

A REWARD OF IMMENSE VALUE

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The Greatest Career Opportunity of All Time — For You!

(Anthony Buzzard)

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this work is to encourage people, such as most of us practical Czechs, to want to seek, and ultimately find, the most valuable reward that can exist.

We can learn about the most valuable reward from the most widely read book, the Bible. Before you dismiss this book because of its association with churches, you should know that it was not written by religious nutters; its contents were written by practical people from all levels of the social ladder, and its words are addressed mainly to ordinary people. The first Christians were mostly people engaged in the most common occupations. If you don't know anything about the Bible, this may be a good prerequisite for understanding it. The writer of these lines was also such a person.

The word **reward**, by definition, contains two factors: (1) the **person** offering the reward, and (2) the **condition** for receiving the reward

The rewarder is the Creator of all, God, as the **Bible** defines Him. "Give me a break with religion", you may be thinking as an ordinary person, "I have more practical things to do than to pursue useless things".

But you might overlook the value of the reward, to receive it is to receive **immortality** in a new body! Not just in a new body, but in the new conditions that will prevail here **on Earth**. Almost all churches that claim the Bible tell us nothing about all this.

It may surprise you to learn that the conditions necessary for understanding are (1) common **sense** (2) unquestionable **evidence**.

Who's offering the reward?

As already stated, the Creator of everything. Very simply, Scripture offers us proof:

*For every house is built by someone, but the **builder** of all things is **God**.. (Hebrews 3:4)*

Today it is widely known that every living cell is much, much more complex than any house, its complexity is likened to a city. The construction of a house, even before it begins, requires a plan, a project, only then to gather materials and craftsmen. And what about the city project?

But didn't **evolution**, which we constantly hear and read about in schools and science programmes, "arrange" everything?

The theory of evolution is yet promoted by qualified scientists! But has any solid proof been found that complex structures arise from simple things by a multitude of accidents?

In the 165 years since the publication of Darwin's theory, the world has changed very, very much, and the scientific method has laid the foundation for the world we know today. What did Darwin know about cells, biochemistry, thermodynamics, information theory, the structure of matter, ecology, cybernetics, etc.? The evidence for evolution is nowhere to be found. The purpose of this paper is not to argue about theories, it is for the common man to get a clear vision of the promised reward.

What's the reward

... in the hope of the [everlasting life] Life of the Age to Come, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the ages began. (Titus 1:2; OGF)

The reward is eternal life, or rather the life of the next age. What this actually means is the subject of the presented articles. They are so arranged that one can grasp the meaning of the promised reward without prejudice. For the sake of clarity even for the layman, the articles are short, yet contain the full content of the important texts of the Bible. The author strives for a simple interpretation, far removed from the disputes of theologians and philosophers.

The Bible certainly does not support the idea of an immortal soul going to heaven or hell at death. Complete laymen have an advantage, their minds are not burdened with terms that actually have no practical meaning.

Readers coming from a church background have to reckon that the content of the articles does not confirm the doctrines of their church, and so they are faced with a difficult but fully fundamental question: what is truth? The **text** of Scripture they believe to be the Word of God, or the **doctrines** of my church. Or, **who do I believe**, the reward giver, God, or the leaders of my church who will not provide the reward?

However, the conclusions about the presented material are up to you, to everyone. The author's intention is only to arouse interest in a clearly defined reward. The author's wish, of course, is that he succeeds in arousing your interest. If you wish to further develop your interest in the reward, I refer you to the text of the Bible, and to [Focus on the Kingdom – Preaching](#)

[the Gospel of the Kingdom](#) There are very carefully crafted documents that support and further develop the material outlined.

May reading the articles have a good effect on you. At least be informed about things you might not have thought of.

Historical fact

A man who was put to death by the Roman authorities about A.D. 34 was buried, and on the third day afterwards appeared alive; this is a unique event, never before or since. That is why many people have thought, and seem to think, that such a thing is impossible, speculating on various ways of "explaining" it, based on ideas prevalent in their own time and on their own experiences, which are of a very different kind. But this approach misses the real meaning of the event in question.

It is worth remembering that this event, though unbelievable, did happen, as eyewitnesses to the event testify, and they either wrote it down themselves, Matthew, Mark, John, Peter and Paul, or gave the details to the writers of Luke's writings, the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. It is so important that it has been preserved for almost two thousand years and is available to us thanks to the dedicated efforts of generations of copyists. No other event in pre-modern history is so accurately and so many times preserved in written sources.

That you don't know about it, even though you went to school? It's a mystery: why is a description of the most reliably documented event with immeasurable consequences for each of us not part of the school syllabus, even though Greek myths, for example, are?

Fortunately, there is no need to be dragged along by the opinions of various contemporary writers when you can just read the contents of the surviving reports directly and make your own judgement. There are not nearly as many of these reports as there are articles today to give us the "right" perspective. Most of the surviving transcript is contained in this short article, and those reports are quoted here.

The oldest document

Today it is an accepted fact among experts that the description of the event, taken closest to the time it happened, was provided by the apostle Paul:

For among matters of first importance, I delivered to you what I also received: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that he was buried and that he was **raised** on the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that he **appeared** to Peter, then to the twelve. After that he **appeared** to over 500 brothers and sisters at once, most of whom are still alive now, though some have fallen asleep in death. Then he **appeared** to James, and then to all the Apostles. And last of all, as though to a child born at the wrong time, he **appeared** to me also. (1 Cor 15:3-8)

At the time Paul described the matter, most of the witnesses to the appearance of the Messiah were still alive. Any one of them could have denied the thing. Paul knew full well what he was writing about, and he goes on to describe the mechanism of how such a thing happened.

What actually happened then?

We will now focus on the manner of that revelation. The description in the Gospels of Luke and John is detailed enough so that we can imagine how Jesus met with the disciples after his resurrection.

On Sunday

But Mary stood outside facing the tomb, weeping ... she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Thinking that he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have removed him, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" Turning, she said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni," which means "teacher." ... Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the lord!" And she told them what he had said to her. In the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together with the doors locked because of their fear of the Jewish leaders. Then Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" With these words, Jesus showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with

joy when they saw the lord. (John 20:11, 14-16, 18-20)

That same day two of the disciples were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were discussing with each other everything that had happened. As they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came up and began walking together with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" They stopped in their tracks, their faces sad. One of them, named Cleopas, answered, "Are you just a visitor to Jerusalem? You must be the only person not to know what has happened there lately." ... As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him, "Please stay with us, because it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he sat down to eat with them, he took the bread and blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. At that point their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Then he vanished ... they got up that very hour and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and the others gathered together. They were saying, "The lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two disciples related what had happened on the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread. While they were telling these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said, "Peace to you." Startled and afraid, they thought they were seeing a spirit. "Why are you afraid, and why do you doubt?" he asked them. "Look at my hands and my feet; you can see it is I myself. Touch me and look, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. Since they still could not believe because of their joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of cooked fish, which he took and ate in front of them. (Luke 24: 13-18, 28-31, 33-43)

But one of the twelve, Thomas (called the twin), was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples kept telling him, "We have seen the lord." But Thomas said to them, "If I do not see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger into the nail marks, and put my hands into his side, I will never believe it!" (John 20:24-25)

After eight days

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them

and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your fingers here and inspect my hands. Extend your hand and put it into my side. Stop being an unbeliever, and believe." (John 20:26-27)

Then Jesus appeared again

to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (see John 21) and elsewhere (**almost 6 weeks in total**):

To them also he showed himself to be alive, after he suffered, by many convincing proofs. *Over a period of forty days he was seen by them*, and he spoke to them about the Kingdom of God. While he was meeting with them he commanded, "Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for what the Father promised, which you heard about from me ... When he had said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud caused him to disappear from their sight. 10 While they were looking intently into the sky as he went up, suddenly two men in white clothes stood next to them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing gazing into the sky? This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come back in just the same way as you saw him going into heaven." (Acts 1:3, 4, 9-11)

Paul meets Jesus for the first time

about 3 years after Jesus was taken up to heaven, an experience vividly described in the first part of Acts 9.

Trustworthy report

This event is so unusual that even those closest to Jesus did not believe it at first. And he himself had told them several times beforehand that it would happen:

"Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and religious teachers, and they will condemn him to death. They will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock and flog and crucify him. But on the third day he will be raised from the dead." (Matt 20:18, 19; also 16:21; 17:9, 23; Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10: 33-35; Luke 9:22)

The disciples' reaction to the news of Jesus alive again:

They returned from the tomb and reported everything to the eleven and all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told the Apostles what had happened. But it seemed like nonsense to them, and the Apostles would not believe them. (Luke 24:9-11)

The author of a substantial part of the record was the

physician Lukáš. He describes how he compiled his reports:

Many have taken in hand to write up a narrative of the events which have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the the Gospel-Word. In view of this fact, since I have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also thought it would be good to write out a clear account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the absolute truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

Conclusion

What can modern critics object to the veracity of the

How did this happen?

Jesus was raised from death to life, which was confirmed by many witnesses who knew Jesus well before he was executed and saw him for three days or more, up to 40 days. But how did this happen? No one saw it directly.

This fact has become a field for all sorts of speculation in later times, but the most authoritative teachers are those who were closest to it. The resurrection of Jesus produced some very unusual effects, which will be discussed another time; these aroused the attention of a multitude of people about 50 days after the resurrection. In a lengthy speech, the apostle Peter explained what had happened. From his speech I take two excerpts concerning the problem we are dealing with.

