

Though we won't focus the majority of our time in this particular text, I thought we would *begin* our time today in the Ch that takes 1st gospel message to the Gentiles. So take & turn in your bibles to...

Acts 10:34-40

"The Resurrection; What Does It Prove?"

Acts 10 opens w/the testimony of a Roman centurion named Cornelius. What we discover is that though he knew *nothing* of J.C. he was faithful to walk in the light that he'd been given. The bible declares that he was a devout man, who feared God, gave alms generously to the people & prayed to God always.

& We learn there that about 3:00 one afternoon as he was fasting & praying that an angel of God appeared to him & said that his *prayers & his alms had come up for a memorial before God*. (Note it, God recognizes both the outpouring of our souls to *Him*, & the practical outpouring of ourselves to man). But he said, "...send men to Joppa & ask for Simon whose surname is Peter. He's staying w/Simon who's a tanner down by the sea, he will tell you what you must do."

(Of course we can sometimes wonder why the angel didn't simply tell him what to do, 'believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved, for it's through *His* name that God has ordained that whoever believes in Him will receive remission [or forgiveness] of sins.") But here's the deal, God has ordained man will be the instrument who takes the message of the gospel to man. God could have angels do all the evangelism, spread the reality of our risen Savior & I suspect that they would do a much better job than we do. But God's plan is to use man to minister to & reach out to man... So what does Cornelius do? He calls for Peter.

There he is, in Joppa & God is preparing his heart for this radical encounter he's about to have. Which btw is often times the way God works, He will many times prepare both ends of the spectrum so that as they meet in the middle it's obvious that God has been at work. It has this way of increasing our faith & encouraging our hearts.

Peter's hanging out, getting hungry, asks for some dinner & as they prepare it, (no doubt it smells delicious), he falls into a trance... & God grants him a vision. This sheet descends out of heaven bound at all 4 corners w/all kinds of unclean animals in it & the Lord says to him, "Rise, Peter; kill & eat." Peter says, "no way, I've never eaten anything unclean & I'm not about to now." The Lord says, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." This happens 3xs... Peter's thinking about it, wondering what it means when suddenly these Gentiles sent from Caesarea show up & are all, "Hey, is Simon, the one whose surname is Peter here?" The Spirit says to Peter, "3 guys are down there looking for you, go *meet* them, *greet* them, doubt nothing & *go* w/them."

So that's exactly what he does, & as he enters the household of Cornelius the purpose of the vision becomes clear. Peter says, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."¹ Or as Jesus said it, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."² There is no one beyond the saving grace of J.C. Jesus came into the world to bring salvation not just to Israel, but to whoever would call upon the name of the Lord...

Peter says, "So when you called, I came, what's up?" Cornelius says, "I was hoping you could tell me, I've called my family & my friends & here we all are, tell us the things commanded you by God." Btw what a wonderful witness, Cornelius was so excited about the word of God, that he made sure his family & his friends were present to hear the message. An example we do well to follow. Well, check it out Vs 34

Vs 34-40

The cornerstone of the Christian faith is predicated upon the resurrection of J.C. Apart from the resurrection everything we believe *in* & hope *for* completely collapses & falls to the ground. **As a matter of fact as Paul was writing to the Corinthians he said that if the resurrection isn't real than not only is our preaching empty but your faith is empty as well.** Because we take all of our eggs & we place them in that basket, we place all of our hope, all of our trust, we allow the outcome of *our eternity* to be established upon the reality of the resurrection of J.C. ...

Whom we discover all throughout the gospel records making claims of just such an event. Perhaps you remember the scene; there they were in Caesarea Philippi & Jesus began to ask His disciples about the pulse of the people, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man am?" "Some say you're J.B. other's Elijah, still others say maybe Jeremiah or perhaps one of the prophets." Jesus looked them & did to them what He will always do to us. He took it from the public perspective to the personal persuasion. He said, "But who do you say that I am?" It's a question we all have to answer & it's so important, so critical that all eternity weighs in the balance. **How I respond that single question will determine my eternal destiny.** Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus said, "Very good Peter, you've heard from My Father & He's revealed this to your heart." He said, "This is the confession upon which my church will be built."

¹ The New King James Version. 1982 (Ac 10:28). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 3:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& We read there that, *"From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."*³ When they were in Galilee He said, *"The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up."*⁴ One day Jesus entered into Jerusalem & made a whip of cords, entered the temple, drove the money changers out & over turned the tables on those who would make merchandise of the people of God... Needless to say the religious leaders were outraged. They said, "What gives You the right to come in here & do these things, what sign are You going to show us in order to validate Yourself?" He said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*⁵ Was He in reference to that temple made of stone? No, it was a reference to His death & bodily resurrection 3 days later.

Even on the night of His betrayal He said, *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."*⁶ On & on we could go w/references that Jesus made regarding the fact of His bodily resurrection. That He would be delivered into the hands of sinful men, beaten & killed & on the 3rd day rise again.

