others have said that “man is a soul who has a spirit and lives in a body.” In reality, man is a triune being, spirit, soul, and body, intricately designed and interwoven to function as a whole. Redemption through Christ must, and will, come to the whole man if he is to fully function in the new order of things to come.



“Man” is spirit, soul, and body intricately designed and interwoven. The three elements are interdependent upon one another giving man a nature to fully function within the order of his existence.

SO COMPLETE A SALVATION

Introduction

Elementary to the Gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus is the idea of a whole or complete redemption of spirit, soul, and body. The Apostle Paul stressed this concept when he wrote, “*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Thes. 5:23)*. Man is a triune being and, as such, must experience redemption in each of his three realms of existence. Oftentimes confusion in interpreting scriptures enters when there is not proper discerning or discriminating whether a Biblical reference is meant toward the redemption of man’s spirit, or soul, or body – for clearly redemption comes to each aspect of man but in its own unique way and time.

For example, it is quite clear that a third part of salvation is yet to come. Paul writes in Rm. 8:23, “*even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting the adoption, the redemption of our body.*” This, of course speaks of the **future** resurrection of the believer’s **body** at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a believer may anxiously look forward to this bodily resurrection, he may also look into his history for a redemption having been complete. The Apostle Peter writes, “*having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible ...*” (1Pet. 1:23). There is therefore a **past** redemption of the believer’s **spirit** occurring at the time of his confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The salvation of man’s soul (his “self”) is quite different. It is neither past nor future. It represents ongoing perfection (maturing) of the believer. “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Phil. 2:12,13), describes the **present** ongoing work of redemption in man’s **soul**.

It is the contention of this writer that proper understanding and grounding of **so complete a salvation** brings stability and confidence to the believer’s walk and a lively anticipation of things to come. Things like doubt, wavering, insecurity, aimlessness, confusion, and spiritual exhaustion cannot stand in the light of truth in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Attitudes like light heartedness, passivity, and routine religiosity cannot prevail. Yes, there are continually choices to be made and things we must do and commit ourselves to. However, let the following passage resonate in your heart now and as you continue to read the following pages of this booklet, “*... how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself*” (Ex. 19:4). As I glance back over my life’s walk in Christ, even through many times of difficulty and struggles, it seems He has truly born me upon His wings to bring me, by His glorious grace, to this place of intimacy and understanding with Himself and my Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation of the Spirit

So Great a Foundation!

Several scriptural terms are used to describe this initial aspect of the believer's redemption. Among the terms are *the new birth*, being *born again*, and *regeneration*. In today's society the term *born again* is frequently used figuratively to describe celebrities, sports figures, and politicians who find new life or sudden success in their long careers. Regrettably, this figurative use of the term is also used to describe any spiritual awakening or enlightenment. A man once related to me that he experienced a similar (but quite the opposite) kind of event in his life. He, now an avowed atheist, remembers a "spiritual" crisis when the full light and understanding that there is no God came to him. He said, "I knew I was crossing a bridge on which I could never return." This is a chilling, sad, but true account. Be not mistaken, when Jesus said to Nicodemus, "*you must be born again*" (*Jn. 3:7*), He did not mean it figuratively. He did not mean to say, "Nicodemus, you better rethink this and get a new attitude." He meant Nicodemus had to literally be *born again*.

Scripturally, the *new birth* (*born again, regeneration*) does **not** imply a new and enlightened state of mind, attitude or opinion, or renewed vigor or desire for spiritual things. It **is** a spiritual event which must be understood and appreciated in the following terms: the *new birth* is,

- a quickening, conception, coming alive, birthing of something divinely holy within the innermost man.
- beyond the capabilities of man, his determination, resolutions, fortitude, strength and/or power, and intellectual abilities.
- a heavenly impartation in which God, Himself, becomes the believer's Father – beyond a Creator/creature relationship to a Paternal/child relationship.

Reality of the New Birth

The *new birth* or *regeneration* speaks of the birthing of a new life in the believer, i.e., something that is present now but was not present before. It is more than an *awakening*, a new *mindset*, or new *appreciation for spiritual things*. Imagine if you would a spiritual scale (forgive me for being foolish), and that this scale could weigh spiritual (non-physical) things. If one happened to be standing on such a scale at the time of death, this spiritual scale would indicate a sudden decrease as the soul/spirit departs the body. If, however, one was standing on this hypothetical spiritual scale at the moment of *regeneration*, this scale would show a sudden gain. Something spiritual has been added to the believer. This something is the birthing of a new spirit, the kernel seed of eternal life. And, this eternal life is Christ. A mystical union has taken place between man and God.

