

March 23rd, 2008 “The Reason for the Resurrection”

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Luke 24:1-12

1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, ‘**The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.**’ ”

8 And they remembered His words.

9 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

We celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday, and I want to spend our time looking at the reasons for the Resurrection. Although Jesus Christ repeatedly warned the disciples about His impending death on the Cross, the disciples could not comprehend that which Jesus Christ was giving them. Human beings have an interesting psychological characteristic known as cognitive dissonance which means that the mind rejects any concept with which it does not agree. The Bible alludes to this property in the disciples when Jesus first begins to tell the disciples about His impending death, in **Matthew 16:21-23**:

21 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.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Although Jesus is revealing the plans of the Kingdom of God to the disciples, the disciples just can not comprehend God’s plan. That which Jesus is saying is so far outside of the expectations of the disciples that Peter can’t hold his peace, but decides that he has to rebuke Jesus for making such an insane prediction. What possible power could the Jewish religious leaders have over a man that can heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons and cleanse lepers? It just doesn’t make any sense to Peter and the boys.

There is precedent in the Scripture for the position that the disciples are taking. **2Kings 1:9-15** records:

9 Then the king sent to [Elijah] a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So [the captain] went up to [Elijah]; and there [Elijah] was, sitting on the top of a hill. And [the captain] spoke to [Elijah]: “Man of God, the king has said, ‘Come down!’ ”

10 So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

11 Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And [the captain] answered and said to [Elijah]: “Man of God, thus has the king said, ‘Come down quickly!’ ”

12 So Elijah answered and said to them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

13 Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: “Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight.

14 Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight.”

15 And the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So he arose and went down with him to the king.

When God is with a man, generally speaking, the man is protected by the power of God. The disciples thought no less of Jesus Christ than the Bible speaks of Elijah. **Luke 9:51-54** records:

51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for [Jesus] to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,

52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him.

53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.

54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?”

The disciples fully expected Jesus to exhibit the power of God against those that chose to reject Him, but Jesus had other plans. **Luke 9:55-56** says:

55 But [Jesus] turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.

The problem that the disciples faced, and that many other Christians face, is the problem that Jesus described in **Luke 9:55**. We don’t know what manner of spirit we are of, meaning that our normal reaction to a problem situation is usually not the same as that which the Holy Spirit would dictate. As a matter of fact, although we who are Christians are given the Holy Spirit to change our thinking, we also still have our old human nature within us, the way of thinking that Paul calls the flesh, our human propensity employ violence to destroy our opposition that caused James and John to speak as they did in **Luke 9:54**. **Romans 8:5-14** tells us:

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

The essential fact that the disciples cannot comprehend is that Jesus Christ has come to be the sacrifice for our sins, meaning that His mission is to take the punishment that we are owed for the sins that we have committed so that God can give us a new, spiritual nature by the power of the Holy Spirit, and then allow us into Heaven rather than give us the punishment that we so justly deserve. Paul describes our situation in **1Corinthians 6:9-11**:

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were

justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

God began His campaign to save man directly after the very first sin was committed. As He was confronting the serpent in the Garden, He predicted the mission of Jesus Christ. **Genesis 3:14-15** reads:

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

The seed of the woman is Jesus Christ. This is true because of the fact that in the normal case of human reproduction, the seed that creates a person come from that person's human father. Jesus Christ did not have a human father, having the unique experience of being born of a virgin; the only human being involved in His birth was His mother, which makes Jesus the seed of a woman. The figure of satan bruising Jesus' heel refers to Jesus' death on the Cross of Calvary which satan caused by inciting those whom Jesus' sacrificial ministry was intended to heal into executing Him. The figure of Jesus bruising satan's head refers to satan being cast into the pit of fire and brimstone that burns forever and ever without us, the sinners that have been saved by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Satan has done everything that He can to thwart the plan of God for our lives, and Jesus chose to be bruised in order to atone for our sin and save our lives. **Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12** tells us:
4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore 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, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

The "He" in this passage of Scripture is Jesus Christ. He is the one that was wounded and bruised for our transgressions and iniquities, meaning, our sins. Jesus is the one upon which the Roman soldiers laid stripes during His scourging although He had committed no sin; the stripes laid on Him paid the penalty for our sins.

Jesus came to earth to be a sacrifice; Jesus came to earth to provide a resolution for the problem that sin must justly be punished; Jesus came to give Himself so that we do not have to bear the weight of the eternal punishment for our sins. Jesus was born with the singular mission to die in our place. **Romans 6:20-23** clarifies:

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus' death on the Cross was a gift to mankind; the gift of eternal life; the gift of eternal transformation; the gift of the new nature; the gift of a new Spirit, the Holy Spirit that indwells our lives and changes the way that we think.

Now, I have quoted the Old Testament books of Genesis and Isaiah and the New Testament book of Romans to support my theological conclusion. This is an intellectual theory; all of these great works of Scripture actually have human authors; Moses was the author of Genesis, Isaiah authored his book under his own name, and the Apostle Paul was the author of the book of Romans. I'm telling you that these books are the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit and given to these men who are their human authors, but I'm telling you that because someone told me that; unless you yourself have seen God manipulating the minds of the men writing these books, my assurance to you that they are the handiwork of the Holy Spirit doesn't really mean much. After all, who am I?