“People of Judea and all of you living in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and pay attention to my words... People of Israel, listen to my words: Jesus from Nazareth, a man fully accredited to you by God by the miracles, wonders and signs that God did through him among you, as you well know — this man was delivered up by the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God, and using godless men, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. But **God raised him up**, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in death’s grip... (David) foreseeing this he spoke about the resurrection of the Messiah: that he was not abandoned to the grave nor did his body decay. This Jesus, **God resurrected**, and we are all witnesses of that fact. (Acts 2:14, 22-24, 31, 32)

There can be no mistake, Jesus did not wake up on his own, someone else, God, raised him up. It must be remembered here that both Peter and the apostles and the listeners were Jews, they knew their God, Yah-

reports described or told by eyewitnesses of the event? Nothing, and yet they argue, do they know more than the people of the time? Where did they get that information?

From these descriptions, it is clear how these people encountered the risen Jesus. It was not in a dream or vision as a result of drug ingestion or some kind of religious rapture. It was an unusual experience, but one lived in full consciousness, even in front of a crowd of people.

How the resurrection took place and in what body Jesus appeared after his resurrection will be the subject of the next articles in this series..

weh. In his speech, Peter referred to the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament. Those people understood it that way and then acted in accordance with their understanding.

They certainly did not conceive of God as a trinity, nor that Jesus was fully God and fully man, as required by the trinitarian creeds held by believers of most churches claiming to Jesus Christ.

A few years later, the apostle Paul, a learned former Pharisee and Roman citizen, explained the process of the resurrection. His explanation is contained in chapter 15 of his first letter to the Christians in Corinth. Again, I will only quote excerpts that serve to understand.

But someone will say, "**How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have?**" You foolish person! What you sow does not sprout into life unless it dies. And when you sow, you do not sow the plant it will grow into, just the bare seed, whether wheat or something else. But **God gives it a body as He has planned**, and each kind of seed grows into a different plant. All bodies are not the same, but humans have one kind of body, animals another, birds another, and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, and the brightness of the heavenly bodies differs from that of the earthly bodies ... So it is with the resurrection of the dead. **The body is sown mortal; it is resurrected immortal**. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in honor and glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:35-40, 42-44a)

Here the future resurrection is spoken of, just as Jesus was resurrected: the mortal body was buried, the im-

mortal was raised. God gave it to him. And Paul considers that proof enough. Speaking before the Athenian philosophers, he ended his speech by saying:

So then God has overlooked the times of ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice through a **man** He has appointed, and He **gave proof of this to everyone by resurrecting him from the dead.**" (Acts 17:30-31)

God, in the resurrection of Jesus, provided proof of His power and His purpose. Some people accept the existence of a Creator, but that's the end of it; yes, once upon a time God created the universe, including life, things just go on by themselves, he no longer cares about his creation, just the Great Clockmaker.

The resurrection of Jesus proves that God is different, that he cares about his creation, that he continues the acts of creation. It's crucial evidence for whom? He provided proof for everyone. It is up to each of us, do we accept this as evidence of God's activity-or do we ignore it or outright reject it?

" God ... gives a body ..."

Simple explanation. It is the expressed simplicity that does not satisfy most people. Whether they claim to be believers or non-believers, atheists or agnostics, appealing to "scientific thinking". In both cases, however, it is the same thing.

Those believers accept the "scientific thought" of the 1st to 3rd centuries, when the scholars of that time were carried away by the pronouncements of the authorities of their time, the Greek philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle. It is well known today that their speculated views do not correspond to the confirmed findings of. The ancient authorities were wrong, their theories are far from having anything to do with modern physics, chemistry, biology, biochemistry, etc.

Today, a person who does not believe in the theory of evolution is considered limited, uneducated. The proponents of scientific thinking miss the fact that the foundations of the "scientific method" were laid 300 years before Darwin, that Isaac Newton, for example, considered one of the greatest scientists of all time, was equally careful about physics and the Bible. And Darwin, acknowledged as the founder of the theory of evolution, had no idea of today's knowledge of genetics, cybernetics, quantum physics, thermodynamics

or biochemistry. Yet he is smugly regarded as an authority.

The apostle Paul was not influenced by the aforementioned prejudices, as an educated Jew and then an apostle of Jesus he was convinced that every-thing around us and we ourselves are the result of the creative activity of the Supreme, Almighty God. *God then gives him a body as he wills, to each of the seeds his own body. There is no body like a body. There is one human body, another animal body, another bird body, and another fish body.*

He did not have to invent anything, for in the beginning God gave bodies to all creatures as He willed..

And God said: "Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth in the firmament of heaven." God created the great water animals and all the nimble creatures of every kind with which the water teems, and all the winged creatures of every kind. ... And God said: "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: tame animals, small animals, and wild beasts of every kind." And it was so. God made all kinds of wild animals and tame animals and all the small animals of the earth. And God saw that it was good. And God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the tame animals, and over all the earth, and over every small animal that moves upon the earth." God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; he created them male and female. (Genesis 1:20-27)

Too easy? But there is no better explanation, even small children can understand it when they see their mother kneading the dough and then shaping it into bread, cakes or dumplings, giving the dough the shape she wants.

Conclusion

How is it that a dead man appeared alive on the 3rd day after death and then was still available for more than 5 weeks? God gave him a body as he wanted. The disciples then saw him in a different body than the body they knew him in. He didn't wake up, he didn't wake up on his own..

To infer this simple message - not to confuse it with the ideas of ancient philosophers, because of which these simple things are overlooked and several verses of Scripture are twisted so that the meanings of words

are taken out of context and shifted - means, for example, that Jesus did not return to the body he supposedly had a millennium before he was born to the Virgin Mary. In particular, it means acknowledging everything beyond the power and ability of God, the Creator

The foundation of our hope

The news that the dead man, Jesus, was alive again was delivered to us by witnesses to that incredible event and by careful copyists over the millennia. Is it just an interesting report like the thousands we get today? No, no, the truth can transform our lives if we realize in our hearts its value.

This is what befell the herald of this message, the Apostle Paul. He took great effort to make its contents known to as many people as possible. In 50 A.D., he arrived in Athens, the seat of learning at that time.

Some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also were conversing with him. Some of them said, "What is this ignorant show-off trying to say?" Others said, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods," because Paul was preaching **Jesus and the resurrection**.

So they brought him to the Areopagus and said, "May we know what this new teaching of yours is? For you are bringing some astonishing things to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." All the Athenians and foreigners living there used to spend all their time either telling or hearing some new thing. So Paul stood up in the middle of the Areopagus and said,

"People of Athens, I see that you are very religious in all ways. For as I was walking around and looking at the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: 'To an Unknown God.' So then what you unknowingly worship, I am announcing to you: The God who made the world and everything in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made with hands. And He is not served by human hands as if He needed anything, since He Himself gives to everyone life and breath and all things. He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the whole earth, having set their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. God wanted people to seek Him, if perhaps they might reach out for Him and find Him — though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live, move, and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are all his children.' So since we are the children of God, we should not think that the Deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image designed by the skill and creativity of humans. So then **God** has overlooked the times of ignorance, but now He commands all people every-

Yes, the resurrected Jesus was a new creation, nothing less than a **New Creation** began with this creaturely act. If we believe this, we too can become part of the New Creation, when **the mortal body is buried, the immortal body is resurrected**.

where to repent, because He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice through a man He has appointed, and He **gave proof** of this to everyone by **resurrecting him from the dead.**" (Acts 17:18-31)

How did the audience react?

When they heard about the resurrection from the dead, some ridiculed him, but others said, "We want to hear more from you about this." So Paul left the Areopagus. But some people joined him and became believers (v. 32-34)

Only some believed

No applause, only ridicule and embarrassment, only some believed, while the audience was trained in the most respected philosophical systems of the time; the Epicureans and the Stoics.

Everywhere else Paul preached it was similar, only some believed. Isn't it very similar today?

Even the members of the churches that Paul himself founded found it difficult to understand. The content of chapter 15 of his first letter to the Corinthian congregation deals with a detailed description of the resurrection. The impetus for this chapter:

Now if it is preached that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, how are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? (v.12)

Our hope

In verse 32b, Paul succinctly summarizes the basis for our hope:

If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, because tomorrow we die"!

Here Paul presents a dilemma, two options (1) die and then nothing (2) die and be resurrected ...

[1] We die - what does that mean?

At the time Paul wrote his letters, only the writings we now call the Old Testament existed. They give us a clear testimony of the state of man after death.

For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the

other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.. (Ecl 3:19, 20)

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going. (9:10)

The end of life is the same for animals and humans, a change into earthly dirt or dust. No afterlife, no consciousness, no ingenuity, no art, no wisdom. After death, no heaven or hell or even purgatory, only the grave, no consciousness. That is what our experience tells us, which is why many people laugh at the idea of life after death and try to enjoy life as it is now. Not a few people take comfort in the idea of life after death and point out: the spirits of the dead, isn't that clear evidence? Paul did not admit this possibility; as a native Jew, he knew the Law given to his nation, delivered from Egyptian bondage by God:

Let there not be found among you one who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, nor an oracle-bearer, nor a snake charmer, nor one who interprets omens, nor a sorcerer, nor a conjurer, nor **one who inquires into the spirit of the dead**, nor a soothsayer, nor **one who questions the dead**. For anyone who does such things is an abomination to Yahweh. Because of these abominations, Yahweh your God will cast them out before you. (Deuteronomium 18:10-12)

The summoning of the spirits of the dead was then, around 1500 B.C., widespread in various nations, and has not ceased even today. Who is behind these "spirits of the dead" is probably of interest to many, but in any case, the command was for a good reason - to avoid the influence of evil spirit beings posing as spirits of the dead.

