

Why Physical Bodies Were Not Raised?

Resurrection Series (Part 5)

By Ed Stevens -- Then and Now Podcast -- Sept 15, 2013

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Welcome back to another study of Biblical eschatology from a preterist perspective.
- B. Last time we mentioned the two different approaches to resurrection within the modern preterist movement (the CBV and IBV views). Then we looked at the biblical concepts of Sheol, Hades, and Gehenna, and read several pages from Dr. Robert Morey's excellent book on *Death and the Afterlife*. That whole study last time was an introduction to the material that we will be looking at this time and next time. So, if you have not listened to it yet, you will want to do that before listening to this one.
- C. In this session, we will deal with that perpetual nagging question that futurists relentlessly pester us with, i.e., "*Why weren't the physical bodies of the saints raised out of the graves in AD 70?*" You will want to pay real close attention to the answer that we will be providing to that question. This will be a satisfying answer that will bless your socks off when you finally understand it, and will give you something that you can fire right back at our futurist critics.
- D. If we have time, we will also look at some of the various definitions and concepts about resurrection that other Christians have had down through the centuries, where those concepts came from, and why they are wrong. Then we will show what the original biblical definitions and concepts are, and how they need to be restored.
- E. So, before we begin, let's pray --
Omnipotent Savior of Your Elect People, who alone has the power to raise the dead out of Hades and give them a better kind of life in Your Holy Presence forever, we magnify You for sending your Son to die on the Cross, and for raising Him back out of Hades to prove that His promise to redeem us from death was trustworthy. Without His death and resurrection, we would have no hope of an eternal life in a new immortal body in Your Holy Presence in the unseen heavenly realm. Help us now as we study what your Word actually teaches about resurrection and our afterlife. It is in the Name of your Holy Son Jesus that we pray. Amen.

Different Kinds of Resurrection Mentioned in Scripture

Scripture talks about several kinds of resurrection, **not just ONE kind**. For instance, there are texts which talk about us being spiritually raised out of our sin-deadness into the eternal life of the New Covenant Kingdom. There are other texts which talk about the physical resurrections of Lazarus, Eutychus, Dorcas, and Jesus. And there are texts which refer to the final *resurrection of the dead* out of Hades on the Last Day. Let's take a closer look at those kinds of resurrection that are mentioned in the Bible:

(1) Bodies Out of the Ground (BOG) — This is the favorite view of most of our futurist brethren. There are a number of instances where we see the self-same physical bodies of saints being raised back to life: the son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:15), the daughter of Jairus (Lk 8:54-55), Lazarus (Jn 11:38-44), Eutychus, Dorcas, etc. were all bodily resurrections back to physical life (cf. Matthew 10:8; 11:5). The self-same physical body of Jesus was also raised back to life. That is indeed one kind of resurrection which the Bible talks about, and most futurists tend to focus almost exclusively on this kind of resurrection. However, it is not the only kind of resurrection that the Bible mentions, nor is it necessarily the kind of resurrection that was supposed to happen at the Last Day (the Eschatological Resurrection). Most futurists tend to focus almost exclusively on this kind of resurrection as they continually use these examples as proof that the eschatological resurrection had to be a resurrection of physical bodies, so that we have to get our self-same bodies back just like Jesus did. Futurists claim that it is not enough to get a **new body** that is like his glorious body (as I am teaching), they think we also have to get a **resurrection of our self-same physical bodies** like Jesus did. We will point out in our comments here in this session why this argument simply does not hold up. Many futurists believe the self-same original molecular physical body will be RAISED out of the ground, then CHANGED into its immortal form to dwell in heaven. However, there are a number of conservative evangelical futurist scholars who believe the disembodied soul is raised out of Hades (SOH) at the eschatological resurrection, and given its new immortal body form at that time, so that there is no need for a resurrection of their physical body with a CHANGE afterwards into an immortal body. In other words, they think we are raised already immortal. That is similar to what we are saying, but not the same. We believe the disembodied souls were raised out of Hades (SOH) and given their new immortal bodies -- NOT given their old self-same already-CHANGED bodies back to them. There is a difference here in the source of the new body that they received, but the concept of resurrection out of Hades is the same. So, within the futurist camp there are two basic concepts of resurrection, one of which is similar to our view of disembodied souls being raised out of Hades.

