

RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the citadel of Christian faith. It is the belief that Jesus conquered death for us. By believing in him, we gain the gift of eternal life.

Over the course of time, the meaning of “death” and “life” has been greatly influenced by the profound human experience of our own physical mortality. The seeming totality of one’s physical demise coupled with the inability to gauge spiritual reality left one with a considerable stab of fear at the prospect of “death.”

Christian teaching on the Resurrection offered a vision of life transcendent of earthly bounds, and in so doing, offered solace to troubled souls confronted with the limits of mortality.

Fortunately, I have been able to spend a considerable amount of time and research helping Christians understand our view on the Resurrection. No greater resource exists than the actual experience of teaching and dialoguing with Christian leaders on these issues. You discover what areas are challenging and why. It helps you to understand the content of the Principle on a deeper level because you will be challenged to give sound explanations of our views. Also, you will be challenged to understand the valid basis for their various belief systems. It helps Christians when they see that you have a healthy and respectful understanding of their basic beliefs.

Amazingly, in our past efforts to teach ministers, we often overlooked this vitally important content of the Divine Principle. We never saw fit to teach it during the ICC era and only one or two times during the True Family Values era. However, it is a most critical (and sensitive) content for ministers to understand. How important is it to Christians? Consider Paul’s words in **1 Corinthians 15:14**: *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*

The question is: in what manner did Christ rise? Here is a typical question that was recently asked me by a member:

In Luke 24:39, Jesus is clearly stating that he is NOT a spirit. Also Thomas was feeling the hands and wounds of Jesus. How can we explain these words of Jesus? In my dis-

cussions with Christians, they claim Jesus' resurrection was clearly not spiritual but physical.

THE MEANING OF RESURRECTION

Luke 9:60

*Jesus said to him, "Let the **dead** bury their own **dead**, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."*

This verse is significant because it illustrates the fact that there are two definitions of the word "death" and, by implication, two definitions of the word "life." It is important to sort out the definitions in order to conclude which death is subject to the resurrection.

Jesus is witnessing to a prospective disciple. He is encouraging him to make his decision today. A well-known salesman axiom is "buyers are liars." That means that prospects have a tendency to procrastinate rather than make the decision to buy. Therefore, it is important to "close the deal" on the first meeting. None of this, "I want to think it over," or "I'll have to talk to my wife and get back to you." Jesus, in this respect, is a "power closer" when it comes to "selling" eternal life. The prospect is "in the funnel" and wants to buy, but he has an objection. He has to attend his father's funeral. It seems like a condition not to buy, but Jesus skillfully handles the objection and turns the objection into the reason for buying. Jesus is one great salesman!

"Let the dead bury the dead, you go and proclaim the Kingdom of God!" Jesus uses the "fear of loss" close. You can go home and bury your father and become one of the dead, or you can proclaim the Kingdom and have eternal life. Which do you prefer?

This question also indicates that there are two types of "death." Let the *spiritually dead* bury the *physically dead*.

Other verses in scripture indicate this twofold meaning:

Revelation 3:1

*I know your deeds; you have a reputation of **being alive**, but you are **dead**.*

John 11:25-26

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

THE DEATH CAUSED BY THE FALL

In order to know which death is subject to the resurrection, we need to know which death is caused by the fall of man.

In the Principle of Creation, we see the original structure and function of a human entails both a spiritual self and physical self. In order for Christians to understand this we can point to the following scripture:

Ecclesiastes 12:7

*And the **dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God** who gave it.*

Genesis 2:22–24

*Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now **bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh**; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and **they will become one flesh**.*

Some Christians even believe that the physical body was created as a result of the fall. They point to **Genesis 3:21**: *The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.* Many maintain a vague notion that the temporal nature of the physical body is attributable to sin.

However, Genesis 2:22–24 clearly indicates that God created flesh bodies for Adam and Eve prior to the event of sin. This would tend to support the idea that the flesh body, too, had an original godly purpose and function prior to man sinning.

In **Genesis 2:17**, we see that if Adam and Eve eat the fruit, they will die on the very day they eat it.

. . . for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

In relation to the temporal nature of the physical body, Adam and Eve ate the fruit and they did die on that very same day. However, this death that they experienced was not a physical death. It was a “death” that reflected the initial category of “death” mentioned by Jesus in Luke 9:60. That is, spiritual death. There is no scripture that links the event of physical death as a consequence of sin.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL DEATH?