[2] We will be resurrected - when

But there is comfort for the disciples of Jesus, as Paul wrote in one of his first letters:

We do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you will not grieve like others who have no hope. Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God **will bring with Jesus**, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. (1 Tes 4:13, 14)

He echoes the same view in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23:

But now Messiah has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep in death. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a human being. For

just as in Adam all die, so in the Messiah all will be made alive. But each in his own order: **Messiah** the first fruits, then those who belong to Messiah **at his coming**.

The resurrection of *all* the faithful will take place at his coming, the coming of Jesus. His disciples last saw him like this:

When he had said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud caused him to disappear from their sight. While they were looking intently into the sky as he went up, suddenly two men in white clothes stood next to them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing gazing into the sky? This same **Jesus** who was taken up from you into heaven **will come back** in just the same way as you saw him going into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11)

The Apostle Peter confirmed that Jesus would return, God would send him to earth, why:

and that He [God] **will send Jesus**, the Messiah appointed for you. He must remain in heaven until the time for the restoration of all things, which God announced from long ago through His holy prophets. (Acts 3:20-21)

Jesus will return, thus beginning the time of the restoration of all things; as already stated, at the very beginning there will be a resurrection of the faithful, and they will then work with him to restore all things here on earth, to restore the earthly paradise and spread it throughout the planet.

Conclusion

Which of the two options is better for us? To live in the here and now, enjoying the pleasure as the Epicureans hoped? To live virtuously, to be above it all, as the Stoics tried to do?

Even today, when we are much better off compared to previous generations, it is not attractive to realize the finitude of life; everyone tries not to see that.

The hope of the resurrection drove the apostle Paul to make an enormous effort to proclaim this possibility to as many people as possible. Why? Because he was helping people to believe that

...this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on **immortality**. When this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will happen the saying that is written: 'Death has been swallowed up by victory.' (1 Cor 15:53, 54)

Our present relatively short life, accompanied by non-powers, wars, crime, epidemics, etc., ending at a time

when we have accumulated much experience and knowledge that we have no way to use or pass on, is not at all comparable to life after this kind of resurrection that Paul promoted. Then, too, there will be

the time for the restoration of all things, which God announced from long ago through His holy prophets. (Acts 3:21)

How all this will look like in concrete terms, so that it is not just a vague hope, will be described in the next article.

What was and will be the new body?

Isn't the question just an intellectual toy? It may seem so, but as we shall see, to answer it is to have a hope of resurrection that is quite concrete and therefore very impressive.

The basis for understanding is Paul's detailed description of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.:

But some will say, 'How are the dead raised?' 'In what body shall they come?' ...But God gives him a body as he wills. (v. 35, 38)

The detailed description is based on the contrasts of the body buried and the body resurrected:

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown mortal; it is resurrected immortal. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in honor and 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 ... The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is of heaven. As is the one made from dust, so also are those made from dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. (v. 42-44, 47-49)

Paul in 1. Corinthians 15 contrasted the body we leave and the body we receive:

It is sown	It is raised
in corruptibility	in incorruptibility
in disgrace	in glory
in weakness	in power
natural	spiritual
from the dust, from the earth	from the sky
earthly	heavenly
mortal	immortal

Heavenly body

If we are to understand this correctly, we must resist the pagan or Greek ideas of "the world up there"; even in our country, where the inhabitants are mostly non-religious, we must not succumb to our preconceived notions of heaven. When a celebrity dies, on Czech television, which is a public service, regardless of re-

ligion, a dove flies upwards; a dove equals a soul. During Christmas stories on TV we "spend several hours in heaven", because one well-known producer has an exact idea of heaven, which was handed down to him by his grandmother!!!

This popular conception has infiltrated churches that claim to profess Christ Jesus, Christian.

The worst impact of these beliefs means that believers have absolutely no understanding of why to strive for "godly" deeds, nor which ones they are. The apostles had a clear reward before them, to receive at the resurrection the same body that Jesus received.

Origin of the body

If we compare the pair earthly vs. heavenly, we come to a simple conclusion: the words denote the origin of the two bodies.

A body from the ground

Our forefather Adam: *Yahweh God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* (Genesis 2:7) *And He said to Adam: Because you have obeyed your wife, and have eaten of the tree...In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the dust of the earth, for you were taken out of it. You are dust, and to dust you shall return..* (Genesis 3:17-19) And we experience this way of life every.

A body from heaven

Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights,, ... (James 1:17)

The Bible is not an astronomical handbook; it describes hidden facts in plain language that even ordinary people can understand. Good things come from heaven, from God.

The heavens, the heavens belong to Yahweh, but the earth he has given to the children of men. (Psalm 115: 16)

What then of the heavenly man, or the man from heaven?

The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is of heaven. As is the one made from dust, so also are those made from dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.. (1 Cor 15:47-49)

The heavenly body was a sovereignly good gift to Jesus from the Father, at the resurrection, not before.

Eyewitnesses of the new body of Jesus

In that body he met with eyewitnesses, some of the characteristics of that body are evident from the description of those encounters.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Thinking that he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have removed him, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" Turning, she said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni," which means "teacher". (John 20:15, 16)

Jesus himself came up and began walking together with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him...he took the bread and blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. At that point their eyes were opened and they recognized him. (Luke 24:15, 16, 30, 31)

While they were telling these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said, "Peace to you." Startled and afraid, they thought they were seeing a spirit. "Why are you afraid, and why do you doubt?" he asked them. "Look at my hands and my feet; you can see it is I myself. Touch me and look, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." (Luke 24:36-39)

he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of cooked fish, which he took and ate in front of them. (Luke 24:41-43)

Jesus couldn't pick up a new body in heaven

The great majority of the described experiences took place during Sunday, early in the morning Mary Magdalene saw him and then the others. Since Jesus' dead body was buried on Friday, he was dead from the moment of death until Sunday morning..

This means, of course, that no part of him was alive, for

there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going. (Eccl 9:10)

Without external intervention, it could not have come to life on its own, as most theologians speculate. An important witness, the apostle Peter, did publicly announce

God raised this Jesus; we are all witnesses to it. (Acts 2:32)

Then he was made alive by the power of the Creator, that is, from heaven, whence he received a new body, heavenly, immortal. He could not have gone to heaven to get it himself, for he was dead. What would those who were right there when it happened have seen? The Apostle Paul mentions the process of such a transfiguration

we will all be changed, in a moment, in the blink of an eye (1 Cor 15:51c, 52a)

Within an eyeblink, apparently not only did the dead body disappear, but the living Jesus appeared in a new body, a new body and psyche, as we would say today, of the same Jesus.

There was simply no time for a trip to heaven, within moments there was an intervention, a creative intervention from heaven, from God, the first instance of a *new creation*.

In that body, he met with people here on earth for almost 6 weeks. Then he was taken up to heaven, the characteristics of his new body allowed him to do so; the report of his going to heaven was given especially by Luke, even twice. From there he will return to set all things right, taking dominion over the earth with his resurrected disciples.

Conclusion

At the resurrection, Jesus received a body not from earth but from heaven. He got it, God gives the body He wants, He gave it to Jesus as the first resurrected man, he became a man from heaven, with a heavenly body, with an immortal body, he cannot die anymore. An immeasurably precious gift.

This is our confirmed hope, proven and demonstrated:

He [God] has set a day when He will judge the world with justice through a man He has appointed, and He **gave proof** of this to everyone by **resurrecting him from the dead**. (Acts 17:31)

For a long time I was convinced that a heavenly body meant *life in heaven* after the resurrection, a vague idea; a fog. That idea is believed by almost all who confess Jesus as their Lord. It is difficult, almost impossible, to give up that idea, for it has been drum-

ed into the heads by almost all religious leaders for some 1900 years. But as far as I've noticed, almost no one looks forward to their "reward" in heaven and tries to make the most of life on earth

The significance of the resurrection of Jesus

Jesus of Nazareth operated for over 3 years in and around the present-day State of Israel as an itinerant teacher from about 30 to 34 AD. He was finally unjustly condemned to a cruel death by crucifixion by Roman soldiers, members of the local garrison in Jerusalem, since this territory was a protectorate of Rome. On the third day after his death, he appeared alive, but in a new body, so that many people who had known him personally for years did not immediately recognize him when they met him.

Today, more than 2 billion people around the planet claim his name. Even in our country, which is one of the most atheistic countries, we can encounter Christian artefacts; for our people, the most common is the cross on which a dying man, supposedly Jesus, is nailed. The common Czech or Moravian is most influenced by it at Christmas, when the birth of a small child, supposedly the baby Jesus, is depicted, and by the most watched TV programmes at that time, fairy tales on the theme of heaven and saints. At Christmas, baby Jesus brings presents even in families that are not interested in any form of "Christianity".

Generally, the most common symbols of Jesus are the "little Jesus" and "Jesus on the cross". This is in stark contrast to who Jesus was and is today. He was a little baby for a few months at most and hung on the executioner's instrument for a little over six hours. His death is very important, but why, it does not tell Christians today much, he died for our sins, but why and for what, perhaps the clergy of the Church will tell you something about that, otherwise probably no one. The content of his message, which he preached for over three years, is hardly known at all, and the hope derived from his resurrection is lost.