(2) SOTERIOLOGICAL or SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION: The spiritually dead (in their trespasses and sins) are raised to newness of life when they are converted or regenerated (cf. Eph 2:6, Col 2:12, 3:1; and Romans 6). That is indeed a “spiritual” resurrection of their souls while they are still in their physical bodies. All the saints during the transition period had that kind of spiritual life, and shared in the millennial reign of Christ during that transition period (died with Him, buried with Him, raised with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenly places, from which He was about to come and put down the rest of His enemies, take His kingdom away from the Jews, and give it back to the Father to whom it belongs, then sit at His right hand to co-rule forever afterwards in the eternal kingdom). All that language is used there about those saints in the first century who were buried with Him, raised with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenly places, and reigning with Him during the transition period. And so that was a *spiritual resurrection*. They were not literally and experientially seated in the heavenly realm on thrones, nor experiencing all the blessings and benefits of the heavenly realm, but they were *positionally* or *relationally* raised up with Christ and seated with Him in a *spiritual* sense. This is one kind resurrection that is mentioned in our New Testament,

but it is NOT the same kind of resurrection that occurred on the Last Day (Eschatological Resurrection). We will see the difference between these two different kinds of resurrection when we talk about the resurrection of the dead out of Hades below.

(3) COLLECTIVE BODY VIEW: The Collective Body is an extension or expansion of that spiritual resurrection concept to the whole collective body of the Church, so that there was not only a personal salvation from sin-death, but also a collective salvation of the whole church from its covenantal death. The Covenantal (collective) Body of Old Testament saints were raised out of covenantal death (i.e., the condemnation and separation that came as a result of Adam's Fall in the Garden, Israel's covenantal unfaithfulness in the land of Israel, and Israel's rejection of the Messiah-Redeemer). That was certainly a collective body of Israelites who needed to be raised out of their covenantal sin and death, and it seems that Ezekiel 37 might be a good example of a text which illustrates this concept of a national resurrection or covenantal restoration from Babylonian captivity to have a new life in the land of Israel. That was certainly a type of collective body salvation or covenantal resurrection.

However, not all of the resurrection texts are referring to that kind of Collective Body resurrection, so we will need to be careful in our study of all these resurrection texts to make proper distinction between these various kinds of resurrection. We need to be diligent students of the Word to rightly divide it and interpret it correctly. The surrounding context is always the best place to start.

Furthermore, we need to keep in mind that some of the resurrection texts could be talking about more than one kind of resurrection. For instance, it is certainly possible to see the OT saints raised as a group (a collective body) out of their slavery to Adamic death AT THE SAME TIME their individual disembodied souls were raised out of Hades and given their new individual immortal bodies. So, we need to study the context of these resurrection texts to see what kind(s) of resurrection they are talking about.

Therefore, it seems to me that the Collective Body View has gone too far in applying the collective body motif to almost all of the New Testament resurrection texts. It fails to make a clear and proper distinction between the different kinds of resurrection that are mentioned in each of the resurrection texts. So that is the reason why I am pointing out the various kinds of resurrection, so that we can keep them in mind as we look at all of these resurrection texts, so that we can properly identify which kind of resurrection each text is talking about in its context.

(4) RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD (out of Hades): This is one of the most common Biblical phrases that is used to identify the eschatological resurrection (i.e., the resurrection at the Last Day).

