

Grow in Christ's Resurrection Exaltation

Ephesians 1:18-23

The resurrection of Jesus bodily from the tomb is a central fact to Christianity. But it is what his resurrection **means** that is so greatly important. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life now in all the fullness of his saving power and kingdom. He has brought in not only the New Covenant but the Last Covenant, a New Day as well as the Last Days, as we live in this age of fulfillment. The risen Savior is at the heart of it.

As we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, this includes growing in his being raised up for us and exalted to heaven.

Let us consider on this Easter Sunday the benefits of Jesus, the Prince of life, whom death could not hold!

Now he is visible displayed in all of heaven above and over the earth and all things, to be the fullness of the Godhead, dwelling bodily, the God-man, the Redeemer of the world.

Now we see the glory of God the Father shining like the sun in no other place than the face of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made flesh.

It has always been the case that to see the Son is to see the Father; but now the risen Christ is dressed in the glory of His Father, who has put his robes upon his Son!

In the resurrection of Jesus, we behold his glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

With that greatness in mind, we are ready to consider three points:

What Jesus is now by his resurrection.

What Jesus is to his body, the church.

What Jesus is to the world.

We begin with the Head Himself – then those that are in his body, the church; and then those beneath his feet!

Jesus, simply, is made the head of all things. His headship involves his authority over all things as well as being the source of all. All things are to be summed up in Him who is over all.

Paul highlights his headship over all things and then also to the church which is uniquely called his body.

Peter on the day of Pentecost preached: "Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified." (Act 2:32-36)

Made him – constituted him – how? By the resurrection.

It wasn't that he was not Lord and Christ before – he was! But now has he entered into the fullness of these titles, which changed at his resurrection.

To the Athenians Paul said God would judge the world by that Man He appointed, showing it by raising him from the dead.

Romans begins with Jesus declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.

1 Cor. 15 says Christ was raised the first-fruits of those who are asleep – and later, he must reign until he puts all enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death.

Psalm 2, Psalm 8, Psalm 72, and Psalm 110 all point in the same direction – Lord of the world, Savior of his people.

Jesus through his great humiliation and perfect obedience, has been exalted now by the Father – that to Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord – Phil. 2.

Listen to what Colossians lists as coming forth from Him now:

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Col 1:13-20)

Like Ephesians 1, both Christ's saving love and his authority are mixed together.

Let us take up his Lordship over all things first. That is the order in Ephesians – that all things in heaven, on earth and under the earth are beneath his heel.

Here, under Jesus the Lord of all and Head, are four benefits from the risen Jesus.

1. Death is now in and under the power of Jesus. Revelation 1 reads, ‘and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn or first-ranked from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth – to him be glory and the dominion forever and ever – behold he is coming and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him – and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. **DO NOT FEAR – I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST – AND THE LIVING ONE, AND I WAS DEAD AND BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE, AND I HAVE THE KEYS OF DEATH AND OF HADES = THE WORLD TO COME.**
2. Then not only death but the cause of death – sin. Jesus resurrection answers all sin in that he either forgives it by his perfect atonement; or he will judge all sin at the last day. His kingdom is one of all righteousness, where the perfect honor and glory of God is to be restored. This is where He who overcame sin has the right to the throne of God! We should add that it is Jesus who restrains and overcomes sin in society as he protects his world and his church. He nurtures progress in culture that needs redemption. He is generous to the fallen sons and daughters of Adam.
3. Third, Satan with all of Christ’s enemies are beneath his feet. All principalities and powers are likely hostile ones. All which offends and opposes the reign of King Jesus will be cast out, as He rules all the nations, all her kings. Look at the book of Revelation. It is the Lamb, the risen Lord who had been slain but now lives, who opens the seals, who sends his gospel as a rider on a white horse of peace and life; but then unleashes war, famine, and death. The Lord Jesus

does this all. And we see great patience on his part; great longsuffering; great kindnesses daily shown to those who hate him ruling over them!

4. So the risen One's Lordship over death, sin, all enemies – especially Satan who is be cast at last into the lake of fire. Now 4th, Jesus, Prince of Life, answers to this world's curse, which is part of man's separation from God. Romans 8 says the creation is groaning now with futility; the good earth and sky and waters do not willingly serve man as rebels from the world's maker. But Jesus comes, this Last Adam, who also has a family as well.

Jesus is going to have a new world, a new heaven and a new earth, as an old world and old earth was provided for the first Adam. A new paradise is coming under the Lordship of the risen Christ. No death, no tears, no sin, no wicked, no separation from God for those who are his.

This is a remarkable thing as we turn to consider our last point – the benefits of the risen One to the church.

What are they? These new and rich benefits of His resurrection to his body?

