

Recovering The Lost Doctrine of the Resurrection

April 7, 1996

Acts 24:10-16

10 Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself,"¹¹ "because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship."¹² "And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city."¹³ "Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me."¹⁴ "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets."¹⁵ "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."¹⁶ "This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. NKJV

Although the resurrection of Christ is admittedly one of the most central doctrines of the Christian faith, it is sometimes hard to see evidence of this from the relative lack of instruction or discussion about it. Clearly, there are a number of absolutely central doctrines in Christianity which if not established would undermine the entire religion. For instance, the incarnation, the sovereignty of God, eternal punishment just to name a few. I would contend however, that the resurrection is given particular importance in the Scriptures because no other doctrine is discussed with as much supremacy as it is. I would also contend that by considering the prevalence of the doctrine in the teaching of the Apostles that the doctrine was far more important to them than it is to us today. It is this premise, that if true, I would like to overturn; beginning with this church.

Remember though, the world would enjoy nothing more than to see the resurrection proved to be false. Since it occurred, there have been those who would change the story or attempt to discredit the accounts. But what they cannot explain is the changed lives of the once meek and unskilled Apostles who, if the resurrection were untrue, would have been martyred for a lie.

- **The Hope of the Old Testament Saints**

Abraham *Genesis 22; Hebrews 11:17*

Believed that God was able to raise the dead.

Job *Job 19:25-26*

Believed that one day he would stand in his flesh before God.

David *Psalms 16:10*

Believed both that he and the Messiah would one day rise from the dead.

Isaiah *Isaiah 26:19*

Those who are dead shall one day be given forth by the earth.

Daniel *Daniel 12:2*

Those who sleep in the ground will one day rise, some to eternal life, some to eternal shame and contempt

Hosea *Hosea 6:1-2*

A prophetic pronouncement of our resurrection with Christ on the third day.

All *Acts 3:11-4:2*

All of the prophets foretold of the Christ and the resurrection from the dead.

Acts 26:4-8

Their hope of the promise of God was that all would rise from the dead.

- **The Testimony of the Apostles**

Apostles Acts 1:22

The office of Apostle was to be a witness of the resurrection of Christ.

Acts 4:32-35

The Apostles continued to bare witness to the resurrection and many believed because of God's grace.

Acts 17:16-34

It was Paul preaching of the resurrection from the dead that brought upon him public shame. But it was through this preaching that God brought many into the kingdom.

Acts 23:6-10

Paul is on trial for his proclamation of the resurrection of the dead.

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- **The Efficacy of Christ's Resurrection**

Christ was declared with power to be the Son of God.

Romans 1:1-4

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. NKJV

- One of the ways that we know that Jesus is the Messiah, is that the resurrection is conclusive proof. The resurrection of Christ was a demonstration of the power of God. In addition, it was a public proclamation of God that Jesus was His son and that the Messiah whom all of the Prophets had foretold was now known.

Jesus secured our justification.

Romans 4:19-25

19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. (NKJV)

- By God raising Jesus from the dead, those who are in Him, are assured of their justification. Remember that this is a legal term; if someone is justified, they have been declared not guilty before the law. For Christians, this means that guilt of our sin has been declared non-existent. The declaration does not occur because God overlooked our sin, or that the law was diminished but that the righteousness of Christ was given to us by God through His grace and therefore when we are judged by the law, it is the righteousness of Christ that enables us to stand.

Jesus secured our resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. (NKJV)

- Just as we have seen in many of the prior verses, there has always been the hope of both a general resurrection of the dead and a resurrection of the Messiah. As the firstfruits from the dead, Christ was the leader. Just as surely as He rose from the dead, so too those who are in Christ will be next. Ultimately all who are dead will rise; some to eternal life and the others to eternal separation from God.

Jesus secured our liberty.

Romans 6:1-11

- One of the greatest joys of being included in Christ is not just that the penalty of our sins has been forgiven but He also has freed us from the power of sin. Sin no longer has dominion over us. When once we were enslaved to our flesh and to our sinful nature, God has given us the power through His Spirit to overcome the flesh and has crucified our sinful nature in Christ on the cross.