

LESSON 7: October 29: The Resurrection & The Life (A Study in Hermeneutics)
“Lo I tell you a mystery”

INTRODUCTION

WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN OR READ THIS WEEK ON WORLDVIEWS?

Peggy Perry: Colson’s Breakpoint
Sterile Worldview by Chuck Colson
Vanishing Russia
October 25, 2006

According to a recent Los Angeles Times article, Russia “has lost the equivalent of a city of 700,000 people every year since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.” We’re talking about the population of San Francisco or Baltimore—a grim reminder of how fruitless some world-views can be.

If demographic trends hold steady, Russia’s population, which stands at 142 million today, will drop to 52 million by 2080. At that point, according to Sergei Mironov, the chairman of the upper house of the Dumas, the Russian parliament, “there will no longer be a great Russia . . . it will be torn apart piece by piece, and finally cease to exist.”

Mironov isn’t alone in his fears. Russia’s demographic crisis raises “serious questions about whether Russia will be able to hold on to its lands along the border with China or field an army, let alone a workforce to support the ill and the elderly.”

Even more disturbing than the numbers are the reasons behind them: that is, “one of the world’s fastest-growing AIDS epidemics . . . alcohol and drug abuse . . . [and] suicide” are among the leading causes of Russia’s shrinking population.

What’s more, last year there were 100,000 more abortions than births in Russia. And many women who want children can’t have them: “[A]n estimated 10 million Russians of reproductive age are sterile because of botched abortions or poor health.”

As Scripps-Howard columnist Terry Mattingly puts it, “we have suicide, AIDS, substance abuse, rampant abortion, and a loss of hope in the future . . . in a nation that, in the past century, saw the rise of an atheistic regime that tried to stamp out the practice of faith . . . Do you think there might be a religion element in here somewhere?”

Well, not according to the Los Angeles Times or the Russian government. The Times’s story did not mention the role of religion—or, in this case, its absence—in its analysis of Russia’s plight. And the Russian government is trying to avert catastrophe by using the same techniques that have failed in the rest of the world: that is, bribing people to have children.

They will fail in Russia, as well, because they don’t address the real problem: The real prob-

lem is a loss of faith. Life has always been tough in Russia, and Russians are famously fatalistic. But, as writers such as Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn told us, Christianity helped Russians to see their suffering as redemptive and not to lose hope.

Seventy-four years of official atheism robbed the Russian people of this source of hope. This, more than a ruined economy and environmental degradation, is what has put Russia on the road to extinction. It's a tragic reminder that ideas, and the worldviews and attitudes they engender, have very real consequences.

It's also a cautionary tale, for what happened to Russia is, in many ways, just an exaggerated and accelerated version of the secularism and materialism overtaking much of Europe. There, as in Russia, secularism is proving to be literally sterile. And maybe it is a lesson we had better learn here as courts and cultural elite continue to marginalize the Christian faith in America.

Bruce Mateer : Seattle Times article on the Devil.

Tobi Ellis: "stained glass saying" as a teenager

A. Today's topic,

like last week, moves us into the Bible. Today we look at a Christian's Glorification and a major dilemma of hermeneutics on how to interpret the scriptures literally or figuratively on man's glorification. It all falls under the title I gave it in your syllabus, The Resurrection and The Life.

Let me first build two foundational principles.

1. Fallen man, on his own, without revelation, has no idea what "glorification" will be like. 1 Co. 13 says that we see thru a glass darkly. True. Caterpillars build a dead cocoon and emerge a beautiful butterfly. The Bible does however REVEAL a blueprint on what it will be like for you and I to have glorified bodies. But a blueprint is not a building. Today I give you the blueprint from the Bible as part of our "spiritual worldview," but experiencing the actual building remains a mystery. If you want to experience the actual building what one of two things must happen? death or the parousia.

