

April 2010

CREATION AND RESURRECTION¹

By Henry Morris, PhD²

The two greatest events in the history of the cosmos were, first of all, its supernatural creation and, secondly, the resurrection of its Creator from the dead. The evidence for each, to one whose mind and heart are open to evidence, is overwhelming. All true science points to creation, and the best-proved fact of history is the resurrection. The Bible, of course, teaches that both are vitally true, vitally important and vitally related, but even to one who does not believe the Bible, the evidence is still unanswerable. He may reject it, but he cannot refute it.

Furthermore, each is necessary to the other. The creation, invaded and permeated by decay and death, heading down toward ultimate chaos, can only be saved and renewed if death is defeated and life is restored by its Creator. The resurrection, conversely, triumphing over death and promising ultimate restoration of the perfect creation, can only be accomplished by the Creator Himself. The creation requires the resurrection and the resurrection requires the Creator.

It is appropriate, therefore, that the Holy Scriptures so frequently tie together the creation of the world and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The creation took place on the first day of creation week, and the resurrection likewise took place on the first day of the week following the Creator's substitutionary death for the world's redemption.

Death first entered God's finished creation when Adam sinned (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:17-20; Romans 5:12).

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.... The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:20, 26)

Therefore, when the heaven and the earth are made new again, the very elements will have been purged of the age-long effects of sin and the curse, decay and disintegration, and "there shall be no more death" (Revelation 21:4; also 2 Peter 3:10-13; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Revelation 21:1; 22:3).

The first book of God's written Word begins with the mighty creation of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1), but ends with "a coffin in Egypt" (Genesis 50:26). The final book of God's Word introduces Jesus Christ as "the first begotten of the dead" (Revelation 1:5), and ends with "all things [made] new" (Revelation 21:5).

Let us consider, therefore, three basic aspects of the Christian life which can be greatly strengthened by a clearer understanding and broader application of these two vitally related facts of creation and resurrection. For each, a key passage of Scripture will be found especially illuminating.

Christian Assurance

In a society pervasively dominated by humanistic unbelief and worldly intimidation, Christians need more than subjective emotionalism to assure them that their Christian faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ not only "works," but is true. In the great "Resurrection Chapter," 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul is seeking to do just this--to assure these young and somewhat carnal Corinthian believers of the genuine validity of the Christian "gospel" which he had preached to them and which they had believed (verses 1-2). He stresses the key importance of the bodily resurrection of Christ, with the overwhelming eyewitness verification of its historicity (verses 3-11), and then concludes that this guarantees the future resurrection of all who "have hope in Christ," the great promise of the Christian faith (verses 12-19).

But that isn't all. He further emphasizes that Christ's resurrection does far more than provide a future life for individual believers. It restores man's lost estate, reversing the consequences of Adam's primeval sin, conquering all the enemies of God and finally destroying death itself (verses 20-28). This great promise not only gives assurance of eternal life, but strength for a godly life

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² Dr. Morris (1918-2006) was Founder of the Institute for Creation Research.

in this present world, triumphing over all opposition and persecution, knowing beyond all doubt there is a better life to come (verses 29-34).

And then, to give still further assurance, he ties it all back to the mighty power of God in creation. All components of the creation (biological--verses 35-39, physical--verses 40-41, and human--verses 42-49) are treated. Every individual creation of God has been designed with its own marvelous structure for its own divine purpose, "as it hath pleased him" (verse 38). Since each is distinct, none could have "evolved" from any other; therefore only God was capable of creating it, and only He can preserve and revive it. As He raised up Christ from the dead, so will He not only raise, but transform, purify and immortalize our present bodies and the entire traveling creation (verses 50-57; see also Romans 8:18-23). The concluding exhortation, therefore, is to "be steadfast" in our Christian faith and "always abounding" in our Christian work, in absolute assurance that this is not "in vain!" (verse 58).

Christian Revival

The great need of the Christian church today is revival--not from apostasy, but from apathy and compromise. Apostate churches, denying the basic doctrines of Christianity, are not real churches, but mere socioreligious clubs, and their members still need to be saved. There are multitudes of generally sound churches and believers, however, that have become neutral in their stance, whenever they face the controversial issues that require them to choose between conformity to and confrontation with the world system that surrounds them.