By the resurrection of Jesus, God confirmed the truth of his teaching

No other teacher of any religion has anywhere near that kind of confirmation, they are all dead, completely dead. Visitors to funeral services may hear of the dead going to heaven, but there is not a shred of evidence that this is happening. Jesus was taken into the heaven-

Having understood that immortal life in a heavenly body is meant *for earth*, I can imagine the restored earth well enough; this clear perspective has given me joy and new energy to share this bright hope with others.

ly realm in front of many witnesses, as foretold in Psalm 110:

Yahweh says to my lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool for your feet.

Jehovah or Yahweh is the name of God occurring almost 6,000 times in the Old Testament, in Czech translations replaced by the name Hospodin.

Jesus is waiting at God's right hand for the moment when his enemies will be trampled, where do we belong? It will happen just as surely as the resurrection of Jesus did. That it's been going on for almost 2,000 years? That doesn't mean it won't happen. But in that time, maybe 200 generations of people have died? They're no longer affected?

Don't marvel at this, for the hour comes, in which all that are in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come out; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28, 29)

Jesus taught this too, and God accepted the challenge as true. Isn't that contrary to all our experience? It's just going to happen, it's hard to believe, but when it does, who's to say they're not ready, after all this challenge has been around for almost 2,000 years. Has there been little time to react?

Jesus based himself on the Old Testament

Jesus replied, "Have you not read that He who created man at the beginning made them male and female? God said, 'This is the reason why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two become one flesh.' ..." (Matt 19:4, 5)

Here, Jesus turns to the creation account in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 as he addresses the relationship between man and woman. For him, the creation account is certainly not a myth that needs to be explained by the "scientific knowledge" of the time.

Jesus said to them, "Does this not prove you are mistaken, and do not understand the Scriptures nor the power of God? ... But about the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in Moses' writings, how God spoke to him at the bush, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the

God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!" (Mark 12:24, 26-27)

Here Jesus is quoting Exodus 3:6, 15, where the scene is God sending Moses to Egypt to begin the work of freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He considers the event to be quite real, although not only archaeologists today, with some exceptions, but even clerics deny that such a thing happened.

So when you see standing in the holy place the 'Abomination of Desolation' predicted by the prophet Daniel (whoever reads this should think about it carefully), then those living in Judea should run away to the mountains (Matt 24:15, 16)

A few days before his death, Jesus described a series of events that would occur just before his second coming, Advent, to establish the kingdom of God on earth and to call his disciples to action. In doing so, he referred to another part of the Old Testament, the prophecies of Daniel. The event described has not yet occurred, but it will certainly happen.

When God resurrected Jesus, He uniquely confirmed his teachings and therefore the truth of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures. What carries more weight in terms of veracity, the modern downplaying of the Old Testament by modern scholars in various fields who rely solely on fictional theories, or confirmation from the Creator Himself?

Jesus Preached the Kingdom of God

His teaching work began like this:

... Jesus went to Galilee, preaching God's Gospel. "The time is fulfilled," he said. "The *Kingdom of God* is near. Repent and *believe in that Gospel*." (Mark 1:14, 15)

Even after his resurrection, he continued to teach, emphasizing the same:

To them also he showed himself to be alive, after he suffered, by many convincing proofs. Over a period of forty days he was seen by them, and he spoke to them about the *Kingdom of God*. (Acts 1:3)

Jesus was emphasizing the importance of the kingdom of God when he included it as one point of the famous prayer.

one of his disciples said to him, "lord, teach us to pray" ... So Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say, 'Father, ... May Your Kingdom come...' (Luke 11:1-4)

This prayer is repeated by perhaps a billion people a day, without those people understanding what the re-

quest for the coming of the kingdom of God means; his listeners at the time, people who knew the Old Testament, understood it well.

Witnesses of the New Creation

The creation of the universe, the earth, and life was not known to any human being, but the results of the creation of the first human immortal body, that of Jesus, were seen by hundreds of people. Thus, there is a record of eyewitness reports; there were no human witnesses to the creation recorded in the book of Genesis.

God cares

The image of the watchmaker - the creator of nature: if we found an object such as a watch on the moor, we would be compelled - even if we did not know how it came into being - by its precision and delicacy to conclude "that it must have had a creator, that at a certain time and in a certain place there must have been a subtle mechanic ... whom, as we find, it now serves, and who understood its construction and planned its use. But every indication of any planning ... which is to be found in watches, exists also in the creations of nature; only, of course, with the difference that in nature they are larger or more numerous, and on a scale which exceeds all estimates." This is just a small excerpt from William Paley's famous 1802 book *Natural Theology*.

The universe and life function as the product of a skilful Creator. But what about all the bad things that befall us? God created everything, humans have been given reasoning abilities and some freedom of action, and that's enough. Everything else is up to them. The bad to evil things show that the Creator is finished and no longer cares about the world. I have encountered this view among very intelligent people

But the resurrection of Jesus shows that the Creator, God, is continuing according to His plan; a human body has appeared with new, previously unknown properties, immortal. And in the future, according to His promise, faithful disciples of the one who already has that body will receive it too.

The significance of Jesus' death

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them. "Drink from it, all of you," he said to them. "This is my blood which ratifies the covenant, poured out for many *for the forgiveness of sins*." (Matt 26:27, 28)

These words were spoken by Jesus at His Last Supper.

For most ordinary people today, they sound incomprehensible: forgiveness of sins? A new covenant? This aspect of Jesus' life has been strongly emphasized among members of Christian churches, but is little understood by most.

To explain them, however, requires a great deal of space and goes beyond the intent of this series of articles. They are fundamental, and the resurrection of Jesus confirms their importance.

A reward for what?

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because the one who comes to **God** must believe that He exists and that He **rewards** those who seek Him.. (Heb 11:6)

As already mentioned, Jesus received a new body at the resurrection, a body unknown until then, a spiritual body, in which he met with his faithful for almost six weeks. This was a very precious gift, for the body is immortal. The Bible shows that it was a reward for obedience:

he humbled himself by **becoming obedient** to the point of death — even to death on a cross. **For this reason God exalted** him to the highest position and gave him the authority above every authority, (Phil 2:8, 9)

Obedience - what kind?

Obedience is not exactly a quality we desire, especially in these competitive times. As the experience of totalitarian regimes after the First World War showed, the worst mass crimes were committed by people who obediently followed the instructions of their superiors. This obedience was largely enforced by the unlimited power of the dictators, as well as by the omnipresent surveillance through the secret services

Considering the power and oversight that an all-powerful, all-knowing God can exercise, and yet demand obedience unto death for the sake of reward, isn't such obedience something more frightening than appealing? We can understand what kind of obedience is involved by comparing the behavior of two people:

Just as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners, in the same way through one man's obedience many will be made right. (Rom 5:19)

We learn who it is directly from that chapter, which describes in detail how the resurrection occurs.

Conclusion

A proper understanding of the event of Jesus' resurrection is a **solid foundation** for our confidence in the future change, the renewal of creation, and our new life to come here on earth, not in heaven.

To realise the value of the resurrection is to see a coherent, undivided picture. A real, almost tangible **hope of reward** for us emerges..

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because the one who comes to **God** must believe that He exists and that He **rewards** those who seek Him. (Heb 11:6)

For just as in Adam all die, so in the Messiah all will be made alive. (1 Cor 15:22)

Disobedience of Adam - the first man

The existence of the first people, environment and activities promised a pleasant life, as described in the first chapters of the Bible

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, ... God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he them male and female. (Genesis 1:26, 27) ... And Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden in the east and placed there the man whom He had created. Yahweh God caused to grow out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to look upon and good to eat, the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (2:8, 9) Yahweh God took a man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and guard it. And Yahweh God commanded the man: Of all the trees of the garden you may eat boldly, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (15, 16)

The only restriction, which was to prove whether the early people were grateful enough to obey *willingly*, was not to eat from a *single* tree in the garden, where "the trees were desirable to look at and good to eat"; they could also eat fruit from the "tree of life" in the middle of the garden. So the prohibition was very clear, including the penalty for violation, death. The situation was to be complicated by the entrance of another being into the scene.

The **serpent** was the cleverest of all the beasts of the field that Jehovah God had made. He said to the woman, "Truly God said: Eat not of any tree in the garden? The woman answered the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God said: Do not

eat of it, nor touch it, or you will die. The **serpent** said to the woman: Surely you will not die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. (3:1-5)

Snakes don't talk, you want to believe some fairy tales? Jesus quoted from the story, he didn't consider it a fable. What are we to think of this snake? Almost at the very end of the Bible is a glimpse into the future:

He took hold of the dragon, that ancient **serpent**, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years (Revelation 20:2)

Here is revealed the intelligent personality that was hidden behind the serpent, the Devil or Satan. How did the story turn out?

The woman saw that it was a tree good for food and appealing to the eyes, a tree desirable for gaining wisdom. She took of its fruit and ate. She also gave it to her husband who was with her, and he also ate. (3:6)

The verdict was delivered almost immediately, Adam heard:

Because you obeyed your wife and ate of the tree of which I commanded you: "Eat not of it: the ground shall be cursed for your sake: you shall eat of it with difficulty all the days of your life. And you shall eat of it all the days of your life: it shall bring forth thorns and thistles, and you shall eat the plants of the field. You shall eat bread by the sweat of your face, till you return to the ground, for you were taken out of it. Dust you are, and to dust you shall return. (3:17-19)

This story, of which only a few verses are given, explains in a few sentences the harsh reality of all our lives as Adam's descendants. It deserves close reading and reflection, but for us it is an appreciation of the obedience for which Jesus was rewarded.

