Resurrection represents the end of Man's exile

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Introduction

In a previous article I demonstrated that the New Jerusalem is a present reality.

We saw that:

- Through his death Jesus has fully restored our access to the Father, so that we can approach his throne and dwell in his presence (Mt 27:51; Heb 10:19-22).
- From the 1st century on, God's elect people have been called through the gospel to be citizens of the heavenly city (Gal 4:26; Php 3:20; Heb 12:22).
- The city's descent to earth in AD 70 (Rev 21:2, 10) shows that there was a definitive, spiritual-legal gathering of believers into the city at that time (cf. Mt 24:31; 2Thes 2:1?).
- The saints on earth were gathered <u>from exile</u> into the city.
  In this way, Old Testament (OT) promises relating to Jerusalem's restoration were fulfilled.
- Even today, people enter "Jerusalem" through repentance and spiritual cleansing (Rev 22:14, 17).
- Within the city we live in God's very presence, serving as priests in his temple (Rev 1:6; 22:3; cf. 7:15).
  Man's banishment and exile that began in the Garden is over.
- The city represents the people of God — Christ's bride, the Church.

It is my belief that the Resurrection, also, should be viewed as a gathering <u>from exile</u> into God's presence in "Jerusalem". And that it occurred along with the gathering of the saints on earth — in AD 70.

Paradise

Prior to AD 70, those who died entered an intermediate abode called Sheol or Hades.
They went there to await final resurrection and judgment.

Sheol/Hades consisted of at least two separate compartments:
The saints entered **Paradise** — a place of bliss.
The wicked entered a separate section of Hades — a place of punishment.

- Jesus and the repentant thief entered Hades-Paradise (Lk 23:43; Ac 2:31[1]).
- The patriarchs were "alive" in Paradise (Lk 20:37-38).
- Enoch and Moses went to Paradise (Heb 11:5, 24-28; cf. 11:39-40); presumably so did Elijah.
- Lazarus (in the parable) went to "Abraham's side" (Lk 16:22), aka Paradise.
  Conversely, the rich man went to "Hades" — the section reserved for the wicked (Lk 16:23).
- Paul was "caught up" into Paradise and/or the third heaven (2Cor 12:1-4).
- John, in Revelation 6:9-11, saw the "souls" of Old Testament and early Christian martyrs.
  They were in Paradise as disembodied spirits, awaiting their final embodiment (cf. Mt 10:28).
  They are "beneath the altar", crying out for justice but being told to "rest a little while longer" (6:11).
- John in Revelation 20:4-6 saw another group of "souls".
  These were the martyrs about to be "beheaded" under Nero.
  They would come to life in a "first resurrection" (20:5b), and reign with Christ in Paradise.[2]
  In Hades-Paradise, both groups of martyrs were awaiting the final Judgment and the second (and final) Resurrection depicted in Revelation 20:11-15.
- Demons and fallen angels were held in Tartarus (aka the Abyss) pending their final judgment (2Pet 2:4; cf. Lk 8:31; Rev 20:1-3). Tartarus is probably a separate (third) section of Hades.
  Peter's point (in 2 Peter 2:4) is that the false teachers will suffer a similar fate (2:9b).

Today, when we die, we don't enter any intermediate abode.
Instead, judgment takes place immediately, followed by entry into our final reward: heaven or the lake of fire.
Believers are now able to enter heaven directly because the Resurrection is a past event.
Direct access to God, in this life and the next, is our great privilege under the New Covenant.
See Hebrews 11:39-40.[3]

[1] Acts 2:31, Peter's Pentecost sermon: *"Seeing this in advance, David spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ: That his soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see decay."*
[2] The latter group of martyrs soon to be killed under Nero receive the following promise (Revelation 14:13):
And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"
[3] Paul in several places anticipates this post-70 AD privilege of direct entry into heaven:

- "We [first-century Christians] will not all [have to] sleep [in Paradise], …" (1Cor 15:51).
- "After that [time], we who are alive and remain will be caught up [into the spiritual realm] …" (1Thes 4:17).
- The new "norm" is for believers to be clothed with their new heavenly bodies the moment they die (2Cor 5:1-10).

Resurrection in Hebrews

Hebrews speaks of first-century believers as having already come to the heavenly Jerusalem (12:22).
Under the New Covenant they were privileged citizens of this heavenly city (cf. Gal 4:26; Php 3:20).[4]

According to Hebrews 11, this city was also eagerly anticipated by OT believers:

- Abraham realized that God's promises to him entailed far more than mere earthly real estate. God's promises related ultimately to a heavenly inheritance and city (11:10, 16).
- Moses likewise looked forward to a final reward (11:26).
- These and other saints anticipated entry into this inheritance following their earthly sojourn — through final resurrection (11:35).[5]

When were these OT saints to enter "Jerusalem" through resurrection?
Hebrews 11:39-40 supplies the answer:

> 39 *And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,*
> 40 *since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*

None of these OT saints, not even those who entered or lived in Canaan, received what God had promised.
For the promised "rest" (Dt 12:9-10; 25:19) was a pointer to the true, spiritual rest won for us by Jesus.
Jesus (the new Joshua) offers salvation-rest, both for this life and the next (Heb 4:1-11).