Consider the following passage, "*Whoever has been born of God does not* (practice, or continue in) *sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot* (continue in) *sin because he has been born of God*" (*1 Jn. 3:9*). The first time I read this scripture with understanding I became speechless. Imagine, the *seed* (Gk. *sperma*) of Christ, in me! I had been born of God **literally**, not figuratively. Oh, what a reality to enter into, appreciate, and rest upon! This opportunity to become a "*member of the household of God*" (*Eph. 2:19*) is graciously extended to all who call upon and "*believe in His (Christ's) name.*"

The Cross and the New Birth

One can never “earn the right” to become a child of God. It was, and will forever be, on the basis of His favor in love, i.e., grace. John 1:12, 13 reads, “*But as many as received Him (Christ), to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” He (God) and He alone, in love and mercy, extends this right to be born of His seed and become His child. But the basis by which one enters this favor is: “*as many as received Him, ... who believe in His name.*”

This **name** of which the verse speaks is not a generic God, not Allah, nor Supreme Being, or any other divine title. It is not Jesus the man, Jesus the prophet, nor Jesus the miracle worker. That name is Jesus the **Christ**. Jesus Christ, the anointed Son of God who died on that cruel cross, a sacrifice for the sin of the world. He willingly shed His blood on the cross *once, for all (Rm. 6:10)* so that man may experience the effects of that sacrifice. The Apostle Paul feared that the Corinthians might receive the Gospel intellectually as he wrote, ... “*to preach the Gospel not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of **no effect***” (1 Cor. 1:17). The **effect** of the cross, its results in the believer’s life, is a cleansing, a purifying of the believer’s self. That he may become a holy temple into which God the Holy Spirit comes into union with man’s spirit.

This cleansing and purifying of the earthly temple is foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Once Moses’ tabernacle was built and furnished precisely to God’s specifications, there remained the need to *sanctify* (set apart, make holy for God’s use) the tabernacle and all who would enter in. There remained the need for sacrificial offerings to cleanse and consecrate. When all the offerings were complete, the glory of God’s overwhelming presence filled the tabernacle (Ex. 29 and 40). Today, it is no longer the blood of bulls, goats, and lambs which continually needs to be sacrificed. Jesus Christ has fulfilled all the righteous requirements. Now, we understand and appreciate how “... *He has perfected forever* (eternal spiritual redemption) *those who are being sanctified* (undergoing salvation of the soul)” (Heb. 10:14). Paul writes to the Corinthians, “*do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own*” (1Cor. 6:19). This emphasizes the spiritual union of God with the believer’s holy, newly-birthed spirit.

Current Spiritual Status

Jesus told the Samaritan woman He met at the well that the place to worship God is neither at the mountain where her ancestors worship nor at Jerusalem where the Jews worship (see John 4). But He said, “*the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him*” (Jn. 4:23). Jesus was addressing the need to supercede formal worship, programmed activities, traditions, and customs. These practices may help the individual “feel good” for they pacify the soul. However, with spiritual rebirth comes the freedom and opportunity for new and true spiritual fellowship with the Father.

This spiritual union of the believer's spirit with God elevates him to new spiritual levels. Consider the following scriptures:

- *“Even when we were dead in trespasses, (He) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5,6).* One of the most amazing things about this passage is the verb tense. Note, *“made us alive ... raised us up,”* and *“made us sit”* are all past tense, thus a present reality!
- *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ...” (Heb. 12:22).* This passage, along with verses 23 and 24 describes a heavenly scene in which the believer may now consider himself a part. *“But you have come,”* is the declaration. The new spirit is not geographically captive. It is, however, relationally bonded to Christ.
- *“He who has the Son has (the) life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have (the) life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life ...” (1 Jn. 5:12,13).* Clearly, *eternal life* is not a “thing” yet to come, or some future event to take place. These verses speak of a present day **knowing** that *(the) life* entered our being when Christ, the possessor of *(the) life* entered into our hearts.

So Great a Foundation

Only after a foundation is in place, the building may be erected. It is the stability, the strength, and the dimensions of all things to come. There can be no greater a foundation for the Christian experience than the full and proper understanding and experience of the *new birth*. It is with this understanding we have the stability, security, and plans to both press toward and anxiously anticipate the fullness of things to come, to wit, the salvation of the soul and body.

The Salvation of the Soul So Great a Life!

The foundation has been laid. The believer, having been spiritually joined with Christ Jesus in the *new birth*, now possesses the eternal effects of that **spiritual union**, i.e., his co-death (on the cross to the old man), his co-life (eternal life), his co-resurrection and co-ascension (spiritual), and co-seating with Him in heavenly places (You may wish to review *Rm. 6:1-14* and *Eph. 2:5,6*). And this is part of the history of the believer, not a hopeful glance at a future event. It is now time to build upon so great a foundation. The Bible addresses this aspect of building upon a sure foundation in *1 Cor. 3:9-16*. The following points are established in this passage:

- You are God's building (*vs. 9*)
- The foundation is laid, take heed how you build on it (*vs. 10*)
- That foundation is Jesus Christ (*vs. 11*)
- Building materials are gold, silver, precious stones (spiritual, heavenly), or wood, hay, straw (fleshly, earthly) (*vs. 12*)
- Building will be tested, in the Day (second coming of Christ), by fire (*vs. 13*)
- If the work built endures – a reward. (*vs. 14*)
- If not loss will be suffered (*vs. 15a*), though
- Oneself will be saved (possesses eternal life), by fire (*vs. 15b*).
- Reminder, you are the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit is in you (*vs. 16*).