1 John 3:14

*We know that we have passed from **death to life**, because we **love our brothers**. Anyone who **does not love remains in death**.*

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is **death**, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:6

*The **mind of sinful man is death**, but the **mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace**;*

Ephesians 4:18

*They are darkened in their understanding and **separated from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them due to the **hardening of their hearts**.*

Spiritual death is the state resulting from sin. It is the state of being separated from God's love. It is where "our hearts are hardened," and thus, we can no longer "love our brothers." Paul says anyone who "does not love, remains in death."

THE MEANING OF RESURRECTION

If physical death is not the "death" caused by the fall, then "passing from death into life" (resurrection) does not involve the revival of the decomposed physical body. (Eccl. 12:7)

Therefore, resurrection is the process of man being restored from Satan's dominion back to God's dominion through the dispensation for restoration.

John 5:24

*"I tell you the truth, whoever **hears my word** and believes him who sent me **has eternal life** and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from **death to life**.*

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Christ is the central figure for the dispensation of resurrection.

At this point, we would normally proceed into the next section that describes the four principles of resurrection. However, ministers, at this point, are still reeling about the above definition of resurrection. They generally need more to hang their hat on if they are going to consider altering their view of resurrection.

The main stumbling block is the biblical description of Jesus' own "resurrection." The tomb was empty and then, soon after, the disciples were meeting Jesus face to face. Jesus said, "Touch my hands and feet, a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, etc. They will have many objections to our description of resurrection up to this point. We must recognize and deal with these major objections before we proceed to the next section; otherwise, they will not hear a thing you say.

BIBLE VERSES THAT APPEAR TO SUPPORT RESURRECTION OF THE CORPORAL BODY

Matthew 27:52–53

*The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were **raised to life**. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and **appeared to many people**.*

John 11:40–44

*Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they **may believe that you sent me**." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" **The dead man came out**, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.*

Luke 24:36–39

*While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a **GHOST**. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? **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.**"*

Jesus said that a ghost does not have flesh and bone, as you see that I have!

Lets examine these important Bible verses more closely:

Matthew 27:52

*The many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised from the dead. They went into the holy city (Jerusalem) and **APPEARED TO MANY.***

The key word is “appeared.” They “appeared” to many, but not to “all.” We will see in other verses how the term “appeared” is used to describe the arrival of spiritualized forms.

If this event were an example of a corporal resurrection, then the saints would have “appeared” to all. If they had appeared to all, then certainly this great event would have received more documentation other than one verse in the book of Matthew (written about 20 to 40 years after the event). For example, the great Jewish historian from the first century, Josephus, makes no mention of this event in any of his records.

Keep in mind, we are not arguing against the *miracle* of corporal resurrection as exemplified by Lazarus (Elijah also raised the dead). We are maintaining that, in this case, the saints were raised in their spiritualized forms.

John 11:40–44 Jesus “raising Lazarus from the dead,” is a *miracle* and not the same as the providence of resurrection to “eternal life.” The purpose for which Jesus performed miracles is explained in **John 10:38**:

*“Even though you do not believe me, **believe the miracles**, that you may **know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.**”*

When Jesus raises Lazarus, he explains that the reason he is doing this is “for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

Even as a miracle, though quite impressive indeed, the ability to corporally resurrect someone is not, necessarily, *exclusive to the messiah*. See **1 Kings 17:21–22**

Then Elijah stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this boy’s life return to him!” The LORD heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived.

Jesus was performing miracles in order to help direct the people toward the actual exclusive provision of Christ: eternal life. This is something that Elijah could never have provided. Christ, alone, is the providential agent of resurrection.

The conclusion, then, is, yes, corporal resurrection is a reality *as a miracle*, but it only provided for an extension of Lazarus' physical life. After all, didn't Lazarus later "die" again? Therefore, corporal resurrection is not the manifestation of resurrection to eternal life.

Luke 24:36–39

*While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a GHOST. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? **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.**"*

This "appearance" of Christ after his resurrection is the strongest and seemingly most emphatic statement of Christ's post-tomb corporality. We must examine this carefully.

First of all, notice that Jesus suddenly appears in their midst in such a way as to "startle and frighten" them. **John 20:19** mentions that he appeared in their midst, "*even though the doors were locked.*"

We see in an earlier appearance in **Mark 16:12**: *Afterward Jesus appeared in a **different form** to two of them while they were walking in the country.*

Different form? What kind of different form? It is his spiritualized form. We see in **Luke 24:16** this "different form" prevented the disciples from initially recognizing that it was Jesus with whom they were speaking.

When Jesus "appears" to the disciples inside the room in **Luke 24:36–39**, he must, likewise, assure them that it is, indeed, Jesus. They were frightened thinking that this appearance was a "ghost." This fear toward the presence of a "ghost" is very interesting and significant to properly understand what is happening.