Being "made perfect" in Hebrews 11:40 refers to the final enjoyment of the promised heavenly inheritance.
Whereas in Hebrews 12:23, "the spirits of the righteous made perfect" refers to the pre-Resurrection saints who, having completed their earthly sojourn, were (when the author wrote) still waiting as "spirits" in Paradise.[6]
The point being this:
The OT saints could only enter heaven once that privilege had become available to New Covenant believers.

So, is this privilege (of being able to enter heaven) available to us today under the New Covenant?
It certainly is!
Today, when we die, we enter heaven directly. We're immediately clothed with our new body, and we appear before Christ's judgment throne. Paul anticipates this privilege in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.

Now if we today enjoy this New Covenant privilege, so too do the OT saints.
They must now be in heaven. Which means that the Resurrection has already taken place!

Direct access to God through Jesus is one of the great blessings of the New Covenant (Mt 27:51; Heb 10:19-20).
Such access allows us to enter into our eternal, heavenly inheritance immediately following death.

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[4] The overriding concern of Hebrews is to show the superiority of, and the greater privileges enjoyed under, the New Covenant.
[5] OT saints willingly endured torture "so that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb 11:35b, Greek text).
The contrast here is with resurrection that merely entailed a return to earthly life (Heb 11:35a; cf. 1Kgs 17:17-24; 2Kgs 4:18-37).
Through the "better resurrection" the saints would be raised with glorified bodies to enjoy life in heaven.
[6] "Made perfect" in Hebrews 11:40 and 12:23 translates the Greek verb *teleioō* (Strong's G5048), meaning "to complete, perfect, accomplish, finish, bring to an intended end" — the fulfillment of whatever was intended for that person or thing.

Abraham and other OT saints anticipated these New Covenant benefits that Messiah would bring and that we today enjoy (Mt 13:17; Jn 8:56; 1Pet 1:10-12).
Jesus has brought resurrection and the gift of eternal life. In a sense we don't die at all (Jn 8:51; 11:25-26) — we merely transition from the New Jerusalem on earth to its heavenly counterpart.

Why was the Resurrection so long delayed?
Answer: The Old Testament saints could not enter heaven because Jesus had not yet died for sin.
Final justification (i.e., their being acquitted and declared righteous) was not yet possible.
Their exile (banishment) continued beyond the grave.
Heaven — God's abode — remained strictly off-limits.

Before the Resurrection, Hades-Paradise acted as a sort of prison in that it kept the saints out of heaven.
The saints were effectively still in exile and excluded from God's presence.
In Paradise they awaited God's final verdict.

It was for the sake of God's OT saints that final judgment was postponed.
Paul speaks of this delay in Romans 3:25-26, which I have paraphrased thus:

> [25] *God presented [Jesus] as a propitiation through faith in his [shed] blood.*
> *This was to demonstrate God's righteousness, <u>because in his forbearance he had left the sins previously committed unpunished</u>.*
> [26] *[It was also] to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time — that he is just when he declares righteous the person who has faith in Jesus.*

Before people could be admitted into God's presence, sin had to be atoned for.
It is true that the OT saints enjoyed justification and forgiveness (Gen 15:6; Ps 32:1-2).
But fundamentally, these are blessings of the New Covenant (Jer 31:34; 33:8; Heb 8:12; 10:17).

Resurrection in Revelation

The saints' entry into Paradise pending the final Judgment represented a sort of "first resurrection".
We see this provisional abode and resurrection described in Revelation 20:4-6:
John sees the "souls" of the first-century martyrs reigning there with Christ for "1000 years" (20:4; cf. 6:9).
He calls this their "first resurrection" (20:5).
All who enjoy this "first resurrection" are spared the "second death" (20:6).[7]
Note that their 1000-year internment doesn't describe a specific length of time. Rather, it's a <u>code</u> for Hades and the afterlife. Satan, also, is interned for "1000 years" (Rev 20:1-3) — a separate and prior millennium to that of the martyrs. He is interned in the Abyss (Tartarus), so that he can no longer deceive the nations.

John subsequently sees both Hades (= Paradise?) and Death delivering up their inmates.
These inmates appear before God's judgment throne to receive their respective rewards — heaven or the lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15; cf. 21:7-8). This is the second or final Resurrection.
(See Appendix 1 for a further explanation of the two resurrections and the two deaths.)

[7] Thereby suggesting that all of God's deceased people enjoyed this first resurrection — not just the first-century martyrs.

Revelation prophesied concerning imminent events:

- Jesus possessed the keys to unlock Death and Hades (Rev 1:18).[8]
  The implication is that he is about to use them. Indeed, their use is implied in the General Resurrection, where Death and Hades deliver up their dead for judgment (Rev 20:13).
- The seventh and last trumpet was soon to sound, heralding God's kingdom (Rev 11:15) and the judgment of both the living (Rev 11:18a) and the dead (Rev 11:18b).
- The General Resurrection and judgment of the dead were imminent (Rev 20:11-15; cf. 22:6, 10).

Gathering into "Jerusalem"

The New Jerusalem's descent to earth in Revelation 21 portrays the fact that the first-century saints were soon to be definitively gathered into the city.
They were to be gathered from exile into God's presence in the city. On earth, this side of eternity.[9]
And at the same time, the OT saints in Hades-Paradise were to enter heaven, ending their exile in Paradise.
The sounding of the last trumpet — a Jubilee trumpet — would call them home to heaven (1Cor 15:52; 1Thes 4:16; Rev 11:15, 18).