Thus, the view of adding or building upon the foundation of salvation is clearly presented. This building is with an eye towards maturity, developing a *Christ-likeness* in the character of the soul. Also established here is the concept of *qualifying* for “rewards” in the coming kingdom or becoming *disqualified* as a loss of eternal “rewards.” It is important to note that one may become *disqualified* with regards to further rewards but retain the salvation (eternal life) that is in Christ. It is much like the man among the Corinthian believers caught in fornication with his step mother. Paul's declaration was, “*deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord*” (*1 Cor. 5:5*).

A Continuation of Grace

Care must be taken at this point. Upon hearing this message of *works* and *rewards* there may come the urge to quickly begin doing things for the Lord, i.e., begin the *qualifying* process by giving of one's time, resources and efforts in an outward benevolent way or ministry. There is no denying that such selfless efforts are both a need and a blessing to the Church. However, the admonition of Paul to the Galatians must be heeded, “*Are you so foolish? Having begun in the spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh*” (*Gal. 3:3*)? The progressive salvation of the soul really does not begin with these benevolent acts of mercy. A transformation must first begin in the nature and character of one's soul, and good works follow as a natural, outward expression of an inward Christ-likeness.

Can we change our own behavior or character? It is said that a habit may be broken, or developed, after eighteen days of repetition. Well, so much for habits. What about attitudes of the heart, innermost desires, deep rooted prejudices, innate character flaws, or undesirable emotional responses to situations like hostility, impatience, or indifference? With the presence of the indwelling Spirit, which brings forth sensitivity to our existing manner of life, one can easily identify with the Apostle Paul who writes, “*For I know that in me (that is, in*

my flesh – old nature) nothing good dwells; for to will is present in me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I would do, I do not do; but the evil that I would not do, that I practice” (Rm. 7:18,19). Thank God Paul doesn’t end with this statement but concludes, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rm. 7:24,25).

How long can one truly *suppress* undesirable traits? And if *suppressed* just how deeply are they buried? I read recently that consciously suppressing anger contributes to the reservoir of rage in the unconscious. And, under the right circumstances, this rage may explode into the consciousness. It seems the believer is faced with a choice, *modification* or *transformation* - which to pursue? One is of the flesh (self), the other of the Spirit. One is of works, earthly. The other is of faith in God’s grace, heavenly. The command to find spiritual maturity in our souls is clear, *“work out your salvation in fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12)*. This speaks of a deeply sober pursuit of Christ-likeness. And the way is also clearly presented, *“for it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13)*. This speaks of the flow of His grace **into** our lives and the lovely qualities of the indwelling Christ to flow **from** our lives.

Not I but Christ

Copy the character of Christ? Hardly. Walk in His footsteps? Never. Mimic some of His qualities? Maybe, to some degree. Resolutions, commitments, imitations, and determinations all have their limitations because they are born of the natural man and therefore are subject to his weaknesses. Jesus said to Nicodemus, *“that which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:6)*. Things of the flesh are temporal, earthly, composed of *wood, hay, and straw*. All destined for fire, no matter the sincerity of intent. That of the spirit is eternal, heavenly, composed of *gold, silver, and precious gems*, all quite able to withstand the test by fire.

I believe Paul reached into the depth of his heart, and with the pinnacle of his understanding and conviction, proclaimed, *“I (the self, old nature) have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith (confidence, reliance) in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20)*. What a revelation! To see by faith, this *born anew* life, being joined to Christ, is as a seed. And within this seed is all the character and nature of Christ Himself. This seed is nourished and watered by the Word, intimate fellowship with God, and a faithful rest (Sabbath) in Him to find His expression in us.

We find this revelation reinforced elsewhere in Scriptures. For example:

- *“For as many as were baptized into Christ have **put on Christ**” (Gal. 3:27).*
- *“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until **Christ be formed in you**” (Gal. 4:19).*
- *“That Christ may **dwell in your heart** through faith” (Eph. 3:17).*
- *“To make known what are the riches of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you** the hope (expectation) of glory” (Col. 1:27).*
- *“When Christ who is **our life** appears” (Col. 3:4).*
- *“For me to **live is Christ**” (Phil. 1:21).*

Thus, the believer possesses in his spirit an *innateness* which will, with the nourishment of the Word and spiritual fellowship, bring forth fruits unto God.

For example, the Apostle Peter writes, “*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and Jesus our Lord, as His divine power **has given** to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which **has been given** to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be **partakers of the divine nature**” (2 Pet. 1:2-4). Some word definitions from this passage will speak for themselves (Vine):*

- **Knowledge** (Gk. *ginosko*) signifies to be taking in knowledge. In the N.T. it frequently indicates a *relationship* between the person knowing and the object known.
- **Given** (Gk. *doreo*) – past tense, to bestow, make a gift of.
- **Partakers** (Gk. *koinonos*) signifies having in common.
- **Divine** (Gk. *theios*, from *theos*, God) is used of the power (vs. 3) and nature (vs. 4) of God.
- **Nature** (Gk. *phusis*) signifies the nature (i.e., the natural powers or constitution) of a person.

