

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Scripture Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15:1-20, 50-58

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:1** Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you- unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: ***that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.***

⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ ***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. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ ***But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.***

²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself

will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all....

³⁵....But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴²So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

^{ESV} **Galatians 1:1-4:** Paul, an apostle- not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead- ²and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ **who**

gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father...

^{ESV} **Titus 2:11-14:** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives ***in the present age***, ¹³ ***waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ***, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

^{ESV} **Hebrews 9:1-12:** Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and ***an earthly place of holiness***. ² For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, ⁴ having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. ⁶ These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.

⁸ ***By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing*** ⁹ ***(which is symbolic for the present age)***. According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (***not made with hands, that is, not of this creation***) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

^{ESV} **Matthew 12:28-32:** But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. ³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be

forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.
³² And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, **either in this age or in the age to come.**

ESV **Luke 18:25-30:** For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."²⁶ Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?"²⁷ But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."²⁸ And Peter said, "See, we have left our homes and followed you."²⁹ And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,³⁰ who will not receive many times more in **this time, and in the age to come eternal life.**"

ESV **Ephesians 1:15-23:** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints,¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ 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.**²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church...

ESV **Romans 8:18-25:** For I consider that the sufferings of **this present time** are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as **we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

ESV **Ephesians 1:11-14:** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things

according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:20-24: For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. ²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² **and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.** ²³ But I call God to witness against me- it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. ²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:1-5:** For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³ if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ **He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee...**

... ^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:17-21:** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Part One

Introduction

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus is a declaration of good news (gospel) of what God has done in inaugurating a new creation, the restoration of all things! Are you a part of this “age to come”, “in Christ”, awaiting full salvation for eternity, or are you merely “in Adam”, part of this “present age” and destined to be judged?

This is why our salvation shouldn't be understood merely in an individualistic, “me and Jesus” personally, kind-of-salvation, but one where we are part of a resurrection that means a new creation, a new humankind, a new age that has been, and will continue to be revealed by God's Holy Spirit! Jesus is Lord of all, and we must see Christ's resurrection not merely of “my individual soul”, but of the whole cosmos!

Summary of Sermon

1) Jesus' Resurrection from the dead is the birth of a new creation/ a new world.

2) Jesus' Resurrection from the dead and his ascension to God's right hand is a time for Christians to live in the tension created by two ages until he returns to restore and renew all things permanently and eternally.

3) Jesus' Resurrection from the dead is the only hope for the world, both Jew and Gentiles, and is particularly the hope of Israel's restoration that the Old Covenant prophesied and pointed forward to!

4) We must see our lives as part of a new existence, a new creation. What God did for Jesus at Easter in the resurrection, in his same yet transformed glorified body, is what he will do for all those united to him by faith!

5) This Easter ask God to renew and restore your imaginations and thinking of yourself as part of a bigger story and new creation!

I. Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead is the Birth of a New Creation

All that we are about to approach in our sermon study is founded on Genesis chapters 1-3: God's creating all things very good by the word of his power in the space of six days, man being made in God's image to have dominion over the creation, the fall of man because of disobedience, and the First Adam being exiled from the Garden of God's presence with the Tree that can give humanity new life eternally.

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

^{ESV} **Galatians 6:14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, **but a new creation**. ¹⁶ **And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.**

John 20: John begins Gospel with “In the beginning...” and ends Gospel with the beginning of a New Creation from the empty tomb.

^{ESV} **John 20:1-9:** Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

⁵ ***And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.*** ⁶ ***Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.*** ⁸ ***Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.***

The Apostle Paul also calls the time in which we and the NT people live as the **“fullness of the times”** meaning that with Christ’s first coming the age, or the world as we know it has come to a conclusion (a “beginning-conclusion” to world-existence as we all know it “in Adam”).

“The fullness of the times” shows that the present age or world, or aeon was pregnant with an age to come.

^{ESV} **Galatians 4:4** ***But when the fullness of time had come***, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law...

^{ESV} **Ephesians 1:7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for ***the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.***

II. Two Ages/Aeons/or Worlds: “Two Adams and Two Ages”/Old Creation and New Creation Comparison (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; 45-49)

In Jesus' first coming, he brought the future into the present!

ESV **1 Corinthians 15:21-22**: For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

ESV **1 Corinthians 15:45-49**: Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

One commentator (Ridderbos, pg. 57), explains 1 Corinthians' "Two Adams and Two Ages" of Paul in this way:

"As Adam is the one through whom sin entered the world and death through sin, so Christ is the one who gives righteousness and life. Christ and Adam stand over against one another as the great representatives of the two aeons (ages), that of life and that of death. In that sense, as representing a whole period of time, a whole humanity, Adam can be called the type of "him who was to come" (Romans 5:14), i.e., of the second man and of the coming aeon (age) represented by him. For as the proto-father brought sin and death into the world, so Christ by his obedience (that is, by his death) and his resurrection, has made life dawn for the new humanity."

ESV **Galatians 1:1-4**: Paul, an apostle- not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead- ² and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ ***who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age,*** according to the will of our God and Father...

