

Eschatology and Resurrection in the New Testament

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Summary

This presentation will begin with the relation between eschatology and resurrection in the letters of Paul. In 1 Thessalonians, his earliest letter, Paul speaks about the resurrection of Jesus in connection with both the future work of the son of God (he who rescues us from the wrath that is coming) and the future expectation of the addressees (you serve God and wait for his son from the heavens) (1:9-10). Later in that letter he links the coming of the Lord with the resurrection of those who have died in Christ and the transformation of those in Christ still alive at the time (4:16-17). This way of linking the resurrection of the followers of Jesus with his coming from heaven is reflected also in 1 Cor 15:23. It is in tension, however, with the scenario of 2 Cor 5:1-5, according to which “we” will not be found naked when we die, but will be “clothed” with our heavenly building, apparently immediately after death. It is also in tension with Paul’s remark in Phil 1:23, which implies that he will be with Christ immediately after death, if execution is the outcome of his current imprisonment. The presentation will consider whether these differences are due to changes in Paul’s thought or whether they can otherwise be explained. It will also discuss the two resurrections in the book of Revelation and their contexts in eschatological tradition.