Peter then goes on to more fully describe the character of the divine nature as that which progressively possesses *faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love* (2 Pet. 1:5-7). These are the gold, silver, and precious gems that will withstand fire, for they are of Christ, and they are eternal.

Before His Face

Is the purpose of salvation merely to escape the agony of hell with a hope towards some blissful state? This view is totally objective and shamefully self absorbed. Oh, to fully perceive, grasp, and grow to appreciate that salvation is infinitely more than just an eternal vitality existing in a most pleasant environment. Actually, eternal life is an eternal conscious union with God in Christ Jesus. It is a vital (living) link, a spiritual oneness, a soul union with the living God. And this *relationship salvation* has already begun. We now look forward to a progressive, ever increasing intimacy and closeness in our *relationship* with Him. Paul writes, “*For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you **in the presence** of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*” (1 Thes. 1:19). This phrase, **in the presence**, in the original Greek literally means *the part towards the eyes, or face*. This speaks of intimacy, closeness, proximity to our Lord.

Life is the ability to consciously relate to our surroundings. This relationship can be with both objects or individuals, whether physical or spiritual. What one does with those relationships is quite another matter. They may be developed into a greater appreciation and intimacy or they may be consumed into a self-absorbent utilization. When one dies in the natural he loses that ability to relate to the natural. He will, however, continue to be able to relate to the spiritual realm because he is still spiritually alive. Jesus defines *eternal life* this way, “*And this is **eternal life**, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*” (Jn. 17:3). The word, *know* (Gk. *ginosko*), was previously defined as frequently indicating a relationship between the person knowing and the object (or One) known. Thus, eternal life is not a thing to possess, a mere vitality, or an eternal life’s energy. Eternal life is that union with God in which His life’s essence is shared with the believer.

As our *knowledge* of Him grows, we are better able to understand, appreciate and realize this life – and the expression of that life. The salvation of the soul is just that, i.e., the progressive transformation and expression of His life in the believer. Is this not what Paul meant when he said, *“it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me”* (Gal. 2:20)? If the indwelling Spirit is not causing an ever increasing reality of Christ in one’s life, then His number one purpose is being compromised.

Remember our hypothetical spiritual scale and how it may indicate an increase in spiritual substance at *regeneration*? This same scale may now be used to measure the increase of Christ in one’s life. As a seed grows, its mass increases. So it is with the spiritual seed of Christ. It is written that the purpose of the five-fold ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors is the building up of the Body of Christ, *“till we all come into the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (mature) man, to the **measure** of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Eph. 4:11-13). Has one’s life shown a substantive, measurable increase in spiritual substance toward His likeness?

Qualifying

It is joyfully and blissfully true that the believer will not come under the eternal judgment of condemnation (see *Jn. 3:18, Rm. 8:1*). It is equally true there remains a believer’s judgment as the following verses clearly show: *“For we (believers) must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”* (2 Cor. 5:10). Also, *“if anyone’s work which he has built on it endures (the test of judgment fire), he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire”* (1 Cor. 3:15).

John writes in *1 Jn. 5:4,5* that the one *“born of God overcomes the world.”* The word **overcome** is used to describe a measure of the believer’s spiritual growth. He overcomes not because he is spiritually mature, but rather, he is mature because of the faithful exercise of inwrought overcoming qualities. This word is used in the Book of Revelation seven times in the letters to the churches in Asia as a promise of reward (or implied loss of such): *“he who **overcomes** will ... eat of the tree of life ... not be hurt by the second death ... eat hidden manna and receive a new name ... be given power over the nations ... be clothed in white and name not blotted from the Book of Life ... be made a pillar in the temple of God and the name of God and the New Jerusalem written on him ... and ... sit with Me (Christ) on My throne”* (Rev. 2,3).

Salvation is truly a gift from God. It is available to *whosoever will* receive the eternal Christ. However, the fact is equally clear that there remains a **qualifying** for *higher order* things in the Kingdom of God. **Things like Divine relationship, Kingdom function, responsibilities, and privileges in the coming eternal Kingdom of our Father and Christ are in the balance of the believer’s judgment.** And, simply put, it is only the measure of Christ that finds its expression in the believer’s nature, character and service to our Lord, that qualifies to be weighed in that balance. *“Let us go on to perfection (maturity)”* (Heb. 6:1).

The only thing separating man from his eternal destiny is time. For death must come to all men, then the resurrection and judgment. This time in which we live our lives should be with an anxious anticipation of the glorious things to come. It is much like a bride while in preparation for her wedding. Her time is spent pondering the glorious union about to take

place, and in preparation of herself even to the smallest detail. Paul writes, “*For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*” (2 Cor. 11:2). And John writes of this coming union in the Book of Revelation, “*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife **has made herself ready***” (Rev. 19:7). The days in which we presently live our lives are given to us for this time of preparation, so that we may be properly *adorned* with the gold, silver, and precious gems of a transformed life.

The Salvation of the Body

So Great a Hope!