Thus, we have a gathering into "Jerusalem" of both the saints in Paradise and the saints on earth:

- The deceased OT saints (and early Christians) in Paradise were gathered through resurrection into heaven.
- The living saints on earth were definitively gathered into the city when it descended in AD 70.
- With these gatherings Jerusalem was finally restored — both in heaven and on earth.
- Exile ended for both groups together.

Resurrection in Paul

Paul clearly expected that at least some of his first-century readers would remain until the Resurrection:

- 1 Corinthians 15:51: … *We shall not all sleep …*
  "Sleep", here and elsewhere in Paul (1Cor 15:6, 18, 20; 1Thes 4:13-15), denotes the transiency of death.
  The deceased saints were "asleep" in Paradise and were to be "awakened" through final resurrection.[10]
  Paul here affirms that some to whom he wrote would not have to spend waiting-time in Paradise.
  Living beyond the Resurrection event of AD 70, they would be able to enter heaven directly when they died.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17:
  15 *… we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord …*
  17 *Then we who are alive, who are left …*

[8] Rather than being one and the same, *Hades* and *Death* probably refer to the respective abodes of the saved and the damned. Note how Jesus declares, in Revelation 1:18, that he possesses "the keys of Death and of Hades" (Greek text) — keys (plural) of the separate realms. Later, in the General Resurrection, Death and Hades give up the dead who are "in them", and both are cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:13-14).

[9] This is probably the gathering Jesus spoke about in Matthew 24:31: After the Tribulation and fall of Jerusalem he will "send out his angels with a loud trumpet call" to "gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Jesus' references to a *trumpet*, the *four winds*, and the *ends of heaven* show this to be a gathering of exiles back to Jerusalem (Dt 30:4; Isa 11:12; 27:13; 43:5-6; Zec 2:6). It's a Jubilee (trumpet) gathering and homecoming.
But note, before this definitive 70 AD gathering there was necessarily a prior gospel-gathering of these saints as well.

[10] "Sleep" is not intended to suggest a state of unconsciousness. On the contrary, passages such as Luke 16:25-31; 20:37-38; Revelation 6:9-11; 20:4-6 imply that those in Paradise were conscious and active even as they awaited their final resurrection.

Paul anticipates the post-Resurrection, post-70 AD situation in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10:
Those who die will shed their old body and immediately receive their new heavenly body (5:4).
They will appear before Christ's judgment throne to receive their reward (5:10).
Yet, when Paul wrote these words the Resurrection was still some years off; Christians who died were still entering and required to wait in Paradise. But what he describes was about to become the "new norm".

The 70 AD gathering of the saints (both living and deceased) into "Jerusalem" is probably what Paul had in mind in Ephesians 1:10 (my paraphrase):
God's plan for the fullness of time was to unite all things in Christ — things in heaven and things on earth.

What about Paul's so-called "Rapture" passage:

> *After that, we who are ·still alive [*or *alive and are left] will be ·gathered [caught; taken] up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*
> *And [*[L]*so; in this way] we will be with the Lord forever.*
> (1 Thessalonians 4:17, EXB)

Is Paul referring here to a one-off gathering of all the living saints into heaven at Christ's return?
Or, is he stating how those who live and die subsequently, after Christ's return to raise the dead, will be translated to heaven: "After that" time, believers one-by-one as they die will be caught up into the spiritual realm to meet the Lord (Jesus)?

Conclusion so far:
The book of Revelation, the author of Hebrews, and the apostle Paul all affirm that the Resurrection was imminent in the 1st century, and that it entailed the raising of the OT saints from Paradise into heaven.

Resurrection in Daniel

Daniel's final prophecies (chaps. 11 – 12) deal with what would happen to Israel in the "latter days" (10:14).
The angel speaking with Daniel refers to both the Tribulation and the General Resurrection (12:1-2).
Moreover, as 12:7 (Hebrew text) notes:
"all these [things] shall be accomplished when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered."
In other words, Daniel connects the Tribulation and Resurrection with the destruction of his own nation.
(Israel's demise is further mentioned in Daniel 9:26b, which clearly refers to the events of AD 70.)

The Nature of the Resurrection

Revelation 20:11-15 shows what the final Resurrection entails:

- The inmates of Death and Hades are released to face final judgment.
- Judgment takes place before God's throne in heaven (20:11).
- Those judged immediately enter into their final reward — either the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:7) or the lake of fire (20:14).
- Resurrection entails the release of souls (spirits) from Hades, not the raising of bodies from graves.
- None of this takes place on earth.

The traditional view of resurrection is that physical bodies will be raised on the last day to be reunited with their souls:

- Job expressed a hope of resurrection and of personally seeing God (Job 19:26-27):

  [26] *"And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,*
  [27] *whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.*
  My heart faints within me!"