God expected obedience from Adam as an expression of gratitude for all that He had given to the first humans - unending life in the conditions of the Garden of Eden, more than enough of everything, the only limitation. It certainly wasn't meant to be a mindless, forced obedience.

However, since God's adversary, Satan, entered the scene, it has become much more difficult to obey God, for the adversary is still at work today. Adam chose as his god the one he obeyed,

in their case the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that they would not see the light of the Gospel (2 Cor 4:4)

Satan is still the god of this age.

Obedience of Jesus

Jesus did not consider Satan to be our inner inclination toward evil, as contemporary psychology tries to make it. Almost as soon as he began his teaching, he had this personal experience:

The Tempter came up to him and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, then tell these stones to become bread." ...Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan! It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him alone.'" Then the Devil departed from him, (Matt 4:3, 10, 11)

In the end, he "became **obedient to the point of death.**" Knowing that his life would end in a very painful execution, he experienced what any healthy man would experience.

He left them and went about a stone's throw away, where he knelt down and prayed, "Father, if You are willing, please take this cup of suffering from me; yet not my will, but Yours be done." ... In agony, he prayed even harder, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling onto the ground (Luke 22:41-44)

He **trusted** God; when it was all over, it looks a little different; put yourself in that moment: I know that I am going to die a painful death, and yet the reward is nowhere, I **believe** it will be. Jesus certainly wasn't some visitor from outer space who put on the spacesuit of a man in which he played his part, only to depart from here into space. He was a real person, experiencing what we experience

For we do not have a high priest [Jesus after resurrection] who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been in all ways tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Heb 4:15)

Conclusion

The Bible shows that Yahweh God rewarded Jesus for his willing obedience; his motive was faith in God's promises, no matter how unpleasant the circumstances:

he humbled himself by **becoming obedient** to the point of death — even to death on a cross. **For this reason God exalted** him to the highest position and gave him the authority above every authority, (Phil 2:8, 9)

...and our reward?

It is clear from the conclusion of chapter 15 of the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth that the reward for Jesus' disciples is the same as that which he received:

As is the one made from dust, so also are those made from dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also **bear the image of the man of heaven**. (1 Cor 15:48, 49)

The first man, Adam, was created from the dust of the ground, and we are all his descendants, bearing his likeness. After the resurrection, if we are true disciples of Jesus, we will bear the image of the resurrected Jesus. And Jesus a verse earlier is described:

The first **man** [Adam] from the dust of the ground, the second **man** [Jesus] from heaven.

Jesus received his new body in the resurrection as a *reward*, he had no favoritism, though he was the human son of God, for God is his father, while his mother was a woman, Mary, human being, (Luke 1:26-35); this applies to us too, we can receive a *reward*:

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because the one who comes to **God** must believe that He exists and that He **rewards** those who seek Him.. (Heb 11:6)

The reward is from God, it comes from heaven, the reward is not going to heaven.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers and sisters. Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights ... (James 1:16, 17a)

As already stated, Jesus received a perfect gift at the resurrection, a new body, a body unknown until then, a spiritual body, in which He met with His faithful here on earth for almost six weeks. It must have been a very precious gift, for that body is immortal. The Bible shows that it was a **reward** for obedience:

he humbled himself by becoming **obedient to the point of death** — even to death on a cross. For this reason God **exalted him to the highest position** and gave him the authority above every authority, , (Phil 2:8, 9)

Our obedience

As mentioned in the previous article, the obedience was indeed *absolute*, to the point of death, but *voluntary* as an expression of gratitude. The same applies to his disciples. The reward is absolute, immortality,

becoming his disciple is not easy for the ordinary person:

He who loves father or mother above me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter above me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Matt 10:37, 38)

In the same way, you cannot be my disciple unless you give up all that you have.. (Luke 14:33)

Why such tough demands? They are necessary for the disciple to participate in the work entrusted to him. The last words of the risen Jesus include this command, the Great Commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So go and make disciples of people of all nations, baptizing them into the agenda and character of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit. **Teach them to follow all the commands I have given you**. Remember, I am always with you, to the end of the age. (Matt 28:18-20)

Becoming a teacher

When we think about this command, we realize that people who had various jobs before they decided to follow Jesus are to become teachers. It must be remembered that the first disciples of Jesus were originally simple fishermen, for example. So did they have to join the theological faculty of a university to do the work entrusted to them? No way.

For centuries, it has been assumed that a religious teacher has acquired the authority to interpret God's Word through years of study, preferably at a university theological faculty. What results did this method achieve that were so different from what Jesus assumed?

We can imagine this with a simple example. When some of his disciples asked him how to pray, he told them:

When you pray, say, 'Father, holy is Your *name*. May Your *Kingdom* come. Give us the bread we need every day. *Forgive* us our sins, as *we forgive* everyone who sins against us. And keep us from temptation.'. (Luke 11:2-4)

It seems like a simple thing to pray like this, it is repeated daily by at least a billion people living on the planet, but where is the forgiveness to be seen? Churches claiming Jesus can be said to have shed blood throughout history, both in wars and in the suppression of dissent. It seems they certainly have not been delivered from the Evil One, Satan or the Devil.

The *name* of the Father was not sanctified, it was replaced by the name of the so-called "Holy Trinity". What does "Thy kingdom come" even mean to the vast majority of those praying people? If it is thy *kingdom* of the Father, it is the kingdom of God, and if it is to come, it is the future kingdom of God. It is mentioned 31 times in Luke's Gospel alone.

To proclaim the kingdom of God

How Jesus began his teaching can be determined:

... Jesus went to Galilee, preaching God's Gospel. "The time is fulfilled," he said. "The *Kingdom of God* is near. Repent and believe in that Gospel." (Mark 1:14, 15)

And what were the last lessons he taught?

To them also he showed himself to be alive, after he suffered, by many convincing proofs. Over a period of forty days he was seen by them, and he spoke to them about the *Kingdom of God*. (Acts 1:3)

The main theme of Jesus' teaching was the kingdom of God. However, if you ask a churchgoer what the kingdom of God actually means, you usually don't get anything specific.

In our case, then, obedience means teaching everything Jesus taught, and the main focus of his teaching was the kingdom of God, what it means, and how to behave as its representatives. We must first **understand** this **ourselves** and then act accordingly.

It may seem simple to us to proclaim the kingdom of God, and it is simple, even a small child can understand it, but there is a powerful adversary, the enemy of the kingdom of God.

This is the same person who told Eve that she would be like God when she ate the fruit of the forbidden tree.

This is the same person who tried to seduce Jesus, and when that didn't work, he seduced the majority of the nation into carrying out a judicial crime, the execution of an innocent man, Jesus, in a particularly agonizing way.

His followers also have the same enemy, they must reckon with resistance even to death, as is evident, for example, from Jesus' instruction to the heralds of his teaching:

But when they persecute you in one town, flee to the next (Matt 10:23a)

Baptism in water

Before a person decides to become a disciple of Jesus, he should know what the kingdom of God is and what

it means to be a herald of it. By what act do we become recognized disciples? One example from the early days of that proclamation tells us:

But when they believed Philip as he was heralding the Gospel about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus the Messiah, they were being **baptized**, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)

How such a baptism is to be performed can be seen from another story in the same chapter:

As they went along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is preventing me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and Philip baptized him (Acts 8:36, 38)

Baptism was and is to be performed in water by immersion, as other verses describing baptism state. Thus one signifies "I have become a disciple of Jesus."

But we must not overlook Jesus' warning:

Why do call me 'lord, lord,' when you refuse to do what I say? (Luke 6:46)

As noted above, there are about two billion people on earth today praying as Jesus demonstrated. However, the results of the behavior of the vast majority are not consistent with the content of prayer, nor forgiveness, nor knowledge of the kingdom of God, nor sanctification of God's name. Why? Clearly these people are not doing what Jesus said.

Conclusion

Doing what Jesus taught requires considerable effort, as he emphasized:

but small is the entrance and narrow is the way which leads to Life, and only a few find it. (Matt 7:14)

Struggle to enter through the narrow doorway, because I am telling you that many will try to go in and will not be able. (Luke 13:24)

Taking this path and persevering on it is not easy, but it is not impossible, and is it worth it for you?

This series of articles, "The Resurrection of Jesus," attempts to briefly lay out the value of the reward promised to us by the only truly reliable authority; there simply is no more reliable authority. That authority is none other than the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator, God. He has the means to do so. The apostle Paul affirms

In the hope of the Life of the Age to Come, which **God**, who **cannot lie**, promised before the ages began. (Titus 1:2)

This Age to Come will come by the supernatural overwhelming removal of 'this present evil age' (Galatians 1:4), and 'that through death he would bring to nothing the one who has the power of death, that is, the Devil, and free all those who were slaves all their lives to the fear of death.' (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

In that Age to Come, those who have believed to the God who gives the reward and have taken up the task

of teachers in today's hostile environment, and have been tested in their faith as a result, will continue to care for others who will be here on earth at that time. That reward will eventually be handed down from God with great joy:

Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is delighted to give you the Kingdom. (Luke 12:32,)

Understand the message from above

For everything that was written in the past was written for our learning, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4)

This series of articles deals with the hope of receiving the same body that Jesus received, immortal. They are supported by the message contained in the Scriptures, the Bible. However, the churches that invoke the name of Jesus, the Christian churches, present something different. How so?

