

## 11. The Power of His Resurrection (2Q 2008—The Wonder of Jesus)

**Biblical material:** Matt. 27:62-66; Luke 24:36-39; Acts 3:14-16; 1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3:7-10, Revelation 1:18

### Quotes

- Jesus claimed He had the power to raise himself from the dead and His followers would be raised from the dead. That's a unique claim in the literature of religion. *Josh McDowell*
- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the crowning proof of Christianity. If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion. If it did take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth. *Henry Morris*
- Jesus was all right, but his disciples were thick and ordinary. It's them twisting it that ruins it for me. *John Lennon*
- If the resurrection of Jesus cannot be believed except by assenting to the fantastic descriptions included in the Gospels, then Christianity is doomed. For that view of resurrection is not believable, and if that is all there is, then Christianity, which depends upon the truth and authenticity of Jesus' resurrection, also is not believable. Bishop John Shelby Spong, *Resurrection: Myth or Reality?*, 1994

### Questions

Without the resurrection, what would the death of Jesus mean? What are the problems in “splitting up” the experience of Jesus into life, death, resurrection, ascension, return? Why is the resurrection so important—not just for us, but for the whole of the Universe? What were the angels thinking between Jesus' death and resurrection?

### Discussion/Comment

Human beings need conviction. Conviction that existence has meaning, that life has importance, that there is a future. The hope that God gives is the assurance of all that—and more! As sure as God Himself, the Jesus Hope is as solid as the ground underneath our feet.

Many religions and philosophies attempt to answer these same questions of existence and to provide some kind of hope. Without being arrogant, the Christian hope presented in the Bible outclasses them all. We have a “better hope” according to Hebrews 7:19.

Why? Because it is based on the promise of God Himself, it assures us of a future together with Him, it gives motivation and purpose to the present, it is far more meaningful than the materialistic hopes of this age, it is guaranteed through the resurrection of Jesus...

For if there is no future together with God, then the present loses its value and as Paul commented, without the hope of resurrection then all is in vain. In 1 Corinthians 15:19-28 the present life (where we do our hoping) is contrasted with the resurrection to everlasting life (where hope will be realized). As Paul says, if this life was all, what would happen to hope? That is why the resurrection is vital—it the way in which hope is

fulfilled. Death is destroyed—the ultimate enemy, so that our hope and future with God may be achieved.

“The human being is only to be defined in terms of his whither, not of his whence,” wrote theologian Helmut Thielicke. In other words, it’s where we’re going that is important, not where we came from. What God sees in us in potential is what He wants to make reality in His Kingdom of the future—which is why He waits for us to respond to His glorious offer of salvation.

And in the resurrection of Jesus there is no triumphalistic revenge, no settling of scores with those who killed him. Rather the glorious establishment of the eternal kingdom, guaranteed by God through his giving of Himself to save the dying from their self-destruction. The appearances of Jesus to his followers confirm the establishment of this radical kingdom, so different from those of this world.

Those who stress the legal aspects of the crucifixion as payment of penalty and a transaction to propitiate God, the resurrection can often seem of lesser importance. In such a view the contractual aspects are met by the sacrifice, and our legal standing is consequently adjusted. For this the appeasement/payment/satisfaction aspects are the essential elements. However, this misses the importance of resurrection as preached by the early apostles. If legal payment was all, then why does Acts and the letters of the New Testament place such stress on resurrection. Without the resurrection, as Paul makes clear, our faith would be in vain. It is the resurrection that is the guarantee, the proof, the demonstration of the intent of our trustworthy God to ensure we are forever with him. The cross without resurrection is indeed a dim prospect.

We live in the time between. The time between crucifixion and resurrection. Christ has come. He has revealed God to us, he has made salvation possible, he has been lifted up from the earth to draw all to him. And soon he will come again to complete the reality of that salvation, to take us to be with him where he is, to lift us up to heaven and draw us to himself, the time of our resurrection.

But for the moment we live in that in-between-time, between the “now already” and the “not yet.” Between the achievement of God’s plan to save, and the consummation of that plan. Between promise and fulfillment. Between “I have come” and “I will come again.”

### **Ellen White Comments**

Christ’s resurrection proves that he has power over death and the grave. He is willing and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. {RH, August 13, 1889}

Our work is to humble self and to exalt Christ before the people. After His resurrection, the Saviour promised that His power would be with all who would go forth in His name. Let this power and this name be exalted. We need to keep continually before our minds the prayer of Christ when He prayed that self might be sanctified by truth and righteousness.

The power of the eternal Father and the sacrifice of the Son should be studied more than it is. The perfect work of Christ was consummated in His death upon the cross. In His sacrifice and His intercession at the right hand of the Father, is our only hope of salvation. It should be our joy to exalt the character of God before men, and make His name a praise in the earth. {2SM 170}

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