

Creeds of the Kehillah ~ Part 13

The Apostles' Creed ~ Part 12

This post will continue our closer look at the third article of faith contained in the **Apostles' Creed** to learn more about what we affirm that we believe.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

From start to finish, the Creed affirms the value of the material world. In opposition to rival systems of thought that denigrate matter and the body, the ancient catechism confesses **God** as the maker, redeemer, and sanctifier of this world. The life of the flesh is not alien to **God**. It is **God's** creature and the object of **God's** loving intentions.

The first part of the Creed proclaims **God** as the creator of all things, not only of the spiritual world but of the material world too: **maker of heaven and earth**.

The second part of the Creed confesses that the **Son of God** has become part of this world by taking human nature to himself. All **God's** intentions for creation come into focus here: **conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary**. And the **Son of God** suffers in the flesh. He is crucified. He dies. He is buried. He is raised in the flesh and continues to share our nature in the glory of the **Resurrection**.

The third part of the Creed confesses that **God's Spirit** (Ruach) remains present in this world. Believers share in the power and presence of the **Ruach HaKodesh**. The **Ruach** does not live on some higher plane but is here within us.

Belief in bodily **Resurrection** is one of the controlling undercurrents of the **Brit Hadashah**. Yet, the nature of the **Resurrection** is hardly ever addressed directly. The **Gospel** accounts never try to depict the **Resurrection** itself. Mark's account does not even include a depiction of the risen **Yeshua**: the tomb is empty, and it is left to the reader to understand why (Mark 16:1–8). The other **Gospels** depict the risen **Yeshua**, but not the **Resurrection** itself (Matt 28; Luke 24; John 20). The tomb is already empty when the **talmidim** get there. The actual **Resurrection** has occurred in secret. It has happened, but where? In the tomb? In hell? In eternity? Wherever and however it happened, the event has already occurred. That is why the **talmidim** are faced with a decision, whether to believe or not.

The closest the **Brit Hadashah** comes to explaining the **Resurrection** is **Sha'ul's** discussion in 1 Corinthians 15. He argues that we, too, will rise in the same way that **Yeshua** has risen. But we do not have any clear picture of what a **Resurrection** looks like. So, **Sha'ul** tries to explain it using the image of a seed (1 Cor 15:35–49). The body now is like a seed, and the life of the **Resurrection** is like the tree. There is an incredible difference between the seed and the tree. They do not look alike. You would not be able to guess the appearance of the tree by looking at the seed. Yet, their identity is the same. In the same way, **Sha'ul** says, our mortal bodies will be planted and raised immortal in **Yeshua**. **Sha'ul** calls this **a mystery** (15:51).

So, what are we claiming to believe when we say that we believe in the **Resurrection of the body**?

If **God intends** to bring forth a single redeemed body, then the eternal joy of the life to come depends, in some measure, on each of us. The joy of **Yeshua** is on hold until we take up our place with Him.

This still leaves us no closer to forming a clear picture of the life of the world to come. So, what do **Believers** hope for? Perhaps it is enough to say that a **Believer's** hope is a social and, therefore, an embodied hope and that this hope centers on communion with the person of **Yeshua**. We learn these things not by speculating about the afterlife but by contemplating the risen **Yeshua** and accepting by faith the things that are revealed in Him. Most of all, what we know about **Yeshua** is that He is the lover of humanity. And so, the life that we await will be a life of love. ¹

In my next post, we will conclude our examination of the **Apostle's Creed**.

¹ The Apostles' Creed: A Guide to the Ancient Catechism.