The author of the quote in the introduction, the Apostle Paul, explains what Scriptures he means. *All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for exposing error, for correcting, and for training in uprightness,* (2 Tim 3:16) The only writings that were available and recognized at the time of the apostle, around 50 AD, were the books included in the collection of writings we now call the Old Testament, or more accurately the Hebrew Scriptures, whether in Hebrew or translated into Greek, the Septuagint. The part of the Bible now known as the New Testament was still in the process of being codified in the early 4th century AD.

This fact has been neglected, if not outright rejected, for millennia. Contemporary churches rely primarily on the New Testament as it has been commented on by the leaders and scholars of these churches over a very long period of time. As we know today, a set of churches claiming the name of Jesus has gradually developed whose binding articles of faith do not agree with each other. This has led throughout history to schisms, politicking, fighting, yes bloody wars to resolve these disputes. In these battles, followers of the various schools of thought have been killed or murdered.

Fortunately, today we live in a time when there is no bloodshed over disputes, but disputes over the meaning of particular verses repel practical-minded people because they do not understand what is actually the

subject of the debates. Yet the same apostle wrote at the end of his life to a close associate: *for God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a **sound mind*** (2 Tim 1:7, Young)

The variety of phenomena and activities claiming to follow Jesus Christ is astonishing: faith healing, masses, temples, incomprehensible rituals, miracles, visions, hallucinations, trances, etc. Connections to the teachings of Jesus based on a text or a few texts. Omission of reason, but feelings, emotions, obsessions. Almost nothing that could be called evidence.

The problem is approach to the Bible

1. The text of the entire Bible, both the New and Old Testaments, carries a message from the highest possible authority, God, the Creator of all things. This message was directed to a single nation, the Jews, until the early 1st century, about the year 30. And the authors of those writings were exclusively Jewish. They didn't just write whatever came to mind, but as Peter, a close disciple of Jesus, confirms, God was the real author: *Above all, know this: no prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own imagination, because no prophecy ever came from human will; instead men **led by holy spirit** spoke from God* (2 Pet 1:20, 21)

The content was intended for an ancient nation, a nation of shepherds, peasants and orchardists. It was meant to be, and was, **understandable** to those people. Therefore, they could enter into a covenant relationship with their deliverer from slavery in Egypt, Jehovah God. If they acted in accordance with their covenant obligations, they would fare well; if not, they would fare badly. How? This is described, for example, in Deuteronomy 28; only an excerpt is given:

If you indeed obey the LORD your God and are careful to observe all his commandments ... All these blessings will come to you... You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the field.... the offspring of your livestock, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your mixing bowl will be blessed...

But if you ignore the LORD your God and are not careful to keep all his commandments and statutes ... You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the field. Your basket and your mixing bowl will be cursed. Your children will be cursed, as well as the produce of your soil, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks... You will be engaged to a woman and another man will rape her. You will build a house but not live in it. You will plant a vineyard but not even begin to use it.. Your ox will be slaughtered before your very eyes but you will not eat of it....

The reward for obedience was a happy life of prosperity on earth, not going to heaven, The punishment for disobedience was a miserable life on earth, slavery, violence, no eternal torment in hellfire; real torment during life on earth.

The people of that time could understand it, and we can understand it too, who live in completely different conditions than they did, whether we are just average people or educated people. Although they understood, as a nation and as individuals they failed.

In the 1st century, John the Baptist, and Jesus in particular, began to lay the foundation for the rise of a new nation that would, in due time, take charge of the earth and bring humanity and the earth into a blessed state. How this began is described in the Gospels (gospel means good news), the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters of Jesus' disciples, which are the content of the New Testament.

The messages of both parts of the Bible tell the inconsistent story of how people began on earth and how the earth and humanity will eventually be brought to a happy state.

A different approach

2. Among the people of all nations and all times there have been those who have excelled in intelligence and have been respected as such; they have produced systematic teachings which have especially influenced the educated and ruling classes: the Greek philosophers, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Confucius, Indian thinkers, etc. From the first century onwards, the message of

the Bible was to be communicated to peoples who were under the influence of their spiritual leaders.

Until 70 AD, Jews lived mainly in Palestine, which was part of the Roman Empire, and their communities were scattered throughout the empire, especially in Alexandria, Egypt, and beyond. In this territory, Greek was widely spoken as the language of communication. For this reason, at that time, the writings of the Old Testament were available in Greek as the Septuagint.

The translators had to find a suitable Greek word for the Hebrew counterpart, but each word had a similar but often different content, as it was a transfer between very different cultures. The most famous example is the word for the place where a person ends up after death. The meaning of the Hebrew word *sheol* can be understood:

the lot of the sons of men and the lot of the beast, have the same lot... It all goes to the same place; it all comes from the dust, and it all returns to the dust...there is no work nor ingenuity nor art nor wisdom in the sheol into which you take.

This meaning should also be given to the Greek word hades, which was used in the translation. But, as we may remember from elementary school history classes when Greek mythology was discussed, Hades in Greek terms meant the world of people after death, often plagued with unbearable eternal punishments depending on how one behaved during one's earthly life. Pure horror!

Two completely different ideas: the peaceful sleep of the unconscious dead waiting to be resurrected to life on earth versus the eternal punishments of hell or "bliss" in heaven where no sane living person wants to go.

People who were subject to the ideas of the Greek myths and Greek philosophers, whom they considered to be unassailable authorities, tried to find justification for their ideas in the text of the Bible, especially in the writings of the New Testament. To achieve "harmony" they needed **shifts in the meaning of words**.

Anyone who has ever translated from English into Czech using dictionaries and grammars, for example, knows that there are almost no mutually unambiguous meanings, because each word has a number of meanings **depending on the context**. A translated sentence

can even have two completely **contradictory** meanings. It is possible to achieve the desired shift in meaning by **taking it out of context** or twisting it. The Apostle Paul therefore gave this relevant advice:

Remind the believers of these things, and solemnly charge them before God not to fight about words, which is in no way beneficial but only ruins the listeners.. (2 Tim 2:14)

Sometimes it is necessary to completely discard common sense in order to achieve "harmony". The problem of preexistence first appeared around 100 AD. The introduction is evidently attributed to Justin Martyr around 150 AD. According to the ideas of the Greek philosophers, which were supported only by speculation and mystical influences, at the creation of the world there was a Mediator of creation between God the Creator and the created world. Today no one can take these ancient ideas seriously, but then it was the basis of education. According to the views of Justin, who became a disciple of Jesus, at the same time not ceasing to admire the Greek philosopher Plato, this mediator was the cosmic Jesus, who then became incarnate in Jesus on earth. This has created

a huge problem and has been a source of controversy and theological literature for almost 2,000 years.

However, **common sense will not allow us to claim** that something or even someone already existed before its actual existence began. This is utter nonsense. At most, a plan or intention existed beforehand. For example, the beginning of the table is probably first in the mind of the carpenter, but it does not begin to exist until after many hours of his work, only then can it stand on the ground, begin to exist

Some texts of Scripture are more difficult to understand than the vast majority, but **preexistence** is by definition **impossible to accept**, and explanations must be sought in the context of whole passages, chapters perhaps even the entire content of Scripture, the understanding of which is not reserved for an elite of scholars; it is to be understood by average people, such as those who chose to obey God's commands 3½ thousand years ago.

Do we want to be like that too? It doesn't take an academic approach.

Traditional interpretations destroy understandability

Almost all of them have never thought about the doctrines presented to them by their spiritual leaders, believing them even thanks to the assurances of their scholars that the dogma is reliably supported by the text of the Bible.

The basis of the traditional view is the belief that Jesus existed as a living being before He was born on earth, as God the Son, either a member of the Trinity or God lower than the Creator, God the Father, or as the highest-ranking angel.

In order to avoid controversy, I offer just a few notes to consider that this view, though so widespread, is supported by only a few texts in the Bible, and is contrary to God's plan as we can trace it in the Bible. It certainly does not require an academic degree from a theology department of a university.

The original text of the Bible has been divided into chapters and then into verses over the last centuries (OT 1448, NT 1551) for ease of working with the text; the Old Testament has 23,214 verses, the New Testament has 7,959. In such a large work it is possible to

find ideas which, taken out of context and put together skilfully into a seemingly coherent whole, **can support perhaps any view**.

The original text was written in languages spoken and written between 1500 BC and about 200 AD. In order to translate it into modern languages, dictionaries are needed that have been created and edited over 2 millennia. Some words occur only once in the text, and explanations are sought in various sources.

The authors of the text are members of a single ethnic group, the ancient Jews, the only exception being Luke, the author of one Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. The New Testament is written in Koine Greek, different from modern Greek. Even the Old Testament was translated over time into Greek, the Septuagint. The writers, though they wrote in Greek, were trying to translate their system of thought into the most widely spoken language of their time, Greek. But the system of thought of the Greco-Roman world was miles away from the Hebrew. The differences in the two systems are still apparent today. As an example, the scholar Miles R. Jones:

In modern times, Jews have received 20% of all Nobel Prizes awarded, despite being a fraction of a percent of the world's population. In the U.S., where Jews make up 1.7% of the population, 40% of all Nobel Prizes awarded to Americans have gone to Jewish Americans.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of many scholars, we can have the text of the Bible in our own language today, no matter which of the several thousand ethnic groups living on earth today we belong to. Not all the texts are unequivocally clear, but certainly 95% of the text is pretty much the same whether we have in our hands the book produced by any church or any particular scholar. But "the devil is hidden in the details", and that detail can have dramatic consequences. The main tool for a faithful understanding of an expression is CONTEXT, the context of the sentence, the lesson being taught, the chapter in question, the particular book, and especially the **entire Bible**.

