

TheoTalk

Engaging Theology that Matters

Who is Jesus?

Part 10: The Risen Savior-King

It was the most astounding event in history. Impossible if it hadn't happened. Executed, confirmed dead, and buried in a rock tomb guarded by armed soldiers on Friday, Jesus was alive again on Sunday morning. In a very real sense, this historical event was the dawn of Christianity. For through His bodily resurrection from the dead, Jesus proved He was who he claimed to be: God's Messiah; the bringer of God's restored Kingdom that had now clearly come; the One who was utterly worthy of our trust.

No wonder, seeing the risen Jesus transformed His fearful, hiding disciples into unstoppable followers who would rather die than deny their Redeemer-King, who had fulfilled his promise to die and rise bodily from the dead (e.g. Mathew 16:21). Far from myth or legend, the bodily resurrection of Jesus was the most transformative event in history, and the basis of historic Christianity.

In this lesson, we will consider why the Apostle Paul declares, "...if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). Specifically, we will discover why, in addition to affirming Jesus was who He claimed to be, His bodily resurrection from the dead is central to our Gospel hope.

Key Takeaway: Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, there would be no Gospel. Because Jesus rose bodily from the dead, our salvation is sure and God's Kingdom has come.

Discussion

There are at least four ways the bodily resurrection of Jesus ratifies His victory over sin, evil, and the Fall, thereby securing our salvation and affirming that God's New Covenant Kingdom has come:

1. Jesus's bodily resurrection secured our forgiveness:

Read Hebrews 10:11-14; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1-2

In ancient Judaism, the high priest offered sacrifices for the sins of the people. Jesus was/is a unique high priest, in that He offered the perfect and final sacrifice for sins by offering Himself for us. The fact God raised Jesus from dead proved Jesus did not deserve to die. Because He was sinless, death could not justly hold Him, since death is the consequence of sin. This is important because it affirms that Jesus was indeed a *sinless* sacrifice who could justly pay for and take away our sin. After His propitiatory death, Jesus "passed through the heavens" (Hebrews 4:14), which is to say, He rose from the dead to "sit at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12), as our righteous representative or advocate (1 John 2:1-2).

In what sense is Jesus our advocate who guarantees our forgiveness before God the Father?

Jesus stands before the Father as the one who lived the perfect life we don't live and died a sacrificial death to pay the penalty for our sins. As our advocate, Jesus stands beside us in the presence of the Father, pointing to His credentials and work on the cross to forever declare He has canceled our sins and, thereby, delivered us from condemnation.

Could Jesus advocate for our forgiveness if He had not risen from the dead? Why or why not?

What hope does Jesus's advocacy give us? (see Hebrews 4:16).

2. Jesus's bodily resurrection secured our righteous standing before the Holy God:

Read Romans 4:22-25; Ephesians 2:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21

In Lesson Three, we saw that our justification (right standing) before God doesn't only include forgiveness of sins, but the imputation (assigning) of Christ's righteous obedience to us. Jesus secured this righteous standing for us, not only in His death, but also in His resurrection: the ultimate and final vindication of His righteous standing before God. By rising from the dead, Jesus proved He was a righteous man who did not deserve to die. More than that, he proved He was the promised Savior-King of Genesis 3:15, come to lift us from the fall and restore to us what we lost there.

He did this by paying for sins that we not He committed, that we might gain the righteousness which He not we possessed (2 Corinthians 5:21). In other words, Jesus's resurrection secures our justification (Romans 4:24-25), not only because He stands before God as the One who paid the penalty for our sins, but also because His resurrection was God's public vindication of His (Christ's) righteousness that is now our righteousness, since we have been raised up and, therefore, vindicated with Him (Ephesians 2:6).

3. Jesus's bodily resurrection secured our future, bodily resurrection:

How does each of the following passages affirm that Jesus came to redeem us as whole people, including our earthly bodies?

Daniel 12:1-3

Matthew 19:28-30

2 Corinthians 5:2-3

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-23

Paul sees the resurrection of our bodies as central to our salvation in Christ. *Why must this be true?*

In verses 20-23, how does the bodily resurrection of Jesus secure our bodily resurrection as His people?

Note: According to the Bible, physical death is the point at which the body dies and the soul separates from the body. Those who belong to Christ when their body dies continue enjoying fellowship with Him in this disembodied soul-state (Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 6:9-10). Those who don't know Christ will not enjoy fellowship with Him after death (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10). All people experience bodily resurrection at the end of the age (Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:25-29). After this comes judgment and, either everlasting, bodily life for those who belong to Christ (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21) or everlasting destruction for those who have rejected him (Daniel 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10).

4. Jesus's bodily resurrection secured our present power over sin and our renewed ability to follow Him:

Read Romans 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:1-4

How do these passages tie Christ's resurrection to our present ability to live increasingly "resurrected" lives in Christ?

Re-read Colossians 3:1-4

What does it look like, practically, for us to live like those who have already been raised with Christ into the newness of His resurrection life?

Based on all these things, where would we be if Christ had not risen from the dead?

Additional Study

For more on Jesus's bodily resurrection from the dead and its centrality to the Gospel, see:

- Fire Song, chapter 11, *The Death of Death*. Pay close attention to the toggle at the end of the chapter entitled, *The Resurrection of Jesus in History*.
- Grudem, Systematic Theology, *Resurrection and Ascension*, pp. 608-614
- [The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus](#)
- William Lane Craig, The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, Oregon.