So w/all this talk about resurrection, being raised from the dead, we might be prone to wonder, what's the point? Why is it so important, or what does it really prove?

Now we might ought to go ahead make mention of the fact (as a side note) that many people would prefer an "un-resurrected" Jesus. They'd prefer Jesus to be tucked away somewhere in a nice quiet tomb to be visited or taken notice of (perhaps admired from a distance as a historical figure) at their convenience.

But far from the cross confining Him, the resurrection released Him in a manner that no one could've ever imagined. You see the resurrection makes Him "dangerous" in effect doesn't it? Meaning people can't simply go & visit Him in that quiet tomb somewhere, keep their eye on Him & maintain that safe distance from Him in their cozy, quiet comfort zone.

Being alive means being on the loose. It means you never know where He might show up. & Trust me when I tell you that He shows up in some very peculiar places, He might show up in the casino, He might show up in your home... or no telling where.

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 16:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 17:22-23). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Jn 2:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 26:31-32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Being alive means you never know how He might speak to you; He might pierce your conscience directly, or speak to you circumstantially (through events taking place in your life), through a child somewhere or by any # of means.

Of course once He has your attention you never know what He may ask of you... Like, "How about you leave that life of sin behind & follow Me?" Or "When are you going to quit running from Me, why don't you turn to Me & trust in Me w/all your heart?" As we learned last week Jesus *comes* to us, & He offers *to* a beautiful exchange. He says in essence, "Come to Me & I will give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning & sorrow & the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Yet so often we choose to wallow in the mire of sin & sorrow rather than turn our lives over to Christ.

Oh, don't misunderstand me. Following Jesus isn't the primrose problem free live, narrow is the way & difficult is the path that leads to life. It's ez to go w/the flow of this world. Following Christ is hard. But one day we're all going to stand before God right? And when we do it's not going to be about the fact that we thought we were pretty good guys, or we were sincere in our beliefs. It's all about Jesus, "Who do you say that I, the Son of Man am?" Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*⁷ Now Jesus was either a liar, or He was a lunatic, or He was Lord of all. Either way we have a decision to make concerning who He is...

So, the resurrection... What does it prove? If you're a note taker (though we could build a case for more [I have no doubt] I want to focus briefly on 3 things concerning Christ that the resurrection proves.

What Does The Resurrection Prove: #1 It's A Demonstration Of Jesus' Sinless Nature, #2 It's A Declaration That Jesus Is the Son Of God & #3 It's Affirmation That Jesus Is The Only Means To Salvation. Or to put it in brief, the resurrection proves that Jesus is the sinless Son of God, our Savior.

#1 The resurrection demonstrates the sinless nature of Jesus... You know, many people aren't aware of all of the "off the charts" kind of claims that Christ made. They think He was just a good man, good heart, good teacher. But as we mentioned a little bit ago, Jesus said that He was the only way to God. Now You have to be pretty bold to make that kind of claim. If I stood here & told you that you would never get to God unless you came to me, placed all your hope in me & followed me. You'd think I was a nut (& you'd be right).

⁷ The New King James Version, 1982 (Jn 14:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Yet Jesus made that claim. He claimed (as we're thinking through today) that after He was killed He'd rise again from the dead; He claimed that anyone else who tried to say that they could bring man salvation was a liar & a thief. He also claimed to be *sinless*. How many here would raise their hand today w/a bold declaration to say that they have never sinned be it in action, attitude or thought? Yet when Jesus was being interrogated (if you will) by the religious leaders of His day He said, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" The answer is that none of them did, because there was nothing to convict Him of, they had nothing on Him because there was no sin *in* Him. Then He asked this heart probing question: "And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?"⁸ "If you don't convict Me of sin because there's no sin in Me, then you have to conclude I'm telling the truth about everything I say (&/or claim), why then don't you believe Me?" It's a good question.

Do me a favor, if you're still in Acts Ch 10, turn to the left to Acts Ch 2. It's the 1st sermon ever preached after the ascension of Christ & the coming of the Holy Spirit. Peter stands up to preach to the crowd & guess what the topic was? The resurrection of J.C.

I want to draw your attention to Vs 22 (-24)

Now I'm sure that many of you have read that passage before, perhaps many, many times. Yet I wonder though how many times you've stopped to think through those 2 simple words found in Vs 24, "not possible." God raised Jesus from the dead, because it was not possible for death to hold Him.

Now think this through; every person who's ever lived on the planet both pre & post Christ, death has done an outstanding job of holding on to them. As a matter of fact not so much as 1 as escaped it's clutches. Once death grabs hold of you, it will not let go... not so w/Jesus. It wasn't possible that He should be held by it, why is that?