2. We need to think in terms of "body and spirit" and "time and space history."

a. Remember Plato had the concept of dualism, body and spirit, but he believed "soma sema," the body, the tomb. That "spiritualism" has invaded Christianity in many ways, from Gnosticism that saw Jesus as only spirit and created the first Christian heresy to scholasticism that allegorized all the stories of the Bible to modern day Existentialism and liberal theology (20th Century form critics included) that stressed the figurative and the symbolic, emphasized

essence before existence, and advised taking “leaps of faith” or faith for faith’s sake while ignoring time and space history and body and spirit.

b. God creates out of nothing. He’s transcendent. He stands outside of and creates the universe — all that is. But he works in the world as an Immanent God. Yes he created the world in a cause-and-effect basis. A tree grows, rain falls, etc. And we can study have unique and how orderly it is. (Darwin said that his whole theory would be proven false if you could prove that the simplest life form was complex. Well the simplest life form is complex or unique, and I’ll show you this in a later lesson on Science and religion.) But God is not limited in this cause-and-effect world. He acts outside of it and can work within it at any time and any place.

c. God preserves what he creates. “His mercy endures forever,” said the Psalmist. God acts in history, in the “time and space” stuff. Therefore, we can trust him for our future. We have hope. Suffering has a redemptive aspect to it.

(1) Modern existentialist theology (not secular existentialism) (Kiekegaard):

TRUTH is in your hands. make a leap of faith (having faith in faith) removed from the common things of life whether or not they make any sense.

(2) The Greek mind was tougher than existentialism.

TRUTH must make sense; something internally inconsistent is unacceptable.

(3) The Jewish mind was tougher still.

TRUTH must be reasonable and non-contradictory AND be rooted in the space/time stuff of history. See what God did with Abraham, Moses, etc. Because God acted in history they were not shaken in the midst of suffering.

(contrary to the Russian worldview that offers no hope and results in a high suicide rate.) God is committed to work in history for us. Psalm 95: 7 “...for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts.”

As Christians we are “spiritual Jews.” Their history is our history from which we get our worldview or view of reality. But as Christians we have the history of a Messiah. The mighty acts of God in history include a Messiah. Jesus is the same image of the shepherd. (Jn 10:27-28) Christianity is an historical religion, unlike all the other religions.

So, we have 2 foundational principles to embrace:

1. God reveals the blueprint of our destiny in the Bible which is our glorification
2. We need to think in terms of body and spirit and time/space history. These are important as we turn our attention to The resurrection and The Life.

B. The Bible tells us a lot about the Resurrection and the afterlife. BUT WE..

1. don't pay much attention to them or we
2. read them but don't connect all of the scriptures together in a teaching, thinking the Bible is inconsistent or even contradictory when it come to the afterlife.
3. try to amalgamate the scriptures with secular beliefs, i.e. Platonism, naturalism, etc.

For instance, we are told in 1 Co 15 that we will have a resurrected body and we just push it aside and say "I don't know what that will mean." Well you know what it means to have a body. Right. You never have lived without one. And, no matter how old you get or how forgetful you become, you do remember when your body looked better and worked better. Right. So, we should be rejoicing when the scripture says that we will have new resurrected bodies. And since these bodies will bear the image of their original design, why should our resurrection bodies not resemble and feel like what we have experienced living in our bodies?

Even more, the form and design of our bodies may be the same but they will be incorruptible. Now that's something new. no more aches and pains for instance. No more wheelchairs and crutches. These things are from the curse of our fallen state.

Joni Eareckson Tada said: "Somewhere in my broken, paralyzed body is the seed of what I shall become. The paralysis makes what I am to become all the more grand when you contrast atrophied, useless legs against splendorous resurrected legs. I'm convinced that if there are mirrors in heaven (and why not?), the image I'll see will be unmistakably 'Joni,' although a much better, brighter Joni."

When we talked last week about the scope of redemption, we have a tie to the scope of what will be resurrected and restored. To be in Resurrected bodies (X), living on a Resurrected earth(O), with Resurrected friends and family members (Xs), enjoying a Resurrected life (culture) (intersecting O's), with a Resurrected Christ (h)... Now that will be quite a party.

C. Jesus is the Resurrection and The Life

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (eternal heaven?)

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies (present heaven); 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (eternal heaven) Do you believe this?"

27 "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to

come into the world.” John 11:21-27

1. God’s idea of the resurrection and the life is man’s yearning.

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecc3:11

2. “Set eternity” means what? (A sense of past and future” in RSV); set a sense of our origin and destiny. Shaeffer’s “sequence,” one thing leads to another and another.

“ 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.” 2 Co 5:8-9

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Phil 1:21-23

25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! Job 19:26-27

D Was Christ’s Resurrection a Bodily Resurrection?

In seminary we had a faculty debate on whether Christ was raised bodily. Dr. Ulrich Mauser and Dr. A.. B. Rhoades debated the question: If you had a polaroid camera on the first Easter and took a picture of the Risen Christ, would you see a physical image? Mauser argued no and Rhoades said yes. Both were committed Christians who knew the Bible in the original Greek and Hebrew and had considerable influence on the making of future pastors.