Most of the creeds and confessions use a modified form of this phrase. They struggled with how to translate this phrase. They did not want to stick with the exact phrase ("resurrection of the dead") as it was used in the Bible, because it was too ambiguous in

its reference to the body. So the creed and confession writers determined to settle the issue by changing the wording to “**resurrection of the flesh**” at first, then later changed it to “**resurrection of the body**.” However, neither of these two phrases are Biblical. Instead, the Bible uses the phrase “**resurrection of the dead**.” But they needed to get that word “body” in the creeds somehow in order to use it against the Gnostics and the followers of Origen who believed in a disembodied afterlife like the Greeks.

However, the Bible talks about the saints before Christ going to Hades when they died, where they would wait until a kinsman-redeemer (Christ Jesus) would appear in order to redeem their souls from Sheol (Hades) and take them to Heaven. That is the eschatological resurrection. It was referring to a resurrection of the disembodied SOULS of the saints out of Hades (SOH). Their BODIES were not in Hades (or Sheol), so their bodies could NOT be raised out of Hades (or Sheol). The phrase “resurrection of the dead” is therefore talking about a resurrection of disembodied SOULS out of Hades (SOH), NOT a resurrection of dead BODIES out of the ground (BOG)! Do you see the difference here? This may seem insignificant to some, but there is a big difference between these two concepts (BOG versus SOH). Some of the Collective Body advocates have accused us Individual Body guys of teaching a BOG view, but that is not correct. No bodies were in Hades, so no bodies could be raised out of Hades. So we are not teaching a “bodies out of the graves” or a “bodies out of Hades” resurrection. Instead, it was disembodied SOULS that were raised out of Hades. We are teaching a SOH view, not a BOG view. We need to make that clear, not only to our fellow preterists, but to the futurists as well.

The “resurrection of the dead ones” at the Last Day is another of those once-for-all events like the Cross. Once the saints were raised out of Hades, and Hades was thrown into the Lake of Fire, then saints no longer go to Hades after that. We are not raised out of Hades at death, because we no longer go to Hades at death. So the idea of “resurrection” no longer applies to us. Nor do we get “resurrection bodies” at death, since our new immortal bodies are not “raised” out of the ground (nor out of Hades) to be given to us. Those new immortal bodies are reserved in heaven for us. Now, when we die, we receive those new immortal bodies and go straight to heaven immediately at death. That is one of the benefits of the once-for-all resurrection event (like we mentioned in a previous lesson).

This means that the resurrection had ongoing benefits for all saints afterwards. Therefore the eschatological resurrection is a past event, never to be repeated, since it emptied all saints out of Hades, and no more saints are going back in there after that. Since no saints after AD 70 can be “raised out of the dead ones” in Hades, resurrection no longer applies to saints after AD 70. Now when we die, we go straight to heaven. No resurrection is necessary for us to go to heaven now. But it was necessary for those dead saints in Hades before AD 70. They had to be raised out of Hades before they could go to heaven.

This phrase “resurrection of the dead” applies equally well to the souls of the righteous who were raised out of Hades at the same time as Jesus’ resurrection (Matt 27:52-53),

as well as to "the rest of the dead" souls who were raised out of Hades at the Parousia (Rev. 20). That is why we affirm that the First Resurrection at the beginning of the millennium and the "rest of the dead" at the end of the millennium were both resurrections of disembodied souls out of Hades.

All of us, futurists and preterists, have admitted that the dead went to Hades at physical death, and would have to be raised back up out of there at the Parousia. But few of us seem to connect the term "resurrection" with that resurrection of dead disembodied souls out of Hades. The futurists especially have assumed that the only kind of resurrection of dead ones that is under consideration in these texts is a resurrection and resuscitation of dead bodies out of the graves (BOG).

Where were the Dead Ones? In Sheol-Hades. The only way the dead ones could get out of there was by being raised back out of there by God. And so, the resurrection of the "dead ones" (who were in Hades) would have to be talking about the raising of those dead disembodied saints back out of Hades.

