

Spring 2013 Newsletter
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Jesus the World's Savior

*"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."
1 Corinthians 15:20*

At this time of the year, many Christians especially consider the events recorded in the Bible, which occurred nearly 2000 years ago, concerning Jesus' betrayal, trial, death on the cross, and resurrection.

Let us consider (4) aspects on this subject:

1. The man Jesus Christ who died.
2. Jesus was dead in the tomb for 3 days.
3. Jesus' soul resurrected on the 3rd day.
4. The importance of Jesus' resurrection for our faith.

The man Jesus Christ who died

The Bible gives many proofs that the man Jesus Christ died. In John 19:31-33 we are told that the soldiers found Jesus dead on the cross. In John 19:38 we are told that Joseph of Arimathaea took the body of Jesus. In John 19:39,40 we are told that Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus were also witnesses that Jesus was dead, and that they wrapped Jesus' dead body in spices for burial. In John 19:41 we are told that Jesus' body was placed in a new tomb where no one else had been laid. All of these

scriptures, and many others, prove that the man Jesus Christ had died.

Why are there so many scriptures recording the fact that Jesus was dead? Because of the lie that the Adversary, Satan, has tried to perpetuate since the days of Adam and Eve when he said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die."—Genesis 3:4

Jesus dead in the tomb for 3 days

Jesus foretold that he would be dead in the tomb for three days. As we read in Matthew 20:17-19, "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again."—see also Mark 10:32-34 and Luke 18:31-33

Jesus died on the cross and was placed in a tomb on Friday afternoon, before 6pm. The Jewish Sabbath begins at 6pm on Friday and lasts until 6pm the next day. Since the Jewish people were not allowed to work or travel very far on the Sabbath, Jesus' followers would have had a lot of time without life's usual distractions to think about Jesus and his death on the cross. They would have also thought about all the events which had happened earlier that same week.

Jesus' soul resurrected on the 3rd day

The resurrection cannot be fully appreciated without a proper understanding of what exactly is the condition of death. We read in Genesis 2:7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man **became** a living soul."

From this scripture we see that man's body is not the soul, and the "breath of life" is not the soul. The body plus the breath of life together result in a living being. This living being is a soul. God **did not give** a soul to man, but rather God created man **as** a soul, a being. In other words, man does not "possess" a soul, but rather man "is" a soul.

In the Garden of Eden, it was the soul named Adam that sinned (the body of Adam did not sin—the breath of life did not sin). As we read in Ezekiel 18:4, "The **soul** that sinneth, it shall die."

Therefore the Prophet Isaiah in foretelling the ministry and sacrifice of Christ (Isaiah 53:10-12) says "thou shalt make his **soul** an offering for sin, ... Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because **he hath poured out his soul unto death**; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

The importance of Jesus' resurrection for our faith

The resurrection of Jesus is fundamentally important to God's plan of salvation for mankind. Generally speaking, however, an erroneous view of this great miracle is held because it is claimed that Jesus himself triumphed over death; that is, that He raised himself from the dead. This is quite incorrect, for the Scriptures make it plain that God, by His own mighty power, reached down into the tomb and raised our beloved Redeemer Jesus Christ from the state of death.—Ephesians 1:17-20; Acts 2:22-24; I Peter 1:18-21

There are many vitally important thoughts associated with the fact of Jesus' resurrection. One of them is that God has power to raise the dead as thus was demonstrated. Jesus previously had awakened Lazarus and others from the sleep of death, but in each instance Jesus called upon His Father for the strength to perform such miracles. After His resurrection, Jesus declared, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). This means that now the resurrected Christ himself has power to raise the dead.

The importance of Jesus' resurrection is the basis upon which our Christian faith may rest. This becomes apparent to us when we realize that the fulfillment of most of God's promises recorded in the Scriptures depend upon a resurrection from the dead. The Apostle Paul said, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Corinthians 15:20). Paul's use of the term "first" shows us there is to be a further fruitage. But, if there had been no first-fruits, neither would there have been any after-fruits; in which case, the Apostle asserts, our faith and our preaching would be vain and we would be without hope.—vss. 14-18

The Apostle Peter declares in I Peter 1:3, "... which according to His [God's] abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Jesus himself later declared, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [*hades*=grave] and of death" (Revelation 1:18). Yes, the hopes of both the church and the world of mankind depend upon the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead.

When the Apostle Paul spoke to the Athenians from Mars Hill, he explained that God had given assurance to all men, because He had raised Jesus from the dead, that there will be a future day of equitable judgment for everyone (Acts 17:31). When the Apostle Peter preached through Christ the resurrection of the dead, he described the colossal miracle of the future as "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21

Think, then, of how much depends upon the resurrection of the dead; of the abundant after-fruitage that never would have materialized had Jesus not been raised from the dead. Had Jesus remained in the tomb, the hope of a resurrection and restitution for all mankind would have been shattered, and all of God's prophets since the world began would have been false instead of holy prophets.

There is still further significance in the resurrection of Jesus than the fact that it demonstrated God's power to raise the dead. In addition to this, it proved that God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice. This thought is beautifully pointed out in the Old Testament Tabernacle types. When the High Priest of Israel was offering sacrifices during the Day of Atonement, it was essential that the High Priest carry out God's instructions to the very letter, else, when he entered into the Most holy with the blood of the sacrifice to sprinkle upon the Mercy Seat, he would die while passing under the second veil.—Leviticus 16:2,13

The second veil of the Tabernacle symbolically pictures death. The High Priest's passing under the veil, therefore, beautifully pictures the death of Jesus; and the rising of the High Priest on the other side of the veil, illustrates Jesus' resurrection from the tomb and his entering into heaven itself, into the actual presence of God. Now, had the typical High Priest not been faithful in performing the service entrusted to him, he would not have passed on the other side of the veil. So also, had Jesus been in any measure unfaithful, He would, likewise, have remained under the antitypical veil, that is, in death.

This too, in such an event, would signify that no acceptable sacrifice for sins had been offered, so that both the church and the world would still be without hope. Now, however, because Jesus was raised from the dead, we have the assurance that "He is the propitiation [atonement] for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—I John 2:1,2

On the day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter mentioned some of the glorious implications of Jesus' resurrection. He explained that Jesus having been raised from the dead, and having ascended to the Father, and being at the right hand of God, had shed forth the Holy Spirit upon the waiting disciples(Acts 2:14-33), and thus giving them, as the nucleus of the Gospel church, a blessed assurance of God's acceptance and blessing. When the church is completed, Jesus will then appear in the presence of God for the whole world, and the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh; and then will be fulfilled the promise given in Habakkuk 2:14, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

Furthermore, Jesus' being raised from the dead, He is able to help those who come unto Him, having been prepared by His suffering for this position as a merciful High Priest to the church (Hebrews 2:17,18). During the Kingdom period on earth, when a New Covenant is being

made with Israel and, through Israel, with the world of mankind, the entire church will be associated with Jesus in the priestly work; they, like Jesus, having been previously prepared by experience for that gigantic task of assisting the whole world of mankind back to life.

So while it is blessed to think of the personal experiences of the disciples, the women who were followers of Jesus, and others in connection with their joy when they learned that Jesus had been raised from the dead, we should by no means lose sight of the deeper significance of that miracle of miracles, realizing that because Jesus lives, so also all mankind will be resurrected from the grave and be given a full opportunity for life during the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

There are many other interesting questions related to this subject to consider, such as:

- How can Jesus be both a Priest and a King?
- What kind of Judge is Jesus?
- Who is the "Mighty God" and the "Everlasting Father" mentioned in Isaiah 9:6,7?

For scriptural answers to these and many other related questions, send in your request for a copy of the booklet Jesus, the World's Savior. It is free and without any obligation.

**"For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.
For God sent not His Son into the world
to condemn the world;
but that the world through Him might be saved."
John 3:16,17**

Please send me the following booklet
FREE for the asking:

Jesus, the World's Savior

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