

Front Page

2014 04 - The Resurrection of The Lord

Introduction

Being raised with the knowledge of the death and resurrection of the Lord, the wonders of these events can degrade to some of the many facts which we know and believe. We know He died and was raised, and no one would question our believing these things, but how they connect with us as we go about our daily business can be remote. Every aspect of the Lord is fraught with deep truths, which not only do we not understand, but are unknown to us, for only the Father knows the Son (Matt. 11:27; Lk. 10:22). Therefore, I have no doubt that throughout eternity we shall be led into fresh wonders and appreciations of the person and work of the Lord. Having said that, I am confident that such is the person of the Lord, His sufferings for sin, physical death, and bodily resurrection, we shall never reach the entire comprehension of it. There are wonders in Christ which only God the Father can comprehend, a truth supported by the words of the Lord: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11:27).

Our meditation will be in three sections:

- a) The Essential Interdependence Between The Death of Christ and His Resurrection
- b) The Supremacy and Uniqueness Of The Physical Death and Resurrection Of The Lord
- c) The Three Days and Nights When The Body Of The Lord Was In The Tomb

The Essential Interdependence Between The Death of Christ and His Resurrection

- 1) The first observation is that the physical death and bodily resurrection of the Lord are indissolubly united in the scriptures as the following scriptures show:
 - a) The Lord died with the purpose of rising. "I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (Jn. 10:17)
 - b) The living Lamb is the one who was dead. "Stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6)
- 2) Without either the death or resurrection of the Lord:
 - a) Reconciliation between God and man would never have been possible. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life", therefore, resurrection. (Rom. 5:10)
 - b) Justification would never have been possible, for we are: "justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:9), and He was: "raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).
 - c) The new covenant, as a covenant and a will, would never have been a reality.
 - i) A "covenant" is only valid when persons are alive, and in Biblical teaching a covenant is based either on blood, or an oath. Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech and Phichol with an oath (Gen. 21:22-24), and God made a blood covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:7-18). The covenant God made and Christ ratified by His blood was between the living God and Israel, then expanded to us (Jer. 31:31-34; 1 Cor. 11:25). This was spoken to a New Testament church and so we are told to drink the cup which symbolizes the new covenant.
 - ii) A "will" is only valid when a person has died. "Where a testament (will) is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament (will) is of force after men are dead" (Heb. 9:16-17).
 - d) The unilateral Lordship of Christ would never have been a reality. "For to this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:9). The word "revived" does not mean to awaken from an apparent death, but to return to life having full faculties. It is used of Jairus's daughter (Mk. 5:42), and of the Lord (Matt. 20:19). "Revived" is not used in the verses for Jairus's daughter. She was not revived from a coma or from having the appearance of death, and neither was the Lord.

Front Page

2014 04 - The Resurrection of The Lord

- e) The comfort derived from the truth of the resurrection would be utter foolishness if the Lord had not been raised. Paul wrote: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain (without foundation). Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God" (1 Cor. 15:14-15). Again: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15:17-18). What consolation there is in the words: "But now is Christ risen from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:20), therefore, in the darkest of hours we listen again to the pledge of God: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4:14). The context is not the spirits of the saints coming back with the Lord, but just as God brought Christ from the dead, through (not "in") Jesus (that is because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead), God will bring those who died in Christ out of the dead.
- f) The gospel would never be complete. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that he rose again." (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

The Supremacy and Uniqueness Of The Physical Death and Resurrection Of The Lord

This world has seen many magnificent conquests as recorded in Biblical and secular history, but all pale in contrast to the accomplishment of Christ at Jerusalem. His entrance into death and exiting from it is the greatest victory the present world and eternity will ever know. The death of the Lord was much more than the cessation of a physical life as is common to all humanity, and His resurrection was much more than that of Jarius's daughter (Mk. 5:42), the widow of Nain's son (Lk. 7:12-15), or Lazarus (Jn. 11:43).

When Christ entered death:

- a) It was to break the spiritual relationship man had under Adam, and ultimately the physical. Adam was the Head of the human race, and when he sinned the whole human family was brought under condemnation and death (Rom. 5:12-19). At the moment Adam sinned all humanity was sold under King sin and became his servants (Rom. 7:14; 6:17). How can that relationship be broken? Only by the deeper aspect of the physical death of the Lord.
- b) There was also the fact that death was Satan's domain (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8). How can the power of Satan be broken? By the entrance of Christ into death, Satan's citadel, and exiting from it.
- c) Furthermore, since God puts those who are redeemed under the Headship of Christ (Rom. 5:12-19), it means putting redeemed mankind into a new order of manhood. How can this be done? By the deeper aspect of the physical death and resurrection of Christ.