  Despite his body wasting away, he would see God, personally, with his own eyes.
  "In my flesh" is understood as a reference to his self-same (but renewed) body.
  Yet the Hebrew text here is somewhat ambiguous; it can actually be rendered "apart from my flesh I shall see God" — the exact opposite of the traditional view!
  Not all commentators regard Job's confession as a hope of physical resurrection.
  See Appendix 2 for two commentaries on this passage.
- The traditional Jewish view was that resurrection entailed the raising of one's self-same body, based perhaps on their reading of Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel 37:1-14, and Daniel 12:2.
  Jesus refers to resurrection in these terms in John 5:28-29.
  The hope of physical resurrection led to the Jewish practice of gathering one's bones into an ossuary, or bone box.
- Judging from the Sadducees' objection to resurrection (Lk 20:27-33), the Pharisees must have held to a concept of physical resurrection that entailed a continuance of marriage.
- Jesus obviously rose physically.
  The manner of his rising is viewed as a pattern for our own. See 1 Corinthians 15:20.
  In 1 Corinthians 6:14 Paul shows his high regard for the body, implying that it will be raised even as Christ's body was raised. In context he is explaining that what we do with our physical bodies is not unimportant.
- The traditional view is expressed in various church confessions:
  The 1561 Belgic Confession (in Article 37) and the 1646 Westminster Confession of Faith (in Chapter 32; Article 2) both affirm that on the last day the souls of the dead will be reunited with their former bodies, albeit with new qualities.

Objections to the traditional view:

- Jesus in Luke 20:34-38 confutes the Sadducees' carnal notions of resurrection by declaring:
  Those raised will be like the angels; there is no marriage in heaven (20:35-36).
  Resurrection is true, for the patriarchs (though without their bodies) are even now alive (20:37-38).
- John saw the "souls" (spirits) of people waiting in Hades-Paradise (Rev 6:9; 20:4).
  In the Judgment, Death and Hades delivered up their inmates (Rev 20:11-15).
  Therefore, the General Resurrection entailed, not the raising of bodies from earthly graves, but people exiting Death and Hades to face final judgment.
  John's vision is unambiguous: The Resurrection was a one-off event that took place in AD 70.
- Jesus' resurrection likewise entailed the release of his spirit from the powerful grip of Hades (Ac 2:24).
  His spirit was reunited with his (uniquely) undecayed body (Ac 2:31).
- Jesus' physical resurrection was necessary for evidential purposes. His body retained the physical marks of his execution, in order to validate his identity and demonstrate his escape from Hades.
- Of vital importance: Our resurrection body will be like Jesus' present glorified heavenly body.
  Not necessarily like the body he had in the interval between his resurrection and his ascension.
  This is further discussed in Appendix 4, page 18.
- Yet even before his ascension, Jesus' resurrection body seemingly possessed remarkable new qualities.
  He could pass through locked doors and appear/disappear at will.
  During his final 40 days Jesus appeared to individuals or groups intermittently, which might suggest that his new body was ordinarily invisible.
  See Luke 24; John 20 – 21; Acts 1:3-9; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7.
- Does Jesus in heaven retain any physical qualities?
  Such would seem doubtful in view of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15.
  What about later appearances of the ascended and glorified Lord:
  To Stephen (Acts 7:55-56), to Paul (Ac 9:3-6; 18:9-10; 22:17-18; 23:11), and to John (Rev 1:13ff.)?
- In contrast to Jesus, our bodies decay and their minerals are recycled (cf. Ac 13:36-37).
  Paul is explicit: our physical bodies waste away (2Cor 4:16) and are "destroyed" (2Cor 5:1).
- Immediately, when we die, we enter heaven in our new, spiritual, glorified bodies.
  Paul anticipates this post-Resurrection (post-70 AD) situation in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.
- Paul, when discussing the nature of the resurrection body, explains that God is quite capable of giving us bodies different from those which we now possess (1Cor 15:35ff.).
  Those resurrected will receive a new, spiritual body — one suited for life in the heavenly realm (1Cor 15:44).
  Such is necessary because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1Cor 15:50).[11]
- Paul's response to Hymenaeus (2Tim 2:17-18) is interesting:
  That Hymenaeus could even claim that the Resurrection had already taken place strongly suggests that Paul was himself teaching an imminent, invisible, and unverifiable resurrection. For, if Paul had been teaching that graves were to open and bodies visibly rise, Hymenaeus could never have claimed past fulfillment.[12]

[11] See Albert Barnes' Notes for 1 Corinthians 15:50. Via the Bible Hub website:
https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_corinthians/15.htm.

[12] What was it about Hymenaeus' teaching that elicited Paul's vigorous response? How did it undermine faith (2Tim 2:18)?
Was he promoting the notion of "corporate resurrection" along the lines intended by Ezekiel's Dry Bones Vision (Eze 37:1-14), which finds fulfillment in Israel's spiritual restoration under the New Covenant as the "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16)?
(Similar to the erroneous Corporate Body View of the Resurrection held by some preterists.)
Or, was he teaching that resurrection merely relates to one's new birth — along the lines Paul speaks of in Ephesians 2:5-6?
Either view, by denying (future) individual bodily resurrection into heaven, would undermine one's hope of eternal life.

- It may indeed be that Job thought of resurrection in physical terms.
  But should we base our doctrine on Job's views? After all, he did not have the full biblical revelation.
- The notion of physical resurrection is related to faulty notions concerning our supposed destiny in a renewed physical creation.
- One final point: The phrase "resurrection of the body" is not actually found in the Bible.
  This erroneous term derives from the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in … the resurrection of the body."
  Or, as the earlier versions of the Creed have it: "I believe in … the resurrection of the flesh."
  But the correct, biblical terms are "resurrection of the dead", and "resurrection from the dead".[13]
  The underlying Greek phrases are:
  - *[anastasis] ek nekrōn*, "resurrection **out from** [the] **dead**" in Luke 20:35; Acts 4:2; 1 Peter 1:3.
  - *[anastasis] tōn nekrōn*, "resurrection **of the dead**" in Matthew 22:31; 1 Corinthians 15:42.
  - *[anastasis] nekrōn*, "resurrection **of** [the] **dead**" in Acts 17:32; 23:6; 24:21; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:12-13, 21; Hebrews 6:2.

