

# The Resurrection

*Matthew 27-28; Mark 15-16; Luke 24; John 19-21*

The death of Christ on the cross was God's way (and ultimately the only way) of dealing with the problem of sin. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor 5:21). Without the shedding of blood, there would be no remission of sin (Heb 9:22). This shows us at once both the horror of sin and the love of God. Jesus died because He loved us and desired for us to have fellowship with Him, but we can't have fellowship with God in sin. Because God wanted the fellowship, He provided a means by which sin can be forgiven. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23). This is His grace at work (Eph 2:8-9).

However, God's plan does not stop only at Jesus' death. In fact, if God's plan ends at the death of Jesus, then we would be miserable people without hope. He came to bring a living hope "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet 1:3). "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain ... If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied" (1 Cor 15:12-19). The



resurrection, therefore, was critical to God's overall plan.

The completion of God's plan includes those wonderful words: "He is risen!" Paul followed up his point with this: "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep" (1 Cor 15:20). Herein lies the message of hope.

Jesus was taken off the cross and buried according to the Jewish custom. He was wrapped in cloth with spices mixed in. They took him to a new tomb very close to where he was crucified and belonging to Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea (see Isa 53:9). A large stone was rolled in front of the opening, and guards were placed at the tomb due to the fears that the Jewish leadership had of the disciples stealing the body.

Early on the third day, some of the women who followed Jesus were on their way to the tomb to apply more spices to the body. They were concerned about how to move the stone from the opening. But when they got there, they were amazed to find the stone rolled away from the door. Two "men" in "dazzling clothing" were there. They addressed the women:

"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 reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest" (Luke 24:5-9).

Everything was now falling into place as Jesus began appearing to His disciples. The apostle Paul reports, "He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also" (1 Cor 15:5-8).

Multiple witnesses could testify to the fact that Jesus, who had died, was seen alive again. That historical reality is the basis for the beginning and growth of His body of Christians from that day forward. All of this was done publicly, with the full intent to spread that news. This is the foundation for understanding our hope, our own resurrection, and our ability to have confidence in serving the Lord, just as Paul indicated: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor 15:58).

The resurrection of Jesus is also the proof that there will be a coming judgment: "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people 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 17:30-31).

By the power of God, Jesus was raised up. By that same power, so will we be raised. The significance of Jesus' resurrection cannot be understated. Praise God, who gives us to the victory through Jesus Christ!

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