

Death & Resurrection - Study #6

1. Death is an enemy which needs to be destroyed

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (I Cor.15:26).”

“For God made not death, neither has he pleasure in the destruction of the living (Wisdom 1:3).”

Death is not “natural” – it is not the highest law of creation

“This means that in the world, in creation, there is a power that does not have its origin in God, which He did not desire, which He did not create, which opposes Him and is independent of him...death is the denial of God... (Schmemmann, Death Where is Thy Sting?).”

“...And through sin, death has come into the world (Romans 5).”

- A. Death is part of the moral order a spiritual catastrophe. (Schmemmann)
- B. Humanity desired the wrong thing – we choose to live apart from God
- C. Humanity (all of creation) is not self-sustainable we rely upon the world for life, we are physiologically dependent upon the world.
- D. Humanity was created for LIFE in God, Eternity and has “fallen” from this calling
- E. In Christ, the only one without sin, unfallen, has not death in Him and so he is seen as the only one who freely and voluntarily chooses “death” to die, upon the Cross.

Christ weeps at the tomb of Lazarus, says nothing – *‘he’s in heaven now and everything is well, he is now separated from this difficult and tormented life (Schmemmann)*

“At the grave of Lazarus, God encounters Death, the reality of anti-life, of destruction and despair. He meets His enemy, who has taken away from Him His world and become its *prince*. And we who follow Jesus as He approaches the grave, we enter with Him into that *hour of His*, which He announced so often as the climax and the fulfillment of His whole work. The Cross, its necessity and universal meaning are announced in the shortest verse of the Gospel: "and Jesus wept"... We understand now that it is *because* He wept, i.e., loved His friend Lazarus that Jesus had the power of calling him back to life. The power of Resurrection is not a Divine "power in itself," but power of love, or rather love as power. God is love and Love is Life, Love creates Life... And because His dying is love, compassion and co-suffering, in ***His death the very nature of death is changed***. From punishment it becomes the radiant act of love and forgiveness, the end of alienation and solitude. (Schmemmann, A Liturgical Explanation of Holy Week).”

GREAT FRIDAY: THE CRUCIFIXION (Celebrated Holy Thursday Evening)

Christ the New Adam - The Garden of Gethsemane

“Gethsemane, the Son’s priestly acceptance of His Father’s Commission (Patitsas)

“Christ comes precisely to be the *new Adam*, to save Adam and the children of Adam by reversing Adam's mistakes. His crucifixion at the place of the skull, Golgotha, is held in Church apocrypha (non-canonical but edifying) to be the resting place of Adam 's own physical skull, and icons of the Crucifixion depict Christ's blood falling toward and landing on Adam's remains below the Cross. Christ is tempted in a garden, as was Adam. His Cross annihilates the curse inflicted by Adam's sin before the tree in the Garden of Eden. Christ's body absorbs Adam's curse, his Cross quenches the flaming sword guarding the Tree of Life, and in fact he and his Cross become a new Tree of Life no longer forbidden to God's children. (Professor, Timothy Patitsas, *The King Returns To His City*, p. 331-2).”

The Resurrection of the Body

“But they were terrified and affrighted, and kept on thinking *that* they saw a spirit. ³⁸And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do reasonings come up in your hearts? ³⁹“Behold My hands and My feet, that I am He. Touch Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, even as you see Me having.” ⁴⁰And having said this, He showed them *His* hands and *His* feet. ⁴¹And while they yet disbelieved from the joy, and wondered, He said to them, “Have ye anything to eat here?” ⁴²And they gave Him a portion of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb. ⁴³And He took *these* and ate in their presence. [Lk. 24:36-43]

The meaning of a “body” (Schmemmann)

- a.) A body is transitory, the molecules within our cells are replaced with new ones every seven to ten years. My body is my individual incarnation in the world as the form of my dependence upon the world and my activity in it.
- b.) The body is the soul’s freedom, for the body is the soul as love, the soul as communion, the soul as life the soul as movement. When the body dies the soul loses life, it is not annihilated but sleeps, enters into dormition.
- c.) Sleep is a kind of dying of one’s own organism
- d.) The resurrection of the body is not seen as a resuscitation of bones and muscle and atoms.
- e.) Christianity speak of the resurrection in terms of restoration of life as communion with Life – life that is given, gifted as a member of “body of Christ.” We can even say, the world finally becomes truly A Singular Body united in Christ

“Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling upon Death, and has bestowed life to those in the tombs!” (Resurrection Hymn).

BRGHT WEEK

“Christians who have observed the Week...*Cleansing their senses*, they see the world in a new light, and are able for the first time to *clearly* confess Christ in their daily lives.... If Great Week has succeeded in creating new *liturgical beings*, then liturgy becomes the dominant existential and social category for its adherents...a people who now see themselves as living stones of the City of God, and a universe filled with the beautiful rays of divine Glory.” (Patitsas, pg. 316)

“We believe in the Resurrection, because Christ has risen from the dead. We expect the Resurrection. We know that Christ's death has annihilated the power of death, and death is no longer the hopeless, the ultimate end of everything... Baptized into His death, we partake already of His life that came out of the grave. We receive His Body and Blood which are the food of immortality. We have in ourselves the token, the anticipation of the eternal life... All our Christian existence is measured by these acts of communion to the life of the *new age* of the Kingdom... and yet we are here...(Schmemmann on Holy Week).”

Living the in the spirit of Holy Saturday - the transformation of sorrow into JOY!

“It is already His Resurrection, but not yet ours. We will have to die, to accept the dying, the separation, the destruction. Our reality in this world, in this age, is the reality of the Great Saturday; this day is the real image of our human condition... We expect the Resurrection. We know that Christ's death has annihilated the power of death, and death is no longer the hopeless, the ultimate end of everything... Baptized into His death, we partake already of His life that came out of the grave. We receive His Body and Blood which are the food of immortality. We have in ourselves the token, the anticipation of the eternal life... All our Christian existence is measured by these acts of communion to the life of the "new age" of the Kingdom... and yet we are here, and death is our inescapable share. (Fr. Schmemmann, pg. 20.)