For much of my life I did not understand the nature of the resurrection. I had some vague notion of an eternal, blissful existence in some spiritual form. Some use the term *ethereal* to describe this state of existence, meaning lacking material substance or being intangible. The early Greek philosophers, some of whom Paul debated, viewed the body as an entombment and something of which to be set free. They viewed a blessed spirit/soul afterlife free of any bodily restrictions. These views, however, cannot be further from the truth. The New Testament of the Gospel of Jesus Christ knows nothing of a redemption that saves the spirit and soul of man but offers no hope for his body. The ability of the *self* to exist **in an embodied state** is everywhere assumed and confirmed in New Testament writings.

A closer look at the scriptural foundation, timing, and nature of the resurrected body is essential to separate truth from myth and to more fully appreciate and anticipate its coming reality. But first, as a foundational principle, let us examine the necessity for the redemption of the body.

Why the Need for a Bodily Resurrection

Have you ever really thought what it would be like to exist without your body? Ah, you might say it would be nice to be free of these physical restrictions and limitations. The mortality issue aside, one might think like one of the ancient Greek philosophers and consider that he would no longer be confined to walls and the surface of the earth (gravity), depend upon air for life's breath, or need the sun for life's energy. Nor would time be a factor. He could literally transcend time and space. This scenario may sound interesting and inviting, but only until alternatives are considered.

You see, the body with all its organs, nerves, and bones was given to man to enable him to enter a dimension in which no "spirit-only" being could function. The body allows man to *live*, or consciously interact, in a realm beyond the capabilities of the spirit and soul. A being is in need of the bodily mind and organs in order to enjoy the following simple pleasures:

- Smell the sweet fragrance of a tree's spring blossoms or the aroma of the ocean's salt breeze,
- Hear the wind lightly bristling through pine trees or the whispers of a loved one's thoughtful words,
- Hold that loved one in your arms or feel the warmth of the summer sun,
- Enjoy the taste of your favorite meal or the comfort of a refreshing drink,
- To behold the beauty of hills aglow in the hues of crimson reds, golds, and yellows of fall foliage or the gem-studded evening sky.

No, the body of man is essential to enter into and enjoy the blessings of the dimension of God's creation. Granted, in this current state of mortality, this life's interactions as described above may become limited or taken away completely. However, this life is only a foretaste of the perfected glorious life to come. Think on it, a perfected realm of a *new heaven and new earth* (Rev. 21:1) free from sin and death's destruction, eternity in which to experience it, and, the glorious presence on this new earth of the *Lord God Almighty and the Lamb* (Rev. 21:22).

As a triune being, man cannot be parceled out and still function as a human being. The interrelations of body, soul, and spirit are so interwoven that one part cannot fully function in the absence of the other. Psychologists say the three primary emotional responses are anger, love, and fear. Personally, I would prefer to express the three emotions as peace, love, and confidence (or lack thereof.) However expressed, physiological changes accompany these emotional reactions. Does not anger cause an increase in heart beat and warmth to the face? Will not fear cause a quaking of the limbs, increased perspiration, or even loss of voice?

A close pastor friend confided in me about a stressful situation in which he was to meet a close friend who was an elder of long standing in his fellowship. This man was set on leaving the fellowship. The morning the pastor was to meet the elder, he could not get out of bed. He was sick. The stress of the situation was overwhelming. It affected the pastor's nervous system which in turn upset his stomach and who knows what other organs. The emotion of the soul cannot be separated from a bodily response and vice versa. They are interwoven and must function in harmony with one another in order for man to fully experience the situation.

Similarly, to physically take and hold a loved one immediately induces a satisfying peace and joy in the soul. How one *feels* inwardly is, in this instance, initiated by physical bodily contact. Many people have experienced traumatic situations which have resulted in long term emotional or mental anguish of the soul. Deep seated emotions like fear, hate, loneliness, hurt, depression, anger and others, can actually be the cause of physical illnesses as well as the response to an illness.

Intuition, or some other spiritual expression, will equally bring forth a response to the body and soul. Intimate worship, in which the presence of the Lord is truly sensed, brings forth a peaceful quietness in the soul and a calming in the body. Before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, David Wilkerson of the Times Square Church and several other church groups around the country spiritually discerned danger was imminent. This discernment caused a deep burden in the souls of those involved to begin interceding to God with prayer and fasting on behalf of this country. Fasting, in turn, helped to sharpen spiritual sensitivity. These and many more similar examples, perhaps several that you may think of, clearly show the interrelatedness and interdependence of spirit, soul, and body.

Scriptural Foundation for the Promised Redemption of the Body

If some promise or instruction is repeated in scripture, its emphasis is magnified. When the Lord Jesus Christ, reiterates a point, one must be instantly convicted of the overwhelming importance of the statement and more so if done repeatedly within the context of a single message. In the Gospel of John, chapter 6, Jesus instructs a large gathering at Capernaum on seeking Him as the eternal *bread of life* rather than natural bread that fills their stomachs for a day. Within the context of this single message Jesus promises:

- *“all that He (the Father) has given Me I should lose nothing, but should **raise it up at the last day** (vs. 39),”*
- *“everyone that sees the Son and believes in Him may **have** everlasting life; and I **will raise him up at the last day** (vs. 40),”*

- “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will **raise him up at the last day** (vs. 44),” and,
- “Whosoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood **has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day** (vs. 54).”