The word "ghost" is used in the New International Version. It is meant to imply some sort of "bodiless demon or apparition." When the presence of a spiritualized form does not entail a negative entity, the term used is "spirit."

However, in the King James Version, it is the opposite. The term "ghost" is used to imply a positive spiritual form, the term "spirit"

is used to indicate a negative apparition that instills fear when encountered.

Are we confused yet?

The point is that Jesus is seeking to allay their fears so that they can recognize that it is indeed Jesus himself and not some demonic entity.

What about Jesus' assertion that "a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have"? Again, Jesus is emphasizing that it is really him. The fact that they can touch him or that he can eat a broiled fish does not mean he isn't in his spiritualized form. It means he isn't a "ghost." A "ghost" can't do these things, but a "spirit" can:

Jacob wrestled an *angel* and wrenched his hip.

Eve *fornicated* with Lucifer.

The daughters of men *married* the "bene Elohim," that is, angels. (Genesis 6:3)

Angels *ate a meal* at Lot's table.

Many have entertained angels *unaware* (Hebrews 13:1).

Don't try to explain *how* this could be, just indicate that scripture testifies that it is.

How Does Jesus 'Appear'?

In the following scripture, Saint Paul documents the series of appearances of Jesus after his resurrection. He concludes the sequence with the "appearance" of Jesus to him (on the road to Damascus).

1 Corinthians 15:4-8

*"That he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he **appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and LAST OF ALL HE APPEARED TO ME ALSO.**"*

The manner in which Jesus appeared to Paul is explained in **Acts 9:3-7:**

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,

*“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; **THEY HEARD THE SOUND BUT DID NOT SEE ANYONE.***

“They heard the sound, but they **did not see anyone.**” This is how Jesus “appeared” to Paul. Paul could see, but others could not. Likewise, when the many bodies of the saints “appeared.” They appeared to some but not all. This was the spiritualized form.

Paul teaches clearly in **1 Corinthians 15:35–52:**

But someone may ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?”

How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 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.

Some key statements in these verses: Paul states that when you sow you do not plant the body that is to be; instead, you are planting just a seed. Likewise, the body that is sown is the natural body, the body that is raised is the spiritual body. The body that is sown, the natural body, is perishable. It cannot inherit imperishability or the kingdom of God (meaning: it can't go to the spiritual world). It is the spiritual body that is raised. It is imperishable and it can inherit (that is, go to) the kingdom of God (spirit world).

Mark 16:12 testifies that Jesus “appeared in a different form” after he was raised from the dead. This is because, as Paul affirms, “the dead will be raised imperishable, **and will be changed.**”

Jesus Gazes into the Spirit World

This is one of the most interesting parables that Jesus ever gave. It provides keen insight into some of the realities of the spiritual world. Most important, Jesus provides a clear definition of “raising from the dead.” It involves two men who die. One is a rich man, the other a beggar. The beggar goes to heaven to be with Abraham. The rich man goes to hell. (The beggar’s name is Lazarus and is not to be confused with the Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead.)

Luke 16:19–31

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

*The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to **Abraham’s side**. The rich man also died and was buried.*

*In hell, where he was in torment, **he looked up and saw Abraham far away**, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’*

*But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you **a great chasm has been fixed**, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’*

*He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. **Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.**’*

*Abraham replied, ‘They have **Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.**’ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced **even if someone rises from the dead.**’*

What is Jesus' definition of "raising from the dead" in this parable?" It is the phenomenon of a spirit in the spirit world "appearing" on the earth plane to perform a providential task centering on people on earth. The rich man wanted Lazarus to "raise from the dead" to warn his brothers to repent so that they would avoid coming to hell.

On this foundation, ministers would be much more open to proceed with the study of resurrection from the Divine Principle perspective. They would, of course, still feel resistant, but they could see that a wide range of scripture was supporting our view.

Basically from this point on, I would follow the standard resurrection lecture content. For brevity's sake, I'll just highlight some of the remaining areas of the rest of the resurrection lecture where potential problems may occur.

THE PROVIDENCE OF RESURRECTION

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, there is one Principle and many applications. The "Principles of Resurrection" are the Principle of Creation applied to the historical journey from death to life. It is the journey of "re-creation."

In *Exposition of The Divine Principle* chapter on the resurrection, this section starts off with "Merit of the Age." For Christians this point is a little obscure. I would begin with the bedrock of "the word." Resurrection takes place on the foundation of the Word of God. This is strong common ground with their beliefs and sensibilities.

