

## “THE RESURRECTION OF THE KING”

Imagine Meeting Christ #17

Psalm 93, Luke 24:1-7, I Corinthians 15:12-28

July 31 & August 1, 2021

The followers of Jesus had seen their hopes dashed to pieces. The One they thought was the Messiah, the One who had raised the dead and healed the sick and cured the lame and given sight to the blind, was now dead Himself. On that horrible Friday, Jesus had been crucified on a cross, His lifeless body laid in a tomb, and that tomb plugged by a huge stone door prohibited anyone from entering.

The Roman soldiers were very good at terminating a person’s life. When the soldiers were told to crucify someone, there was no way that they were coming down alive. So it was that Jesus was very dead when He was let down from the cross. There was no possibility of resuscitation in the tomb, because the soldier’s spear had punctured not only the lungs but also the heart, giving way to blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus (John 19:34). Jesus had not just fainted while on the cross as some postulate; He was dead, and everyone there knew it. Had He not been, the soldiers would have broken His legs, too, so that He would have died (John 19:32-33).

But that was not all. The Jewish leaders had taken preemptive precautions to prevent a grave robbing and the start a rumor that the resurrection of Jesus’ body had happened. They had heard Jesus say “*destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days...the temple He had spoken of was His body*” (John 2:19-22). They did not want any possibility of that happening, especially if it were **staged** by the disciples stealing the body and then **claiming** that Jesus had risen. So they not only got the official word from Pilate to protect the tomb as best they could, but he ordered an official seal placed upon the tomb that gave the notice that anyone entering that space was putting their own life on the line. So the guards were placed at the tomb to keep the tomb secure (Matthew 27:62-66). They did everything they could to keep Jesus in that tomb and extinguish His life from this world.

Because of Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion, the disciples and many of the followers of Jesus had gone into hiding, thinking that there could be a mass attempt to squash any remnants of Jesus’ followers. But there were others who wanted to make sure that Jesus had the best burial possible. Being that He

was important to them, they wanted to honor His burial spot so that they could go there when they needed encouragement, or when they needed “connection” with Him. We heard that in our Gospel lesson of Luke 24 today. They wanted to be able to remember all the good things that Jesus had done, and let those memories help them through their grief over His death. They didn’t want to forget the difference that Jesus had made in their life. They wanted this to be a very special place for folks to come to commemorate Jesus’ life.

So those who visited the tomb on the third day, that morning after the Sabbath, were very surprised to find the stone rolled away from the tomb, the guards missing (or lying around like dead men, Matthew 28:4), AND the body of Jesus missing as well. Did someone actually succeed in stealing His body? Did they find the detachment of soldiers asleep on the job, rolled the stone away without waking them up, and then take Jesus’ body? Surely, that’s the story that the chief priests and the elders of the Temple told the soldiers to tell everyone (Mt. 28:11-15).

But that’s **not** what happened. Jesus defeated death’s attempt to end His existence by returning to life. He had demonstrated great power and authority in raising others from death, so surely He would have had the power and authority to command His own body to become alive again? Whether it was instantaneous, or gradual that the lifeless organs of His earthly body revived and began to function once more, it doesn’t matter. What matters is that death no longer had power over Him, and He was alive on a much greater level than before. With His resurrected body, Jesus was able to appear suddenly in the presence of His disciples, even while the doors and windows were locked (Jn. 20:19-22). He was no longer limited by the confining elements of this world, and He could disappear at a moment’s notice (Luke 24:31). Though completely human, Jesus’ resurrected body was no longer confined to the ways of the earth. Death no longer held a sting. So the stone was rolled away, not to let Jesus out, but to let the followers of Jesus in to see that He was no longer lying dead in the tomb.

But ever since that time, people have been debating the probability of Jesus’ resurrection. Some have tried to dispel the claims of Christians that Jesus rose from the dead, but they have not yet been

successful in disproving it. The best they can do is to try to malign those who proclaim the truth in an effort of making it seem so ridiculous to even consider such a thing as happening. Their argument is “It’s never happened since then, so it could not possibly have happened then, either.”

Fortunately, the Apostle Paul confronted that argument for us, and we see that in our lesson of 1 Corinthians 15:12-28. Listen to how Paul describes it. (READ 1 Corinthians 15:12-28).

Now Paul was not just trying to make a convincing argument for the resurrection of Jesus. Rather, he was explaining the reality of it. In the first half of chapter 15 he explains the eye witness accounts of those who actually experienced Jesus’ presence after His resurrection. After appearing to the 12 disciples, Jesus also appeared to over 500 people at the same time. Then He was with James and the apostles for more than 40 days before He ascended back into Heaven. And then, Paul experienced Jesus’ presence with him, which changed his whole life from one who persecuted the church, to one who actively promoted faith in Jesus as the Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-11).