In verse 47 Jesus says emphatically, “Most assuredly He who believes in Me has eternal life.” I believe that in the mind of Christ the promise of *bodily resurrection* is imbedded in the notion of *eternal life*, that is, the two are mutually inclusive and cannot be separated. When He speaks elsewhere in scripture of *eternal life*, the promise of *bodily resurrection* may be safely assumed.

Thus, *bodily resurrection* is a promise. It is a promise based upon the rock solid foundation that, “if Christ was raised from the dead, then the believer in Christ will most assuredly rise (bodily resurrection) from the dead also” (Paraphrased from 1 Cor. 15:12,13). Passion week ended on that dark Friday morn as Jesus Christ lowered His head in death, a lamb slain as an eternal sacrifice for the sins of man. His earthly ministry was *finished!* All that Christ was sent by the Father to do was complete. His body was then placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and wrapped in linen with spices. *It is finished* (Jn. 19:30)! But spiritual powers and realities were also then set into irreversible motion on that day. It is as though a space rocket had been built, placed on the launching pad, and the ignition switch flipped on (forgive me for being simple-minded again). Certain events are bound to follow, e.g., the rocket will lift off and carry all occupants into a new realm.

The events to follow surrounding Christ began that Sunday morning. The stone blocking the tomb, being miraculously rolled away, revealed that Christ Jesus rose bodily from the dead. Oh the magnificent glory of that moment! What cause for rejoicing! Both sin and death had been conquered (see Rm. 8:2). Until that time the dead bodies of all mankind, beginning with Adam, were held by death. The corrupting remains of that flesh, blood, and bones were imprisoned in the earthly grave. But glory, *Colossians 1:15 and 18* proclaim that our Lord Jesus Christ was, “the **firstborn from the dead.**” The **firstborn!** Not, the “*only born from the dead,*” or just, “*born from the dead,*” but the **firstborn from the dead.** There cannot be a firstborn child without more children to follow. “That He might be the firstborn among many brethren” reads *Rm. 8:29*. As surely as Christ rose from the dead in that glorified body, by the powers of God set in motion at the cross of Calvary, so will all those who are *in Christ, born of Christ,* rise also.

Additional Scriptures Regarding the Promised Bodily Resurrection

Following is a review of a few more scriptures significant to the understanding of the final redemption of our bodies, that is, the resurrection. In addition to a general increase in understanding of the resurrection, it should be noted that several scriptural terms, phrases or quotes directly associated with the resurrection have often been taken out of context. They have been used to support unrelated teachings – such as present day spirit, soul, or body experiences, or “some kind” of election or predestination to name a few. The term associations will for sake of brevity, however, only be noted and not elaborated upon.

“Not only they, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly **waiting** for the adoption, the **redemption of our bodies** (*Rm. 8:23*).

This is a pivotal verse from verse 17 to the end of Chapter 8. Note that words and expressions like: *heirs, glorified together, revealing of sons of God, adoption, redemption of our body, saved in this hope, predestinated to be conformed to His image, firstborn among many brethren, all point to the anticipated future resurrection of the body*, gloriously culminating the believers' salvation. (It may be good at this point to re-read this portion of scripture and to reflect upon how the verses, with all their terms and phrases, preceding and following verse 23 relate to that single verse.)

An incidental thought. The content of Romans 8:17ff was brought to mind while witnessing an awesome spectacle of nature. A few years ago the cicada (a large locust-like insect) completed its life cycle. Its life began as a larva deposited in the soil where it lives as a worm-like insect for seventeen years feeding on the roots of plants and trees. The only world it knows is this dark, earth bound existence. Then, as the cycle nears completion, a metamorphosis occurs. The worm-like insect transforms into a large winged insect. It digs a pencil size hole to the surface and bursts forth gloriously into a new world. Upon which thousand upon thousand and tens of thousands of these harmless insects fill the air and the hills with their presence and very loud chirping noise. Their glorious transformation and new existence is manifested to the entire world. However, unlike the day of man's resurrection, the cicada's life cycle ends a few weeks later as it mates and deposits new larva into the earth beginning another cycle. The believer's glorious transformation and manifestation will be everlasting.

*"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance **until the redemption** of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory"* (Eph. 1:13, 14).

That *sealing* and *guarantee* relates directly to the promised resurrection of the believer's body. Note the expression, "*until the redemption,*" is the looking forward to a redemption yet to come. A past redemption is spoken of in *verse 7* of this chapter, "*In Him we have redemption through His blood,*" - thus pointing to the spirit redemption at the *new birth* of the believer. But this portion of scripture is now addressing the irreversible setting into motion of that which is to come. There is a *predestinating* and *guarantee* of a glorious bodily resurrection. When the number of days set by God has been fulfilled, and the day of the Lord has arrived, "*...we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"* (1 Cor. 15:51,52). The life's energy of the indwelling Spirit of Christ will surge through mortal flesh and transform the corruptible into incorruptible. Glory!!