Instead of this lineup:

1. Merit of the Age
2. The word
3. Physical body
4. 3 Orderly stages

This order is better:

1. The word
2. Physical body
3. Merit of the age
4. 3 Orderly stages

THE PROVIDENCE OF RESURRECTION FOR PEOPLE ON EARTH

This is the content that explains the three stages in the dispensation for resurrection. I had no major problems in this area of the presentation. It was generally well received. Whenever I teach this part of the Principle I am always reminded of one experience I had: (See testimony on pages 240-243)

Testimony

In 1985 there was a special 40-day mobilization. At that time, I was working under Rev. Chung Hwan Kwak in the Education Department at the World Mission Center. I was sent to the Boston area. Richard Buessing, my spiritual father, lobbied hard to get me to come to that area. He was the church leader in Boston at the time. He was calling me every day and saying, "Hey, Kevin, come to Boston and we'll take good care of you!"

So, he picks me up at the train station. I'm wondering which Korean restaurant we will be going to; of course, he'll be taking me to a Korean restaurant. I imagined I would be staying at the main center. I would, of course, be escorted to my room. A fruit bowl would be prepared. Yes, this was a good choice.

But "spiritual" parents can get real "spiritual" at times. In their eyes you are still a brand new member. It's just like when I go home to visit my 80-year-old Mom. She still yells at me, "Don't leave the refrigerator door open!"

Rich picks me up at the train station. I notice he has this funny-looking grin on his face, but he always has a funny-looking grin, so I thought nothing of it. We hop in his car and off we go. The next thing I know, we're leaving Boston and heading north. I thought to myself, "He must be taking me to a really special Korean restaurant, yeah, that's it. Or maybe he's going to take me to one of those conveyor belt sushi restaurants where if you can eat 30 dishes, it's free! That's even better! Well, I'll just let him surprise me!"

Oh, he surprised me all right! After about an hour's drive, we end up in Salem, Massachusetts. This is the town from which they coined the phrase "witch-hunt." This is where the Salem witch-hunt took place.

Rich pulls up in the middle of downtown, puts the car in park, reaches around in his backseat and pulls out a big pile of flyers. "Well, Kevin, here's your new pioneer town!" He plops the pile of flyers on my lap. "Would you like to pray before I head back?"

I still don't get it. I'm thinking, "Why don't we just pray at the restaurant?"

I slowly started to get it as I watched the backend of Rich's car pull away on his way out of town. I thought I could hear hysterical laughter coming from his car as he pulled away; or maybe it was coming from all those witches watching me from the spirit world. Hee! Hee! Hee!

To this very day, 16 years later, he still laughs about that day. "Hey, Kevin, remember when I dropped you off on the front-line!" I try to accuse him of being "an armchair leader," but he just laughs that much harder!

Now what does this have to do with resurrection? Well, I needed it, obviously. Actually, I ended up pioneering in a nearby town, called Lowell, Massachusetts with two wonderful Japanese sisters, Reiko Stone and Tomoyo Yamaguchi. Reiko was the spiritual mother of Tomoyo. Reiko, a longtime church member, spoke no English. Tomoyo, a brand-new member, spoke perfect English.

Our mission was to visit ministers and invite them to ICC. Reiko, Tomoyo and I tried to work out the best way to visit all the ministers as quickly as possible.

We realized right away that we were going to have to work around some challenging situations. If we all went together, we would not be able to reach all ministers quickly. Not good. Okay, we will each visit ministers separately. Not good, Reiko doesn't speak English, Tomoyo is a brand-new member. Okay, Tomoyo will go with me, Reiko will go by herself. Not good, Reiko still doesn't speak English. Okay, Reiko will go with me, Tomoyo will go by herself. Not good, Tomoyo might have a hard time with the ministers. Okay, we will all go together. Not good. . .well, you see what I mean.

Then I had a brain storm. Reiko is spirit. Tomoyo is body. Yea, Reiko is Moses and Tomoyo is Aaron. So they are "one" person! Our plan was they would visit ministers together and any minister that was nice to them, they would make an appointment for me to meet the minister and explain more deeply about ICC. This worked very well. We joked that they were "a Geiger counter" to find prepared ministers.

So many wonderful Japanese members across the country worked so hard in visiting and caring for ministers. It was Japanese members that first nurtured so many of the thousands of ministers that now have studied the Divine Principle and are supporting True Parents.

I heard about one Japanese sister who brought so many ministers to the ICC in Korea. She spoke almost no English at all. Her method was very simple. When she met the minister all she could do was burst into tears and just say over and over "ICC" "ICC" "ICC." That was all the English she knew. Sometimes the minister would be very startled: "What? What do you see?" "See? You See? What? What do you see? She was crying and saying, "I-C-C." She brought the most ministers.

