

GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#176)
Resurrection and eternal life –
connected to a person.

1

In Scripture, God reveals to people what they need, at the time they need it.

- ✓ This is why, for instance, the Old Testament has considerably *less* information about the resurrection and eternal life, than does the New Testament.
- ✓ This doesn't mean they had *no* information; but what they had was not as detailed and clear as what is revealed later, closer to the time of the fulfillment.

God's revelation in Scripture is "progressive" revelation.

What God tells us "progresses" from the initial revelation in Genesis... to the information we find in the book of Revelation.

By "progressive," we mean that the addition of further information *increases* what we know. It does not contradict what God previously said.

2

IN EVERY AGE, GOD HAS REVEALED TO PEOPLE WHAT THEY NEEDED.

- ⇒ For living a holy life – he gave them everything they needed.
 - ⇒ To be prepared for the next step in his plan – he gave them what they needed, in order to be ready.
 - He does not give us all possible information. There will be details that are not necessary for life and godliness, or for knowing how to respond. *We can trust God and leave these other details to him.*
 - God may also reveal something about even more distant events (though additional information would be given when the time got closer).
 - ⇒ Whatever God reveals at one point in time will be fully consistent with everything he said in *previous* centuries, and what he will say in the future.
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⇒ Examples in the past:

- When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, God revealed to him what he needed, for his journey to the land of Canaan... but not much related to a *nation* living in the land.
 - When Israel left Egypt, God revealed what they needed for living in the land of Canaan ... but not much about the coming Messiah and what he would accomplish.
 - When the *nation* of Israel was destroyed because of their sin, God revealed what they needed for getting ready for the New Covenant and the Messiah ... but not much about the resurrection, its significance for us, and the "end times."
 - When Jesus came, he revealed to Israel what they needed about the resurrection and some warnings about the "end times."
 - After Jesus' resurrection, God revealed much more about these issues to the church.
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⇒ In our present situation, we have what we need.

- There are things we do not know about the future. The book of Revelation shows us this quite clearly:

When the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write. But I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Keep secret what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down."

Revelation 10:4 (NLT)
 - More information will be revealed in the future, when it's needed.

[God] has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.

1 John 3:2b (NLT)
 - The issue is this: **What are we going to do with what God has revealed to us?** (*Are we going to pay attention to it... or be like the people of Israel, who often ignored what they were told?*)
- 5

Before Jesus arrived, interest in the resurrection and eternal life greatly increased.

- ✓ The Old Testament prophets referred to these topics a few times, in preparation for Jesus' coming.

- It may seem like it wasn't much... but it was just what they needed.

(This was also the time when the prophets started focusing on the future *New Covenant* that would replace the Old Covenant given to Moses.)

But your dead will **live**, Lord; their bodies will **rise**— let those who dwell in the dust **wake up** and shout for joy— your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give **birth** to her dead.

Isaiah 26:19a (NIV)

And many who sleep in the dust of the earth will **awake**, some to everlasting life, but others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:2 (BSB)

6

- ✓ **The prophets also mentioned many related topics – some of them quite extensively.**

- This is because resurrection and eternal life are interrelated to many other things – and the people couldn't experience the one without the others.

> Four examples <

- ↳ **The removal of death** (a more common theme in the *New Testament*).

There [the LORD] will remove the cloud of gloom,
the shadow of death that hangs over the earth.

He will swallow up death forever!

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears.

Isaiah 25:7-8a (NLT)

- ↳ **Judgment** (a common theme).

"But I judge each of you according to your deeds."

Ezekiel 33:20b (NLT)

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- ↳ **A future kingdom ... and a future king** (a common theme).

... I will raise up ... a descendant of David.
He will rule over them with wisdom and understanding
and will do what is just and right in the land.

Under his rule Judah will enjoy safety
and Israel will live in security.

Jeremiah 23:5b-6a (NET)

He will reign on the throne of David and over his
kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and
righteousness from that time and forevermore.

Isaiah 9:7b (BSB)

- ↳ **The coming Messiah – the One chosen to accomplish these things** (a common theme, but not always with the term "messiah" or "anointed").

The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather
together, against the LORD and against His Anointed One:

Psalms 2:2 (BSB)

8

- ✓ **The prophets themselves were *not* told everything about these topics.**

- They realized that they did not have all the information.
- They trusted God to resolve what they didn't understand.

