

Resurrection Of The Dead The Hated Doctrine

By Glen A. Adams

Strange indeed it is, that man, locked in the fear of death, hates the hope of resurrection from the dead with the greatest passion. That he does so is quite evident both in Biblical accounts and in contemporary beliefs. In Paul's defense before Agrippa he said, "And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O King! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God does raise the dead?" Most of the Athenians on Mars hill scoffed when Paul set forth the resurrection. Paul used the fact of resurrection to divide the council because he knew the Pharisees believed it and the Sadducees did not. All through the Acts of the Apostles they were in trouble because they preached Jesus and the resurrection.

There is very little difference between that day the present. Most religious people would accept the fact that in some mystical way Christ was raised from the dead. However, the idea of the entire race being resurrected, each with his own identity, gets lost in the false doctrine that at death each person goes immediately to heaven or hell.

REJECTING THE ONLY ANSWER

Does it not appear rather odd that in knowing he goes to the grave to dissolve back to the elements of the earth from which he was taken, that man would repudiate the only answer to this awful prospect that lies before him? He will spend his last cent to stay alive when plagued with a disease that could put him in the grave, yet he will refuse to hear or believe the one answer to the problem of death; the resurrection from the dead.

There must be a reason why, and one might properly conjecture that it probably roots back into the flaw that got him into the death syndrome in the first place. If resurrection is the antidote to death, and death is the wages of sin, then the shying away from resurrection must have something to do with the fall of man. Let us probe this a bit and see if that relationship does shed some light on this question.

REJECTING GOD AS CREATOR

The promiscuous nature of modern living has a difficult time believing that the whole trouble of the human race began with eating of a piece of fruit from a tree, no matter how emphatic the prohibition. So man, in his inventiveness, has come forth with all kinds of speculation as to what Adam's sin was. One middle-aged man who taught a Sunday school class of adults larger in number than my entire congregation said that he thought the original sin was sex, and so taught his class.

The term "God" is an absolute. When one says "God" he has automatically placed all else under that authority and supremacy. God is Creator of all things, and because of His absoluteness, that which He creates must of necessity believe and accept His Creatorship or forfeit the right to be. That means that any contesting of His wisdom by any act contrary to His stated wish becomes a direct repudiation of Him as Creator.

In actuality God has not been deposed, but the sinner, by his rejection of God's absolute authority as God and Creator has deposed God as far as his relationship to God is concerned. It is not the apple, or sex, or any other particular physical doing that is sin. It is man saying to God as his Creator and as having any right over him as a creation. The one sin of man, then, that incurs the death penalty is rejection of God as Creator.

REASONS TO CHANGE YOUR MIND

In order for there to be any salvaging of man from this terrible predicament of death, it becomes apparent that the mercy and grace of God would show forth to corrupt, fallen man that which would change his mind about God. Where he denied God as his Creator, and stepped into death, he would have to come back to believing God *did* originally create him, by some means that mercy and grace would provide. The whole being and doing of Christ incarnate in flesh was one grand display of the fact to man that He was and is Creator and holds absolute power over the creature. His Virgin Birth says that God has come among us, with the method attesting to His Deity. His miracles all show His power over creation. His sacrificial death is God providing the atoning victim to fulfill the law. His *Resurrection*? His resurrection is the visible display before the eye of man that God is Creator by re-creating Christ after He was put to death.

In other words God is saying to man, "I created you and you denied it to the forfeiture of your own being and identity as a man. Now I have provided pardon for you in the death of my Son and you ought to be able to see that I am Creator once again by my re-creating my Son as one of the race and the first-fruits of the race from death. If you will not believe this evidence I set before you this second time, you will forfeit your right to be forever."

Sabbatarians have a difficult time understanding why Christians throughout the Christian era worship on the first day of the week, when they see the command in the Decalogue for man to worship on the seventh day. Certainly the fourth commandment says to man, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." But did man keep this commandment any better than he kept the other nine? Not at all. That fourth commandment was there to remind man to honor God as Creator and the violation of it was as much a breaking of the law as the violation of any of the other nine. To break the fourth commandment was no different from the act of Adam in the garden in the original sin.

NO EXCUSE NOW

Now Christ was resurrected on the first day of the week. That resurrection was God re-creating one of the race and holding the fact before the eye of man so that he could never again have any excuse for not honoring God as his Creator. So what the first fact of God being Creator was not able to do, that is, get man to worship Him as Creator and Lord, the second demonstration of His power to create ought to accomplish. So if we worship the first-fruits of the new creation it is pertinent to worship Him on the day that He convinced us that He is Creator by actually re-creating Christ.

If one will examine Romans 10:9–10, he will see that the thing that saves a sinner from death is a return to the belief that Christ is Lord and that He was re-created by resurrection. Once a man comes to believe that God is God and is the only Creator, he will then regard Him as Lord and submit to his Fatherhood. But he must come back to his belief that God is indeed Creator, not by just imagining that to be the case, but by the evidence that God presents to him that turns his mind around to take the place of creature before the Creator. The gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. What better way to get man to reject his rejection of God as His Maker than to kill Christ to fulfill the penalty that will release man from the cause of death and then boldly demonstrate the fact of and the power to resurrect and re-create man?

If man's rejection of God as Creator ends in man's death, and man willfully makes that denial, it is easy to see why he hates the resurrection. When he sees God's display of His being Creator in raising Christ from the dead, he has to confront the fact that God is God indeed and he is not. That means that he would have to return to the creature status and honor God as Lord over him. To deny this was his original sin and he does not like that confrontation now any more than he accepted the restriction in the Garden.

Any created being must, by definition, accept ;and honor the cause of his being. Most who deny God created them in an act of sin, will not heed the gracious demonstration of creativeness in resurrection, though irrefutable. To do so would require one to accept the Lordship of Him who presents the demonstration, and man refuses to give up his assumed authority as his own God as he did in Eden.

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