Later, a third Japanese sister joined our team. Her name was Asa and she worked in the city next to Lowell. One experience I will never forget took place when Asa made a connection with one Christian group in Lawrence, Massachusetts. She mentioned that they had a bible study every Wednesday night. She invited us to attend with her.

So Wednesday arrives and we all met at the bible study. I guess we did look a little unusual. So, of course, all eyes were on us. We take our seats. I notice that Reiko, Tomoyo and Asa all had brought their bibles. Good move, coming to a bible study and all.

The leader of the group announces the bible verse. "Everyone turn your bibles to Galatians 1:8-10." This was followed by the sound of bibles opening and pages flipping and then one by one each member of the group finding the verse and directing their attention to the Bible study leader. That is, except for one area of the study circle. I continued to hear the stirring and rustling of pages growing louder and more frantic. Flip, flip, flip—pause—flip, flip, (whisper) flip, flip, flip (whisper-whisper) flip, flip (panic flipping) flip, flip, flip, flip. It was the unmistakable sound of Moonies lost in the bible.

I look up and see the three Japanese sisters in a full frantic festival of flipping. They weren't even close to Galatians. They weren't even in the right Testament. They were off by about, say, 4,000 years. I tried to make eye contact, "go left, go back, no, too far, go back!"

Now in fairness, Galatians is a flipper's nightmare. It's a small chapter "in the back." It is one of Paul's letters.

The regular members of the Bible study, wondering what the hold-up was, now started to take notice. I began to detect the slight, knowing smirks, the glances back and forth, the subtle roll of the eyes.

The Bible leader finally chimed in, "Could someone help our guests locate our verse in Galatians?" He might as well have said, "Could somebody help these Godless, baal-worshipping, cult members find Galatians before they all end up in HA YELL ALL!"

Finally the verses were found and the session began. I realized right away, the fix was in. Tonight's session just so happened to be about "false Christs," "false prophets," "another Gospel," and so forth. I think they knew we were coming.

The Bible study leader, his name was Phil, intentionally focused on the Japanese sisters. He thought he had an easy mark. "Asa, could you explain to me what is a false Christ?" Asa smiled, with total sincerity and without a trace of nervousness she asked, "Do you mean 'antichrist' or 'false Christ?'" Phil was somewhat startled and said, "well, both, ah, you can explain both."

Now everybody was listening. Asa continued, "Well, 'antichrist' is satanic imitation of Christ. This is communism. 'False Christ' this is spiritually open person who receives a revelation that 'he is the Lord.' This is because in the Last Days we are at the top of the growth stage. So we have to be careful." Big smile.

"Uh huh," Phil's eyeballs were going like pinwheels. "Well, Okay, how about Reiko? Reiko, tell us how we can recognize a "false prophet."

Reiko spoke almost no English. She had a very serious look on her face. She made that sucking sound through her teeth as only Japanese can when they are about to say something serious.

"SSSSSSSSSSSSSH . . .fass propet BEDY bad! SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSH fass propet body NO GEEWWDD!" She

nailed it. I'm looking at Phil, I'm laughing and thinking to myself, "Take your pick Phil, 'bedy bad' and 'bedy no good!"

Phil began to realize his little plan to confound the cultists wasn't working out. After a little while the study begins to focus on the meaning of the resurrection. You could tell Phil was still a little mystified by Asa's first comments and I guess he wanted to see if he could trip her up on the resurrection. Big mistake.

"Asa, could you explain what the resurrection means to you?" Phil gave a side-glance to one of his members as if to say, "We got her now."

Asa thinks for a second and then asks, "Which resurrection do you mean, the Old Testament Age, the New Testament Age or the Completed Testament Age?" Big smile.

"Huh?" At that point I could see Phil making a mental note to himself, "no more questions for Asa." Asa went on to explain to the group that there were three stages in the resurrection. She also explained, in detail, the meaning and character of each age. You could have heard a pin drop! I felt God was so proud of His Japanese daughters!

After that night, I watched those three sisters study their bibles every day. They memorized the order of the 66 books of the bible. They would call out a book and time themselves to see how many seconds it took to get to the passage. By the next bible study they were smoking! They were ready! They couldn't wait for Phil to announce the bible verse.

They were sitting there with their bible holsters strapped on. They had this Clint Eastwood type squint in their eyes like when Clint would be in the middle of the street ready to gun down some bad hombre. "Go ahead, bible boy, make my day!"

Phil hardly got the verse out of his mouth and BANG! ZOOM! They got to the verse even before Phil. I didn't hear a single flip. I was laughing to myself the whole time. I keep thinking they were handling those bibles like Bruce Lee handled numchuks in Enter The Dragon!

