

The Significance of the Resurrection of Jesus

“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Listen to this account of the discovery of the empty tomb on the day of Jesus resurrection.

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they [the women disciples] came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.”

“And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, *“Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”*

“And they remembered His words and returned from the tomb and repeated all these things to the eleven and to all the rest” [Luke 24:1-9].

Peter preached several weeks later, saying:

“This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses...Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” [Acts 2:32,36].

That Jesus arose from the dead after His crucifixion and walked out of the tomb where He was buried is at the heart of the Christian faith. This belief, grounded upon historical fact, is the central pillar of the Christian religion. In the words of Paul: *“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is in vain, your faith is worthless, you are still in your sins”* (1 Cor. 15:14, 17).

What Paul is saying is that the truthfulness of Christ's claims and therefore of the Christian gospel stands or falls with the resurrection. If Christ has been raised from the dead, it's all true; but if he is still dead and buried, then it is all false and there is no hope for mankind. "*But now Christ has been raised from the dead...*"! He is risen indeed!

What is so significant about the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ? Why is it so all-important? I want us to examine this teaching of the New Testament under two headings:

1st, what the resurrection meant to Christ himself, and
2nd, what His resurrection means to us.

First, The resurrection of Jesus meant that the Father had accepted His sacrifice on behalf of guilty sinners. Jesus Christ came into the world on a mission of salvation. In order to redeem sinful man, He must suffer the punishment due them. "*The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many*" (Mark 10:45). This meant that He must be a sinless person and that no flaw could be in Him or in His work. In that dark hour upon the cross there was a transference of our sin – our guilt to His account. "*He became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*" [2 Cor.5:21].

He suffered and He died. On the third day God the Father raised Him from the dead. When He did so, He was putting His stamp of approval upon His work. He was saying, "I accept your sacrifice – there was no sin, no flaw in you or in your work. The debt is paid in full."

Second, the resurrection of Jesus validates His claim to be the unique Son of God. At the heart of the New Testament is its proclamation of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. He is LORD! This is the central confession of the early church. "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is LORD and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Belief in and submission to the Lordship of Christ is necessary to a New Testament experience of salvation. But this confession

of His Lordship is a delusion if Jesus is not risen. Since He is risen, this validates His claim.

Paul wrote: *“He was born of the seed of David according to the flesh and was declared with power to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom 1:3-4). His descent from David through Mary shows that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly man. His resurrection from the dead proves that He was truly God.

He did it not become the Son of God by the resurrection – he was declared to be such. He who during His ministry on earth was the Son of God in weakness, became by the resurrection, the Son of God in power. *“For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living”* [Rom. 14:9]. Thus the resurrection is confirmation of Jesus’ divine Sonship – He is who He said He was – the unique Son of God - God manifested in the flesh – our Lord and our God.

Also, to Jesus the resurrection was His entrance into glory as a human being. He who had shared the Father’s glory for all eternity set aside that privilege for a season when He came to dwell among men. He was promised the reward as a human being – the unique God-man – of entering into the glory of the Father in His glorified human nature. This is part of His reward.

He prayed just hours before His death: *“And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed”* [John 17:5].

This the Father did when He raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand as our Mediator and our Great High Priest. This the church confesses concerning Jesus Christ:

*He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit*

*Beheld by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory [1 Timothy 3:16].*

The author of Hebrews tells us that “*When he had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high*” (Heb. 1:3).

The resurrection relates that Jesus is the living, exalted, glorified Lord.

The resurrection was important to Jesus and it is no less important to us who believe in Him. It is God’s guarantee that what he said He could do for us, He truly does.

First, the resurrection of Christ relates that we can be forgiven of our sins and be declared justified before God.

“He was delivered up because of our transgressions and was raised for our justification” [Romans 4:25].

Everything depends upon Christ’s resurrection. You see, if God the Father raised Him from the dead and put His seal of approval upon His death in behalf of sinners, it means your sins can be forgiven when you place your trust in Him. He has handled once for all your sin problem, and thus you can be declared “not guilty” before God on the basis that your debt has been fully discharged before His bar of justice.

Also the resurrection of Christ Jesus means that He can and does come to live in those who place their trust in Him as Savior. He not only saves from the guilt and penalty of past sins, but he is a living Savior. By His Holy Spirit He comes to live in us, and we are vitally connected to Him. We are joined to Him. He lives on the throne of God and He lives in the hearts of the redeemed. This guarantees the salvation of all who truly trust Him as Lord and Savior.

“He is able to save forever (or to save completely) those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” [Heb. 7:25].

“For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” [Rom. 5:10].

In reference to all mankind and especially the unregenerate, those who do not bow the knee to Christ’s Lordship, *the resurrection of Christ is the pledge of God that He will come again to this earth as the Judge.*

“God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead “ [Acts 17:31].

History has a goal. It is all wrapped up in Jesus Christ. Because He arose from the dead, those who trust in Him will be raised also, in like manner.

But the resurrection of Christ is also a solemn declaration that if you do not flee to Christ and lay hold of His redemption, you will be judged by the Christ whom you have rejected. He will lay aside His high-priestly garment and put on the sword of omnipotent justice. If you are not robed in His righteousness, you will appear before Him in your own filthy rags, and He will send you into outer darkness forever. His resurrection is the pledge and guarantee that one day you will face the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are the most important truths proclaimed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We could look at the historical reasons for belief in Jesus’ resurrection. There are many. It is a reality based on objective facts. We could talk about the empty tomb, the transformation of the defeated lives of the disciples, and the creation of the Christian church. But I want to challenge you, if you

are not convinced of the reality of His resurrection, to take the more subjective test. Yet it is the acid test of the truthfulness of the claims of Christ's resurrection.

I want you to talk to Him as if He were alive. Tell Him something like this: "Jesus, I hear you are alive. I don't know, but I'm willing to learn. I want you to show me yourself."

Then take the New Testament and with this prayerful attitude read the accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the New Testament letters that explain these events. If you approach God with this humble attitude and subject your mind to the rich data of the New Testament, you will meet the risen Lord and He will transform your life – forgive your sins and turn you into a believer. Amen.

This has been Wayne Conrad with Bible Insights. Until next time....