The Lord Jesus Christ had a similar problem when seeking to assure His disciples that His doctrine of salvation was true. Of course, Jesus did miraculous works in the sight of the disciples, and told them the plan of God for His life and for their lives, but the words that Jesus spoke to the disciples were ineffective to convince them of His deity when pitted against the horrible logic of His brutal, physical death on the Cross. Yes, Jesus told them that He was going to die to pay the penalty for our sins, and He did die, but how do we actually know that Jesus' death did that which He said that it was going to do? At the end of the day, Jesus was just as dead as everyone else that had ever died, and the fact that He prophesied His own death only meant that the prophecy, along with His crucified corpse, would linger in our minds when we considered Him. That was cold comfort, even to those that actually believed in Him.

However, Luke relates an account of the activities of a group of men that thought highly of Jesus Christ. The third day after Jesus died, although they experienced some excitement when the women went to the tomb of Jesus and found it empty, cognitive dissonance kept them from really comprehending that which the women were telling them. They decided that, now that Jesus was dead, life had to get back to normal, and that they needed to take care of some business in Emmaus, a town just up the road from Jerusalem. The ministry of Jesus Christ was an exciting experience of which to be a part, but now the party was over, Jesus was dead, and they had to get back to business. **Luke 24:13-24** records:

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17 And [Jesus] said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to [Jesus], “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

19 And [Jesus] said to them, “What things?**” So they said to [Jesus], “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,**

20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

23 When they did not find [Jesus’] body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but [Jesus] they did not see.”

They did not see Jesus. Although they were talking to Jesus, they could not recognize Him, but the principle reason for the Resurrection is that seeing is believing. Jesus talked to the men, and explained His mission on earth to them. **Luke 24:25-29** records:

25 Then [Jesus] said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!****

26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and [Jesus] indicated that He would have gone farther.

29 But they constrained [Jesus], saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them.

From the perspective of the travelers, the man with whom they were talking was a Biblical scholar with an excellent knowledge of the Old Testament, who was able to point out all of the places in those books that pointed to the mission and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ was the topic of the day, the two disciples were drawn to the arguments of this scholar, and thought that it would be wonderful if this scholar could take the time to break bread with them and continue His exposition of the Scripture so that they could be comforted by the fact that Jesus Christ not only told them that He was the fulfillment of Scripture, but that they had independent Biblical confirmation. At the dinner table, however, they received the unmistakable confirmation that they did not expect but that was ultimately convincing. **Luke 24:30-32** records:

30 Now it came to pass, as [Jesus] sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew [Jesus]; and He vanished from their sight.

32 And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while [Jesus] talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”

All of the circumstances and all of the interesting discussions made for an intellectually stimulating day, but no discussion could have convinced the two disciples of Jesus' deity and resurrection from the dead in the way that actually seeing Jesus Christ in the flesh did, once they got over the initial shock of having seen and conversed with a crucified man who had been certified as dead by the Romans, then buried in a tomb from Friday afternoon to sometime on Sunday morning. So they went back to tell their fellow disciples of their experience. Upon arriving, they and the other disciples duplicated the experience that the two had in Emmaus. **Luke 24:33-43, John 20:21-23, and Luke 24:44-48** records:

33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how [Jesus] was known to them in the breaking of bread.

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you."

37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

38 And [Jesus] said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.

43 And He took it and ate in their presence.

21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And you are witnesses of these things.

Unfortunately, we will not sit in that room with Jesus and break bread together. We will never have the objective experience of Thomas, whom Jesus invited to put his finger into the wounds caused by the nails and the spear in His wrists and side. Although the evidence of history is overwhelmingly abundant, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best attested to historical

event in the history of the world before the invention of the printing press, and that there is more documentary and even physical evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ than for any other event in antiquity, we have to rely on the testimony of history for our confirmation that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead.

Unless we accept the accounts of the life, ministry, death, burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ on faith and then pray to receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus told the disciples, in **John 14:25-26**:

25 “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

The Holy Spirit is Our Helper, is He that motivates us to continue in the doctrines of Jesus Christ and establishes the church. The Holy Spirit is the unseen power that inspires us to tell others about Christ. In **Acts 1:4-8**:

4 And being assembled together with them, [Jesus] commanded [the disciples] not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 And [Jesus] said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The power that we have to transform our lives by our belief in Jesus Christ and the power that we have to influence the lives of others to believe in Jesus Christ comes from the same Holy Spirit of God that motivated the disciples into their great work. **1Corinthians 12:3** tells us:

3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives makes the salvific plan complete. He helps us by transforming our thinking and making us realize the reality of the Christ and the correctness of His teaching. We can resist the teaching of the Holy Spirit, just as we can resist any other teaching that we receive, but the effectual working of the power of the Holy Spirit navigates the circumstances of our lives to gather us under the authority of the Word of God so that that which we experience can ultimately bring us to the same place of intellectual belief, of faith to which Jesus brought the disciples.

The reason for Jesus’ Resurrection, which we commemorate on every Sunday including this Easter Sunday, is to give us a starting place for belief; to give us the sure testimony of those that were there that Jesus is the Christ, that He died for our sins, and that He rose from the dead. This is the single most important event in the history of the world, because it is the event that allows our eternal destiny to be Heaven, rather than Hell. **Romans 5:1-10** teaches us:

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

10 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.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ completes the reconciliation of man to God. Let us recognize and commemorate Jesus' great Sacrifice for us, and let us resolve to live our lives under the influence of the Holy Spirit, reconciled to God with the mission to live through our tribulations with perseverance, character and hope that others may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in Heaven. That is the message of the Resurrection, and let us celebrate it, not just on Easter Sunday, but everyday.

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