These three sisters were so amazing and I will never forget how sincerely they did their mission and how much they cared for the ministers. It was a great joy and privilege to work together with them. I'll never forget Asa's big smile as she asked Phil, "Which resurrection do you mean?"

Whenever I teach about resurrection, I remember that story. Every time I think about the three stages of resurrection, of course, I think about Moses, Jesus and the Second Coming, but after that I think about Reiko, Tomoyo and Asa!

PARADISE AND HEAVEN

The explanation of paradise and heaven is a sensitive matter. Especially, you want to remember to be careful with regard to Jesus' status. You don't want to create the wrong impression that Jesus is "only" in paradise. You don't want to express something that seems to place a limit on Jesus. We don't need to send out a search party to locate Jesus in the spirit world. As far as we're concerned at this point, Jesus isn't anywhere except "sitting at the right hand of the Father judging the living and the dead."

In Luke 23:43, Jesus mentions to the thief on the right, "today, you will be with me in paradise."

The more essential point that we are making is that all is not done providentially on earth or in spirit. This is not as hard a sell as you may think. Certainly many Christians are of the mind that when Jesus said, "it is finished," he meant everything was complete. But if Christians will pause and consider for a minute, they can begin to realize even they don't believe that, nor does that reflect the voice of scripture.

The idea that Christ is returning to complete the work of salvation is not a foreign, non-biblical idea. It is solidly grounded in scripture. The idea that Christ is returning to set up his kingdom; likewise, is mainstream. It stands to reason given the idea "what is sown on earth is reaped in heaven," that the Kingdom must first be established on earth so that it may be then transported to the world of spirit.

Hebrews 9:28

*So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to **bring salvation** to those who are waiting for him.*

What salvation could that be?

1 Peter 1:5

*. . . Who, through faith, are shielded by God's power **until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.***

That "salvation" won't be revealed until "the Last Days." The clear implication is that even the bible as we know it has not articulated the nature of that salvation. The Bible reveals that it has not been revealed.

Acts 3:21

He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

”Restore everything as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.” This means the Kingdom and all prophecy of glory such as Isaiah 65:17. Do you remember the disciples question to the resurrected Jesus in Acts 1:6? So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” This is the meaning of “to restore everything” in Acts 3:21.

Paul certainly seems to be expecting more in the following scripture.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but WHEN perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 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. 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.

Hebrews 9:39–40 indicates that the saints in heaven are still waiting for “what was promised.”

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Those saints in paradise will be made perfect with us. “Us” refers to the people on earth at the time of Christ’s return to “complete salvation.” To “eat from the Tree of Life.” signifies the opening of the way to perfection.

The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is the symbol of perfect Adam. God told Adam and Eve that they must first be “fruitful.” This was the prerequisite for their marriage. On that foundation they could receive God’s permission to multiply. Man fell and God blocked the way to the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24) Thus man “died,” was cut off from the life of God and needed to be resurrected to life.

“To eat from the Tree of Life” is the key to opening the Kingdom. Without perfection we cannot fulfill the second blessing. Thus, we see in the Old Testament that the hope has been to achieve the Tree of Life.

Proverbs 11:30

*The fruit of the righteous is a **tree of life**.*

Proverbs 13:12

*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but **a longing fulfilled** is a tree of life.*

The fruit of righteousness in the Old Testament is the “blessing” when Christ comes to Israel to establish his everlasting Kingdom. That is the “hope” and “longing fulfilled” of the Old Testament Age. Therefore Jesus is the “Tree of Life.” **Hebrews 5:8–9** *Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once **MADE PERFECT**, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

By achieving “perfection” Jesus became the “perfected Adam,” that is, “The Tree of Life.” He is the “vine,” we are “the branches.”

John 15:4–6

*Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. **I am the vine; you are the branches**. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

However, he said “my Kingdom is not of this world. The gates were shut because there was “no faith, no, not in Israel.”

Jesus comes again to open the gates and open the way to the Tree of Life.

Revelation 2:7

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Revelation 22:14

*Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the **right to the tree of life** and may go through the gates into the city.*

Until we regain the right to eat from the tree of life, we cannot “enter the gate” into the city. The Holy City is the Kingdom of Heaven, i.e. “the new Jerusalem.”

Thus, until that time, we are *in paradise* and must “resurrect” to the level of the *Kingdom of Heaven*. This is how we can explain paradise and heaven in a more biblically grounded manner.

NO MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN

The resurrection lecture is vital because it is here that we can best begin to deal with the strong Christian misconception about “no marriage in Heaven.”