Rev. 20-22 certainly describes the resurrection of all the dead (righteous and unrighteous) out of Hades. Those whose names are not in the book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire (the Second Death) where they are "tormented day and night forever and ever." Death and Hades were both thrown into the Lake of Fire, along with the Devil and his angels, where the Beast and False Prophet were also. The Lake of Fire was a place in the unseen realm where Satan and his minions could be "tormented day and night forever and ever." It is contrasted with the New Jerusalem where the righteous dwelt. If the Lake of Fire is in the unseen realm, then the New Jerusalem has to be in the unseen realm as well.

It requires no stretch of credulity to understand that the disembodied souls of the dead saints were raised up out of Hades and given their new immortal bodies. This resurrection occurred in the unseen realm. They were NOT raised back into their physical bodies in the seen realm. Their disembodied souls were raised out of Hades and given their new bodies, all of which occurred in the unseen realm. Then the resurrected dead were gathered together with the changed living saints and caught up to be with Christ in the unseen realm above. This very kind of resurrection and catching up in the unseen realm seems to have been witnessed and recorded by Josephus and others.

The dead were raised out of Hades and sent to their respective eternal destinies. The judgment mentioned in Matt 25 was not seen by anyone on earth. However, we know that it occurred, since the priests in the Temple on Pentecost (in AD 66) heard the voices of a great multitude in the UNSEEN realm saying that they were leaving one place (Hades) and going to another place (heaven). The priests did not see this resurrection, but they heard it and felt it when it happened. So, there was a resurrection at the Parousia in AD 66. Here is how Josephus describes it:

...Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the **twenty-first day of the month Artemisius [Jyar], a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared**; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sunsetting, **chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds**, and surrounding of cities. Moreover at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, **they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence."** [Josephus. *Complete Works*. Translated by William Whiston. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1971. Josephus *Wars* 6:296-300 (6.5.3)]

(5) BODILY CHANGE OF THE LIVING AT THE PAROUSIA: Notice that this is not a resurrection for the living, but instead a bodily change. The living had not died yet, so they were not in Hades yet, and therefore could not be raised out of Hades. In 1 Cor. 15:51-52, Apostle Paul mentioned what would happen to the living saints at the time when the dead saints would be raised out of Hades. He says that, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead would be **RAISED**, and we [the living and remaining saints] will be **CHANGED**." Notice the distinction between what happens to the dead and the living at the Second Coming. The dead (ones) would be **RAISED** out of Hades and given their new immortal bodies, while the living saints would have their bodies **CHANGED** into immortal bodies without having to experience physical death first. That is profound beyond words, but that is exactly what Paul is alluding to here. Notice that the living were not raised (out of Hades), because they had not died and gone to Hades. So, the living did not need to be raised. The resurrection did not apply to them. It only applied to those saints who had already died, whose disembodied SOULS were waiting in Hades for the Son of Man (who had the keys to death and Hades) to come and unlock the gates of Hades, set the captive saints free, give them their new immortal bodies, and take them to heaven. However, the living saints only needed to have their bodies **CHANGED** in order to go to heaven. This may be a very subtle distinction in the minds of most Christians, but it is definitely what Paul is teaching here in 1 Cor. 15:51-54 and 2 Cor 5:1-4. The dead were **RAISED**, and the living were **CHANGED**. Their physical mortal bodies were "CHANGED" from mortal to immortal "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Even though this was not a "resurrection" of bodies or souls, it was something which enabled the living saints to participate in the resurrection event and get their new bodies at the same time the resurrected dead got their new immortal bodies. The dead got the "resurrection," while the living saints got a bodily "change."

