

The Resurrection



Victory Over Death (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week in which it has been our privilege to glimpse some of the unsearchable riches of Christ as we've followed through with our theme for the week, "Victory Over Death."

Yesterday I spoke to you about the atonement, the "at-one-ment," the event which made it possible for God and man to be reconciled. I unfolded three truths from Isaiah 53: the first, as our kinsman-redeemer Jesus died our death; the second, His soul, poured out in His blood, became the sin offering for all humanity; third, brought back from death, He imparted to us His righteousness.

Today I'm going to deal with the greatest event of all history up to this time. The resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the heart of the Christian message. In fact, without the resurrection there is no Christian message. It all revolves around the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It's not a philosophy, it's not a theory, it's a fact of history. Either it is a fact or it's of no consequence. If it's just a theory, a romance, a philosophy, it has no power to help humanity. But thank God, it's a fact, a fact of history. Let's see what Paul says about it in 1 Corinthians 15:1, 3 and 4:

> "Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." (NIV)

Paul bases his whole message and ministry on these three simple historical facts: first, that Christ died; second, that He was buried; third, that He was raised again from the dead. Remove any of those and we have no message. Christianity has no other foundations.

What are we to say about the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Let me quote you a statement by Professor Marcus Dodds, a well-known professor of history from Cambridge University

of a previous generation, a respected historian. This is what he had to say:

> "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the best attested facts of history."

That's the opinion of a professional historian. Let me point out to you five facts related to the resurrection that attest its validity. First of all, it was attested by a much greater number of reliable witnesses than would be required to establish a fact in law. Second, it produced a dramatic and permanent change in those witnesses for which there is no satisfactory alternative explanation. Third, adhering to their testimony cost many of them their lives. They had nothing to gain from it in the normal sense of gaining. Fourth, it has produced a radical and permanent change in the course of history. History will never be the same and there is no satisfactory alternative explanation to that change. Fifth, the resurrected Christ has continued to reveal Himself personally as alive to countless millions in the ensuing centuries and I'm one of them. I, myself, am a witness.

In 1941, while I was serving as a soldier in the British Army, one night in the barracks room, I had a direct personal revelation of Jesus. I was not unduly religious. I was not a person that was seeking something special or fanciful or out of order. There was nothing unusual in my psychology at that moment. But Jesus revealed Himself to me so really and so personally that from that day to this I have never been able to doubt that He is alive. And, if He is alive, that's the most important fact of history.

I've said that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historical fact and yet, of course, there are many who reject it. Why do they reject it? Why will they not receive the evidence? I suggest to you that there are two main reasons. The first is psychological, the second is spiritual. Psychologically, people do not wish to acknowledge the possibility of God's direct, supernatural intervention in human affairs. They resent the thought that somehow God can change what they regard as the fixed course of events. And yet, there is no logical or scientific reasons for this attitude. I dare to speak with some authority because at one time I myself was a professor of philosophy and one of the subject that I studied in some detail was the logic of science. And I venture to say that science can offer no logical reason why the resurrection of Jesus Christ should not have taken place. It is not scientific to assert that it did not happen. In fact, it is unscientific to reject the valid evidence that it did happen.

The second reason why people find it hard to believe in the resurrection of Jesus is spiritual. It's stated clearly by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:4. He says:

> "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (NIV)

The "god of this age" is one of the many titles in Scripture of Satan. Satan, we have said, is the murderer, the thief, the life-taker. Jesus is the life-giver. On the cross, Jesus met and conquered Satan. He defeated him finally and forever. Since that time, Satan has no answer to the cross. It spells his defeat. It ends his power to dominate humanity and inflict upon them his cruel will and the endless agonies for which he is responsible: emotional, physical, and spiritual. Therefore, Satan now has one supreme objective, which is to keep men and women from understanding the truth of what happened when Jesus died and rose from the dead.

So Paul says, as the god of this age he has blinded the minds of unbelievers. They cannot see the clear, plain truth, the message of salvation and deliverance which is given to us through Jesus Christ. So there are two reasons: one, psychological, people don't wish to acknowledge that God can intervene in the universe that He created. The second, spiritual, Satan seeks to keep men and women from seeing what was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus because it spells the end of his power to dominate and torment humanity.

