THEOLOGY OF RESURRECTION

Saint Mark’s Cathedral
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RESURRECTION

• Rising to life from death (not specifically Christian in origin)
  • Ancient Near East myths
  • Pharisees vs. Saducees
  • Book of Daniel, etc.
• Foundational tenet of Christian faith tradition
  • Something happened in past that has inaugurated something new, which will reach its final consummation in the future
  • Christian hope offers solace and balm to those who fear end of life (something more)
  • Offers a theology of death through the lens of Easter—death stings, but is not final—AND it sustains relationships, even if changed
  • Invites us into something more (communion of saints...)


RESURRECTION COLORS EVERYTHING

- Sacramental theology
- Doctrine of Creation
- Eschatological Hope
- Paschal Mystery

- Jesus’ resurrection offers the connection between redemption and eschatology
DID THE RESURRECTION ACTUALLY HAPPEN?

• What happened?
  • NT Wright and others: yes, bodily resurrection (not resuscitation or reanimation)
  • Paul and the apostles believed it wholeheartedly

• Thomas Sheehan, Richard Rohr, et al.—resurrection is “true” in realm of metaphor
  • Metaphysical interpretation that delivers Jesus into God’s eschatological presence

• Not historical fact but tenet laid down by early faith tradition
SCOPE OF RESURRECTION… TIME AND SPACE

• PAST—PRESENT—FUTURE

• He descended into hell…
• Eternal Life is a present reality
• Jesus’ resurrection is the “first fruits” (1Cor 15:20)

• Cosmic Christ—embodies entire universe
• No split between physical and spiritual world
• Resurrection is not individual experience, but corporate/cosmic
JURGEN MOLTLMANN (1926- )

- German theologian
- Drafted into German Army in 1944
- Surrendered to first Allied soldier he saw
- Met Christian pastors in POW camps
- Professor at Tubingen University
- Theology of Hope (1964)

Eschatology:
- Not dualism of Rapture Theology
- “Life power of hope”—implies a present reality forming the future
If we expect catastrophic destruction at end, why care about the world now?

Our expectation of future informs our present reality

Expectation of ultimate reign of Christ

Time is different (so don’t get caught up in numbers)

Look forward to final judgment—brings God’s righteousness to all…victim and perpetrator are judged/healed/reconciled together.
THEOLOGY OF HOPE

- If God acted in the past, is it reasonable to expect God can/will act in future?
- The Eschaton is not the end point, but the point from which all else flows...born in hope for a better way.
- Alternative to the imperial way.
- The Resurrection of Christ can be viewed not so much as an historical event as it is THE event which finds its full meaning in the future.
- Future fulfillment is for all creation, not just humans (Behold, I make all things new)