Such churches are typified by the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22), the last of the churches addressed in the seven letters of Revelation 2-3. This church represents a real Christian church, with its candlestick still in place (Revelation 1:20; 2:5), one which seems to be doing well outwardly, in "need of nothing" materially, but one which is "lukewarm," and therefore "wretched" spiritually (verses 15-17). Such churches are urgently in need of revival, not a revival of mere emotional activity, but one of real substance and truth (verse 18)--that is, repentance (verse 19).

It is significant that the Lord Jesus Christ, in addressing the Laodicean church, begins with an emphasis on the creation and ends with the resurrection and promised consummation. These are the most fundamental of all doctrines, consequently the ones most resisted by the world, and thus the doctrines on which there is the greatest temptation to become "lukewarm." The Lord calls such churches first of all to recognize Him as the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (verse 14). He concludes by reminding them that His resurrection and ascension provide the only

surety of their own future resurrection for the coming kingdom. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (verse 21). How urgent it is for churches today, with all their emphasis on introspective spirituality and so-called abundant living, to get back to an understanding and proclamation of the bedrock doctrines of creation and resurrection.

Christian Witness

When a Christian has firm assurance of his own salvation and is properly motivated in terms of God's eternal purposes, then it is his responsibility to bear witness to others who need this great salvation, wherever and by whatever means he can, as God leads and enables.

No doubt the greatest Christian witness was the apostle Paul, and his example surely deserves study and emulation. It is significant that Paul always began where his listeners already were, in their own prior understanding of God and His purposes. When they already knew and believed the Old Testament Scriptures, he would show them from the Scriptures that Christ was the promised Messiah, going on from there to the resurrection as the conclusive proof. When, however, his listeners neither knew nor believed the Scriptures, he would start with the evidence of God in creation, which they had distorted into a pantheistic polytheism. The classic example is that of the Greek philosophers at Athens (Acts 17:15-34). Note his words:

Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth...giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. (Acts 17:23-25)

Then, in anticipation of the natural question as to how one would know which of the "gods" was really the God who had created all things, the apostle first had to point out that the Creator of all men must also be the Judge of all men, and that all men needed to repent and turn back to Him.

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

This two-fold testimony--creation pointing to the fact of God and the resurrection identifying the person of God--constitutes an irrefutable witness, so that God can in perfect equity on this basis, "command all men everywhere to repent" (verse 30). Even though death triumphs over all other men, it could never defeat the Creator of

life, and no one who believes in creation should ever stumble at the resurrection. As Paul challenged King Agrippa, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8).

By the same token, one who accepts the factuality of Christ's resurrection should never stumble over God's record of creation. Yet there seem to be multitudes of compromising Christians today who have no hesitancy in believing that Christ was raised from the dead but who still reject His testimony about creation. "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female," He said (Mark 10:6, referring to Genesis 1:27). Not after 18 billion years of cosmic history and 4.5 billion years of earth history, but from the beginning of the creation, God made man and woman. In fact, the very purpose of the earth's creation was that it should be a home for "the children of men" (Psalm 115:16). How can a Christian believe Christ's words and then reject Moses' words?

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (John 5:46-47)

The Lord Jesus said, in two of the great "I am" passages of the book of Revelation:

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Revelation 1:8)

And then He also said:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:18)

He is both "before all things" and the "firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:17-18). Therefore, He is "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25). ☩

HENRY MIDDLETON JOINS TASC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Henry became the 11th member of our board by unanimous vote at our last board meeting. Henry earned a PhD in Systematic Theology under Dr. L. Russ Bush at South-eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in December, 2007. Henry's specialty is apologetics, and he has a keen interest in creation and intelligent design. Henry has already contributed to TASC through authoring newsletters and making presentations at our monthly meetings. Visit Henry's blog entitled "Thoughts on Apologetics and Theology" at: thoughtsonapologetics.blogspot.com

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, April 15—note the change of date for this month only—7:00 P.M., Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 631

Matt Promise will present "Abortion: Creation View of the Value of Life", an expanded analysis of genetic engineering (abortion, infanticide and cloning) from the perspective of the Bible, science, philosophy, history, and other discipline.

Contributions can be made at the TASC web site at www.tasc-creationscience.org through any of these major credit cards or through PayPal.



Or mail your contribution to: TASC, P.O. Box 12051, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2051