From God's viewpoint the resurrection of Jesus was both logical and necessary. It was God's vindication of the obedience and righteousness of His Son Jesus. This is stated by Paul in the opening verses of the first chapter of Romans, where he says this:

> "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared our Lord." (NIV)

In the flesh Jesus was a lineal descendant of David, but in His eternal nature He was the Son of God and our Lord. And God declared that Jesus was His Son by raising Him from the dead. The resurrection is God's great vindication of His Son. It is the public demonstration to the universe that Jesus, though He died a criminal's death, rejected by man, was indeed, and is, the Son of God and our Lord. This is summed up in a paragraph from my book, Resurrection of the Dead,

which I'd like to read just now.

> "Previously, Christ had been brought before two human courts, first, the religious court of the Jewish Council, and then the secular court of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. Both these courts had rejected the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God, and had condemned Him to death. Furthermore, both these courts had united in seeking to prevent any breaking open of the grave of Jesus. To this end, the Jewish Council had provided their special seal and the Roman governor had provided an armed guard of soldiers. However, on the third day God Himself intervened. The seal was broken; the armed guard was paralyzed; and Jesus Christ came forth from the tomb. By this act, God reversed the decisions of the Jewish Council and the Roman governor, and He publicly vindicated the claim of Christ to be the sinless Son of God."

So you see, the justice of God was vindicated by the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus had been set aside by humanity as a criminal but God, by the resurrection, endorsed His claim to be the Son of God.

What should be our response? Let me read you a beautiful passage describing the response of the women who were the first witnesses of the resurrection. Matthew 28:8-9:

> "So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him." (NIV)

What else can we do when we consider who He is and what He did? There is no other reasonable response but to come to Him, to fall at His feet and to worship Him. Let's do that.

Well, my time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again at this time next week, Monday through Friday. I'll be continuing with this same rich and wonderful theme, "Victory over Death." I'll be answering the question: "What does the resurrection mean for us?"

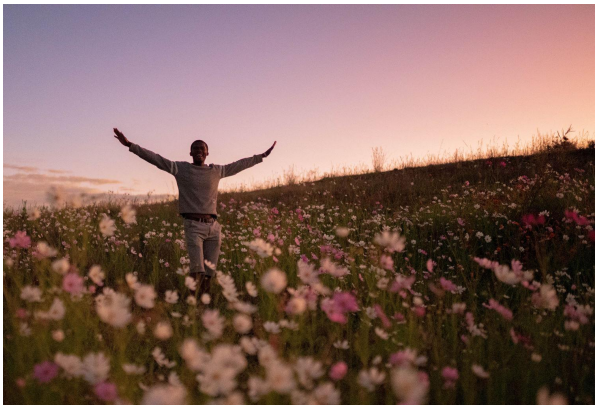
This week I'm making a special offer of my book, Resurrection of the Dead. This book contains the truth that can deliver you from all fear and uncertainty concerning death and enable you to face both death itself and the eternity that lies beyond with calm and unshakable assurance. Stay tuned for details.

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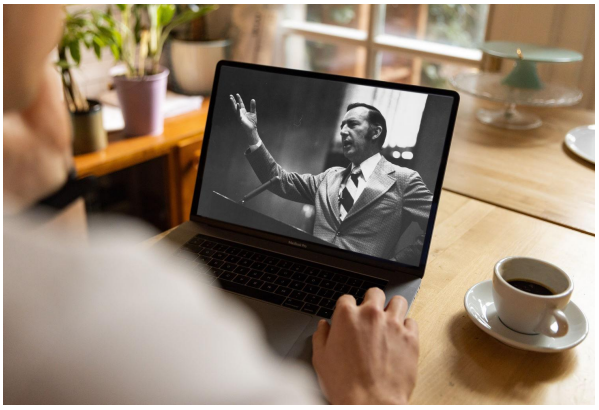
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