  The term in Philippians 3:11 is interesting: *eis tēn exanastasin tēn ek nekrōn*.
  The prefix *ex* on *exanastasis* (Strong's G1815) serves to intensify its meaning:
  "a rising up completely out from / thoroughly removed from" the realm of the dead.
  Such was Paul's hope!

Given the biblical data, one cannot be too dogmatic about the nature of our resurrection bodies.
They clearly won't be reconstituted flesh-and-blood bodies (1Cor 15:50).
Rather, they will be a wholly new type of body suited to the heavenly realm.
But having said that, recognition of friends and loved ones would seemingly require some continuity of form with our present bodies.

The following points need emphasizing:

1. We can today enter heaven when we die only because the Resurrection is a past event.
   The whole point of the 70 AD Resurrection was that heaven was finally opened up to God's people.
   Without this, we would have to join the OT saints still waiting in Paradise.
   We would all still be in exile!
2. Once in heaven, we never leave it.
   The traditional notion that, in the Resurrection, one leaves the bliss of heaven to inhabit a renewed physical world in our renewed physical bodies is both unscriptural and unappealing.[14]
   Concerning our bodies, Paul is emphatic that the order is: **Natural → Spiritual** (1Cor 15:44-49).
   Adam-like, earthly body made from the dust of the earth → Christ-like, heavenly body.
   (Not: Natural → Spiritual → Natural again.)
   Our final destiny is heaven, not some new physical order.

[13] In the ESV, the phrase "resurrection of the dead" is found in Paul's resurrection discourse (in 1 Corinthians 15:12-13, 21, 42) as well as in Matthew 22:31; Acts 17:32; 23:6; 24:21; Hebrews 6:2.
Whereas "resurrection from the dead" is found in Luke 20:35; Acts 4:2; Romans 1:4; Philippians 3:11; 1 Peter 1:3.
[14] For many of us, gaining back our self-same bodies (even if with new qualities) isn't really an enthralling prospect!

3. The "hope of Israel" (Ac 28:20) encompassed all that the prophets had foretold concerning Messiah and his kingdom, etc. (Ac 28:23).
   Central to this was the hope of resurrection (Ac 23:6; 24:15; 26:6-8).
   Messiah would bring all these things in the "age to come" (e.g., Mt 12:32; cf. 24:3).[15]

   And Jesus has done precisely that!
   Recall his declaration to Martha:

   > [25] *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, shall live.*
   > [26] *And everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."*
   > (John 11:25-26, my translation)

   Jesus was inaugurating the new age — the messianic age, the age of resurrection — and he proved it by raising Lazarus from the dead.
   Jesus has "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10).
   With the Resurrection now past, physical death for us is but a portal to eternal life in heaven.

Resurrection and Israel's restoration

Paul viewed Isaiah's restoration prophecies as being, for the most part, fulfilled in his own day through the gospel. Evidence for this can be seen in the way he cites Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27.[16]

The point I wish to emphasize here is that "Jerusalem" was also restored through resurrection — through the gathering of the exiles in Paradise into the heavenly city. In AD 70!
"Jerusalem" is both in heaven and on earth.

Is there evidence that Paul himself viewed resurrection in these terms?
There certainly is!
Paul concludes his well-known Resurrection discourse in 1 Corinthians 15 by referencing two OT prophets:

1. 15:54: *"Death is swallowed up in victory."*
2. 15:55: *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"*

These derive, respectively, from Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14.
Paul is stating that when the resurrection finally transpires, and the deceased saints are clothed with their new heavenly bodies, then those OT prophecies will have been fulfilled (1Cor 15:54).
This was true of the saints who were raised in AD 70, but it is equally true as each one of us puts on his new body in death.
Note that both OT references concern Israel in the context of judgment and restoration.
Resurrection is indeed related to Israel's restoration!

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[15] Not "world to come", as found in traditional versions such as the KJV. The Greek noun αἰών (*aiōn*, Strong's G165), from whence derives our English term "eon" (aeon), is better translated as "age". And so, modern versions have "either in this age or in the age to come" (Mt 12:32), along with the phrase "the end of the age" (Mt 13:39-40, 49; 24:3, ESV 2016 edition).
These terms reflect the Jewish belief in the world's two great eras: the hopelessly evil pre-messianic age, and the subsequent good age under Messiah's righteous government.
[16] Paul relates Isaiah's prophecies to the first-century responses of Jews and Gentiles to the gospel, and to his own ministry to the Gentiles — see Acts 13:47; Romans 9:27-29, 33; 10:11, 15-16, 20-21; 15:12, 21; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2.