N. T. Wright writes concerning Paul's biblical-theological outlook in Galatians 1:4 ('Resurrection of the Son of God', pg. 332):

"For Paul, the point of the resurrection is not simply that the Creator God has done something remarkable for one solitary individual (as people today sometimes imagine is the supposed thrust of the Easter proclamation), ***but that, in and through the resurrection [of Jesus Christ, the True Israelite], 'the present evil age' has been invaded by the 'age to come', the time of restoration, return [from exile], covenant renewal, and forgiveness*** [that Israel was hoping for in the Old Testament when Messiah would come]. An event has occurred as a result of which the world is a different place, and human beings have the new possibility to become a different kind of people."

Non-Conformity to “This World (Age)”

Romans 12:1-2

^{ESV} **Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² **Do not be conformed to this world (age)**, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

This World “Passing Away”

1 John 2:15-20

^{ESV} **1 John 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions- is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ **And the world is passing away** along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

The “Powers of the Age to Come” and/or “End of the Ages”

^{ESV} **Hebrews 6:4-6:** For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and **have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come**, ⁶ if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

Hebrews 9:6-12, 24-28:

These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing ⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. ¹¹ ***But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)*** ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to

suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. ***But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*** ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so ***Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.***

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 10:11** Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, ***on whom the end of the ages has come.***

Quote: A biblical perspective divides history up into two ages. The first is the evil age where the forces of evil are active and effective. The evil age is followed by the age to come where God has vanquished evil and death. The age to come is inaugurated by the coming of Jesus, while the present evil age ends with Christ's return. We are seen to live in the overlap between the two ages where both the power of God and power of the evil one are both active. God's promise of victory over sin and death has been fulfilled by Christ through the cross. The resurrection is the guarantee of victory. Yet this fulfillment awaits its future consummation. Ours is the age of the now but not-yet. -Michael Hill

Cullman's wartime illustration is still helpful.

The believer lives between D-Day, the first coming of Christ when the enemy was decisively defeated, and V-Day, the second coming of Christ, when the enemy shall totally surrender. – Oscar Cullman, '*Christ and Time*'.

III. Jesus is the “Last Adam” or “Final Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:40ff)

1) ***Jesus is NOT “Last Adam” or “Final Adam”*** in the sense of a successive number of “Adams”, but that he is the ***ultimate Adam***, the One who represents a ***new creation*** and ***new humanity***.

2) We will bear the image of the Man from heaven (1 Cor. 15:49).

3) Jesus Christ was the Son of God (Daniel 7), Son of Adam (Luke 3), Son of Abraham, Son of Israel...this is why it is significant that he is the “Last” or “Final” Adam- - he has come to redeem a new humanity of those who believe in him alone as the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

A. “Already, Not Yet” (or another way of saying “already enjoying the blessings of the age to come” and “not yet fully enjoying the blessings of the age to come because the present age has not ended”)

1) What is “Realized Eschatology”?

2) What is “Eschatology”? The whole Bible is focused on eschatology, that is the end of how God will restore all things in the New Heavens and the New Earth (the whole “big picture” from Genesis 1-3 to the realization in Revelation 21-22).

3) How do we use “Eschatological”? Eschatology as a “realization of the beginning promise made to Adam and Eve.” Quote J. Moltmann:

4) ***Protology and Eschatology***: Genesis and the Last Days (a redeemer who would crush the head of the serpent- Gen. 3:15- - this was an “eschatological outlook” that is expounded throughout the entire STORY of Scripture).

“From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present....Hence eschatology cannot really be only part of Christian doctrine. Rather the eschatological outlook is characteristic of all Christian proclamation, and of every Christian existence and the whole Church.”- Theology of Hope, pg. 16.

B. OT Expectations of the Last Days/NT Fulfillment of Last Days

History was not cyclical for Israel, but had a beginning at creation and would come to an end on the Day of the LORD or Judgment Day.

^{ESV} **Luke 2:25** Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for **the consolation of Israel**, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

^{ESV} **Luke 2:38** And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to **all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem**.

^{ESV} **John 18:36** Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. **But my kingdom is not from the world.**"

Acts 1:5-11: "**Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**" ⁹ And when he had said

these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

The kingdom will be restored to Israel through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the end of the earth until he returns!

Summary of Old Testament Expectations at the Time of Christ (from 'The Bible and the Future' Hoekema, pg. 11):

- 1) A coming Redeemer (Messiah/Christ)
- 2) The Kingdom of God
- 3) The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34)
- 4) The restoration of Israel (cf. Acts 1:5-10)
- 5) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- 5) The Day of the LORD
- 6) The New Heavens and the New Earth

Examples:

1. Outpouring of Spirit: Joel 2:28ff; Acts 2
2. Restoration of Israel in the "Valley of Dry Bones": Ezekiel 37; John 20; Acts 2
3. Jewish Expectation of "Last Days" (Salvation and Judgment: New Heavens and New Earth):

Isaiah 40: Return from Exile for Israel

^{ESV} **Isaiah 40:1-11:** Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹ Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Ezekiel 36:24-29

²⁴ I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. ²⁸ You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you.