But Paul helps us to know the importance of Jesus’ resurrection. In writing to the people of Corinth, he lays it out. He says if it is true that **no one** is raised from the dead, then Christ (Jesus) has not been raised. And if He has not been raised from the dead, then we who have put our trust in Him have been somehow duped into believing a lie. And if He has not been raised from the dead, then our faith in Jesus is useless and we are delusional, and all those who put their trust in Jesus are the biggest fools in the world. And if He has not been raised from the dead, those who trust in Jesus and die in that faith, have lived and died for naught, being the most pitiful people of the world. That is what it would be IF JESUS HAS NOT BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

It makes sense that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, anyone putting their hope and trust in Him would be doing so on false hopes and dreams. We’d be just like the disciples right after Jesus was crucified, finding our confidence only in a man that dies while trying to make the world a better place. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then all our hope for the future beyond this life is just a sick lie we have come to believe. It means that there is nothing to look forward to beyond this earthly life, and that

this is the best that it gets. How morbid! How delusional! How senseless to even hope beyond this life, **IF Jesus did not beat death and rise again!** Yet even if it were not true about the resurrection of Jesus, though there would be no hope beyond this life, we would still have lived decently and respectfully and honorably, making our own difference in this world. But there would be no reliable expectation for anything beyond this life. And Paul tells us clearly, *“If our hope in Christ is good for this life only and no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world”* (1 Cor. 15:19).

*“But the truth is that Christ (Jesus) has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised”* (1 Cor. 15:20). Since Christ Jesus has been raised from the dead, those who put their trust and faith in Him have the assurance that we, like Him, will also receive new life, having put our trust in Him. **Since Jesus has been raised from the dead**, all those who belong to Him will be welcomed with Him when He returns. Since Jesus has been raised from the dead, this life is not all there is, and we have hope for eternal life with Jesus when this earthly life is finished.

**THAT’S THE GOOD NWS OF THE GOSPEL** my friends! Jesus HAS been raised from death! He HAS defeated death’s finality, and He GIVES all those who put their trust and faith in Him new life, not only for this world, but also in the world to come.

You see, death came upon the earth because of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Their disobedience to God’s one law *“you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die”* (Genesis 2:17), brought sin into the world. Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s command, and brought death to all of God’s creation.

But Jesus came to the earth to save us from that death sentence. He was the perfect sacrifice for the payment of the price for sin, and when He died on the cross, He took the punishment of all of the sins of the world upon Himself to ultimately pay off our sin debt. His death paid the price for sin, AND His resurrection brought new life to all who will believe in Him.

So Paul states it correctly, *“For just as death came by means of a man, in the same way the rising from death comes by means of a man. For just as all people die because of their union with Adam, in*

*the same way all will be raised to life because of their union with Christ*" (1 Cor. 15:21-22). Jesus IS THE CHRIST, the Messiah who has saved all His people from death. Jesus IS THE LORD, who has come back from the dead to rule over all the earth. He has fulfilled His purpose to save all people from the bondage to sin and death, but the choice is ours as to whether or not we will trust Him and follow Him. And so Jesus is our GREAT HIGH KING, over every earthly ruler, over every thing here on the earth and over every thing in the heavens. There is NO ONE like Jesus!

He is greater than Donald Trump! He is greater than Joe Biden! He is greater than Vladimir Putin! He is greater than Xi Jinping! He is greater than Kim Jong-un! He is greater than Hassan Rouhani! Jesus is greater than Ashraf Ghani! He is greater than Mahmoud Abbas! He is greater than Isaac Herzog or Naftali Bennet! Jesus is greater than any national or religious leader here on the earth. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords! Jesus is the ruler over all the nations of the world, whether they recognize Him as their ruler or not.

Psalm 110 reads, *"The Lord said to my lord, the King, 'Sit here at my right side until I put your enemies under your feet.' From Zion the Lord will extend your royal power. 'Rule over your enemies,' he says. On the day you fight your enemies, your people will volunteer. Like the dew of earthly morning your young men will come to you on the sacred hills. The Lord made a solemn promise and will not take it back; 'You will be a priest forever in the priestly order of Melchizedek.' The Lord is at your right side; when he becomes angry, he will defeat kings. He will pass judgment on the nations and fill the battlefield with corpses; he will defeat kings all over the earth. The King will drink from the stream by the road, and strengthened, he will stand victorious."*

Jesus is the RESURRECTED KING, the mighty Son of God, who has come to free the world from sin, and to rule in righteousness and peace over all the nations. Not one human in all the earth is greater than Jesus is. Right now the leaders of the world think that they are so powerful, but when Jesus returns they will melt before Him like butter in the heat of the Sun.

Pontus Pilate, governor of Judea, thought he had great power over the people. When Jesus was

before him, he said to Jesus, “...Remember, I have the authority to set you free and also to have you crucified.’ Jesus answered, ‘You have authority over me only because it was given to you by God...” (John 19:10-11). Jesus submitted to Pilate’s authority only because it would fulfill God’s plan of Salvation for the world. But after His resurrection, “...God raised Him to the highest place above and gave Him the name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honor of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

The resurrection of Jesus is not only providing salvation for everyone who will put their trust and faith in Him as the Messiah, but it is establishing Jesus as the greatest of kings, the greatest of authorities, and the greatest of all people who have ever, or will ever, live here on the earth. The resurrection of Jesus is the most quintessential event of all of human history, which is why the hosts of hell are so embattled against us knowing it. Satan knows that when we come to know that Jesus Christ is Lord over all, that means even him. So Satan does his best to keep salvation a secret, or to discourage those who would explore the possible truth of it from knowing it.