*"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will **transform** our lowly body that it may be conformed to His **glorious** body, ..."* (Phil. 3:20,21).

I would like to make two quick comments about the bold-typed words. The word **transform** (Gk. *meta-schematizo*) indicates a change in fashion of the believer's body and does not mean a different body. It is similar in concept to *Rev. 21:1, 5* pointing to a "*new heaven and new earth.*" Here the Greek '*kainos*' is used for the word *new*, which means, "*new as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old*" (Vine). The Greek word '*neos*' which means, "*new in respect of time, that which is recent*" (Vine), is intentionally not used

here. Thus, a transformation of the present body and not a creation of a different body are noteworthy.

The second word emphasized in the above quote is **glorious** (Gk. *doxa*, signifying, “the honor resulting from a good report” [Vine].) In my mind, words like *heavenly*, *majesty*, *perfection*, and *splendor* accompany this *honor*. Here, and elsewhere in scripture, the word glory is used to describe “the state of blessedness into which believers are to enter hereafter through being brought into the (resurrected) likeness of Christ” (Vine). Glory surrounds *with the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (R. 8:18). It seems as though Paul was actually excited when writing about the coming the resurrection. It will then, and forevermore, be glorious! For example:

- “I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** which shall be revealed in us” (Rm. 8:18). It seems as though Paul was actually excited when writing about the coming resurrection. He was joyfully anticipating it.
- “because creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the **glorious** liberty of the children of God” (Rm. 8:21). A new and eternal order, the “new heaven and new earth,” will also be delivered from disease, pestilence, and decay.
- “...I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the suffering of Christ, and also a partaker of the **glory** that will be revealed” (1 Pet. 5:1). Peter sees himself already possessing (“a partaker”) the seed of life that will, in the day of the Lord, burst forth in bodily resurrection (“glory to be revealed”). To him it is an irreversible course; he has been predestined to this glory.
- “...the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal **glory** by Christ Jesus” (1 Pet. 5:10). This verse, like so many of scripture, removes all boasting of man. The *calling* and provision of *eternal* glory is of God, in and through Christ. Man needs only to respond with an open heart.
- “(The bride, the Lamb’s wife) having the **glory** of God” (Rev. 21:11).

John was given the opportunity to witness the coming glorious culmination of all things. All of Chapter 21 speaks of a city, the New Jerusalem. But it is made very clear in verse 9 that this city symbolically represents the *bride, the Lamb’s wife* (today’s church). Let us not be guilty of reducing the great and glorious calling of God unto intimacy in relationship to that of things, materials, times, places, or events. In verse 2 John sees this symbolic city “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” **Adorned** means “clothed with.” Paul foretells this when he writes, “earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,” and “if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked” (2 Cor. 5:1-4). No, the believer will not be found naked but will be clothed in a body of glorious fashion.

Geography Verses Life

Let me be quite candid. Much has been written of the “New Jerusalem,” about its size, streets, walls, buildings, materials, and so on. It has been drawn, painted, and built as models. But, even as the term *Israel* may refer to the *geographic entity* or *a people*, so also does the term **New Jerusalem** mean a people. The central thought being addressed in Revelation 21 is not that of a geographic realm. Rather, it is a realm in which our Father God, and Lord Jesus Christ have their habitation among a people gloriously and

magnificently redeemed in spirit, soul, and body. It has to do with God's presence and intimacy of relationships. Note:

- *“But I saw no temple in it (the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ), for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev. 21:22)* – It is not a matter of a place or a building but of a presence!
- *“these shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the **glory** of His power, when He comes, in that day, to be glorified in His saints ...” (2 Thes. 1:9,10)* – the word *destruction* used here for the unbeliever means not annihilation, but actually a loss of well being. The word *presence* is often translated *face* (literally, the countenance, that part towards the eyes – here meaning the presence of a person, the face being the noblest part [Vine]). Is hell, as a place, important? Or does the importance lie in the loss of intimate relationship with the Lord?
- *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” (1 Thes. 2:19)* – in His presence, before His face, for all eternity. Glory! Note, here also emphasis is not placed upon a *heavenly* geographic realm, but upon an intimacy of relationship.

When one thinks or meditates on the Garden of Eden (*Gen. 2*), thoughts are not so much on the geography of the garden. Rather, one is drawn to imaging the presence of God and the intimacy of relationship with Adam and Eve. God and man would meet and commune in delightful fellowship. With the fall of man this fellowship was severed. Restoration of God's presence was *somewhat* re-established with the building of Moses' tabernacle and its later replacement, Solomon's temple. His glorious presence is said to have occupied the central part, the Holy of Holies. But, the intimacy of relationship was reduced to a system of sacrifices, feast days, laws and regulations, i.e., religion. Even though God's presence was among His people, yet He remained quite unapproachable. Now, through Christ Jesus, intimacy of relationship with God is not only being restored, but surpasses anything previously experienced. Oneness with God may today, this moment, begin in the spirit and progress throughout the soul. The Book of Revelation reveals not just a restoration of fellowship, but the grand culmination of all things. It shows the most glorious realm of the presence of God in intimate fellowship with a people redeemed in spirit, soul, and body.