1. First consider the great accessibility of salvation for his people. Now the veil in the temple has been torn in two – the doors of access to God through this new and living way of Jesus to all – females as well as males, slaves as well as free, poor as well as rich, and Gentiles as well as Jews. This comes from Jesus rising as the Son of MAN, not only the Son of Abraham. Now instead of all mankind coming to some central Jerusalem, Jerusalem has come to

your street! Salvation in Jesus has become so wonderfully and pleasantly EASY! It isn't easy on God's part, of course. What a price did He pay! But listen to the theme of the new covenant Book of history, the book of Acts: "All who call on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved!" did you miss that? Let me say it again – *repeat*. The full, free willingness of Jesus to save is the welcome to the world. Come unto me all you who labor and are burdened... And how willingly does he save all who truly come to him to be saved from sin! Would you be made whole today? Today is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time with him!

2. Then second, for those who are saved, his resurrection doubly saves them. What do I mean by that? Jesus is both the righteousness and the power of our salvation in his resurrection. Christ's resurrection is the seal of his cross work for you – taking all your sins upon himself, and rising from his death victorious. He has fulfilled all righteousness. Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is Christ who died – nay, who has risen, who is seated at the right hand of God the Father! "My righteousness is in heaven," said John Bunyan. Paul at the end of his life craved to be found in a righteousness not his own! But there is power too. Paul wanted to know the power of his resurrection. The one who believes also dies in Christ and rises with him to newness of life. In Eph. 1 the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the great power that is at work in giving you life! Peter says that you have been born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead – 1 Pet. 1.3. You have been translated into a new kingdom with a new life, from Jesus who rose again.

3. Now there is more – number three. His resurrection brings all your privileges as saints, as the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus. How? By the Spirit of adoption poured out uniquely at Pentecost. This is the pinnacle of the Christian life – of human life – to have the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the life in the Spirit. God is your Father – Jesus is your brother – you are the Spirit’s home now and heaven is your home hereafter. This gives true, full and rich meaning to all of life. It puts our relationships into a proper focus; it places the temporal blessings of this life where they belong – beneath our feet and not in our hearts. It even sets suffering and trials where they need to be – as part of God’s purpose in my life and yours, his chastenings, his afflicting us, but for our benefit! Paul said in Phil. 3 – O, that I might know him, the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings! Child of God, don’t waste your hardships, your testings, your trials, your afflictions – those are times when Jesus the risen one, whose body you are and who is persecuted with you, feels your infirmities and draws near. Open wide your soul and your needs into his ready ear and heart.
4. Lastly, number 4! Has Jesus risen as the firstborn of many, many brethren! Then you too must rise at the last! As in Adam all die – effectually; so in the Last Adam, all must be made alive – effectually. Christ’s resurrection is not only the pattern for your resurrection; it is not only the beginning of your resurrection; it is even more than the guarantee of your resurrection. It is part of your resurrection. So Paul in the best chapter of the Bible – 8:11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your*

mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. The assurance of these things is here. For us to die is gain. We cannot lose that which we have committed to him whom we have believed. Be more sure of rising from our graves than of your beds tomorrow morning! What comfort, what joy, what excitement, and what hope is yours! Your best days are always ahead – even your last day on earth is your best day because that is your graduation day, your elevation day, your going-home-at-last day, to see your Jesus who always sees you.

As we conclude, review – The Father’s glory and the Spirit’s presence and power enwrap the God-Man, Jesus, risen from the dead; the glory of both shine in his face and in all he does as he builds his church.

His resurrection declares him head over all and especially to his church. He is made Lord of all things, put beneath his feet, and he is the Christ, the risen Savior of His body forever.

As Lord of all, risen from the dead, death, sin, the wicked led by Satan and the world under a curse are all in his hand as conquered foes.

As the new and living Christ to His people, what easy terms are there in the gospel – believe and you shall be saved! He saves us by the gospel which justifies and vivifies by his resurrection. And by his new life we now live as heirs, children, heavenbound souls by him; and his resurrection is the surety and seal of all who believe.

What a comprehensive benefit plan, right?

How should we respond? I ran across a line from E.K. Maltby a few weeks back. He said Jesus promised his disciples three things:

1. They would be absurdly happy.
2. They would be completely fearless.
3. They would be in constant trouble.

That nicely captures these benefits of the Risen Christ to us.
Resurrection **joy** every week, every Sunday, Easter is now.
Resurrection **courage** – to triumph in this world of testing.
Resurrection **troubles** – may it be our doing what is holy, just, good
and spiritual that gets us our trouble in the world; and not our sins and
weaknesses.

May we study Him until these things are part of the very fabric of our
whole lives, and we live them out before a dead and dying world!