

What Jesus' Resurrection Means to Us

Intro: When God made His covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai, He instituted a holy calendar of days to be observed each year. He was very specific about what those days were and what His people should do on each one of them.

We might have expected Him to do something similar when He revealed His new covenant through Jesus Christ and His apostles. However such a calendar of holy days does not exist in our NT other than the institution of the first day of the week as a day in which Christians gather to remember Jesus' death and resurrection in the Lord's Supper.

Interestingly many religious groups today celebrate an elaborate calendar of holy days that were instituted by men through the centuries following the establishment of the church. They include many holy days or seasons recalling certain events in Jesus' life and the veneration of various "saints" canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. Some Protestant groups have selective observed some of these days while rejecting others.

Our commitment to simply follow what was revealed in the NT makes us reticent to observe any of these human traditions or to venerate these so-called saints. Rather it motivates us to focus upon the Lord's Day and to teach and appreciate all things that Jesus and His apostles did and taught.

However, this approach to faith does not at all suggest that we do not celebrate important events in Jesus' life, such as His birth, His death, his resurrection or ascension. In fact, while not observing "Easter" as a holy day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus, it might be said that we celebrate the resurrection every first day of week by assembling on that day and by reflecting upon its meaning constantly. One does not have to observe Easter in order for the resurrection to have meaning and importance to one.

So may I then suggest "What the resurrection of Jesus means to us?"

It means that we have an irrefutable basis for our faith in Him as the Son of God.

The eyewitness testimony of the apostles is given to us to lead us to faith in Jesus as the Christ, the son of the living God.

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (Jn. 20:30-31)

The resurrection is the culminating sign of Jesus' claims to be God in the flesh.

...concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection

*from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,
(Rom. 1:3-4)*

No one has been able to successfully discredit the evidence of the resurrection.

It means that we can pass from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Paul showed the Corinthians that the denial of the concept of the resurrection of the dead had serious implications for everyone. It meant that Christ was not raised; and if Christ was not raised then there was no forgiveness of sins.

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. (1 Cor. 15:16-17)

The positive point is that the resurrection assures that we have passed from spiritual death to spiritual life--that the sins that made us spiritually dead have now been forgiven and we have been reconciled to God.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (Jn. 5:24)

And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, (Col. 2:13)

It means that we have been exalted to a new status as citizens of His kingdom.

Paul wanted the Ephesians to understand that something remarkable had happened to them in their decision to follow Jesus. They had experienced the resurrection power of Jesus in being made alive from spiritual death.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, (Eph. 2:4-6)

But in addition, they had been "seated with him in the heavenly places." and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:6-7)

The word "seated" when it refers to Christ means more than taking a certain posture as if one is no longer active. It is the language of enthronement as suggested by passages like Ps. 110.

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." (Ps. 110:1)

But what then are the implications for those who raised in Christ? They too are "seated" with Him. In other words, we share in His reign.

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17)

We are citizens of his kingdom, soldiers in His army, and sharers of His victory!

It means that there is a real power to transform us into new creatures in Him.

Paul shows us that the experience of salvation is itself a resurrection to new life.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, (Rom. 6:3-5)

We no longer live in the oldness of the sinful way of the life; but in the newness of a life lived unto God in which the members of our body become instruments of righteousness.

He prayed that the Ephesians might know the greatness of the power that was working them to bring them to that newness of life.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. (Eph. 1:18-19)

It means that we have a constant intercessor in the presence of the Father.

Many people find the Hebrew writer's description of Jesus being a high priest after the order of Melchizedek confusing. His point is a simple one. Melchizedek did not inherit his position from others by physical descent nor pass it to another by his death. Likewise Jesus became our high priest not by birth into a priestly family nor did he surrender it by death (like the priests of the OT economy). But instead His resurrection from the dead establishes His perpetual role as our intercessor.

And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of Him, "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. 7:15-17)

What that means to us is that we will never lose the help of our great high priest until the day that we reach the presence of God.

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25)

It means that there will be a final day of judgment.

The victory of Jesus over death establishes Him as the final judge of all mankind.

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,³¹ 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.”
(Ac. 17:30-31)

Jesus resurrection and exaltation is the basis for Paul's affirmations that all will ultimately submit to Jesus as Lord, either in this life or at the judgment.

For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” (Romans 14:11)

It was for this purpose that Jesus came to earth that in his victory over sin and death, He might be worthy of the praise and honor of all mankind.

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11)

It means that our victory over death is assured

Paul shows that our enemy (death) is also Christ's enemy, the last one to be defeated. Therefore because He has been victorious, our resurrection is also assured.

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. (1 Cor. 15:20-24)

It means that we can see again those who have departed from us

If the resurrection assures our victory over death, then it also assures the victory of those we have died before us; and opens up the possibility of reunion with them again.

This is what prompted Paul to urge the Thessalonians not sorrow in hopelessness for their lost loved ones. Instead he tells them that Jesus' resurrection assures their resurrection as well.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thes. 4:14-17)

It means that our efforts to serve the Lord will not be in vain.

If there was doubt about Jesus' resurrection then we might be tempted to make less effort just in case this all turns out to be a pipe dream. But since

we know that Jesus is alive and that our victory over death is assured, then we can risk everything, even life itself.

This is what prompts Paul's final exhortations to the Corinthians:

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 Corinthians 15:58)

Conclusion: Can any truth of Scripture reach more deeply into our hearts than the knowledge that Jesus is risen and that all these things are true because of it?

What does Jesus' resurrection mean to you? Do you believe it? Will you act upon it?

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him. (1 Peter 3:21-22)