- ↳ **As Peter later wrote to the followers of Jesus...**

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the
grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with
the greatest care, trying to find out the time and
circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was
pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah
and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them
that they were *not serving themselves* but you ...

1 Peter 1:10-12a (NIV)

[This refers to us who have been given the Good News].

9

- ✓ **During the time *between* the Old and New Testaments, interest in these issues increased greatly.**

- The topics of our focus (resurrection, eternal life) became increasingly popular issues.
- There was also an increased desire for the *Messiah* to come.

- ↳ **Remember the context:** Israel was a conquered nation, and they longed to be freed from under the control of other nations. They dreamed of a deliverer who would fulfil their longings. *This influenced their expectations and how they interpreted the writings of the prophets.*

- *And so, they were ready and eager for the Messiah to come!* Or so they thought.

**WE NEED A MESSIAH – SOMEONE
WHO WILL CONQUER OUR ENEMIES
AND RESTORE OUR NATION!**

10

- ✓ **WHEN JOHN THE BAPTIZER AND JESUS CAME, it seemed that things were finally happening. *Had someone come back from the dead?***

- **This was a legitimate question!** Malachi had told Israel that Elijah would return. With all the things happening, the people wondered if John the Baptizer was Elijah returned from the dead.

"I'm going to send you the prophet Elijah before that
very terrifying day of the Lord comes."

Malachi 4:5 (GW)

Well then, who are you?" they asked [John]. "Are you Elijah?"

John 1:21a (NLT)

- However, some reached conclusions that were quite *misguided*. After King Herod beheaded John...

At that time Herod, ruler of Galilee, heard the news about Jesus. He said to his officials, "This is John the Baptizer! He has come back to life. That's why he has the power to perform these miracles."

Matthew 14:1-2 (GW)

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- ✓ **Had the messianic deliverer finally arrived?** At first, some said "YES!" In the end, they concluded "NO!"

- ✓ **WHY? Because Jesus *wasn't* what they were wanting.**

- When Jesus came, he did *not* meet their expectations. *Their own thoughts and desires* caused them to not recognize the actual fulfillment of those Old Testament statements.
- *So, they failed to recognize the "signs of the times" ... and thus fulfilled the next step in prophecy, by killing Jesus.*

The people in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize Jesus as the one the prophets had spoken about. Instead, they condemned him, and in doing this they fulfilled the prophets' words that are read every Sabbath. ... they asked Pilate to have him killed ... But God raised him from the dead!

The promise was made to our ancestors, and God has now fulfilled it for us, their descendants, by raising Jesus.

Acts 13:27, 28b, 30, 32b-33a (NLT)

12

- **Jesus had done nothing wrong!** Even though they didn't like some of the things he said and did, nobody could find any sin in him .

Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?

John 8:46 (NIV)

I [Pilate] have examined him in your presence and have found **no basis for your charges** against him. Neither has Herod, ... as you can see, he has done **nothing to deserve death**.

Luke 23:1b–15 (NIV)

[The leaders] ... were **trying to find evidence** against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they **couldn't find any**.

Mark 14:55b (NLT)

[One of the criminals said] "... this man has **done nothing wrong**." The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was **a righteous man**."

Luke 23:41b, 47 (NIV)

13

QUESTION: What happens when you kill a sinless person?

Sinless people – of which there is only one (= Jesus) – cannot die. What happened to him has a direct effect on the lives of his followers.

- ✓ Death is the consequence of SIN.

For the wages of sin is death, ...

Romans 6:23a (CSB)

... death spread to all people, because all sinned.

Romans 5:12b (CSB)

- ✓ The only way that Jesus could die was by becoming our sin. (This "great exchange" is what made *his death* and *our salvation* possible.)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

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- ✓ Once our sin was paid for, there was nothing left to keep Jesus dead. He had to come back from the dead!

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Acts 2:24 (NIV)

(Then Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11, a messianic prophecy that states that he [Jesus] would not decay in the grave.)

For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Romans 6:9 (NIV)

- ✓ Having been paid for, our sins will no longer be able to keep us dead – if we died in Christ, having been united with Christ in his death and resurrection.

For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united in the likeness of his **resurrection**.

