

Christ Has Been Raised from the Dead

1 Corinthians 15:12

... *Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead* ...

It is necessary for God's preachers to preach the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, because it is part of the gospel that has been delivered to us to preach (vv.1-5): "1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen"

What do God's preachers preach regarding Christ's resurrection?

I. Christ's resurrection fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. For example, Peter the apostle on the Day of Pentecost declared that the prophecy of Psalm 16:8-11 was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25-28): "25 For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw Jehovah always before My face, for He is at My right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore My heart rejoiced, and My tongue was glad; moreover My flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave My soul in Hades [or *the grave*], nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to Me the ways of life; You will make Me full of joy in Your presence.'"

Also, in Isaiah chapter 53, Christ's resurrection was necessitated. For we read not only of Christ prophesied as dying for His people but also of afterward seeing the results of His death for them and being highly exalted by Jehovah (Isaiah 53:10-12): "10 ... When You make His soul an offering for sin, He [afterward] shall see His seed [His spiritual descendants, God's children], He shall prolong His days [so that He lives forever and never dies], and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. 11 He shall see the labor of His soul [i.e., the results of His labor], and be satisfied. ... 12 ... I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death"

II. Christ's resurrection was prophesied by Christ Himself.

1. He told sign-seeking scribes and Pharisees "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" (Matthew 12:40).

2. He spoke of "the temple of His body" when He told sign-seekers "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19-21).

3. He taught His disciples that He would be killed and raised from the dead on the third day. He did so at least thrice, from about six months before His death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21; 17:22f; 20:18f). He was

so well-known for this doctrine that even His enemies confessed to Pilate "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise'" (Matthew 27:63).

4. He declared "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17f). One very important point to here consider is that Jesus attributed His resurrection to Himself, as when He said "I will raise My body up" in John 2:21. In other instances He said He would "be raised up" (Matthew 16:21; 17:23).

When you read these prophecies from Christ regarding His resurrection from the dead, ask yourself these questions:

- How does a dead man fulfill His prophecy regarding being raised from the dead?
- How can Jesus Christ resurrect Himself from the grave, since the power to raise the dead and give life to them belongs only to God (John 5:21; Deuteronomy 32:39; 2 Kings 5:7)?

III. Christ's resurrection is declared and described in all four gospels (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-10).

1. All four gospels emphasize Christ's resurrection on "the first day of the week" – "after the Sabbath". (The Sabbath ended at sundown on the seventh day of the week, at which time the first day of the week commenced.) This gave rise to Christ's church forsaking Sabbath-day worship services and assembling for worship "on the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7), which later came to be known as "the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10). As we assemble to worship and celebrate the resurrected Christ, rejected by men but exalted by God, we may sing "This was Jehovah's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day Jehovah has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:23f).

2. The first three gospels emphasize Christ's resurrection fulfilling His own prophecies: The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for *He is risen, as He said*. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

3. The fourth gospel emphasizes Peter and John seeing, believing, and finally understanding His resurrection. They *saw* that Christ was not in the tomb. They *saw* the linen cloths in which Christ's body had been wrapped, now lying in the place from which His body had departed them. They *saw* the handkerchief that had been wrapped around His head, now neatly folded and deliberately laid in a place by itself. They *saw* proof that Mary Magdalene had erred when she earlier said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb" – for the positions of the cloths and handkerchief demonstrated that Christ's body had not been taken away by others. (She evidently had departed the tomb before seeing the angel who declared

Christ's resurrection.) They therefore *believed* that He had indeed been resurrected. And they finally *understood* the Old Testament Scriptures that had prophesied His resurrection (e.g., Psalm 16:10f).

IV. *The resurrected Christ was seen by many witnesses and on various occasions:*

- Mary Magdalene at His tomb (John 20:11-18) – at which time “Jesus said to her [Mary Magdalene], ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father.’”
- Simon Peter on an unspecified occasion that day (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5).
- Cleopas and another disciple in Emmaus that evening (Luke 24:13-35) – at which time “it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him ... He was known to them in the breaking of bread.”
- all His apostles except Thomas that evening (John 20:19-25) – at which time “Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”
- all His apostles including Thomas one week later (John 20:26-29) – at which time “Jesus said to [doubting] Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”
- “over five hundred brethren at once” on an unspecified occasion (1 Corinthians 15:6).
- James and the other apostles between His resurrection and ascension (1 Corinthians 15:7; Acts 1:1-11) – during which time “He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).
- Paul the apostle on the road to Damascus (1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:3-6, 17) – at which time Paul was converted and commissioned.
- Stephen the deacon at his martyrdom (Acts 7:54-60): “But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’”

V. *Christ's resurrection has many doctrinal implications:*

1. Christ's resurrection is proof that *He is divine* (Romans 1:4): He was “declared to be the Son of God [a title denoting His divine nature]

with power [i.e., in a superhuman manner] according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”. Thomas therefore did not err when He confessed Jesus Christ as “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).

2. Christ's resurrection is proof that *He has justified His people* (Romans 4:25): “He was delivered up [to death] because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.” Here is the fulfillment of Jehovah's prophecy “By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:11).

3. Christ's resurrection is proof that *He is the Man by whom God will judge the world* (Acts 17:30f): “30 ... God ... now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” God is the judge at the final day, and “He shall judge the world in righteousness” (Psalm 9:8; 96:13; 98:9). When He raised Christ from the dead, He declared Christ's deity (Romans 1:4). Here we are taught that the judge at the final day will be the God-man. (See also John 5:22f.)

4. Christ's resurrection is proof that *God's people have a living hope regarding future bliss* (1 Peter 1:3-5): “3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (cp. 3:21). God can do for us what He did to Christ.

5. Christ's resurrection is proof that *all His people will also be resurrected* (1 Corinthians 15:20): “Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

6. Christ's resurrection is proof that *He has conquered Death and Hades for Himself, and will do so for His people* (1 Corinthians 15:54-57): “54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption [in our resurrection], and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written [in Isaiah 25:8 & Hosea 13:14]: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ 55 ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ ... 57 ... thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Christ's preachers have good reasons to preach His resurrection. And it is necessary for you to believe His resurrection in order to be saved. Do you?

– Daniel E. Parks (April 16, 2017; #973)