I need to note here, that this bodily change concept is the precise point at which all of us have stumbled in the past, both futurists and preterists. It is a difficult concept to wrap our minds around. But it is so very important to understand. It relates to the kind of bodies that the dead received at the resurrection, as well as the kind of bodily change that the living received. Without this change of the living into their new immortal bodily

forms, there would be no way to explain how the living and remaining Thessalonian saints would be reunited with their departed loved ones at the Parousia, which is exactly what Paul promised those "living and remaining saints." That coming reunion with their departed loved ones was the whole basis for his encouragement to those grieving Thessalonians. That reunion required those living saints to be changed into their new immortal bodies, so that they could be caught up together with the resurrected loved ones to be with Christ forever afterwards in the heavenly realm.

We Get New Bodies Like Christ's Immortal Body

If you are like me, you are probably saying that this all sounds real good for the first century saints, but what about us today after AD 70? What happens to us after we physically die?

At His Parousia, Christ gave the dead their new bodies, and changed the living into their new bodies, and caught them both up together to be with Him forever. Because of His Return to Raise the Dead and Change the Living, we now have heaven and our new immortal bodies available to us immediately after death. That is the whole point of the resurrection event. Since the resurrection of the dead out of Hades has occurred, saints no longer have to go to Hades at death. We instead receive our new immortal bodies and go to heaven immediately after death.

Jesus died on the Cross to reverse the death sentence upon Adam's race because of his sin, and to pay for all the sins of every one of us. All those who were in Adam were under that curse. All those who are "in Christ" are saved from the power of that curse to condemn us and separate us from God for eternity. Because we have sinned, we are under the death sentence just like Adam was (but for our own sin, not Adam's). The Law of Sin and Death makes all sinners subject to death. If we sin, we have to die physically. There is no escape from physical death and our bodies returning to dust. Nor can we get our self-same corrupted bodies back again after death has returned them to dust. Jesus is the only one who could get his self-same uncorrupted body back. The rest of us will instead have to get NEW IMMORTAL BODIES which are like His glorious body. Those new immortal bodies are reserved in heaven for us. We get them immediately after death, and then go to heaven where we "enjoy Him forever."

We Have a Better Hope

That is a far better hope than the futurists think that they have. They are quick to accuse preterists of destroying our hope for an afterlife in heaven. Nothing could be further from the truth. They believe that we do not get our new immortal bodies until a yet future resurrection event. Plus, they are not sure whether their disembodied souls go to Hades or some part of heaven when they die now.

Preterists definitely have a better hope than that, because we believe that saints no longer have to go to Hades and wait until the Second Coming to get our new immortal bodies and go to heaven (like the futurists think). Which is the better hope: (1) Still be

waiting for resurrection and getting our new immortal bodies, or (2) Receive our new immortal bodies and go to heaven immediately at death? It is the same heavenly afterlife hope for both futurists and preterists, but the preterist sees it as a hope that is realized immediately after death, rather than still waiting for it to finally be fulfilled in the distant future. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a hope fulfilled is a Tree of Life" (Prov. 13:12). Which hope is better?

Why Were the Physical Bodies Not Raised in AD 70?

Well, of course, the Futurists deny all this, as we would expect them to. They have incessantly insisted that the eschatological resurrection at the Last Day must be a resurrection (reassembly and resuscitation) of the physical bodies out of the graves (BOG), since that was the kind of resurrection Lazarus and Jesus had:

"The son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:15), the daughter of Jairus (Lk 8:54-55), and Lazarus (Jn 11:38-44) were all bodily resurrections back to physical life. Same for Jesus. Since we are supposed to have a resurrection like Jesus, we must get our self-same body back like he did."
[Robert Strimple's argument in Mathison's book]

Sounds like a solid argument, doesn't it? However, it is overlooking a few scriptures and biblical concepts. But their question is still a very good one, and deserves a solid biblical answer: "Why were the physical bodies of the saints not raised out of the graves in AD 70?" Here are several reasons why the bodies of the Dead Saints were not raised out of the graves in AD 70:

1. Only Christ could get his self-same body back and take it to heaven with him and keep it forever. And that was because He was sinless. His body was never corrupted by sin and was therefore never "subject to decay" (could not return to dust), nor could it be "abandoned to Hades." Jesus had the keys to death and Hades. He could open the door, walk right in, and walk right back out again. Death could not keep him. Hades could not hold him. He is the only one who could say: (1) *The Father has given me life within myself (John 5:26)*, (2) *No one can take it from me (John 10:18)*, (3) *I have the power to lay it down and the power to take it back up again (John 10:18)*, (4) *"Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Lk. 23:46 - he yielded up his own spirit and died voluntarily — no one could kill him)*. His body was not mortal in the sense that it was forced to die and destined to die and decay and return to dust, like our bodies are. Since He never sinned, his body was not mortal in that sense. Therefore, Jesus is the only one who could get his self-same body back, and not have to leave it behind when he went to heaven. When he ascended, that "flesh and bone" body was changed into a glorious form that could dwell in heaven. He had a bodily change at the ascension. It was no longer a flesh and bone body after the ascension. Paul said that they once knew Christ according to the flesh, but that now after the ascension they knew him thus no longer (2 Cor 5:16). Heaven requires a different kind of body to dwell there. The dead saints could not take their old physical bodies to heaven, so why raise them? Why not instead just give them their new

bodies that were like Christ's glorious body? They needed a new kind of body to dwell in heaven.

2. All those who were raised before AD 70 had to have their old bodies resuscitated, because their new immortal bodies were not yet available. But at the resurrection in AD 66, those new bodies were finally made available to them. Therefore, there was no need to get their physical bodies back, because they now had their new immortal bodies available to them. So it was only those who were raised before the Parousia who had to get their physical bodies back (e.g., Lazarus, Tabitha, Eutychus, and the "many" raised in Matt. 27:52-53). Their new immortal bodies were not available yet, nor could they go to heaven yet. So they could only reappear in their old physical bodies, or in some transfigured form like Moses, Elijah, or Samuel. But the Parousia changed all that. *It made heaven available to them, and that life in heaven required a different kind of body than their old corrupted physical bodies.* Since the new bodies were now available, why would God raise their old bodies? And since they were not going to dwell on earth again, why give them an old physical body that was not suited to heavenly dwelling? They were headed to heaven, so there was no reason to put their old physical bodies back on. They needed new bodies that were suited to their heavenly existence. This is such an important point, yet almost everyone (futurists and preterists) have overlooked it.
3. No one could get their new immortal bodies until the Parousia. Christ ascended to the Father to prepare those new dwelling places and new bodies. They were reserved in heaven for the dead saints until the Parousia and Resurrection event. Those who were raised out of Hades before the Parousia had no other option but to be receive their old physical bodies back, and dwell on earth again. They could not go to heaven yet, nor could they get their new immortal bodies yet. But at the Parousia all that changed. They now could go to heaven where they would need new kind of bodies. So God did not make them put on their old bodies and come back to earth. He gave them new bodies and took them to heaven.
4. If the dead saints were going to be raised back to life on earth, they indeed should have had their physical bodies raised back up and restored to them. However, that is not what the "better resurrection" (i.e., the eschatological resurrection) was all about. The Last Day Resurrection was a "better" resurrection! Why is it described as being "better" if it was only a resurrection of their physical bodies and a return to life on earth? But a new immortal body and dwelling in heaven would certainly deserve that label of being "better." In fact, Paul described it as being "far better" and "not worthy to be compared" with their physical bodies and earthly existence. It was for the purpose of raising the Dead out of Hades and taking them to heaven where they would need a new kind of body that was suited to heavenly existence. They were not raised back into their physical bodies to appear on earth again. That would not have been a "better" resurrection! They remained in the unseen realm the whole time during their resurrection out of Hades, their reception of new immortal bodies, and their being caught up to heaven.

