

JESUS IS ALIVE - April 4, 2021

Today, we're celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All of Christianity rests on the truth, the fact, that about 2000 yrs. Ago, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and is still alive today, and will be alive forever. The resurrection of Christ is so critically important, for without it, you have no hope, no salvation, and no victory over sin and death.

The biggest problem in the world is death. As you know, people do all they can to stay alive, to live longer, to postpone death. Billions of dollars are spent on doctors, medicines, and hospitals, but as a person, you can never beat death. God tells you, "*the soul that sins will die,*" and you can't just somehow eliminate death, and that's because you're a sinner – "*the wages of sin is death.*" That is, the reason people die is because of their sin.

- But Jesus came to this earth to defeat both sin and death. By His death on the cross, He paid for people's sins, and in so doing, defeated sin. And it was by His resurrection, by rising from the dead, that He defeated death, and therefore, proved and showed that He got the victory over sin as well. Romans 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-13

And the person who repents of his sins and believes that Jesus died to pay for his sins, will be forgiven, will have eternal life, will be spiritually alive forever with Jesus Christ. And this is the most important subject in the world, that Christ died and rose again to get the victory over sin and death, and is then able to give us the victory over sin and death. People need to believe what Christ did, or else they will be doomed and damned forever. Hebrews 12, Luke 23:39-43, 24:46-47; John 3:16

I want to summarize what happened to Jesus Christ from His death to His ascension.

1. Luke 23:44-46. Here we see that Jesus died on the cross, and it wasn't that He had just physically died on a cross, but that He had also just finished paying for all the sins of all the people who would ever believe in Him. And when we say that He died, we don't mean that His spirit died, but that His physical body died.

2. Luke 23:50-53. Here we see that Jesus was laid in a tomb by Joseph, and Nicodemus was also there. And Jesus' body was in the tomb from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning. And during this time, Jesus, in his spirit, went to all these evil spirits who were in prison, and proclaimed his victory over them, and over sin and death. 1 Pet. 3:19

3. Luke 24:1-7. Here we read that Jesus was raised from the dead. And when we say Jesus was raised from the dead, we mean that His spirit was placed in a new glorified body, an immortal body, and it was this body that left that tomb, a body that will live on forever and ever, and it's the kind of body all believers will receive. Rev. 1:17-18

4. Luke 24:13-43. Here is Jesus, in His glorified body, appearing to different people.
- Acts 10:37-41. And so Jesus revealed Himself to certain people, but only to those whom God the Father had chosen beforehand to see His Son. Acts 1:3
- Luke's gospel tells us that Jesus appeared to these two men who were walking along on this road, and after that, He appeared to the eleven apostles.
- 1 Cor. 15:6 tells us that after that, He appeared to more than 500 believers at one time.

5. Luke 23:44-49. Jesus was telling His disciples that this message of repentance and forgiveness of sins needed to be proclaimed to all the nations. And Matt. 28:19-20 tells us that Jesus commissioned them, commanding them to go and do this work. He told them -
"*Go and make disciples of all the nations, and lo, I am with you until the end of the age.*"
- Luke 24:49 - The Father promised them that He would empower them through the Holy Spirit so they could go out and do this, could proclaim the gospel message to all the world.

6. Luke 24:50-53. Forty days after Jesus had been raised from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. And He has been there at the right hand of God since that time.
- Acts 1:8-11. This also tells us that Jesus ascended into heaven, but that He would be coming back to this earth, and as we know, to rapture the Christians, judge the world, save a remnant of Jews, and then set up His kingdom on earth.

Acts 2:1-4. It is at this time that the disciples were filled with the Spirit, and were empowered to preach the gospel, to carry out the work God had given them to do. From this time on, we read that the gospel was preached and the church began to grow. And Peter and Paul are given to us as examples of ones who were preaching the gospel and a primary aspect of their message was the resurrection of Christ.
- Acts 2:23-24, 3:14-15, 4:10, 4:33, 5:31-33, 10:39-40
- Acts 13:30, 17:18, 17:32, 23:6, 24:15. Now Paul was preaching Christ's resurrection, And also the resurrection of the dead, that those who believe in Christ will also be raised from the dead, will be glorified, will be given a brand new body.

Let's now look at 1 Cor. 15, which more than any other chapter in the Bible, talks about the resurrection. Now there are two main themes in this chapter:
- First, we read about the core truths of the gospel, summed up in vs. 3-4.
- Second, we read about the resurrection of the dead. Paul was addressing this question because some people were saying Christians wouldn't be raised from the dead.
- If Christ hasn't been raised from the dead then there is no resurrection of Christians, no faith, no forgiveness, no hope, no future, that is, no Christianity, and no need to preach the gospel message. 1 Cor. 15:12-19
- Why then should we live this Christian life, why should we sacrifice our life on this earth if there is no resurrection, and therefore no hope, no future?

1 Cor. 15:20 - Paul answers this question by saying, "*Christ has been raised from the dead.*" This means that Christians can and will be resurrected from the dead. And so when we talk about the message of Easter, we don't want to just talk about Christ's resurrection from the dead, but the resurrection of all believers. About 2000 years ago, Christ rose from the dead with a glorified body, and one day, and I believe it's in the near future, all believers will receive a glorified body, one like Christ's.

1 Cor. 15:20 – Christ is the first fruits, the first person to be raised from the dead, but there will be millions and millions of more people raised from the dead, these people referred to as asleep, as those who have already physically died.

- 1 Cor. 15:21-22 - It is through Adam who sinned and then died that all people in the world are sinners and will then experience death. But it is through Christ, and only through Christ, that all believers will be made alive, and this word alive means that our salvation will be complete, that we will receive a new glorified body.

1 Cor. 15:23 – There is an order to the resurrection - for we see that Christ was raised first, and after that, all those who are Christs, all those who are believers. And when does this happen? At Christ's coming, and this is referring to the future when Christ returns to earth, raptures the church, and at that time all believers from all of history will be glorified, OT believers along with believers from this church age.

1 Cor. 15:42-44. This tells us what these resurrected bodies will be like.

- They will be imperishable, which means they are immortal, and will live forever.
- They will be glorious, for they will be altogether perfect, absolutely beautiful, stunning.
- They will be powerful, much, much stronger than your present weak body, able to do all that God wants you to do, and able to travel really fast.
- They will be spiritual bodies, fully suited to love and serve God, to fellowship with believers, and do all that God wants. Phil. 3:20-21, 1 John 3:2-3.

1 Cor. 15:50-54. This tells us that our human bodies, in their present state, are perishable, and are not physically able to go to heaven and live there.

- Second, it says that not all people will physically die, that is, fall asleep, but that all believers will be changed, will be given this imperishable body, this new glorified body. That is, when Christ returns, there will be a number of believers still living on this earth and they'll be raptured and changed, will suddenly and instantaneously lose their old perishable body and be given a new, imperishable body, this glorified body. 1 Thess. 4:17
- Third, when Christ comes, believers will be changed, will be glorified in a very short time, for it will happen in a split second, in the twinkling of an eye.
- Fourth, this will happen at the sounding of the last trumpet. Matt. 24:31, 1 Thess. 4:16

This past year has been very difficult with all that's going on. People have been anxious, discouraged, fearful, upset, and lonely, but because of Christ's death and resurrection, we can have joy and peace, a close relationship with God and others. Therefore, we should be excited and encouraged and thrilled about life, about living for the Lord, and about the great future He has in store for us, in this life and the next. 1 Cor. 15:57-58