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PART II

THE NATURE OF MAN:

INCARNATE SPIRIT



*Nothing in the plan of Redemption as set forth in the Scriptures is in any way incidental to it: **nothing**. It is all of a piece and stands wholly essential in all its elements.*

Yet, an established fact is as sacred as a revealed truth.



...CONNECTIONS...

It may be asked, Why all this concern about the meaning and nature of time? Does it really matter? After all, we are not going to worry about time in heaven anyway!

True. The only trouble is that although Scripture reveals that we shall pass immediately into the Lord's presence when we die, we evidently do so without our bodies. The resurrection of the body is a still distant event belonging to the end times. Paul himself, who expected to be present with the Lord at once, is nevertheless still without his body.

Unless we say that the body doesn't really matter in heaven, we have to imagine this interval of disembodied "nakedness" as a period of something less than a totally fulfilling condition of existence. This would seem an odd situation in which to be, in the presence of the gloriously *embodied* Lord.

If we say that embodiment makes no difference, that we can be completely whole in this "naked" condition, then the great emphasis placed on the resurrection of the body in Scripture seems rather meaningless. If we can be perfectly identifiable without our bodies, both subjectively to ourselves and objectively to others, why bother about bodily resurrection? It seems redundant.

Now, man was not created to be pure spirit, such as angels are, but *incarnated* spirit. We and our bodies belong together and the thought of death, in so far as it disrupts this union, is normally an abhorrent one. We have a longing for a real new heaven and a real new earth, and such a setting seems to require some kind of appropriately real bodily existence. The thing we long for is freedom from present *ills*, not freedom from present *objects*.

What was God's purpose in making man MAN rather than angel – i.e., in making him an embodied spirit not just an ethereal one? What role does the body actually play in establishing our personal identity and to what extent does the spirit depend upon the body to function effectively within the framework of the physical world in which we live? What precisely is the relationship between *spirit and body* (from the biblical perspective) and, alternatively, *mind and brain* (from the

neurophysiological perspective)? It is a fascinating subject, and the evidence suggests that the separation of the two components of the human constitution effectively "extinguishes" the individual, thus demonstrating the need for the resurrection of the body.

When, therefore, the spirit deserts the body in death, how can it function while it awaits the new body that is promised at the end? **Perhaps there is no waiting?** The answer to this question is the subject matter of the rest of the volume, and hinges upon what has been said in Part I.

We therefore need to examine two things:

(1) the vital relationship between spirit and body, a union which appears to characterize the true personhood of man (for otherwise why the *Incarnation* of the Lord Jesus Christ?); and

(2) whether there is a form of "interval" between death and resurrection that would not have the effect of extinguishing conscious personal identity even for a moment.

Part II addresses the first: Part III addresses the second.

 PROCEED