5. Those new bodies were not available yet until Christ ascended to heaven and prepared them for us. That was one of the things that His ascension was supposed to accomplish, i.e., to prepare the new dwelling places and the new bodies. Then at His return, the rest of the dead were raised out of Hades and given their new bodies and taken to heaven to dwell in their new dwelling places that had been prepared for them. They did not need their physical bodies to be put back on them because they were not going to spend any time back on earth again. They were headed straight to heaven where they would need a new kind of body to dwell. Why bring them back into their mortal bodies to appear on earth, and then have to change them into immortal bodies before going to heaven? Why not just bypass the whole fleshy body resurrection, and give them the "better resurrection" (their new immortal bodies) that they preferred anyway, and take them straight to heaven where they wanted to go? They did not want their old bodies back, nor did they want to return to earth. They wanted a "better" resurrection with their new bodies with which to dwell in heaven!
6. The book of Hebrews refers to the AD 70 resurrection as a "better resurrection," implying that it was something new, different, or better than the previous resurrections of the physical bodies and resurrection back to life on earth. It was a better resurrection because it gave them a better kind of body (immortal) and a better place to dwell (heaven). As Apostle Paul said, that was "very far better." Abraham looked ahead and saw that "better country" (of heaven) waiting for him in the afterlife at the end of the age. He did not want to return to the physical body and the physical land of Canaan. He wanted the "better things" that were in heaven in a new immortal body.
7. Any saint, if given a choice between getting their physical body back and dwelling on this sinful earth again, versus getting a new immortal body and dwelling in heaven, would choose the "better" things (the heavenly country and the immortal body). Abraham and Apostle Paul both referred to it as "better" or "far better" than a life in the flesh on earth again.
8. So it was not because God COULD NOT raise their physical bodies and restore them to an earthly existence at the Parousia, but rather because he had prepared something "better" for them. A physical body resurrection might have been better than dwelling disembodied in Hades, but it was not worthy to be compared to an immortal body dwelling in heaven (which was "far better" according to Paul). Their new dwelling places had been prepared, and their new immortal bodies were ready to be put on. That was something new which no previous generation had available to them. All previous generations had to come back into the flesh and dwell on earth again if they were raised back out of Hades, because their new bodies and new dwelling places were not available to them yet.
9. But then, at the Parousia, those new bodies were finally made available to them, and heaven was opened for them to come and dwell there. Christ raised them out of Hades, clothed them with their new immortal bodies and received them to Himself

there in the unseen heavenly realm, where they would dwell with Him forever afterwards.

That indeed was a "better resurrection." "Far better" than having their physical bodies raised back up for them. And so that is the reason why I believe those physical bodies were not raised back out of the graves. They didn't need them. They didn't want them. They were not worthy to be compared to the new immortal bodies that were now available to them. So God gave them the "better resurrection" which they needed to dwell in the heavenly realm. And that is the same kind of new bodies that we will get when we die and go to heaven. That is glorious hope, and it is a better hope than our futurist brothers think that they have.

I think we have clearly shown why the futurist arguments simply do not hold up under biblical scrutiny. A resurrection of physical bodies and a return to life on earth again is NOT what scripture was promising to those saints. They were expecting to receive new immortal bodies and go to heaven to be with Christ forever afterwards.

And the living saints were told that their bodies would be CHANGED from mortal to immortal at the Parousia and Resurrection event. What a profound and marvelous thing that must have been for those living saints to have their bodies changed and go to heaven without having to experience physical death! Now we can understand why they were willing to go through all kinds of torments and tribulation and persecution and hardships in order to live and remain until that bodily change and rapture to heaven! It was a glorious hope that was set out before them. And they longed for His return, so they could receive their new bodies without having to experience physical death.

That is such an amazing and profound concept to wrap our minds around -- the bodily change of the living and remaining saints. It was an amazing incentive for those living saints to remain faithful so that they could receive that bodily change at the Parousia.

Well, I hope that was beneficial for you. It will bless your socks off when you fully understand what we have presented here. We will talk more about it in future sessions together. Stay tuned.

That will do it for this session. Thanks so much for listening.