Romans 6:5 (NET)

15

What did Jesus teach about resurrection and eternity?

- ✓ **Jesus continued the Old Testament focus.**

↳ **The concept of "sheol" (called "hades" in the New Testament)** – mentioned by Jesus (in Matthew and Luke), the apostles (in Acts) and in the book of Revelation.

↳ **Dead people were brought back to life.**

- The widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:11–17); Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:40–56); Lazarus of Bethany (John 11); various saints in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:50–53). See also Matthew 10:5-8.
- This also happened twice in the early church: Tabitha (Acts 9:36–43) and Eutychus (Acts 20:7–12).
- These resurrections were only *temporary*, because (unlike Jesus) these people were sinners.
- **[The response of Jesus' adversaries? Not repentance, but a desire to destroy the evidence (John 12:10-11)!]**

↳ **The use of words like "sleep," "awake," etc.** – both by Jesus and the apostles.

16

- ✓ **Jesus expanded the Old Testament focus.**

↳ **He warned them about an eternal place of punishment** – called "gehenna," mentioned by Jesus (in Matthew, Mark and Luke) and in the book of James. Also called the "lake of fire" (in Revelation).

↳ **He spoke of a final judgment.** People who died in the Old Testament era would be there, along with those who were alive in Jesus' day. [The rest of us will also be there.]

"The queen of Sheba will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen.

The people of Nineveh will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent.

Luke 11:31-32 (NLT)

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- ✓ **Jesus warned them that many who thought they were saved would someday discover that they weren't saved, and would be condemned.**
 - **He denounced the cities** that rejected his kingdom message. In doing so, he affirmed a future judgment, heaven and Hades.

I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the **judgment** than for you.

... will you be lifted up to **heaven**? No, you will be brought down to **Hades!**

Luke 10:12, 14, 15b (BSB)

- **He started warning people** that many who *thought* they belonged to the kingdom would be cast out, and others from around the world would be welcomed in. (Examples – Luke 13:23-30; Matthew 8:11-12.) This was directed especially toward the Jewish religious leaders, who claimed to be "Bible believers."

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- ✓ He taught the whole range of issues related to the future resurrection and eternal life. This included the issues that people don't like to hear.

↳ He taught about *eternal life* and the *resurrection of people in the last days*. Much of it was said to his followers.

- After Jesus' resurrection, his apostles would have *much more* to say about these issues.

↳ He also had a strong focus on the topic of *judgment* (and other topics that people *need* to hear, but *don't like* to hear).

- This was especially directed to those who were *not* his followers (with a greater emphasis on the religious leaders).

"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."

"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"

Mark 7:8 and Matthew 23:33 (NIV)

19

- ✓ He began to speak about *his own death and resurrection*. (This was mainly to his followers.)

- He connected these to Old Testament prophecy.

Then he took the Twelve aside and told them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. Everything that is written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the Gentiles, and he will be mocked, insulted, spit on; and after they flog him, they will kill him, and he will rise on the third day."

Luke 18:31-33 (CSB)

- After his resurrection, this was affirmed by angels at the tomb.

"Why are you looking among the dead for the living one? He's not here. He has been brought back to life! Remember what he told you while he was still in Galilee. He said, 'The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful people, be crucified, and come back to life on the third day.' "

Luke 24:5b-7 (GW)

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- He rebuked his disciples for not paying attention to what he had said. And he showed them what the Old Testament scriptures said about him.

Then Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are! You're so slow to believe **everything the prophets said!** Didn't the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Then he began with Moses' Teachings and the Prophets to explain to them what was said about him throughout the Scriptures.

Luke 24:25-27 (GW)

Then he said to them, "These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you. I told you that **everything written about me** in Moses' Teachings, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to come true."

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

Luke 24:44-45 (GW)

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In the end, we discover...

- ✓ Resurrection and eternal life are connected to a person: Jesus Christ.

- Our response to that person – and all that he represents – will determine our relationship to the resurrection and eternal life.
- But this involves the *real* Jesus, not the one people choose to "reinvent," to fit what they *want* to believe.

YOUR MISSION!

- ✓ Choose which "Jesus" you are going to follow!

- You can "adjust" the *fake* "Jesus" to be whatever you want him to be.
- The *real* one places obligations on you. You *cannot* live the way you used to.

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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