

Being human, being divine. What makes us human?

12 November 2009

Eternal life

Eternal life, everlasting life, real life

aionios, αἰωνίος, aion

olam (Hebrew)

- *aion* and *olam* both have the basic idea of that which flows, especially that which flows out or flows down. eonian life is life that flows or flows out, out-flowing life.
- rivers of healing water, Ezekiel, Apocalypse
- age, time, outflows, outflowing (Psalm 90; O God our help, v 2)
- *everlasting* might be derived from this. life is working in a mighty stream.
- When we say something is there for eternity, we sometimes mean it is always accessible.
- Jonathan Bailey: Not quantity (everlasting), but quality (eternal: with God). Eternal life in that sense starts here and now on earth, living in the company of God, in the power of his Spirit. Life like that feels different, is different: You see the world differently, it shapes your values, it determines what is important to you, it brings much joy, and you face mystery, suffering, and tragedy in a different way. St Paul says it so well in Romans 8, when he writes about nothing being able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
- Outflowing life is a quality of life you would WANT to live for ever.
- The nature of the Divine is that of a "flow-er" -- one that flows. Related to pouring out, self-giving, kenosis.
- Self-giving life, healing life, salving life. Salvation: notions of

Now or then?

- Thy kingdom come on earth
- Christian Aid: *We believe in life before death*

Jesus

- When questioned by the Sadducees about the resurrection, Jesus made it clear that the resurrected will be like angels in heaven.
- the faithful to the resurrection of life, unfaithful to the resurrection of judgment.
- According to Matthew, at the death of Jesus tombs were opened, and at his resurrection, saints who had died emerged from their tombs and went into "the holy city," No other New Testament account includes this event.

Early Church

- The author of Luke: Lazarus and the rich man. Revelation author: battle at the end of times when all souls are judged. There is mention of ghostly bodies of past prophets, and transfiguration.
- Efficacy of prayer for the dead, so that they might be "translated to a state of happiness."
- Hades as a place where the righteous dead, awaiting resurrection, rejoice at their future prospect, while the unrighteous are tormented at the sight of the lake of fire.
- Gregory of Nyssa discusses the long-before believed possibility of purification of souls after death.
- Saint Augustine: unbaptized go to hell, including infants.

Paul

- Thessalonians
- entry into Heaven is a gift that is solely God's to give through his unmerited grace.
- but the belief that heaven is a reward for good behaviour is common.

Catholic: hell is not punishment imposed on the sinner, but rather the sinner's refusal to accept God's love.

Eastern religions

Parapsychology: exorcism, poltergeist, dreams, dead as angels in heaven.