

3 – The New Us

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Revelation 21:1-4 ⁱ

How important is the resurrection to you? Could you be satisfied without it?

What do you think Heaven will be like without having new bodies on a new earth?

Marcus Borg, a leader in *The Jesus Seminar* of the late 1990’s wrote, “As a child, I took it for granted that Easter meant that Jesus literally rose from the dead. I now see Easter very differently. For me, it is irrelevant whether or not the tomb was empty. Whether Easter involved something remarkable happening to the physical body of Jesus is irrelevant.” ⁱⁱ

How confused we all must be when Christian doctrine fall short of a thorough examination?

Pulitzer Prize winning author, John H. Updike wrote, “Make no mistake: if He rose at all it was as *His* body; if the cells’ dissolution did not reverse, the molecules reknit, the amino acids rekindle, the Church will fall... *Let us not mock God with metaphor, analogy, sidestepping transcendence; making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the faded credulity of earlier ages: let us walk through the door [of reality].*

The Apostle Paul considers the resurrection absolutely essential to the Christian faith – as should all followers of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:17, 19 ESV

*“For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins...
¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”*

The 20th century American pastor, teacher and author R. A. Torrey explains that our bodily resurrection is the foreground for great realities:

“We will not be disembodied spirits in the world to come, but redeemed spirits, in redeemed bodies, in a redeemed universe.” ⁱⁱⁱ

If we get our bodily resurrection wrong, then we’ll miss the greater truths of redemption that God is preparing for all who believe.

What was NORMAL at the beginning will be the normal in THE NEW HEAVEN

Let’s consider *the first normal* of our human condition – *the way we were meant to be and live* at the beginning of time.

Human life was created to be eternal:

Remember, before the fall of humanity into mortality, **God’s plan for us included a life without death.**

Ecclesiastes 3:11

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart...”

Let's take a closer look at creation:

Genesis 2:7

*"The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, **and the man became a living being.**"*

As Randy Alcorn points out the Hebrew word for "living being" is often translated "soul".

The point at which Adam became a "soul", or living being, is when he had both material *and* immaterial components.

Our physical bodies are an essential aspect of who we are, not just shells for our spirits to inhabit.

Death, then, would be an *abnormal condition* from the original design of life.

Death tears apart what God created and joined together for all time.^{iv}

Our abnormal condition will be **REDEEMED** at the resurrection.

Disrespect and disobedience toward God, our creator, will be restored - for all time – *in Christ Jesus!*

2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

Revelation 21:5

And He who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

The resurrection of the body and the renewal of everything God has made is the hope of the Christian faith.

We will never be exactly what God intended us to be until our bodies and souls are reunited at the resurrection.

What will our NEW BODIES be like?

It's what we've all dreamed of – new bodies with no flaws or limits!! Am I right?!

No need for exercise, makeup, hair gel or Botox. Just give me a brand-new body!

The one that I have always wanted!

Not so fast!

1 John 3:2-3

*“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But **we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.** ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”*

Jesus also told His disciples that He was not a ghost (**Luke 24:39** NLT).

Jesus' resurrection was the *“firstfruits”* of the dead in Christ (**1 Corinthians 15:20**)

Jesus had walked on earth for 40 days after His resurrection.

He had been seen by the women at the tomb (who called Him “sir” – obviously recognized Him as a person – **John 20:15**).

The disciples saw Him after He miraculously appeared in a locked room with them, and Thomas even touched his scarred hands and side:

Jesus instructed Thomas...

“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” (**John 20:27**).

On the third occasion of which Jesus was with the disciples after His resurrection, He was waiting on the seashore for seven of them to arrive from fishing early that same morning (John 21:1-14).

- Jesus had started a fire,

- Stood on the sand,
- Called for them,
- Made their breakfast, and
- Ate with them.

Philippians 3:20-21

*“...our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, **the Lord Jesus Christ,**²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, **will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.***

We will have abilities to be in places we wish to be regardless of what we would consider impossible in our mortal bodies.

1. Our bodies will be our human bodies – **renewed!**
2. We will walk.
3. We will know each other.
4. We will talk to each other.
5. We will eat.

How can we all share in this HOPE?

Philippians 3:17-19

¹⁷Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. ¹⁸For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

Colossians 3:1-4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above,

not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

ⁱ All scripture references will be taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless indicated otherwise.

ⁱⁱ Marcus J. Borg and N. T. Wright, *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 129-31.

ⁱⁱⁱ R. A. Torrey, *Heaven or Hell* (Kensington, Pa.: Whitaker House, 1985), 68-69.

^{iv} Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 112-13.