Satan does not want us to put our trust in Jesus, because when we do that, when we claim Jesus as our Resurrected King, he has no more power over us. When we trust in Jesus, we gain a new power that supersedes anything that Satan has. When we trust in Jesus, we no longer have to worry about the condemnation of our souls to hell because of our sins. When we trust in Jesus Christ and let Him become our Savior, we are made brand new people through Christ, so we have nothing to fear, not even death. When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, all our sins are washed away and we are redeemed, restored, recreated into the perfect image of God, Himself.

Is it any wonder then, that Satan is working overtime to try to prevent people from putting their trust in Jesus? If we become so enamored with the things of this world, our focus will be diverted away from the truth and we will give our souls to the pleasures of this world. If we are discouraged because of what life is handing out to us, if Satan can make our life so miserable that we feel that there is no

hope, even in Jesus, then we blindly turn to everything else that this world has to offer in order to try to appease the hurt within us and numb the pain we are experiencing.

If Satan gives us everything that we want and we have every delight at our fingertips, we begin to believe that we have no need for a Messiah to save us because we've got it all so good. All our needs are met and we need nothing more in our life, including Jesus.

If Satan can convince us that there is no such thing as sin, then anything goes and we heartily pursue everything we can get our hands on. If Satan can convince us that everything in this world is "Yummy, Tasty and Delicious," we are deceived into thinking that God must be holding out on us, and we delve into every delight we can find.

If Satan can somehow convince us that belief in Jesus Christ is nothing more than a crutch for weak and foolish people, then we naturally turn to our own pride and tell ourselves, "I don't need a crutch – I'm already doing great," and we give up any pursuit of finding the real truth about ourselves, and we wallow in our sin and die in sin's punishment.

If Satan can somehow convince us that we don't need Jesus because we have all the power and authority to rule over the people of the world, we give in to that lie, and we turn away from anything to do with God's Salvation. If Satan can convince us that we have the right to subject other people to do our will, and to have everything done our way, then we begin to treat each other with disrespect, and we find the division of the races.

It's the same things that Satan tempted Jesus with right after He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Satan uses every trick and every lie in the book to keep us from turning to Jesus, because if we turn to Jesus, we have real life, real hope, real peace, real joy, and real power. If we turn to Jesus, we no longer see race, or color, or ethnicity, or any other difference, because we look into the eyes of the other and see a brother or sister.

The resurrection of Jesus on that first Easter morning changed the possible fate of every human since. Jesus' defeat of death brings us the greatest hope we can ever have. We no longer have to

depend upon ourselves, upon our own wisdom, upon our own power, and upon our own ways, but find the freedom in following God's ways. We are no longer confined to the tricks and lies of Satan, for the truth becomes real to us, and we find God's abundant blessings for us. When we claim the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as our Salvation, our souls are lifted up out of the mud and muck of this world and we find the good in others. When we claim the Salvation of Jesus as our resurrected King, we have nothing left to fear, because there is now, nothing left that can separate us from His great love for us (Romans 8:37-39). And we find that we are no longer alone to fend for ourselves, but we now have the Lord Jesus to fight for us and protect us and walk with us each and every day.

Jesus, our resurrected King, changes our whole life when we put our hope and trust in Him. When we submit ourselves to Him, our whole perspective is changed and the light of His truth is revealed to us so that we can begin to avoid the temptations that Satan puts before us. Jesus gives us the power to say "No!" to the lies and schemes put before us, trying to keep us from knowing Jesus. He gives us the courage to face the troubles and trials of this life with a new confidence that empowers us to right the wrongs going on in our life, so that we can begin to conform to the ways of God instead of the ways of this world. Jesus opens our eyes to see the needs that others have so that we can begin to brighten the lives of those around us with His love.

When we receive Jesus Christ into our lives as our Resurrected King, everything changes and we begin to walk the path of righteousness and truth. When we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, we begin to see the need that others have for Him in their lives, and He begins to provide opportunities for us to share His great love with them, too.

The resurrection of King Jesus from the dead changes everything for us and gets us started once more onto the path of life, eternal life, that no one can take away from us. Let's pray.

Father God, thank You for raising Jesus from death on that first Easter morning! Thank you that He was willing to take our sins upon Himself and pay the price for our sin, so that we would not have to face eternal death. Thank You for the resurrection of Jesus, that as we put our trust in Him, our lives are

transformed from the things of this world into the things of God. Thank You for the hope we have in Jesus that this life is not all there is, but that we have eternal life waiting for us. Thank You for bringing Salvation to us so that we might be free from the devices of Satan, and that we might live free from condemnation and guilt. Thank You, O God, for not giving up on us, but that Your love for us has given us the chance to come back to You again. Give us the courage now to live for You in all that we say, and in all that we do, so that others might see the difference You made in us, and help them to find You, too. Continue with us, O Lord Jesus, so that we might always and forever follow You. This we pray in Your precious and holy name, Jesus. AMEN.