

## INTRODUCTION

The resurrection of Christ is the very citadel of the Christian faith. This is the doctrine that turned the world upside-down in the first century. It lifted Christianity above Judaism and the pagan religions of the Mediterranean world.

You can have:  
Confucianism without Confucius;  
Buddhism without Buddha;  
Mormonism without Joseph Smith;  
Christian Science without Mary Baker Eddy;  
Islam without Mohammed;  
But you cannot have Christianity without Christ.

Christianity is not simply a religion, it is a life; and that life is Christ's life made living within men. In fact the apostle John writes in 1 John 5:11-12:

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the son of God does not have life.

The resurrection of Christ is an actual historical event. Luke writes:

[Jesus] also presented Himself alive [to His disciples] after His suffering by many infallible [i.e., undeniable and unmistakable] proofs [evidence], being seen by them [the apostles] during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)

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But the resurrection of Christ is more than a past historical event. It's more than the guarantee of the believer's future resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is A PRESENT REALITY! As we view Christ's resurrection we discover the following:

### **THE DECLARATION WHICH IT MAKES (Rom. 1:4)**

Paul writes to the Romans that Jesus was . . .

Declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1:4)

Jesus was hated, rejected, mocked and reviled, called a blasphemer, falsely accused and condemned, scourged and beaten beyond recognition, and then finally led to Golgotha to be crucified between two thieves. He hung there suspended between heaven and earth; as a man not fit for heaven and a man not fit for earth. But on the third day God vindicated His Son. God cleared His Son from all criticism, suspicion, blame, and false accusations by the resurrection from the dead.

- *The resurrection of Christ declares Him to be Who He really is: The eternal Son of God!*
- *The resurrection of Christ proves that His work on Calvary has fully satisfied the just demands of holy God regarding man's sin and atonement.*

On the Day of Pentecost the apostle Peter boldly proclaimed that, “it was not possible that [Christ] should be held by [death]” (Acts. 2:24). Satan and all his minions could not lay claim on Him. The Roman seal that was placed on the tomb and the guards stationed there could not secure Him. Death and the grave could not hold Him. Corruption and decay could not touch Him!

*Up from the grave He arose,  
 With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;  
 He arose a victor from the dark domain,  
 And He lives forever with His saints to reign;  
 He arose! He arose!  
 Hallelujah! Christ arose!*  
 —Robert Lowry, 1874

He's more than a good teacher; He's more than a good moral example; He's more than a philanthropist; He's more than a prophet; and He's more than a carpenter. He's the eternal Son of God!

In his book, *Many Infallible Proofs*, Henry Morris writes:

If the resurrection did not take place, than Christianity is a false religion. If it did take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth.

### **THE JUSTIFICATION WHICH IT PROVES (1 Cor. 15: 16, 17)**

For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

An occupied tomb means an empty message. But an empty tomb means a life-giving and life-changing message. For the believer, *the resurrection of Christ proves that our sins are gone!*

[Christ] was delivered for [because of] our offenses, and was raised for [because of] our justification. (Rom. 4:25; KJV & NKJV)

As I mentioned last week, how can God justify the believing sinner without compromising His holiness, righteousness, and truth? How can God's justice prevail and at the same time free the guilty sinner? What appears to be a dilemma for man is absolutely no dilemma for God. It was there at Calvary that the Judge became the judged; the Creator became the Crucified; and the Sovereign of the universe became the Savior of the world; “that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26).

At salvation, not only does God forgive our sins, He also declares us righteous through faith in Christ. In fact, justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous through the finished work of Christ. It has to do with our legal and right standing before God; where we stand before God complete, perfect, and righteous through Jesus Christ.

Allow me to illustrate. What if you met a homeless person along the way; he's dirty, hungry, and his clothes tattered and worn. Because you are moved by compassion for the man, you invite him into your home. He hasn't bathed for weeks; maybe even months. So you draw his bath, show him where the soap and shampoo are, and lay out a towel and wash cloth for him. So far so good; right? But when he finishes, you don't want him putting those dirty and stinky old clothes back on; do you? So what do you do? You go into your own closet and chest of drawers to find a complete change of raiment for him; right?

You and I were dirty and defiled because of sin. We didn't even have the means in-and-of ourselves to do anything about it. But because of His compassion toward us, God provided a means whereby we could be cleansed of all our sin through His Son's death at Calvary. But wait, that's not all His Son's death provides. His death also provides a brand new change of raiment. Through faith in Christ, not only are our sins forgiven, we also stand before God fully and completely clothed in His own righteousness! We're invited into His presence. We become members of His Royal Family; "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17a). All the privileges and possessions of God become ours through faith in Jesus Christ!

*He paid a debt he did not owe,  
I owed a debt I could not pay.  
I needed someone to wash my sins away.  
And now I sing a brand new song,  
"Amazing Grace" all day long,  
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.  
—Author Unknown*