Isaiah 66:22:

"For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.

Compare Isaiah 61 and Luke 4:18ff

^{ESV} **Isaiah 61:1-3: *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.***

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

John the Baptist and Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God is "at hand" and was also coming"

4. Overlap of "Last Days" with the Heavenly Reign of Jesus Christ.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:22-28:** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ **Then comes the end**, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ **For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.** ²⁶

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, **that God may be all in all.**

Illustration of "Already, Not Yet" from 1 Corinthians 15:22-28

- 1) **Jesus has already triumphed over death and evil** (this present age) in his resurrection, yet the end is still to come!
- 2) **Jesus is already reigning over his enemies, including death** (this present age), but has yet to be fully realized. NO matter how powerful the world looks in this present age, it will not last- -in fact, Jesus Christ is LORD of this world (cf. Phil. 2:6-11).
- 3) **Believers are already raised with Christ** (John 5:24-25, and seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:4-8; Col. 3:1-4), yet await the full resurrection of their bodies (1 Corinthians 15:23; Romans 8:23).
- 4) **Jesus is reigning over this present age** at God's right hand and we as his people must not only celebrate this reality, but to show forth his powerful rule through us who are his people in preaching, evangelism, and being servants in this present age!

Compare Paul's teaching here with Ephesians 1:19-22:

...and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ 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.**²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church...

^{ESV} **1 John 3:1-3:** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.² ***Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.***³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

God's future is on the way! We as the people of God are to show to the world the in breaking of God's future salvation and judgment in new creation:

^{ESV} **James 1:18** Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Real suffering – but hope!

Real struggle with sin – but hope!

Real forgetfulness about who we are in Christ –but hope!

^{ESV} **Colossians 3:1-4:** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

^{ESV} **Matthew 28:18-20:** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, ***I am with you always, to the end of the age.***"

Part Two

III. Jesus is the “First Fruits” of Resurrected People (1 Cor. 15:20ff)

The Future in the Spirit has been brought to us in the present as those united to Jesus Christ!

Considering the Work of the Holy Spirit in Chris’t Resurrection (Our Resurrection):

C. The Tension: Already Resurrected, but Still Living in This Present Age

1. The Holy Spirit as the First Fruits (1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Romans 8:23).
2. The Holy Spirit as “Deposit” or “Down Payment” or “Guarantor” or “Pledge” (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:1-5; Eph. 1:11-14).
3. The Holy Spirit as “the Seal” (Ephesians 4:30).
4. The Holy Spirit in the Resurrection of Christ’s People (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

V. Death Has Been Defeated!!!

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:26** The last enemy to be destroyed is **death**.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:50** I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ **"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"** ⁵⁶ **The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.** ⁵⁷ **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

N. T. Wright writes: "The focal point of this saving kingdom [of Jesus Christ the Messiah] is the defeat and abolition of death itself (verse 26). And the defeat and abolition of death must of course mean new life, new bodily life, resurrection life." ('Resurrection', pg. 335).

VI. What Kind of Body will We All Have?

1) Plato's "Ugly Ditch"

2) Problem with contrast of "Physical" and "Spiritual" Body- -NOT referring to material/non-material Greek dichotomy (remember: continuity and discontinuity with the present body –human flesh, but Holy-Spiritually Glorified human flesh that will never see corruption!

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:42-44:** So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

3) A body that is not merely enlivened and animated by the *psyche* (soul, cf. Genesis 2:7), but one that is enlivened and animated by the Holy Spirit (thus *Holy-Spiritual Body*). ***Glorified body is the point with all the fullness of the Holy Spirit!***

^{ESV} ***Romans 8:9-11:*** *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

Notice the "Already, Not Yet" hope of the Spirit in the above passage!

Christ's resurrection and our resurrection ("Already, NOT Yet"):

John 5:24-25

^{ESV} **John 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. ²⁵ "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

(Compare with) Revelation 20:4-5

^{ESV} **Revelation 20:4** Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their

foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

John 6:39-44

^{ESV} **John 6:39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.** ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, **and I will raise him up on the last day.** ⁴¹ So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³ Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. **And I will raise him up on the last day.**

The Judgment at the "End of the Age" (Matt. 13:36-49)

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." ³⁷ He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. **The harvest is the close of the age,** and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be **at the close of the age.** ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ **Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.** He who has ears, let him hear.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹ **So it will be at the close of the age.** The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous.

4) **Christians are not "going to heaven" but "heaven will be coming to us"** in the Person of Christ when he returns to restore his people and all of creation (that is why in the Book of Revelation, John sees a New Heavens and New Earth prophesied by Isaiah, and the glorious city coming down out of heaven, from where Christ rules over all people right now!

^{ESV} **Philippians 3:20-21: But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ 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.

Revelation 21: City coming out of heaven to the earth

2 Peter 3:3-11: Restoration of the new heavens and the new earth

Our “Already, Not Yet” Hope!

1 Corinthians 2:6-11: Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a **wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.** ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of **this age** understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written, ***“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”***- ¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.