

## Examining the Resurrection -6- Some Implications of the Resurrection

### Some implications of the Resurrection

If Jesus did rise from the dead in a real, but now transformed body, as the records declare, there are certain implications which must inevitably follow. I suggest four.

#### It substantiates his claims

Paul says that Jesus "was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). Jesus spoke of his coming death at least sixteen times prior to it happening. On a number of occasions he also included references to his resurrection. Twice he was challenged to give some miraculous sign to prove his authority for acting the way he had. In both instances he indicated in picture language that his resurrection on the third day would be evidence enough (Matthew 12:38-40; John 2:19-22). "Condemned for blasphemy, he was now designated Son of God by the resurrection"

John Stott

On his final journey to Jerusalem he spoke more plainly to his disciples of his coming death and resurrection, though they couldn't grasp what he was talking about (e.g. Matthew 20:17-19). How could they? None of this fitted their views of the Messiah. That he did rise demonstrated that he knew who he was and what he was about. If he had not risen he would have been proved false.

The resurrection was also the reversal of the verdict passed on Jesus by the Sanhedrin (the Jewish High Court). In terms of Jewish law the only construction that could be placed on the death of Jesus was that he was under the curse of God. He had been condemned as a blasphemer pretending to be the promised Messiah, and such a death was appropriate. But if Jesus was raised from the dead, the verdict of the highest human court was overturned by the highest authority of all. It was the vindication that his words and his works were not of Satanic origin, but the very works of God himself.

Noted Bible scholar John Stott says:

Condemned for blasphemy, he was now designated Son of God by the resurrection. Executed for sedition, for claiming to be a king, God made him 'both Lord and Christ'. Hanged on a tree under the curse of God, he was vindicated as the Saviour of sinners, the curse he bore being due to us and not to him.

#### It guarantees the effects of his death

The New Testament constantly affirms that the death of Jesus was not merely the death of a martyr in a righteous cause, but a sacrifice initiated by God himself to pay for the sins of the human race. In some incredible way Jesus was making our forgiveness possible. Passages such as these are typical: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8); "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28); "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

In raising Christ from the dead God was setting his seal of approval on what Christ had done. In one of his final words from the cross Jesus had cried: "It is finished" (John 19:30). The Greek word here has a number of meanings. In the business world it meant the payment of a debt. One could say that the resurrection is the receipt for the payment that had been made. His death and resurrection were part of the one act. Paul says, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:25). His sufferings on our behalf make our forgiveness possible - but it is the risen Christ who offers that forgiveness to us and guarantees it for us.

The Roman world was largely unanimous that crucifixion was a horrible, disgusting business. It would not be mentioned in polite society. And yet it has become a symbol beloved by millions. Nothing but the resurrection could have produced this understanding and transformation.

#### It guarantees the triumph of good over evil.

Jesus' resurrection is pictured in the New Testament not only as a triumph over death, but also as a triumph over sin and evil which are ultimately the cause of death. He is heralded as the victor over Satan and all that lies behind the brokenness so evident in our world today. "Jesus' resurrection in history's mid-course gave everyone a public preview of the end-time"

Carl Henry

The victory of the allied forces on the beaches of Normandy on D-day was not the end of the war. However, it did guarantee the final defeat of the German forces. Similarly, the victory achieved by Christ through his death and resurrection on that first Easter morning is the guarantee of God's final triumph over evil. By his perfect life, his death for our sins and his resurrection, it is Christ who has won the right to be the final judge of the human race. Paul, preaching in

Athens, put it this way, "[God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). As the prominent American theologian, Carl Henry, aptly says:

Jesus' resurrection in history's mid-course gave to everyone a public preview of the end-time and its moral implications...The Risen Jesus is unveiled in advance as the future judge of the whole human race.

It guarantees our share in the final victory.

At the beginning of each harvest it was part of Jewish tradition to offer the first of their crops in the temple. This offering was known as the "firstfruits". Using this image, the New Testament describes Jesus' resurrection as the firstfruits of a greater harvest yet to come. The resurrection is not just something for Jesus, but an experience which all of his followers will share: "Christ the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him" (I Corinthians 15:23). Those who put their faith in him are "co-heirs" of his kingdom and glory (Romans 8:17). We can barely even begin to imagine all that this will imply, though the New Testament does give us some very meaningful hints. William Fitch expresses it like this:

When we are drawn to him at his appearing, we will experience the wonder of resurrection nearness and resurrection fellowship...All distance will be annihilated, all shadows dissipated, all fellowship completed, all joy consummated...we shall share the life of his eternity.