Lesson 7: Doctrine of Glorification… The “Not Yet” Doctrine

(Receiving a Resurrection Body)

Explanation & Scriptural Basis

Definition – Glorification is the last redemptive act of God. It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like his own.

A) The last and final act of redemption.

1) Romans 8:29,30; ”For whom he foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." Romans 8:17 also mentions this concept: "... and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him."

2) John Murray writes, "Glorification is the final phase of the application of redemption. It is that which brings to completion the process which begins in effectual calling. Indeed it is the completion of the whole process of redemption. For glorification means the attainment of the goal to which the elect of God were predestinated in the eternal purpose of the Father and it involves the consummation of the redemption secured and procured by the vicarious work of Christ" (Redemption: Accomplished and Applied, p. 174).

B) New Testament Evidence for Glorification

1) 1 Cor. 15:20-26; “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

2) 1 Thess. 4:13-18; “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no
means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

3) John 5:28-29; “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

4) Phil. 3:20-21; “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

5) Rom. 8:11; “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

6) John 11:23-25; “Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yes, Lord I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come in the world.”

C) Old Testament Support for Glorification

1) Job 19:25-27; “For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall Stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”

2) Dan 12:2; “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

3) Isa. 26:19; “Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.”

D) The resurrection and redemption of the body. Several redemptive acts are associated with glorification.

1) First, glorification includes the resurrection and redemption of the body. The Bible teaches that at death the souls of believers go immediately into the presence of
God and enjoy all the blessings of being made perfect in righteousness, being received into heaven, and beholding the face of God (see: Philippians 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:8; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9-11; 14:13).

2) As wonderful as this state is, however, it is not the final goal of God's salvation. God created man as a union of body and soul and our redemption includes the redemption of the body as well as the soul. This full redemption will occur at the last day in our glorification. Romans 8:23 refers to this aspect of glorification: "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

Now believers have the first fruits of their salvation. Among other blessings, they are forgiven for their sins, Christ's righteousness is imputed to them, they are adopted into God's family, they have spiritual union with Christ, and the Holy Spirit is at work in their sanctification. However, believers do not yet have the full redemption of their bodies. Their bodies are subject to aging and a myriad of diseases and physical problems. Death, the last enemy, is not yet abolished. Romans 8:24,25 mentions that believers have the sure hope or expectation of the full redemption of their bodies, but they are still waiting for that aspect of their salvation to become a reality: "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." Believers wait eagerly for the redemption of their bodies, a redemption that will take place at their glorification.

a. This redemption of the body could occur in one of two ways. For believers who die before Christ's coming, their souls enter into heaven, but their bodies rest in the grave until the resurrection. At Christ's coming their bodies will be resurrected and their souls reunited with new glorified bodies. (1 Thess. 4:13-18 see page 1 in this outline)

b. The second way the redemption of the body may occur is in an instant transformation of the body for believers who are alive at the time of Christ's coming. This is alluded to in the 1 Thessalonians passage when it mentions that those who are alive will not precede those who have died.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54: "Behold I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"
i) The believer that is alive when Christ comes will be instantly glorified. This glorified body is like Christ's glorified human nature. Philippians 3:20, 21; "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

John Murray writes of glorification: "It is the complete and final redemption of the whole person when in the integrity of body and spirit the people of God will be conformed to the image of the risen, exalted, and glorified Redeemer, when the very body of their humiliation will be conformed to the body of Christ's glory (cf. Phil. 3:21)"

ii) It is also important to note that all of God's people enter into this glorification together at the same time. Those who have died are resurrected and glorified at Christ's coming; those who are alive at Christ's coming are glorified "in the twinkling of an eye." Paul emphasizes the point in 1 Thess. 4 when he states that "we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep."

John Murray states, "This truth that glorification must wait for the resurrection of the body advises us that glorification is something upon which all the people of God will enter together at the same identical point in time. There is no priority for one above the other. In this respect it radically differs from death and the glory with Christ upon which saints enter on that event. Each saint of God who dies has his own appointed season and therefore his own time to depart and be with Christ. We can see that this event is highly individualized. But it is not so with glorification. One will not have any advantage over another - all together will be glorified with Christ".

At this point Christians will enter upon their glorified state, the goal toward which the Triune Godhead has been relentlessly driving from the moment of creation.

E) Believers will fully reflect the holy character of Christ.

1) Besides the redemption of the body, glorification means that believers will be perfectly conformed to the holy character of their Savior. The ultimate goal of our sanctification is conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29).
"The souls of the righteous being made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies;" (2nd London Baptist Confession, Chap. 31)

2) This includes not only the redemption of the body, but also believers being sealed in righteousness. Hebrews 12:23 speaks of the spirits of believers in heaven before the resurrection being made perfect: "... to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect..."

3) In glorification, this state is intensified in that believers are made perfectly and immutably righteous in both body and spirit.

1 John 3:2; "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as he is."

Jude 24; "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy...."

F) Future glorification is a basis for present encouragement.

This Scriptural doctrine has a strong application for Christians now.