We will examine this connection between Israel's restoration and the Resurrection under three heads:

1. Resurrection may serve merely as a metaphor for Israel's own restoration following her exile.
   Israel's exile represented (in a covenantal sense) her "death".[17] She was under God's judgment, cast out of his presence, etc. Indeed, so hopeless was Israel's situation in exile that the nation's eventual restoration would be a miracle akin to resurrection itself — a wholly supernatural work of God.
   This restoration (of Israel) is surely how we are to understand Ezekiel's Dry Bones vision (Eze 37:1-14).
   Isaiah 26:19 should probably be understood in this sense as well.

2. Paul's adaptation of Isaiah 25:8.
   Here is the reference in context (Isa 25:6-8):

   > [6] *On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make <u>for all peoples</u> a feast of rich food,*
   > *a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.*
   > [7] *And he will swallow up on this mountain the <u>covering</u> that is cast over all peoples,*
   > *the <u>veil</u> that is spread over all nations.*
   > [8] *<u>He will swallow up death forever</u>; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,*
   > *and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth …*

   "Covering" and "veil" (25:7) might refer to a burial shroud (the sheet in which a corpse is wrapped for burial), and/or to the veils that cover the faces of mourners at a funeral. (Translations differ somewhat.)
   Either way, the references are to death and the gloom associated with it.
   This passage is part of a section called "The Little Apocalypse" (Isaiah 24 – 27) — called such because it supposedly deals with universal judgment at the end of the world.
   But actually, these judgments are tied to God's deliverance of his people — their gathering from exile, and the restoration of their nation and city (Jerusalem).[18]

   It is therefore in the context of <u>Israel's restoration</u> that we get this remarkable prophecy:
   On Mount Zion (cf. Isa 24:23) Yahweh will prepare a great feast for all peoples (25:6).
   "Rich food" is symbolic of great spiritual blessings.
   He will remove the burial shroud/veil that is associated with death — and that for all nations (25:7).
   They simply won't be needed, because death itself will be no more (25:8).
   Death, the great "swallower", will itself be swallowed up — permanently!

   Isaiah here ties Israel's restoration to the end of death itself. This will transpire when Yahweh reigns on Mount Zion (Isa 24:23). With the coming of his reign and kingdom, death will be abolished for all nations.

[17] Moses, in Deuteronomy, anticipates Israel's future exile and portrays it as the nation's death. Disobedience will cause Israel to "perish" or "be destroyed" (Dt 4:26; 6:15; 7:4; 8:19-20; 11:17; 28:20; 45, 48, 51, 61, 63; 30:18).
As Kenneth Turner observes, "The people will continue to exist physically in exile; yet, as a single entity, Israel is said to 'perish' or 'be destroyed.' So, it is not Israel as an historical or socio-religious people, but Israel as Yahweh's elect son and servant (Dt 1:31; 7:6; 14:1) that is put to death. Exile constitutes the death of Israel as a nation in covenant [with Yahweh]."
Kenneth J. Turner, quoted by Jason S. DeRouchie in *Why the Third Day? The Promise of Resurrection in All of Scripture*, https://jasonderouchie.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-Why-the-Third-Day-Resurrection-DeRouchie.pdf.
[18] That this section is indeed concerned with the nation's return and restoration is evident from Isaiah 26:1-2; 26:15 (cf. Isa 54:2-3); 27:6-9; 27:12-13 (cf. Isa 11:11).

Concerning Isaiah's prophecy, Ciampa and Rosner note:

> Isaiah 25:8 is cited in rabbinic literature as a divine promise that death would be no more in the age to come.[19]

("Age to come", in Jewish thought, denotes the future messianic age and kingdom — see footnote 15.)

Paul appears to support this interpretive tradition when (in 1 Corinthians 15:54) he applies Isaiah's prophecy to the Resurrection.
In so doing, he also implicitly ties the Resurrection to Israel's end-time restoration.
We noted above that, for Paul, "Jerusalem" was being restored (and God's people gathered from exile) through the gospel.
It would seem (from his use of Isaiah 25:8) that he viewed the coming Resurrection in similar terms:
In the Resurrection God's people would be gathered <u>from exile</u> into his presence in the heavenly Jerusalem.

3. Paul's adaptation of Hosea 13:14.

Here is the reference in context (Hosea 13:14-16, ESV 2016 edition):

> [14] *I shall ransom them from the power of Sheol; I shall redeem them from Death.*
> *O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting?*
> *Compassion is hidden from my eyes.*
> [15] *Though he may flourish among his brothers, the east wind, the wind of the LORD,*
> *shall come, … it shall strip his treasury of every precious thing.*
> [16] *Samaria shall bear her guilt, because she has rebelled against her God;*
> *they shall fall by the sword …*

In view of the immediate context (i.e., concerning judgment about to fall on the northern kingdom),[20] it is more likely that 13:14 should be read negatively — as a pair of rhetorical questions and inviting Death and Sheol to do their worst:

> *Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from Death?*
> *[No, I will not!]*
> *O Death, bring on your plagues! O Sheol, bring on your sting!*
> *Compassion is hidden from my eyes*.[21]

As the following verses (13:15-16) intimate, judgment and violent death would soon overtake Israel and her capital, Samaria — by the hand of the Assyrian invaders (733-722 BC).

Paul's application of Hosea's prophecy to the final Resurrection shows that he viewed that prophecy as having a much wider application than Israel — just as he did for Isaiah 25:8.
In any case, Paul interprets Hosea's prophecy in the light of Jesus' death and resurrection — Jesus has absorbed death's power and sting, rendering death completely impotent.[22]
The death and resurrection of Jesus has ensured that Israel will be ultimately restored, not destroyed.

