

The Resurrection of Christ and the Believers - April 12, 2020

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a most important truth, a central fact of Christianity. Only because Christ died for our sins and then rose from the dead can we be saved, can we be forgiven, have eternal life, have true love and peace in our heart, and then go to heaven and be with God and Christ and fellow believers forever and ever.

- 1 Cor. 15:3-4 – *“I delivered to you of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

Today, I want to look at some verses that talk about man’s death and Christ’s resurrection. First, we have to look at the reason for man’s death. Rom. 3:23 says, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Every person who has ever lived in this world has sinned and is therefore separate from God, and falls short, far short, of being holy, of being what God planned for him to be.

Rom. 6:23 says, *“The wages of sin is death.”* The consequences, the results of our sin is that we die, we spiritually die. In Gen 2:17 we read what God said to Adam and Eve, *“from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die.”* The dying talked about here is not physical, for all people who sin must physically die (except Enoch and Elijah). But what this and other verses say is that people spiritually die because of their sin. Eph. 2:1 - *“You were dead in your trespasses and sins.”* Ez. 18:20. *“The soul that sins will die.”* This death, this dying is talking about spiritual death.

The person who sins then is spiritually dead, and if he never gets right with God, is never forgiven of his sins, and then physically dies, then he is eternally dead, that is, he is spiritually dead and separated from God forever, and will be punished forever by God for his sins. John 3:16; John 5:24; Matt. 25:41, 46

Rom. 4:23-25. Vs 25 says Jesus was delivered over because of our transgressions. That is, God the Father delivered Jesus over to death because of our sins (Rom. 5:8). Jesus died for our sins and was punished by His Father for our sins. Then it says He was raised because of our justification, or better said, He was raised for our justification. - And so, Jesus Christ was raised for our justification. What this means is that Jesus didn’t really defeat sin if He had just stayed in the tomb, because the result of sin is death, and Jesus was still dead in the tomb.

But the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead means that Jesus got victory over sin, and proves He got victory over sin. You see, sin results in death, and the fact that Jesus was no longer physically dead, meant that He defeated not just death, but sin which resulted in death. And all who believe in Jesus are justified, are completely righteous in God’s sight, and therefore, are ones who, because of Jesus Christ, also defeat both sin and death.

Rom. 4:24. To be justified, to be made righteous in God's sight, we need to believe in God, and believe that God raised Christ from the dead, and God raising Christ from the dead showed that Christ got victory over sin - for Christ paid for our sins, and then died, but He didn't stay dead; and so, His resurrection shows that He not only got victory over our sin, but also over the result of sin which is death.

Heb. 2:14-15 – *“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise, also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”* This tells us some important things:

- First, Jesus needed to be man, for only by being man could Jesus die in our place, and then die for our sins. Jesus then took our sin upon Himself and died, and thereby got the victory over sin and death, the evidence and proof being that He rose from the dead.
- Second, we understand that the devil has the power of death. This is saying that the devil has power over unbelievers. All who are sinners are children of the devil and are in his camp, his domain of death and darkness, and therefore, the devil, has power over them.

Of course, it's our sin, our rebellion against God that results in Satan having power over us; and an unbeliever does, whether he realizes it or not, what Satan wants him to do, to keep sinning against God, and thereby remain spiritually dead. 2 Cor. 4:4

- And again, our sin gives Satan his power over us, this power of sin resulting in this power of death. Now the devil's desire is to do all he can to keep people spiritually dead during their life on earth, and if he succeeds in that, then people will go to hell forever.
- And so, in a real sense, Satan has the power of sin and death over us, and this power of sin and death had to be broken. J. MacA. *“The only way to defeat Satan was to rob him of his weapon – death, physical death, spiritual death and eternal death... Death is the power of Satan's dominion, and when Jesus shattered Satan's power He also shattered His dominion.”*

Again, Satan knows if unbelievers stay spiritually dead during their life on earth and then die, then their opportunity for salvation is gone forever. And so, Jesus came to take the devil's power away, to destroy it for us, and give us the power of life, which is eternal life.

- The way to eternal life is through the resurrection, and the way to the resurrection is through death, and so, Jesus went through death and was then raised from the dead and therefore, conquered death for us. And so, Christ's death and resurrection is the means of eternal life. Jesus Christ took away the devil's power of death through the resurrection and therefore, could give us the power over death, and with that, eternal life.