Romans 8:18; "For I consider that the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

In the midst of trials and suffering, it is crucial to keep an eternal perspective and remember that the temporal trials and pains of this life cannot even be compared with the future glory that awaits God's people. The cultivation of an eternal perspective gives comfort during times of suffering.

The cost of sacrificial service to Christ is not worth the results we see in this life. We receive blessings that encourage us along the way: business successes, faithful children, and good health. But these gifts alone cannot sustain those whose lives are filled with voluntary suffering. To overcome the discouragement that often accompanies suffering, we must follow Paul's example by turning away from this life and focusing on our reward in the world to come.

G) What Will Our Resurrection Bodies Be Like?

1) 1 Cor. 15:35-58: Please turn to your copy of the Scriptures to see this passage.

   i. Glorious; 1 Cor. 15:43
   ii. Powerful; 1 Cor. 15:43
iii. Spiritual; 1 Cor. 15:46
iv. Imperishable (Immortal); 1 Cor. 15:53

2) Christ’s own resurrection body, though it differed somewhat from the body He had before He died, was similar enough in appearance for the disciples to know who it was rather quickly. People will probably be able to recognize and know one another in heaven. (Matt. 8:11; Luke 9:30, 33; Matt. 27:52-53)

H) The entire creation will be renewed as well.

Rom. 8:19-23; “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”

1) Paul says that all corruption, chaos, and death in the created order is due to man’s fall into sin. The creation, however, will be set free from its slavery to corruption at the same time God’s people are glorified.

John Murray writes, "It is a renewed cosmos, new heavens and new earth that we must think of as the context of the believers’ glory, a cosmos delivered from all the consequences of sin, in which there will be no more curse but in which righteousness will have complete possession and undisturbed habitation" (Redemption: Accomplished and Applied, p. 179).

2) Peter describes this renewed creation as "new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13). This is a fulfillment of Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22 where a new heaven and new earth are prophesied. John declares that in this new heaven and new earth "there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

I) The glorification of believers is associated with the final glorification of Christ.

1) The glorification of believers is glorification with Christ. The ultimate goal is the full glorification of his Son as Savior and Messianic king.

Romans 8:17; "...and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him."
a) The significant point is that believers are glorified with him. Romans 8:29 provides further understanding concerning this: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. . . ."

Commenting on this, John Murray writes, "In Rom. 8:17, believers and Christ are said to be glorified together, and in Rom. 8:29, 30 it is apparent that the glorification spoken of in verse 30 is the realization of the predestinating purpose spoken of in verse 29, namely, conformity to the image of God's Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. These two texts, therefore, (Rom. 8:17; 8:29, 30), both indicate the inseparable conjunction and community that exists between Christ and believers in respect of what is the final phase of Christ's exaltation and glorification, and the glorification of the elect. The title, 'firstborn' or first begotten' refers to priority and pre-eminence and points to the supereminence (superior eminence) that belongs to Christ. But it is supereminence among brethren, and therefore the supereminence involved has no meaning except in that relation. Hence, though there can be no underestimation of the pre-eminence belonging to the Son as the firstbegotten, yet the interdependence is just as necessary. The glory bestowed upon the redeemed is derived from the relation they sustain to the 'firstborn.' But the specific character in being the 'firstborn' is derived from the relation he sustains to the redeemed in that capacity. Hence they must be glorified together" (Collected Writings of John Murray, 2:315).

b) Believers are glorified together with Christ and the chief end is the glory of God (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; Philippians 1:11).

As we think about our own glorification and seek to build an eternal perspective into our lives, this chief end should dominate our thinking and hope. God will not be finally satisfied until Christ and his church are fully and finally glorified, to the praise of his Son and his own most holy name (Phil. 1:11), and that to eternity.

Believers have the sure expectation of exceeding glory and eternal bliss which they receive only through the mercy and grace of God. Eternity will not be long enough to give praise and glory to God for His indescribable gift.

J) The unbelieving dead will be raised for judgment on the day of final judgment. (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15) [This topic to be covered in another lesson at a future date]
CHAPTER 31; OF THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH, AND OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Paragraph 1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption;1 but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them.2 The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies;3 and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day;4 besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none.

1 Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36
2 Eccles. 12:7
3 Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23
4 Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23,24

Paragraph 2. At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed;5 and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other;6 although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.7

5 1 Cor. 15:51,52; 1 Thess. 4:17
6 Job 19:26,27
7 1 Cor. 15:42,43

Paragraph 3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.8

8 Acts 24:15; John 5:28,29; Phil. 3:21

CHAPTER 32; OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

Paragraph 1. God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ;1 to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged,2 but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.3

1 Acts 17:31; John 5:22,27
2 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6
3 2 Cor. 5:10; Eccles. 12:14; Matt. 12:36; Rom. 14:10,12; Matt. 25:32-46

Paragraph 2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient;4 for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who do not know God,
and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.  
4 Rom. 9:22,23  
5 Matt. 25:21,34; 2 Tim. 4:8  
6 Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess. 1:7-10

Paragraph 3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will he have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus; come quickly.  
7 2 Cor. 5:10,11  
8 2 Thess. 1:5-7  
10 Rev. 22:20  

Amen.