The Nature of the Resurrection

Envision if you will the following scene. The day of the Lord arrives and the power of God's Spirit surges through all His creation. A total transformation occurs. The heavens and earth are renewed. Purged from the earth and its environment are all those elements leading to destruction, death, and decay such as disease, pestilence, toxins, and the brutality of beasts. Then ...

*“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain.
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
As the waters cover the sea” (Is. 11:6-9).*

Believers are resurrected from the grave into this new environment. They become clothed with garments (bodies) fashioned to eternally function in this new environment. And, central to all things, about Whom all that live, and move, and have their being, is the glorious and mighty presence of God, our Father, and the Lamb, Christ Jesus (See Rev. 21:22,23).

*“And I heard a loud voice from 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 will be with them and be their God.
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes;
There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying;
And there shall be no more pain,
For the former things have passed away.’” (Rev. 21:3,4).*

It is clear that **all** will rise from the dead, believers and unbelievers (Jn. 5:28,29). Scriptures explain that unbelievers will come to a time of judgment followed by eternal separation from God, which is the second death (Rev. 21:8). Their new realm of existence, termed the Lake of Fire, is characterized by a life of extreme loss of well being and sadness (2 Thes. 1:9; Mt. 8:12). Beyond this understanding is only speculation. However, the believer has much to look forward to. One does not need to speculate regarding the nature of the believer’s new life, for the following Biblical assumptions may be made:

- The seed of Christ is in the believer (1 Jn. 3:9). And, “...we **know** that when He is revealed, we **shall be like Him** for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2)
- Paul said that the new body would not be “flesh and blood” (1 Cor. 15:50), but Jesus pointed to the fact that he was “flesh and bone” (Lk. 24:39). Here also Jesus said to His disciples to “**behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself;**” thus declaring that it was His whole being, spirit, soul, and body standing before them and that the marks on His hands and feet were evidence that it was the same corporal body, only now transformed.
- The fact is equally clear that this body that Jesus retook was changed into a new kind of body. It now has qualities adaptable to this new order – it could:
 - Be seen, recognized, and touched (Jn. 20:19-29).
 - Walk along a road and carry on a conversation (Lk. 24:14-17).
 - Break bread, and eat fish and honeycomb (Lk. 24:30, 42,43).
 - Build a fire and cook a meal of bread and fish (Jn. 21:9).
 - Teach and instruct (once Jesus was with over 500 people) (Acts 1:4-8, 1Cor. 15:6).

- Suddenly vanish from sight (Lk. 24:31).
- Suddenly appear (Jn. 20:19,26).
- Ascend into the clouds (Acts 1:9, Mk. 16:19).

From these scriptural statements, we therefore learn that our *present* bodies – confined to *matter*, *time*, and *space* imprisonment, will not be resumed in the resurrection. From Christ, we learn that the resurrected body is not ethereal (vapor-like) but has some kind of real substance. The elements of *time*, *space*, and *matter* were not obstacles to Christ nor will they be obstacles to the resurrected believer. It is also clear from scripture that the resurrected body will no longer be subject to pain, disease, decay, or death (1 Cor. 15:54, Rev. 21:4). Our current physical nature, subject to geophysical and biological laws, will be exchanged for a nature that operates within a different order of being. The laws of that new order are not understood. However, the principles by which this new life operates will have undiminishable perfections and unending continuance - perhaps as the perpetual creating of the Spirit.

Summary and Conclusion

Old testament “psychology” shows that man was created by God as a triune being. “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a **living being**” [Heb. *Nephesh*, soul] (Gen. 2:7). When the first *living soul*, Adam, sinned, his whole being was effected. Spiritually he was separated from fellowship with God. His soul became corrupted with self-centeredness and being earthly minded. The body would eventually find death and decay.

God’s design for man has always been, and will continue to be, for him to live on the earth as a triune being. He proposed man to enjoy spiritual fellowship with Himself and things of the heavenly realm, and for the fullness of fellowship and experience in the earthly realm. The restoration of redemption must, therefore, come to the whole man - spirit, soul, and body.

Scriptures clearly point to such a threefold salvation. For one walking this course, in and through Christ Jesus, he may with joy, confidence, and lively anticipation make a threefold confession of faith:

- I have been born again of spirit by God; the seed of Christ is in me; and because I have Christ, I now have eternal life.
- For me to live is Christ. The Spirit of God is now working in my soul enabling me to be a partaker of the divine nature and thereby escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- In the Day of the Lord, this body of mine will rise from the dust of the earth and attain immortality. I will be clothed with a changed body that will not know pain, disease, and death; but will enable a walking in and enjoying of a fascinating new earth environment. I will be in the company and fellowship of all believers in Christ, but also most graciously be in the

presence of my Father and my Lord Jesus Christ. There, I will serve Him to the desires of His heart, as He oversees His eternal kingdom.

What confidence, what inward joy, what lively anticipation, what cause for inward joy!

So Complete a salvation!

“Blessings and honor and glory and power to Him who sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever, and ever” (Rev. 5:13).

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