

My Hope of Resurrection

Philippians 3:20–21

Easter 2015 #2

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One of my favorite candies is a chocolate truffle. How can something be so small yet be so full of amazing goodness and so filling to my stomach? When I turn to Heidelberg Catechism question and answer 45 I think of a chocolate truffle. Here is one of the most succinct yet fullest answers in our Catechism. There's only one question and answer in our Catechism on the resurrection of Jesus, but this one answer is so full and so filling!

You and I are here today because Jesus is alive! I believe that and the question before you and I today is how does his resurrection benefit me? The answer says that when you put your trust in the resurrected Jesus Christ you come to “share in the righteousness he won for us by his death.” In other words, the resurrection of Jesus has justified you. When you put your trust in the resurrected Jesus Christ you come “now” to be “resurrected to a new life.” In other words, the resurrection of Jesus is sanctifying you. And finally, note that when you put your trust in the resurrected Jesus Christ you come have “a guarantee of our glorious resurrection.” In other words, the resurrection of Jesus will glorify you.

There is a past benefit that has already come to me in justification. There is a present benefit that is coming to me in sanctification. But there is also a future benefit that will come to me in glorification. It's this last benefit that I want to focus this afternoon for a few moments.

Christ's resurrection in the past gives me hope for the future. Hope. It's such a misunderstood word. "I sure hope the Lakers get the number one pick in the draft." "I hope I see him when he's in town this time." This is hope that's not really based on anything. But as I've said before, hope in Scripture is not a wish like this but a firm confidence that I have now of what will come to me in the future based on what God has already done in the past. So as our Catechism says, I have hope now that I will be raised and glorified in the future—why?—because Jesus has already been raised.

And we saw this hope in the Word of God we read this morning from 1 Corinthians 15. I said that Paul was so confident in the resurrection that he laid it all on the line when he said, "If in Christ we have hoped in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied" (1 Cor. 15:19). He went on to say, though, "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:20).

But I want to turn to another part of the Word of God now. Paul speaks again of our hope now that we will be raised and glorified in our bodies in the future because of the fact that Jesus has already been raised from the dead. Look at Philippians 3:20–21 where the apostle says, **But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.** I want you to be able to read this passage with me today and say very personally that in it I find *My Hope of Resurrection*.

1. ***I Have Hope Now***
2. ***My Hope Will be Reality in the Future***
3. ***My Hope is Based on the Past***

I Have Hope Now

I have hope now: But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice that both our citizenship and our Savior are in heaven. And from heaven we **await** the Lord to take us home.

This verb **await** is a word of hope. When I travel away from home, initially I am excited to be in a new place. I'm so taken by new places and new people. But after a while I literally get a feeling in the pit of my stomach that longs for home. Have you ever had that experience and feeling? Well, Paul is saying that this age in which you live is like a foreign land. There are lots of sights to see, people to meet, and places to go. But it's not home. Home is where Jesus is. And Paul says we are to eagerly wait for his coming to take us home to the age to come. Listen to how Paul describes this in Romans 8:23-25:

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we *wait eagerly* (there's our verb) for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we *wait* (there it is again) for it with patience.

My Hope Will be Reality in the Future

So what am I waiting for? Our second point is *my hope will be reality in the*

future. Note how Paul describes our waiting to be for both the Savior and the ultimate benefit of our salvation. We wait for the **Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.** What is your ultimate hope, brothers and sisters? The world hawks hope daily, doesn't it? Every day it's like walking down the street in Las Vegas or New York City with people holding out flyers, speaking to get you into their shops, thrusting goods in front of you. And it's so tempting, isn't it? But the world's hopes are idols, aren't they? Marriage, health, beauty, wealth, power, prestige, degrees, world peace, and the list goes on. So what is it that you are looking forward to in the end?

God's promise to you and I is that at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ he will transform our bodies to be like his body. Your perishable body will be transformed to be like his imperishable body (1 Cor. 15:42). Your dishonorable body will be transformed to be like his glorious body (1 Cor. 15:43). Your weak body will be transformed to be like his powerfully raised body (1 Cor. 15:43). Your natural body will be transformed to be like his spiritual, that is, Spirit-enlivened and empowered body (1 Cor. 15:44). Your body, made in the image of the man of dust, Adam, will be transformed to be made in the image of the man of heaven, your Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:48-49)!

My Hope is Based on the Past

But thinking this, saying this is, and believing this is one thing; it's quite another to know this for sure. How can I be sure this is true? How can I know that in the future I will be raised? Hope now that is merely in the future, is nothing but pious dreaming. But hope now for the future that is based in what has already happened in the past is true hope.

Notice how Paul assures you and I of our future transformation to be like Christ. God will do this for us **by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself**. What's he talking about? He's talking about the power of God that raised Jesus Christ from the dead and that exalted him as Lord of the universe! This is that "immeasurable greatness of [God's] power" and "great might that [God] worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come." This is that event when God "put all things under [Jesus'] feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:19-23).

Therefore my hope now of my bodily resurrection in the future is because God raised Jesus two thousand years ago. And this hope is not a mere wish, but is an assured promise of God to all of you who believe today! Amen.