Do not overlook the context of the passage

Je vybrán jediný příklad jako ilustrace, kvůli přesnosti překladu je použit ten český nejstarší, Kralická bible.

each of you should, in **humility**, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself. Each of you should be concerned not only about your own interests, but about the interests of others as well. You should have the same attitude toward one another that **Christ Jesus** had, who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross! As a result **God exalted him** and gave him the name that is above every name (Phil 2:3b-9, NET)

The writer of the letter, the apostle Paul, here exhorts the Corinthian Christians to a humble attitude, setting as an example Jesus, who, though the expected Messiah, the King of Israel, humbled himself to the level of a common, perhaps wretched man, and for his obedience unto death received a reward from God, being exalted above all.

A small part of this passage is intended to serve as proof that the spiritual being has renounced his existence in heaven, and his humiliation is said to consist in his descent to earth in human form. If this were really the case, Paul's whole purpose in exhorting the Christians at Corinth to humility would be rendered meaningless. How can people imitate the decisions of a god

or an angel? How can they understand his thought processes? How could such a being die? How could it be elevated when it had such a position before? Would the resurrection of such a god or demigod be a hope for us, if it just returned to its original body?

The attempt to prove Jesus' preexistence relies on wordplay in verse 6: KB: *Kterýž jsa v způsobu Božím, nepoložil sobě toho za loupež rovný býti Bohu; Žilka: ačkoli měl Božskou podobu, nepokládal rovnost s Bohem za žádoucí kořist; Serebrini: ktorý súc v podobe Boha nepovažoval toho za lúpež byť rovný Bohu. Naproti tomu český studijní: Ačkoli byl ve způsobu Božím, **nelpěl na tom**, že je roven Bohu.*

This translation states in the note: **did not cling to it:** Greek: did not regard as a prey; [The word *harpagmos* can be understood in two ways: a) a prey that one already has and does not want to give up; b) that which is yet to be seized.] Two grammatically correct translations are possible: 1: he did not consider equality with God to be a desirable booty 2. equality with God he already had and did not want to give up. Here the context - the difference between Jesus and Adam, who considered equality with God to be a desirable spoil [You will be like God, you will know good and evil (Genesis 3:5b)] - will help us decide.

Common sense and context will not only help us to understand well, it will encourage us to have the right attitude through the example of the man Jesus Christ, to humble ourselves.

Conclusion of the Bible - Apostle John

John wrote his writings, the Gospel, the 3 letters and Revelation at the end of the apostolic age, the end of the divine inspiration of the Bible, the conclusion of all that had been written up to that time. They summarize, confirm.

Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, but those are not recorded in this book. The ones recorded here are to persuade and convince you to believe that the Messiah is Jesus, the **Son of God**, and by believing this you may gain Life in Jesus' name. (John 20:30, 31)

But John certainly knew the same thing about the beginning of Jesus as the physician Luke, who described it this way (Luke 1:26-38):

God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to a young virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, of the descend-

ants of David. The angel came to her house and said, "Greetings, you who are richly blessed! The Lord is with you." But Mary was...wondering what this greeting might mean. "Do not be afraid, Mary," the angel said, "because you have found grace with God. And listen: you will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great, and he will be called the Son of the Most High." Mary said to the angel, "How will this be possible since I have never been with a man?" The angel answered, "Holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason precisely the holy child to be fathered will be called the **Son of God**..." And Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me come true.

Jesus' conception, the fertilization of an egg in the body of a virgin, Mary, is described by a physician, but the method of fertilization is quite extraordinary, but who knows more about it, the Creator of life or the contemporary critics?

The main "proof points" of scholarly theologians for Jesus' preexistence are based on some of Jesus' statements in the writings of John.

There is a huge gap between how Jews and Jewish Christians understood them and how later followers of the name of Jesus, coming from a world whose thought patterns were informed by the Greek philosophy of the time, approached them. They saw in them a confirmation of the concepts of the universe as speculated by the Greek philosophers, especially Plato. Today these concepts are considered unrealistic, divorced from reality; they have persisted in the churches.

The text that seems most likely to accommodate speculation about preexistence is John 8:58:

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the solemn truth, before Abraham came into existence, I am!"¹

I've heard it many times, "it's black on white."

To understand what Jesus may have meant is to understand what he may have meant to the faithful Jews of his day. What does "*I am*" mean? It means something different to Jehovah's Witnesses than it does to Catholics, and the meaning to Jews is different from both. The key is to look up this phrase in the entire Gospel of John; it occurs a total of 8 times. We find that it al-

ways means "I am the one" you are looking for or expecting, "it is I."

Several times Jesus used this idiom instead of directly saying, I am the Messiah, I am the Son of God. He confirmed this only in his final interrogation before the supreme Jewish court, the Sanhedrin, according to Luke. 22: 70, 71:

They all said, "So are you the Son of God then?" He replied, "Yes, I am." They said, "Why do we need any more evidence from others? We have heard it for ourselves from his own mouth."

This became the basis for the sentence of death by crucifixion. When he was resurrected, when he met the disciples, he told them:

These were my words while I was still with you —that everything which is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled. (Luke 24:44)

The key to who Jesus is must be found in the Old Testament, that is, the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, not in the Greek philosophers.

Proč Jan napsal své evangelium?

The ones recorded here are to persuade and convince you to believe that the Messiah is Jesus, the **Son of God** (20:31a)

John was obviously trying to emphasize Jesus' origin, which is described in detail by Luke (see above). Jesus was begotten by a biological miracle; the Creator of life, God, became his father when he placed the necessary "seed" in an egg in a virgin by his spirit through his action at a distance.

John goes even further back in time in his emphasis on Jesus' significance - the Creator, God, was already counting, yes, looking forward to having a human son at the beginning of His work, that was the main goal of His activity:

In *the* beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. It was in *the* beginning with God. (John 1:1, 2)

The term "word" has many meanings, but none of them can be applied to a living being. Today, "word" is considered a unit of information. That information, before creation, we might today simply call a plan, an inten-

¹ NEW WORLD TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES used by Jehovah's Witnesses: *Jesus said to them: "Most truly I say to YOU, Before Abraham came into exist-*

tence, I have been." This rendering changes the actual content of the text so that it can be used to support the Watchtower doctrines.

tion, a resolution. Obviously the most important thing is described below:

Now the **word became flesh** and took up residence among us. We saw his glory — the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father. (John 1:14)

It was only in the begetting of Jesus that it was revealed that he was a major part of the plan, he didn't really exist before, he was planned. But the options for human parents to carry out their plan are much more limited.

We can zoom in on the construction of a house. First the drawings are drawn, the house already exists in advance, but only in concept. Only then do the drawings **become** the house.

This is the only way we can conceive of Jesus before his birth; he was a major part of God's plan of creation; he is therefore of great importance, and was to appear at the proper time according to the prophecies contained in the Old Testament.

This is the main idea John was trying to support when he captured the most significant miracles that God did through Jesus:

Jesus the Nazarene, a man clearly attested to you by God with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs that *God performed* among you *through him*, just as you yourselves know, (Skutky 2:22)

John also recorded conversations of Jesus in which he referred to who he was, including a statement in John 8: 58:

Jesus said to them: "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am [the one to come]."

Moreover, the context of the whole conversation of Yeshua with the Jewish listeners must be taken into account; it was very heated, concerning the problem of who is the father of the listeners and who is the father of Jesus. The end of the chapter illustrates the atmosphere:

"Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Then the Judeans replied, "You are not yet fifty years old! Have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the solemn truth, before Abraham came into existence, I am!" Then they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out from the temple area.. (John 8:56-59)

We may notice, "and did you see Abraham?" Jesus didn't say "I have seen him", he just emphasized his claim to be who he is. He already had a privileged position, his Father had granted it to him long before Abraham, in the beginning, when he decided to create.

Indeed, there is a huge gap between the meaning communicated by Jesus, and by his apostle John, and the meaning given by the people of the nations. John's writings are the culmination, the conclusion, of divine inspiration. If we do not understand all that has gone before, we cannot understand the message conveyed by John.

Conclusion

Two attempts have been made in this article to clarify the basic errors in the reasoning of those who claim that Jesus actually existed in the cosmos before He was born on earth, as detailed in Matthew and especially carefully described in Luke. In doing so, they proclaim that their position is supported by the texts of the Bible.

The number of texts needed is less than ½ % of the total of 31,173 texts. Some of them allow ambiguity, but the context will clearly show the correct meaning. The book of the Bible most suited to speculative interpretation is the Gospel of John, unless its close relationship to all other parts is deliberately ignored.

But mainly common sense is ignored - God, god or angel has become man. This is similar to the *Puss in Boots* fairy tale or the *theory of evolution*, where fish turn into birds and monkeys into humans without any problems.

The future of each of us

Is it even possible to dare to predict such a thing? Many have already failed to do so. This article is based on old prophecies, of which there are many in the Bible. But attempts to rely on the Bible have proved fruitless, sometimes ridiculous today, sometimes tragic. They have failed because they have chosen only some

of the book and neglected most of it. Here is presented an effort to avoid these errors.