Christians believe that marriage is exclusively an earthly arrangement. It is temporal only. The traditional wedding vows have reflected this belief: “until death do us part.”

This misconception of thousands of years is what stands at the root of the present demise of the family. It is also a MAJOR barrier to Christians understanding the value of the Blessing. A *major objection* Christians have about the Blessing is that Jesus seems to say that there is no marriage in Heaven and that we will be single and unattached “like the angels.”

It is an interesting belief because most Christians, naturally, in their heart long to be with a departed spouse. Most have a deep hope to “meet again.” Can you imagine going to the spirit world and not being allowed to be with your spouse because it’s against the rules? Actually, I guess we would be pretty much acclimated to that environment.

Of course, I’d be up there in heaven trying to get around the rules and find a way to meet my wife secretly (just like I did on earth!). I’d slip her a note, “honey, meet me over by the Holy Fountain of Divine Waters at 2:00 o’clock.”

We would have a little picnic or something until the angels would spot us, start to get a little suspicious and come over to ask a few questions. “Excuse, me, weren’t you two, uh, I mean on earth, I think I recall you WERE MARRIED!” The angel whips out his nightstick and whistle. “No, wait,” I plead, “We’re on the volleyball committee, we’re just planning for the tournament . . . I swear!”

The angel blows the whistle and suddenly a couple of vans pull up loaded with angels. A big fat angel with a huge cigar gets out, “Okay, load ‘em up!” One group grabs me and the other group grabs

my wife and they drag us away to separate vans. They open the door and throw me in the back with several other Moonies. The big fat angel stands there puffing on his cigar, shaking his head and says, "Look at yez, when are you people gonna get with the program?" He slams the rear door. I can hear him talking to some other angel outside.

"How many is that today?"

"About 17 . . . all of 'em Westerners."

"Why am I not surprised?" said the fat angel. You could hear them both laughing.

Matthew 22:23-32

At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

This is the verse that Christians cite. Jesus is speaking to a group of Sadducees. The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in the resurrection. They were inquiring of Jesus to determine with whom a woman would be married in heaven if she had been married seven times on earth. Of course, their only motive was to try to confound Jesus.

Notice that Jesus never says that there is no marriage "in heaven." He says that there is no marriage "at the resurrection!" This is a significant difference.

If you will examine **Luke 20:27-38**, you will find the same story. However in Luke's rendering of this same event, he is clearer. He writes, "We will be like the angels, for *we will never die*." In other words, our similarity to the angels "in heaven" is not that we will be unmarried as the angels, but rather that we will never die. Matthew's expression, however, seems to suggest that our similarity to angels "in heaven" is that we will be *single* as the angels. This is incorrect.

What, then, does Jesus mean when he says that we will not marry "at the resurrection"? The course of resurrection, as is the course of restoration, is the course of "re-creation." The course of "re-creation" follows the same Principle as the course of "creation." Adam and Eve were to grow to perfection in the position of brother and sister. To "eat from the Tree of Life" is the ideal of perfection and the prerequisite for fulfillment of the second blessing. In the beginning, there would be no marriage until the conclusion of the creation process to the Tree of Life, that is, the first blessing.

Likewise, in the course of resurrection, there is no marriage until the conclusion of the process of resurrection: restoration to eat from the Tree of Life.

Since God “blocked the way to the Tree of Life,” (Genesis 3:24) there has been “no marriage.” This is why no child could be born without the stain of sin. “All born of Adam” were without life.

Thus there will be no marriage until mankind can resurrect and reclaim the right to eat from the Tree of Life. It is a permission issue as stated in the chapter on “The Change of Blood Lineage.” This is the hope of the Second Coming as we have seen in Revelation 2:7 and 22:14.

FINAL NOTES: ON THE UNIFICATION OF RELIGIONS

In the sections “Unification of Religions by Returning Resurrection,” and “The Returning Resurrection of All Other Spirit Persons,” make sure they don’t misunderstand you to be proclaiming that we can go to heaven without Christ.

Typically, when we teach the unification of religions, they will think you are stating “all roads lead to God.” Help them to understand by lifting up what is unique about the Judeo-Christian providence. It is the relationship of central and peripheral. Simply put, the Judeo-Christian providence is central because it brings the Christ, the central figure of resurrection and salvation. Other religions are used by God to make a foundation for Christ.

Make sure they understand that whereas God can use other religions, he will only use Christianity for the providence of salvation. Make sure they understand that you are not affirming everything claiming to be a religion as being subject to God’s use. (Baal worship, for example)

For example, you might indicate to ministers that God could use the traditions of the wise men to lead them to the baby Jesus. Their belief system was neither Jew nor Christian and yet it was used by God to bring them to the feet of Christ. It didn’t save them, but it brought them to the location of salvation.