When the Lord rose triumphant He had the "keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Death was no longer the exclusive domain of Satan. He was defeated, and because Christ has the keys He can cause death to be held in abeyance (Rev. 9:6); He can nullify it (1 Thess. 4:15, 16; Rev. 19:20), and He can limit the power of those to whom it is given (Rev. 9:18).

Moses is one of the greatest pictures of Christ triumphant entering the sphere of the controller of man's bondage and death. Moses went into the camp of the enemy of the Lord (Ex. 4:21, 29) and exited with those who were sheltered by blood (Ex. 12:13, 23). So the Lord judiciously exited with all those who would trust in Him (Eph. 4:8). Moses went into Egypt but he could not be held captive by it, and neither could death or Satan hold Christ. As Victor, Christ deliberately entered the cold realm of death, and in victory exited it unscathed and in the full conquest of death's control and its enforcer.

The death and resurrection of the Lord is spoken of as an "accomplishment" (Lk. 9:31). When on the Holy Mount Peter did not understand the exodus of the Lord, and neither did John though he lay on Jesus' bosom. This subject was the communications of glory before God. It was much higher than man can grasp. God is exclusively

Front Page

2014 04 - The Resurrection of The Lord

interested in His Son and what He would accomplish. The Lord's accomplishment was by entering death. None other had ever done that and then exited it. To all other men the message from death was plain to understand.

Death Approaching

Through me you pass, beyond this vale of tears,
I halt the onward passing of earth's years
And open up to eyes another world,
In which you have eternally been hurled.

I have no feeling for the sorrows sore,
Devoid of sympathy I now approach your door,
And my chilled hand lies steady on your head,
As stricken ones, behold your shallow breath.

Then taking hold on your last gasping state,
I open widely now eternity's cold gate,
There is no hope for you who enter here,
No wailing cry will reach your chilling ear.

So solemnly they cover every trace,
Deny the stark grey pallor of your face,
For to this earth, you are but history,
Now in my grasp, you are eternally.

*. . . Rowan Jennings
Nov. 2013*

Thank God we can say: "But now is Christ risen from the dead". That is wonderful but there is added: "And become the firstfruits of them that sleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). We sorrow not as others who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13) for Christ has vanquished death, Satan, and the grave. Let every saint shout the praises of Him who destroyed: "Him who had the power of death" (Heb. 2:14), and rejoice in the reality that: "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them" (Col. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:8).

The Three Days and Nights When The Body Of The Lord Was In The Tomb

There is a question which has been the subject of much discussion through the years. Where was the Lord between His death and resurrection? One must vehemently reject the heretical teaching that when the Lord cried "It is finished", it was not finished but He had to go into Hell. It was only then, after three days, where the demons beat on Him until God decided it was enough, and the work was completed. This thinking and teaching is blasphemy. The demons had no part in the procuring of their own downfall and the securing of redemption. The scriptures make it clear: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6); and "He (God) hath made Him to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21).

There are at least five major passages which deal with this time period. Two are unmistakable and three are open to misunderstanding.

- 1) The two which are clear in their teaching:
 - a) The Lord said to the thief: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43)
 - b) When the Lord was about to enter death He said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).

Front Page

2014 04 - The Resurrection of The Lord

2) The three which are open to misunderstanding:

- a) "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." This was quoted by Peter (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:27).
- b) Paul wrote: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" (Eph. 4:9)
- c) Peter wrote: "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:18-19)

If we only had the two unmistakable, the question would have been easy; or if we only had the first of the ones open to misunderstanding, it would have been easy, but when we have all five, then the subject becomes more difficult. However, we must never conjecture, neither must we allow a plain scripture be robbed of its clarity by one that is obscure. It is important to observe that "hell" in the above passage is the word "Hades", and is used of both Abrahams bosom and the place of punishment (Lk. 16:23). Hades is the unseen world so the Psalmist and Peter are saying that God will not leave the soul of the Lord in that realm unseen by mortal man, but will raise Him to be seen again. The Lord was seen of Mary (Mk. 16:9-11); others had seen Him, apart from the eleven (Mk. 16:14); the disciples in the room saw Him (Jn. 20:25), and Thomas saw Him (Jn. 20:29). He was seen for forty days of Peter (Acts 1:3), by five hundred brethren, James and Paul (1 Cor. 15:6-8). Concerning the last two, until I have further understanding, I must leave them at this time. What we do know clearly is that in those three day and nights, after the Lord committed His spirit to God, He was in paradise, the realm of the unseen by mortal eyes.

Joyfully we sing with exuberance:

Christ, the Lord, is risen today, Alleluia!
Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth, reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Vain the stone, the watch, the seal, Alleluia!
Christ hath opened paradise, Alleluia!

Adapted from Charles Wesley's hymn



... Rowan Jennings