1. Just from our memories, what **facts are recorded in the Bible about the Risen Christ in relation to his physical body?**

- Empty tomb
- touch me and see John 2:19-21, Luke 24:39, Heb 2:17
- had the marks of his crucifixion
- ate food John 21:12, John 20:19
- he was recognized
- his voice was recognized “Mary” John 20:15-16, 21:4
- Mary held on to him
- Mary thought he was the gardener
- Mary called him, Sir.
- he kept teaching them Luke 24:13
- gave them tasks to do Acts 1:48
- he picked up his relationship with them where he left off (no wonder some continued to

doubt). Will we not pick up our relationships where they left off?

BUT...

- walked through a door (also, the stone was rolled away not to let Christ out but to let us look in)
- the neatly folded head band and the clothes perfectly in place as if the body went thru them.
- appeared in different places within a short time frame
- touch me not for I have not yet ascended?

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence. 44 He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Luke 24

How many “flesh and bones” ghosts are there? As the risen Jesus walked on earth for 40 days we get a picture of what it will be like for us to be resurrected in a new heaven centered in a new earth. REPEAT.

2. Why didn't Jesus' say “flesh and blood”? Why flesh and bones?

49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. 50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 52 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. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 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.” 55 “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Co 15

3. What does flesh mean to Paul? “flesh vs spirit” means that our bodies are no longer under the curse and sin. No more disease, aging, deterioration and death..

4. Compare Adam to Jesus.

ADAM

under sin

under the curse

under death

JESUS

without sin

blessed by God as his “son with whom [he] is well pleased” at Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration

death could not hold him

E. If there are mirrors in heaven, what will our Resurrected Bodies look like?

1. Must be like Christ.

Jesus is our model/example: we will be like him. The doctrine of continuity through resurrection:

Same type of body as Christ

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2

Some mystery included in this statement, “what we will be has not yet been made known”.

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Phil 3:20-21

What does transform imply? Our individual identity remains in tact, same body features, etc. but what’s different? What will it be like to have his glorious body? Mystery.

45 So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. 1 Co 15:49

So, must be like Christ..

2. Must be physical and spiritual or spiritual bodies.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonour, 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. 1 Co. 15

Present Bodies
sown perishable
sown in dishonor
sown in weakness
sown a physical (natural) body

Resurrected Bodies
raised imperishable
raised in glory
raised in power
raised a spiritual body

Spiritual is an adjective describing Body. Still a Body, but now an incorruptible one. Not flesh and blood as we know it deteriorating. Not under the curse and sin.

3. Must be “ourselves”

35 But someone may ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 1 Co 15

I call this “God’s anti-evolution” statement. We are not all made of “star stuff.”
Evolutionary biology.

Individual identity is part of personhood. DNA and fingerprints. (Many rooms in the present heaven

They saw Moses, Elijah at the transfiguration and Abraham and Isaac in Matt 8:11
What makes you you? Memory, personality (9 bipolar traits, show some commonness and yet everyone is different), gifting, passions, preferences, interest: all restored, amplified and no longer under the curse or sin. How deeply I love my wife, deeper still in heaven, more intimate.

Emotions: Anthropomorphism is attributing human features to God. Avoid creating God in our image, BUT we are created in God’s image and so what does the Bible record as far as God revealing himself to us? God has emotions. God is love, laughter, angry, jealous and so on. So we will have emotions? But how will our emotions be a “deeper perfection?” Tears of sadness? No. No injustice, death, pain or sorrow. Tears of joy. Yes, think of the powerful emotions of wonder, reverence, awe, love, joy, etc.

Intellect: Adam was an intellectual giant naming the animals and ruling the creation. Won’t we? I build imperfect furniture and only have a vision of what it must be like to create a masterpiece. But the intellect to understand spatial things, names, places, etc. And the educational process continues on a new level of curiosity and discovery.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1 Cor 13

Volitional: To enjoy heaven will be to enjoy God. Heaven is the fulfillment of our desires. When I grill a hamburger and crunch into it, when I sing a song, when I worship, we will be, in the act itself, enjoying God forever. We will want to do what pleases God. NO rules needed. No commandments spoken.

Knowing now what the scriptures say, Will heaven be boring?