On 14 May 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed. This brought to an end the 1878 years since 70 AD, when the Romans conquered Jerusalem and the Jews

were expelled from the territory where they had lived for almost 1500 years.

This event was predicted by Isaac Newton, the main founder of the scientific method, for 1944. His life ended in March 1727, more than 220 years before it happened. It was only after the auction of Newton's unpublished writings in 1936 that it became known that Newton was equally concerned with physics and the Bible, the latter perhaps a little more.

Why is this summary so interesting in terms of our future? While Newton took the content of the entire Bible seriously, the Christian churches, which claimed the Bible as the Word of God and on which they built their dogmas, almost completely broke off their contact with the nation to which virtually all of its writers belonged, the Jews. Not only that, they became their enemies, culminating in the Holocaust, during which 6 million people were exterminated simply because they were Jewish.

Newton was one of the small minority of Christians who did not share this attitude.

When the state of Israel was established, a necessary condition was fulfilled for the fulfillment of Bible prophecies that spoke of the end of this evil age and the establishment of a new order throughout the planet. For those prophecies concerned the Jews in their original homeland, which had not been possible for nearly two thousand years.

Christian churches invoke the name of Jesus Christ, but his teachings are not in their field of vision.

So when you see the abomination of desolation — spoken about by Daniel the prophet — standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. . (Matt 24:15, 16)

These words are a small part of the conversation when the disciples asked Jesus, among other things, *what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?* (24:3b) The prophet Daniel lived in Babylon during the end of the Babylonian empire and the rise of the Persian empire around 600 BC.

The prophet Daniel mentioned the abomination of desolation at least three times. If we look at 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11, we learn of the connection between the abomination and the worship in the Jewish temple - the cessation of the sacrificial feast and the additional sacrifice, the continual worship.

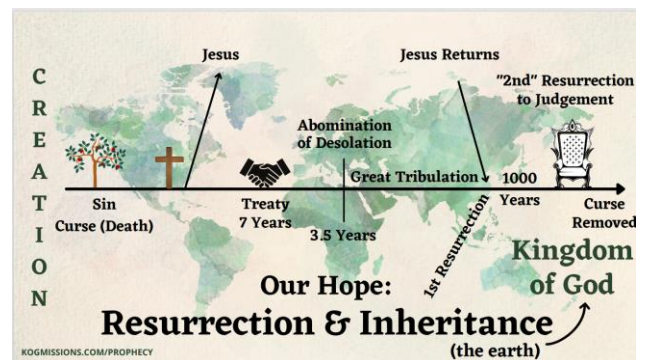
How can we understand this when the last Jewish temple was destroyed over 1950 years ago, in 70 AD, and no such temple exists today? Indeed, until 1948, when the state of Israel was established, the conditions for its rebuilding were in the realm of fantasy, but not for everyone, like Isaac Newton.

The Jewish state has been here for 75 years and it seems only a matter of time before the rebuilding of that temple that Jesus spoke of when He said they would see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel set up in the holy place.

Did not Jesus say that *no one knows the day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father?* Indeed, for almost 2,000 years we have not known when it will happen. But as can be seen, we know many details of what will happen and how. Everyone's future is known today and all the time before that.

This does not mean that we all have a predestined destiny. Rather, it's a matter of which group we've fallen into during our lives.

The chart below shows the timing of events as they are predicted in Scripture for a future time.



The decisive moment in history will be the second coming of the Messiah Jesus, his return from the extra-terrestrial sphere where he dwells at the right hand of his Father, God.

Then this evil age will end and what Christians have been praying for almost 2,000 years will begin: *Our Father; ... Your kingdom come. Do your will on earth as it is in heaven;* the age of God's kingdom, here on earth, of course..

Surviving the Great Tribulation

For then there will be a great tribulation such as never was before, from the beginning of the world up till now, and will never be again. Unless those days are cut short,

nobody would be saved, but for the sake of the chosen those days will be cut short. (Matt 24:21, 22)

The days of predicted tribulation will be cut short by the coming of Jesus. Few will survive His coming, and they will continue to live on earth in new conditions.

The sound of weeping or cries of sorrow will never be heard in her again. Never again will one of her infants live just a few days or an old man die before his time. Indeed, no one will die before the age of a hundred, anyone who fails to reach the age of a hundred will be considered cursed. They will build houses and live in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build a house only to have another live in it, or plant a vineyard only to have another eat its fruit, for my people will live as long as trees, and my chosen ones will enjoy to the fullest what they have produced. They will not work in vain, or give birth to children that will experience disaster. ... wolf and a lamb will graze together; a lion, like an ox, will eat straw, and a snake's food will be dirt. They will no longer injure or destroy (Izajáš 65:19-25) No resident of Zion will say, "I am ill" (33:24)



The reward of Jesus' followers

Jesus' coming will fulfill the hope of all his true disciples:

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep as Christians. (1 Tes 4:14)

How does he bring them in? By being raised in the same kind of body that Jesus was raised in.

*Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the **first resurrection**. Over them the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of the Messiah, and they will reign with him for one thousand years. (Rev 20:6)*

What about the Christians who will be alive at that time?

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the lord in the air. In this way we will be with the lord always (1 Tes 4:17)

Christ's disciples, both those who have been resurrected and those who have been transfigured, will receive **immortality**; the second death has no power over them. The possibility of obtaining this **privilege will end**.

A thousand years

During that time, the one who has led mankind to wickedness throughout history will be removed.

He seized the Dragon — the original Serpent, who is the Devil and Satan — and bound him for one thousand years.... so that he could not deceive the nations any longer (Rev 20:2, 3)

The survivors of the great tribulation will not be tempted to evil, they will live in the conditions briefly described above. Under the rule of Jesus and his disciples:

...he can teach us his requirements, and we can follow his standards. For Zion will be the center for moral instruction; the LORD will issue edicts from Jerusalem. He will judge disputes between nations; he will settle cases for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not take up the sword against other nations, and they will no longer train for war. (Isa 2:3, 4)

At the end of the millennium, all will be tested as to their faithfulness. The Evil One will be released and a large number of people will rebel against the government, thus deciding their future. They will be removed forever and the Evil One with them. The scene will be set for the second resurrection, the resurrection to judgment.:

death and Hades [grave of all men] gave up the dead in them, and each person was judged according to his works. If anyone was not found in the book of life, that person was destroyed FOREVER. (Rev 20:13, 15)

Conclusion

When will all this happen?

No one knows that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Keep watching, stay awake — because you do not know when the time will come.. (Mark 13:32, 33)

Jesus said that about 1990 years ago. Since 70 AD, the temple service spoken of by the prophet Daniel has

not been possible. The Jews were scattered throughout the world until 1948 when their state was established with part of Jerusalem. It is only a matter of a short time before the temple is built there and the predicted events begin to take place..

What about us today? We can still take advantage of the offer to receive the same body that Jesus received, immortal, and share in Jesus' reign on earth and direct the restoration of the earth and humanity. To do this, we must meet the same requirements that Jesus met, trusting God and obeying his instructions, which are clearly described in Scripture.

The other option is not to be interested in this offer in the style of "*let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*". (1 Cor 15:32)

If we do not realize or know about the offer that has been made, it is possible that during the Last Judgment our deeds will be judged favorably and we will be allowed to live on the new earth as described in Revelation 21:3, 4:

Look! God's residence is now among human beings. He will live with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will not exist any more, or mourning, or crying, or pain, because the first things have disappeared

Will you be there? Your loved ones? I just wish...

The Greatest Career Opportunity of All Time — For You!



Stop and listen!

We have some spectacularly good news for you and your family. Some time in the future, Jesus of Nazareth is going to become the world's first successful super-ruler. He will totally reorganize human society, and produce the peace on earth which we all want.

Under Jesus' government, there will be no more wars, no more famine; no more murder, rape or theft; no more alcoholism and depression; no more divorce, and no more poverty.

Does this sound too good to be true? God, the Creator of all things, has personally promised that a Golden Age for all mankind will come. He has been promising it since He first placed man on our earth. The arrival of that era of glorious peace and prosperity is guaranteed.

What you have just been told is the heart of the Christian Gospel. Very probably you have not heard it before.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus came to announce the dramatically important good news concerning the future divine government on earth. He is coming back to take up his office as world super-ruler — and he is now recruiting men and women to assist him in the administration of his coming Kingdom. He wants you to be a ruler in that Kingdom.

What a tragedy if you were to allow this greatest of all career opportunities to pass you by. You can so easily neglect the information you have just been

given. But don't do it. Do yourself and your family a favor. Check up on the facts. We might just have given you the greatest piece of Truth you have ever heard!

The coming new age on earth

There was a time when we did not know that Jesus wants to train men and women now for positions in the world government of the coming new age on earth. When we found out, our lives were radically changed. We want to share with you what we have discovered about the Christian Gospel — the Good News about God's coming world government.

If you will contact us, we will point you to the source of our information. You will then be able to find out for yourself that what we have been saying is true.

Don't delay. Don't brush us aside. Remember, God wants you to help administer a world government with His Son Jesus, when he comes back.

There could be no greater honor. It is high time for you to be preparing, with God's help, for that position of responsibility. Your training will entail tests and trials to ensure that your character and integrity are beyond suspicion. God does not intend to allow corrupt rulership to continue anywhere on earth once His Son comes into office.

Act now! Find out more about the Christian Good News. Peace is coming. And you can help to bring it about.