

## Meditation: HE IS NOT HERE; HE HAS RISEN

### *An Easter meditation.*

During the winter of this year (2007), one of the items in the news was about the supposed discovery of the bones of Jesus in a tomb in Israel, along with those of his family members. As with similar stories that have cropped up during my lifetime, I was neither surprised nor fascinated by the news. I KNOW what happened to the body of my Lord, hence the lack of fascination. I also realize that many people do not accept by faith the details concerning the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as given in the Bible. Rumors and theories have been going around ever since the body of Jesus was found to be missing from the tomb, so more speculation is never surprising.

Here is what I believe. Jesus really did die on the cross. His body was buried in a tomb that was sealed with a large stone. When the women arrived there early Sunday morning, the body was gone, but the tomb was not empty. The grave clothes that had wrapped the body of Jesus were there, neatly folded and deliberately placed. And angels were there to explain what had happened. *"He is not here; he has risen,"* they said. Then, over a period of 40 days, Jesus appeared to his followers at various times, sometimes to one and once to a gathering more than 500. To those who thought they might be seeing a ghost, he said, *"Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."*

The resurrection of Jesus involved his body, bones and all. True, after he rose his body was different in many ways, but no part of it was left behind to be put in a box for later discovery. To me, it is sad to think of people not believing in the bodily resurrection of Jesus. I feel like the apostle Paul must have felt when he stood before King Agrippa and said, *"Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?"* Why indeed? More than that, Jesus taught that our own bodies will be raised from the dead some day. Our future resurrection is closely tied in with Christ's past resurrection, as Paul clearly emphasizes in 1 Corinthians 15.

*But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life, we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

Yes, Christ has indeed been raised from the dead! That is what fills me with hope and enables me to look beyond my age and the physical condition that limits me on the earth into the spiritual realm where I shall thrive forever!

To those curious about how the dead are raised and what the new bodies will be like, Paul uses the planting of seeds as an analogy for the burial of bodies. The seed we sow dies and then a new plant arises, the promise of which was in the seed. He goes on to say:

*So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in*

*power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*

As if this future resurrection were not enough to fill us with joy, Paul then speaks of a coming event so exciting that he bursts into a song of praise at the end of his narrative:

*Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.*

*“Where, O death is your victory?  
Where, O death, is your sting?”*

*The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

What an uplifting message that is! No wonder Paul sang! Some day God’s trumpet will sound and resurrection life will begin instantly for all of God’s faith family, just as it began instantly for Jesus! I really look forward to that!

The resurrection of Jesus was a TREMENDOUS victory over death, sin and Satan! What a wonderful Savior we have! What a privilege to call Jesus Lord! The Lord is risen indeed! Glory to his name. Amen.

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References: Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; Acts 26:8; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, 42-44, 49, 51-57.

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