We read that unbelievers are enslaved to death – they are enslaved to sin, and the result of sin, which is death. And many unbelievers are afraid to die. Maybe they have realized they have sinned against God and are guilty and that they deserve to be punished in hell. (Heb. 10:26-27). Or maybe they are afraid of the unknown – they don't know what is going to happen to them when they die. The point is that a lot of unbelievers are afraid to die. Heb. 2:14-15

Col. 2:9 – Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, and because He is perfect, He could die for us.
- Col. 2:10-14 – *“In Him you have been made complete, ... And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the remove of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead... He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven of us all our sins.”*

Through Christ you have been made complete. The fact that you were spiritually circumcised means you have a new spiritual heart, you are a new person in Christ, you are a child of God. And it's not by your works, but by your faith, your trust in Christ alone. Titus 3:5
- And you were baptized, meaning spiritual baptism, not physical baptism. You were spiritually placed into Christ. And since Christ was raised from the dead then you were, spiritually speaking, raised from the dead, and raised up with Christ, that is, were born again, were forgiven of your sins, and you became a child of God. And this is all the work of God, an incredible miracle of God for us, for us who were lost in our sins, and spiritually dead.

Col. 2:14-15. You're not spiritually dead anymore, but spiritually alive, and your sin and debt were taken away because of Christ's death and resurrection, and because we were raised up with Him; and again, it's by your faith in Christ. Thankfully, Jesus Christ defeated the devil, made him powerless, and so the devil now has no power over you. Rom. 8:1, 31-34

Eph. 2:1-9. As unbelievers we were sinners and therefore, we were spiritually dead, and deserved God's wrath. But God, because of His mercy, sent Christ to die in our place, to save us from our sin and from death. And we are saved, not because of what we do, but because of God's grace, because of His mercy, because of what He did for us.
- And so, we are saved, we are spiritually alive, and spiritually speaking, we were raised up with Christ and were seated with Him in heaven and are now citizens of heaven. Not only that, but God wants to show us the surpassing riches of His grace in the ages to come.

Rev. 1:17-18. *“Jesus placed His right hand on me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.’”* John was very afraid, for he had just seen this vision of Jesus, and it was a powerful, awesome, sobering and frightening vision of Jesus. But Jesus tells him not to be afraid, and if we know Jesus, if we are saved, we have nothing to be afraid of, not even death, which to be honest, is a person's biggest fear.

Now a person should be very concerned about what's going to happen to him after he dies. He should be wondering what's going to happen. *“Is there life after death? Will I live after I die? Will I cease to exist? Is there purgatory? Will I go to heaven? Will I go to hell? Will I be judged by Christ for my sins? Will I be declared innocent or guilty? And if I go to hell, will I be eternally and painfully punished for my sins?”* These are important questions; and a person who doesn't know Christ should be dreadfully afraid of what will happen after he dies, but sadly, most people aren't. Their idea of the future is often wrong, for they are believing their own misconceptions or some false teaching, and they aren't very concerned about what happens to them after they die. Matt. 25:41, 46

But Jesus reminds John and all of us the truth about life and death.

- First, Jesus says He is the *"first and the last,"* that He Himself is God, which means He has all authority and power, and that what He says is true, absolutely and eternally true.

- Second, Jesus says He is the *"Living One,"* for He was dead, but He was raised from the dead, and is now alive, and will live forevermore. And all this means is that Christ defeated and conquered death, which is the best news there is. No one else could defeat death, could get victory over death, but Jesus Christ did, for Himself, for His Father, and for us.

- Third, Jesus has the keys to death. This means that through Christ, we can defeat death, and we can be resurrected after we die, we can come back to life, both spiritually and physically. And it's when we are saved, when we are born again that we spiritually become alive; and we physically come alive when we are glorified, for then we receive our new, immortal bodies, which enable us to live forever with God in body, soul and spirit. 1 Cor. 15:50-53

But it also says Christ has the keys to Hades. And Hades, in the New Testament, refers to hell, to that place of punishment a person goes to after he dies (Luke 16:23-24). And that Jesus has the keys to Hades means He controls, He has power over who goes to Hades and who doesn't. Now Jesus died on the cross to pay for the sins of people so all who repent of their sins and believe He died for them, will be forgiven of their sins, and will not be punished in Hades. But if you don't believe in Christ you will go to Hades, go to hell, and after that you will be punished forever in the lake of fire, that horrific place unbelievers deservedly go to at the end of the millennial kingdom, after the Great White Throne Judgment. Matt 25:30, 41, 46; Rev. 20:11-15

1 Cor. 15:20-28. This gives us the big picture. It talks about Christ being resurrected, which happened about 2000 years ago, and then it says we will be resurrected, we will be glorified at Christ's coming, which will happen in the near future, for Christ will return to rapture the church and we will then be glorified, be given brand-new, perfect and powerful bodies. And then the next age, the millennial kingdom age will take place, and you and I, in our glorified bodies, will reign with Jesus Christ and serve Him, carrying out our special and specifically assigned tasks on this earth, serving Christ. And then it will be said, *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts, and the whole earth will be filled w/ His glory."* Hab. 2:14

Finally, at the end of that 1000-year period, Jesus Christ will hand the kingdom over to God the Father, and then the eternal kingdom will begin, and we will be with Christ in the new city of Jerusalem, and worshiping Him, reigning with Him and serving Him forever. Psalm 145:1-2 – *"I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised."*