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[19] Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner. Section on 1 Corinthians 15:54. In: G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, editors, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), p. 747.
[20] The ESV's heading for this entire section of Hosea (chapter 13) is *The LORD's Relentless Judgment on Israel*.
[21] The NET Bible (New English Translation) supports this reading. Other versions that render this verse interrogatively include the AMP, CJB, ESV (2001 edition), EXB, LEB, LSB, NASB, NLT, and RSV.
[22] As Ciampa and Rosner further note, "If in Hosea death is called upon to punish sin, Paul shows that such a role is no longer needed. [Death's sting has been] drained of potency." Section on 1 Corinthians 15:55. In: G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, editors, *Commentary*, p. 748.

Appendix 1: Multiple Deaths and Resurrections in Revelation 20

Revelation 20 refers to a "first resurrection" (20:5b) and a "second death" (20:6).
This necessarily implies there is also second resurrection and a first death.
The following is an attempt to understand this confusing chapter, and the interrelationships between these various deaths and resurrections:

Revelation 20	**Believers**	**Unbelievers**
1st Death (implied)	Physical	Physical
1st Resurrection, pre-AD 70 (20:4-6)	"Souls" in Hades-Paradise; "1000-year" reign	N/A (20:5a: "The rest of the dead did not come to life …")
Keys (implied by Rev 1:18)	Inmates of Hades-Paradise	Inmates of Hades-Hell (Lk 16:23)
2nd Resurrection, AD 70 (20:11-15)	Paradise unlocked; Final Judgment	Hell unlocked; Final Judgment
2nd Death (20:6, 14)	N/A (20:6)	Lake of fire (20:15)
Post-70 AD (Revelation 21 – 22)	Judged at death (Heb 9:27); Immediate entry into heaven with new body	Judged at death (Heb 9:27); Immediate entry into the lake of fire

Concerning the 1000-year (millennial) reign of the martyrs in Paradise (Rev 20:4-6):
1000 years is a code — a pointer to Hades, the realm of the dead.
There is another, earlier 1000-year period in the preceding verses:
The internment of Satan in the Abyss (Rev 20:1-3).
These 1000-year periods (millennia) point to the "other-worldly" locations of Satan's internment and of the martyrs' reign — to Hades-Tartarus (= the Abyss) and Hades-Paradise, respectively.

For a fuller explanation see the following:

1. Kurt Simmons' online article *Why Two MIllennia?,* which can be found here: http://preteristcentral.com/Why%20Two%20Millennia.html.
2. My articles on this website:
   Revelation: A Preterist Interpretation.
   The Millennia of Revelation 20.

Appendix 2: Resurrection hope in Job

Job 19:25-27 (ESV):

> [25] *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.*
> [26] *And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in*[a] *my flesh I shall see God,*
> [27] *whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.*
> *My heart faints within me!*
>
> a. Job 19:26 Or *without*

Job's confession, made famous through Handel's *Messiah*, has traditionally been regarded as reflecting his hope of physical bodily resurrection. Tied to the notion of a physical new heaven and earth, the "orthodox" view is that the souls of believers will, on the last day, leave the bliss of heaven to be reunited with their self-same but renewed bodies in order to live on the new earth.
However, according to the Preterist view, the Resurrection is a past event in which God's people entered heaven with new bodies in AD 70. And with the Resurrection now past, we today receive our new bodies immediately when we die. Our new bodies are spiritual and suited to the heavenly realm. No ultimate exiting heaven to be reunited with physical bodies that have long-since decayed — heaven is our final destiny!

Yet it seems that, in spite of the wasting away of his body, Job believed he would see God, personally and with his own eyes, and that God would vindicate him. Eyes are, after all, the physical organs with which we see!

The only point I wish to make about this passage concerns the ambiguity of the Hebrew text of Job 19:26, which can actually be rendered "<u>apart from</u> my flesh I shall see God" — the exact opposite of the traditional view.

Moreover, not all commentators regard Job's confession as a hope of physical resurrection.
Here are a couple of examples:

<u>Albert Barnes' Notes</u>

> The literal meaning is, "from, or out of, my flesh shall I see God." It does not mean in his flesh, which would have been expressed by the preposition ב (b) — but there is the notion that from or out of his flesh he would see him; that is, clearly, as Rosenmuller has expressed it, tho' my body be consumed, and I have no flesh, I shall see him. Disease might carry its fearful ravages through all his frame, until it utterly wasted away, yet; he had confidence that he would see his vindicator and Redeemer on the earth. It cannot be proved that this refers to the resurrection of that body, and indeed the natural interpretation is against it. It is, rather, that though without a body, or though his body should all waste away, he would see God as his vindicator.[23]

[23] Albert Barnes' Notes for Job 19:26. Via the Bible Hub website: https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/job/19.htm.

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

The words *from my flesh*, however, may mean *away from*, or, *without* my flesh. In this case the words "after this my skin has been destroyed" are taken up and their meaning repeated in a more intense form in the phrase *and without my flesh*. This is the natural construction.

It is to be observed, however, that the language does not state *in* what condition precisely Job shall see God, but rather *after* what events, viz. after his skin has been destroyed and his flesh has been removed. Here, however, again a division of opinion exists.