You can help it go down a little, by reminding ministers that God “so loved the world” and **2 Peter 3:9** *He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Take a look at some of these interesting questions:

Do Unificationists believe that everyone will be saved and go to Heaven?
Rev. B.D., African Methodist Episcopal

Answer:

All concepts of universal salvation have thus far been inadequate and in error. However, we do see that God is not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should come to everlasting life (2 Peter 3:9). If God is not willing for anyone to perish and God's will is absolute, then there would be scriptural grounds for the concept of an ultimate restoration of "all things."

The notion is also given support in the fact that biblical Greek for "eternal, eternity" could also be rendered "for a long time" as opposed to "neverending." The problem with universal salvation theories is that it invites a complacent attitude with regard to our personal responsibility to salvation, an "enjoy now, pay later" mentality. On the other hand, neither is the fear of hell and damnation the ultimate motivation to live a Christ-centered life.

What is your attitude toward other denominations and religions?
Fr. T.L., Catholic

Answer:

We believe that all denominations are object to God's blessing and that absolute doctrinal purity is not the condition that God needs to be able to work with man or a religious body. God looks for certain virtues that are to be the fruit of doctrines. God looks to the virtues and not the doctrine.

A denomination with a high, clear doctrine but which is living halfheartedly would produce virtues of less quality than another denomination with a lesser, more unclear doctrine that was being applied more diligently. A good example would be to compare Japanese society, which is less than 1 percent Christian, with American society, which is overwhelmingly Christian.

It is why Jesus stresses in Matthew 7:23-27 not only doctrine, but also application. For us, with regard to the basis of relationship with other denominations and religions, we look for those eternal virtues as the basis of our relationship and not doctrinal harmony in jot and tittle.

I noticed Unification Church believes a person can be: A Buddhist and a Unificationist; a Confucianist and a Unificationist; a Moslem and a Unificationist; anything and a Unificationist; Can a person be a Baal worshipper and a Unificationist? **Rev. J.J., Pentecostal**

The purpose of religion is that all should come to Christ. God had worked in many religions to make the ground more fertile for the saving message of Christ's love. Not every tradition that calls itself religion can be an object to God's purpose.

Remember, God was able to lead such non-Christian movements as Judaism and lead non-Christian wise men to the baby Jesus. The God I read about so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

Is there ever a justifiable situation to question or expose another religion, as Jesus exposed the Sadducees, Pharisees, Scribes, Priests, Levites, Samaritans, etc.?

Answer:

Jesus' judgment of Judaism was not meant to be an affront to the tradition of Judaism. We see that Jesus deeply respected the Jewish tradition and followed many Jewish customs. Jesus judged the Jews with regard to the fulfillment or failure of their contemporary responsibility to obey and receive the Son of Man. It was in that acceptance that their tradition would be fulfilled. Also, Jesus never judged anyone for which he was not also willing to go to the cross. Our failure is that we many times engage (almost with glee) in the judgment of other religions (or even the completely non-religious) without having demonstrated the willingness to go to the cross.

You said with your own words that we should put the words of the Bible into practice. Why do so many so called Christians, and you teach that we should embrace them all, take Jesus with them to the bars and dance floors, to drink and party with harlots, who do not have any modesty or godliness. Is that Christianity? Are we to expect that kind of conduct to enter into heaven? Maybe the Unification Church can agree to walk hand in hand, but I do not want to be identified with that so called Christianity!

Answer:

I think if you were to know Unification Church members, you would find the highest moral standard, as is absolutely necessary for a religious person and especially for anyone who seeks to model his life after Christ. I just wonder, are you ready to go to the cross for all those reprobates you intend for all Christians to shun. Jesus never judged anyone he wasn't also ready to go to the cross for. . .

“ . . . and it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house,

*behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” **Matthew 9:11–13.***

These are the main hurdles for Christians in understanding the Resurrection. Your special preparation will benefit them immensely.

Because of the fall of the first human ancestors, all parents and all things pertaining to them are as if they did not exist. It is as if they died. They lost their lives. To make them live again, to resurrect them, is much more difficult than starting the creation all over again. Re-creating is that difficult. It is nearly impossible. Those who have been given birth already must go back to their mother’s womb and be born again, literally. This is extremely, extremely difficult. The realm of resurrection is not just one entity, but it involves the whole environment as well as the people living there.

*It is not just individuals who are dead and need to go back to their mother’s womb to be born again as living being. The whole family, the country, and all things in the world must do this, too. The realm of resurrection includes all things in the world. **Rev. Sun Myung Moon***