Well, not only because the word of God had declared that He would rise again, (God promised that His Holy One would not see corruption, nor would His soul be left in Hades). But here's the primary point. The Word of God declares (Rom 6:23) "...the wages of sin is death," I have a question for you, if one has never sinned, can they die?

You say, "Well, Jesus died, does that make Him a sinner?" Therein lies the caveat (or perhaps the riddle of sorts) doesn't it? How do we explain this?

Listen, if there's one thing we learn about the nature of sacrifice throughout the scriptures is that the guilty cannot atone for the guilty. It takes innocence to atone for guilt... the *sinless* to atone for the sinful.

⁸ The New King James Version, 1982 (Jn 8:46). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Next we consider the federal headship of man. If by one man's offense (namely Adam) *condemnation* comes to all, then even so it only takes one Man's obedience (namely J.C.) for *justification* to be offered to all.

So what does God do? He becomes a Man in the Person of J.C. (God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself), leads a sinless life. How then can He die? Listen, by *becoming sin for us*. God somehow, & in some way placed the sin of the world upon J.C. & in becoming sin He would pay the penalty of death, but He never became a *sinner* so death could not hold Him. Here's how the bible says it, *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*⁹ So, though Jesus would bear our sin, He Himself was not a sinner (He knew now sin). Therefore He would pay the penalty of sin, but not being a sinner it was not possible that death should hold Him. The resurrection proves the sinless nature of Jesus.

#2 It Proves that He is the Son of God. Btw that was another one of those claims Jesus was always making, that God was His Father. That He came from God & would return again to God. Again the Religious leaders of His day were always wanting Him to prove Himself. *It's as if the opening the eyes of the blind, feeding thousands from a few loaves & a few fish, or healing lepers, or raising the dead didn't count (or His sinless nature). They were wanting "a sign" to ratify who He was.* This is what He said, *"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*¹⁰ So even though Jesus could've called upon His miraculous conception (Virgin Born), His miraculous power, His sinless life, the hundreds of prophecies He fulfilled in their midst, He didn't. He said, *"My proof positive to you that I am who I say I am I will wrap up & tie to 1 thing, the resurrection. Even as Jonah was taken down in that great fish for 3 days & nights I will be in the heart of the earth for 3 days & nights. But even as Jonah "resurfaced" alive, even so death will not hold Me down, I will "resurface" alive & by that You will know that I am the Son of God."*

It's in Acts 13. Paul preaching on the resurrection of J.C. He says, *"And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus."* (Notice)

⁹ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (2 Co 5:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 12:39–40). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'"¹¹ So when we talk about the only begotten Son of God, we're not talking about begotten from the womb, but from the tomb! It's the resurrection that validates the fact for us that Jesus is the Son of God. As Paul said in the book of Romans, *"... concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."*¹² The resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God.

3^{rdly} finally. It proves that Jesus is our Savior. That He is our reconciliation to God, everlasting salvation for you & me. You see the bible is clear (1 Cor 15,) that if there is no resurrection, then Christ isn't risen. If Christ isn't risen than not only is my preaching empty, your faith is empty as well. I'm a false witness & your faith is futile & you're still in your sins... there is no Savior apart from Christ & there is no salvation apart from the resurrection. We might look at it like this, the death of Christ was His payment for sin, the resurrection of Christ was the proof that the payment was accepted. In Romans 5 we read it like this, *"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."*¹³

God places His stamp of approval upon the atoning work of Jesus at the resurrection stating that He alone is qualified to bring salvation to man... *It's in Acts Ch 4 when Peter is once again on trial due to healing a man in the name of J.C. & He tells the authorities that it's through Christ (whom they crucified [he said] whom God raised from the dead) that the man stands there whole. He went on to say of Jesus that He was the stone whom they (as builders) had rejected, which has become the chief cornerstone. Then He said, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*¹⁴

The resurrection proves that Jesus is the sinless Son of God, our Savior... *What glorious news it was indeed when on that 3rd day the ladies came to the tomb only to find it empty.* Only to have the encounter that would forever change their lives as the angel appeared to them & said, *"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!"*¹⁵

¹¹ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ac 13:32-33). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹² *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ro 1:3-4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ro 5:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ac 4:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Lk 24:5-6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Prayer Points:

Lord we give You praise today. We're so overwhelmed at the measure of Your love toward us, which in reality is immeasurable. That You would become a Man, lead a sinless life & be made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in You. Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called the children of God... We thank You for the promise of everlasting life through faith in You, Lord we believe in You, increase our faith, use our lives, be glorified in us.

Perhaps you're in a place whereby Christ has never come into your heart, you've not turned from your sin, nor trusted in Him. Today He's speaking to you, behold, I stand at the door & knock, if you will my voice & open the door I will come into you & dine/fellowship intimately w/you.

Here's another claim that Jesus made. He said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Now if there are none to convict Jesus of sin, because in Him there is no sin, than this must be true, will you believe it?