(1) By some the words are taken in a comparative sense, meaning that Job shall see God when his skin and flesh have been (virtually) destroyed by his disease and he is reduced to a skeleton of bones — though still in life.

(2) By others the language is taken in an absolute sense, meaning that Job's vision of God shall be after his disease has wholly destroyed his body and brought him to death. The second view is the more natural, does most justice to the language, and is most in harmony with the elevated character of the passage. It is also supported by many considerations suggested by other parts of the Book.[24]

[24] The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, notes for Job 19: Job's Reply to Bildad. Via the Bible Hub website: https://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/job/19.htm.

Appendix 3: The Nature of the "Change" in 1 Corinthians 15

1 Corinthians 15:50-53:

> [50] *I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.* [51] *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* [52] *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.* [53] *For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*

In the preceding verses Paul had discussed the nature of the resurrection body.
Here he addresses the question as to what would happen to those who are alive when Jesus returns to raise the dead. He answers that those still alive will undergo an instantaneous change.

The straightforward reading of this passage leads to the following:
At the sounding of the last trumpet the dead will be raised with imperishable bodies.
The living will be "changed" — their perishable/mortal bodies transformed to become imperishable/immortal.

Given that, according to preterism, the seventh and last trumpet has already sounded and the dead have been raised (Rev 11:15, 18), we need to ascertain in what way the living were changed.
Some preterists believe that the change took place when all true Christians were raptured into heaven in AD 70. Supposedly, these raptured saints were then clothed with their resurrection bodies.
But there is no historical evidence for any such rapture. The Church and its leadership continued on, post-70.[25]
Moreover, the New Jerusalem's descent depicts the spiritual blessings about to be enjoyed by those on earth, this side of eternity. A sudden rapture into heaven would run contrary to this and serve no purpose.

The absence of any bodily change to believers in AD 70 is a problem for preterism.
Futurists would say it's a fatal objection.
Yet the New Testament time statements are crystal clear and must not be ignored.

I offer the following tentative "solution":
The "change" refers to a change of status for Christians post-70; they would no longer have to wait ("sleep") in Hades-Paradise pending the final Resurrection (1Cor 15:51).
To all intents they will have "put on immortality" (1Cor 15:53).

After all, Jesus himself declared:

> [25] *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, shall live.*
> [26] *And everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."*
> (John 11:25-26, my translation)

[25] Christian leaders that lived through and beyond the events of AD 70 include Simeon (leader of the Jerusalem church; successor to James), Linus (leader/bishop of the church in Rome; successor to Peter), and Clement (a later leader/bishop in Rome).
Daniel Harden, in *Gathered Into the Kingdom* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), pp. 255-277, reviews these and other early Church leaders who were not raptured in AD 70.

Hadean death was terminated in AD 70 — the last enemy to be destroyed (1Cor 15:25-26; Rev 20:14).
So now, Jesus has "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2Tim 1:10).

Paul, in his follow-up letter to the Corinthians, anticipates the results of this change.
The post-70 AD situation — the "new norm" — will be such that a Christian immediately receives his new body following death (2 Corinthians 5:1-10):

- Our earthly body ("tent") will be replaced with an eternal heavenly body (5:1).
- In the meantime, we groan while we long to be clothed with this heavenly body (5:2-4).
- In our (present) bodies we are away from the Lord (5:6); we long to be away from this body and at home with him (5:8).
- Judgment follows immediately after death (2Cor 5:10; cf. Heb 9:27).

Paul here (in 5:4) seems to borrow language from his earlier Corinthian letter:

> *For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened — not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.*
> (2 Corinthians 5:4; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:53-54.)

That is our situation today as well:
Immediately following death we enter heaven and are "further clothed" with our new body.
But we can do so only because the Resurrection is a past event.
For us now, death has altogether lost its "victory" and "sting" (1Cor 15:55).

One final point:
The New Testament appears to actually teach that biological death would continue following Jesus' return:

Matthew 16:28 (literal Greek text):

> *Truly I say to you, There are some of those standing here who shall certainly not taste of death until they have seen the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.*

John 21:22-23 (my paraphrase):

> [22] *Jesus said to Peter, "If I want John to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?" …*
> [23] *Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that John would not die. However, Jesus had not said to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"*

Appendix 4: Jesus' resurrection body and ours

The following is from Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*.
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House (5th printing, 1988).
Excerpt from page 1199, concerning Jesus' post-Resurrection body:

> It is sometimes assumed that our new bodies will be just like that of Jesus in the period immediately following his resurrection. His body apparently bore the physical marks of his crucifixion, and could be seen and touched (John 20:27). Although the Scripture does not explicitly say that Jesus ate, we draw that inference from Luke 24:28-31 and John 21:9-15. It should be borne in mind that there were more steps remaining in Jesus' exaltation. The ascension, involving a transition from this space-time universe to the spiritual realm of heaven, may well have produced yet another transformation. The change which will occur in our bodies at the resurrection (or, in the case of those still alive, at the second coming) occurred in two stages in his case. **Our resurrection body will be like Jesus' present body, not like that body he had between his resurrection and ascension**. We will not have those characteristics of Jesus' post-resurrection earthly body which appear inconsistent with the descriptions of our resurrection bodies (e.g., physical tangibility and the need to eat).

[Emphasis added. End of quote.]