

March 31, 2024

Isaiah 25:6-8:

## **The Day Our Bodies Are Resurrected**

I. Feast.

II. The Ultimate Threat.

III. End Of Death And Reproach.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
2155 N. Oakland Avenue  
Decatur Illinois 62526

Isaiah 25:6-8

Dear Friends in Christ,

When we wander through a graveyard and look at the tombstones, or go into the church and examine old monuments we see one heading to them all, "Here lies." Then follows the name with the date of death, and perhaps some praise of the good qualities of the deceased. But how different is the epitaph on the tomb of Jesus! It is not written in gold nor cut in stone, it is spoken by the mouth of an angel; and it is the exact reverse of what is put on all other tombs: "He is not here."

That was written by S. Baring-Gould, the man who wrote "Onward Christian Soldiers." And this is Easter Sunday, the day we remember Christ's victory over the grave for us. It's the fulfillment of what the angel said to Joseph regarding the child in Mary's womb: "...you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins (Mt.1:21)."

That was the absolute purpose of Christ's mission to this world. His death and resurrection lays before us reality and promise. The reality: "The wages of sin is death." The promise: "but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus Christ our Lord (Rm.6:23)."

The appointed Old Testament text from Isaiah moves us from death to the promise that while our bodies will rest in the chamber of death our souls (who we are) will be in eternal life, followed by . . .

## THE DAY OUR BODIES ARE RESURRECTED

### I. Feast.

"The Day." It's this, from First Thessalonians:

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet sound of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then those who are alive, who are left (the Christians still on this earth) will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (I Thess.4:16,17).

It is then that we will enter what John refers to as *the marriage supper of the Lamb*, as John writes regarding the world's end: "Let us rejoice and exult and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride (the church) has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure' - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints (Rev.19:7,8)." - that is, the deeds that express our love and thankfulness for God's love in Christ, not deeds we think will earn His favor. That's what Jesus did for us.

This is the Eternal Feast that God's people will forever celebrate because the Lord "...will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Rev.21:4)."

The Lord's Supper points to the Eternal Feast. Jesus said to the first disciples as He says to us, "Take eat; this is my body.' And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you (and please hear this) I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Mt.26:26-29)."

And so, the Lord had Isaiah write, from our text: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, a rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined (Is,25:6)." Can we appreciate this? We're always looking for the moments of celebration, the moments of peace and rest from this weary and sin riddled world. We're reminded from Scripture that through faith in Christ, "(we) have come to Mt. Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in Festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first born who are enrolled in heaven...(Heb.12:22,23)." On Easter we celebrate the fact that we are citizens of eternal joy - now! The

eternal peace of God through faith in Christ's payment for our sin is ours - now! The victory is ours - now! It's the unending joy and most wondrous celebration based on these words from our text: "And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil (death) that is spread over all nations (v.7)."

## II. The Ultimate Threat

It was the philosopher Socrates who said, "The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways - I to die, and you to live. Which is better is known only to the gods." That's the way of man; always swimming in an ocean of question marks, unknowns; brave and confident, for awhile, then swimming and drowning in lostness. That's "the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations." Maybe that covering was best expressed in a book written almost 50 years ago by Charlotte and Howard Clinebell entitled, "The Intimate Marriage." From page 188:

One of the roots of the need for spiritual relatedness is the experience of man as the animal who knows he will die. How can one cope constructively with the dizzy flight of the years, with the knowledge that every tick of the clock brings death closer? How can one confront the brevity of one's membership in the human family? How can one deal constructively with the ultimate threat of non-existence? The fact that a man knows he will die colors all of his life...

Some will argue that the Clinebell book is an old book. Sure, but nothing has changed. For me, that book and others of the past foreshadowed all the "How To's" and psycho-babble of the present, and one book follows the monotony of another and take us nowhere! Tell me, in light of all the "brilliance" of human thinking - tell me - are we closer to a perfect world? Is the fairy tale of evolution that only the strong survive edging us closer to a world of peace and tranquility - or the death of everything?

And what a tragic question the Clinebells asked: "How can one deal constructively with the ultimate threat of non-existence?" The fact is, without Christ no-one ever has - ever will! Oh, things might get better for awhile, but consider the process this world has always traveled: rise, decay, dying, and death. But our text closes with . . .

## III. End Of Death And Reproach.

He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken (v.8).

Let's start with the word "reproach" as in "the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth." Reproach, the rebukes and disapprovals the world pours out at the church; especially if the church is faithful to God's Word regarding salvation through Christ; the values of life, marriage, family, decency.

And then there's the statement, "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord will wipe away tears from all faces." Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us every assurance with this promise: "Because I live, you also will live (Jn. 14:19b)." Faith in Christ lifts us from this world of constant sorrow, disappointment and death to His everlasting Kingdom.

It is critical that we keep these words of Scripture in light of the coming final day.

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant women, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of the light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

You might recall a reference to the following incident that took place around 1930. Its significance is found in the fact that features of it are in our country. This was written by James S. Hewett:

About 1930, the Communist leader Bukharin journeyed from Moscow to Kiev. His mission was to address a huge assembly. His subject was atheism. For a solid hour he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity, hurling argument and ridicule. At last he was finished and viewed what seemed to be smoldering ashes of men's faith. "Are there any questions?" Bukharin demanded. A solitary man arose and asked permission to speak. He mounted the platform and moved close to the Communist. The audience was breathlessly silent as the man surveyed them first to the right, and then to the left. At last he shouted the ancient Orthodox greeting, "CHRIST IS RISEN!" The vast assembly arose as one man and the response came crashing like an avalanche. "HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

He has! And we, too, will rise in our resurrected bodies. Then will be fulfilled the words given to John: "...we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 Jn.3:2)." Blessed Easter!

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott