

Christ's Resurrection and the Believer

Today I want us to look at ... 'What Christ's Resurrection Means to Us.'

The Bible says that Jesus "is declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:4)

In 1950 C. S. Lewis published an essay titled "What Are We to Make of Jesus Christ?" In it Lewis discussed the resurrection of Jesus. He writes,

"We come to the strangest story of all, the story of the Resurrection. It is very necessary to get the story clear. I heard a man say, '*The importance of the Resurrection is that it gives evidence of survival, evidence that the human personality survives death.*' On that view what happened to Christ would be what had always happened to all men, the difference being that in Christ's case we were privileged to see it happening. This is certainly not what the earliest Christian writers thought. Something perfectly new in the history of the Universe had happened. Christ had defeated death. The door which had always been locked had for the first time been forced open. This is something quite distinct from mere ghost-survival. I don't mean that they disbelieved in ghost-survival. On the contrary, they believed in it so firmly that, on more than one occasion, Christ had to assure them that he was not a ghost. The point is that while believing in survival they yet regarded the Resurrection as something totally different and new. The Resurrection narratives are not a picture of survival after death; they record how a totally new mode of being has arisen in the Universe. Something new had appeared in the Universe: as new as the first coming of organic life. This Man, after death, does not get divided into 'ghost' and corpse.' A new mode of being had arisen. This is the story. What are we going to make of it?"¹

What does Christ's resurrection that mean to us?

When I think about when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (found in John 11), I try to imagine what the people who saw this thought. Jesus had said,

"...I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26 ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, "What are We to Make of Jesus Christ?" in *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 159-160.

A week later Jesus was crucified.

“All the redemptive values of the Gospel come to us from the Cross of Calvary; but they would never come to us at all were it not for our Lord’s resurrection. A dead Christ could be no Mediator.” (J. Sidlow Baxter)

Had Jesus remained in the grave everything about Him would have no meaning. Peter preached,

“...this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.” (Acts 2:23-24)

Paul wrote,

“For if while 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.” (Rom. 5:10)

Christ’s resurrection means that...

I. We Live

Because Christ lives we live.

There are two basic categories of people,
those who are “In Adam”,
and those who are “In Christ”.

Paul explains the differences,

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

First fruits – idea of more to come

Through Adam came sin and death; Through Christ, forgiveness and life.

In Ephesians 2 Paul writes of this,

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins... [but you were] made alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him

in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..." (Eph. 2:1, 5).
 When Christ came to the earth in the incarnation,
 God was linked with our human nature.

By His resurrection

He has linked our human nature with God – to the very throne of God.
 By Christ's resurrection for Christian believers death is disarmed and transformed.
 We have life and hope...

II. The Basis of Hope

Christ's resurrection is the basis of the believers' hope.

"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,

even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord,

that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord,
 will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout,
 with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God,
 and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up
 together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,
 and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

No longer must the mourners weep
 And call departed Christian dead;
 For death is hallowed into sleep,
 And every grave becomes a bed.
 To fall asleep is not to die! –
 To sleep, yet wake in larger life!
 Instead of exile, rest on high!
 Instead of struggle, peace from strife!
 Now once more, Eden's door
 Open stands to mortal eyes!
 Now at last, old things past,
 Christ is risen! We too shall rise!²

² J. Sidlow Baxter, *Awake, My Heart*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 137.

Death, the final enemy, will be ended when Christ returns.
When someone dies they will live again.

Those who have died are with Christ. When He returns their bodies will be resurrected from the grave. Then all believers on the earth will be caught up and changed into a glorified state and meet up with the resurrected saints in a great reunion.

A parallel passage is 1 Corinthians 15,

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (1 Cor. 15:51-53).

This is our blessed hope!

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” (Titus 3:11-13)

Jesus is the hope of all the ages.

We rejoice in hope, because we serve the God of hope.

‘Christ in us’ is the hope of glory,
the hope of salvation, the hope of eternal life.

He is a living hope, an inner hope, a personal hope,
and a glorious hope.

Have you put your hope in Him? I hope so!

Because Christ Lives we Live; His resurrection is the basis of our Hope,
and a pledge of our Future.

III. A Pledge of the Future

- **Because of Christ’s resurrection we have a glorious future.**

Our Future Home

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:2-3)

Our Future City

(Our heavenly re-location plan is not like the old neighborhood)

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’ And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Write for these words and faithful and true.” (Rev. 21:1-5)

Our future reunion with all the saints will begin at Christ’s return and continue on eternally in the New Heaven and Earth.

Our future Bodies

- Glorified Resurrection Bodies

John wrote,

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like him, because we will see Him just as He is.” (1 John 3:2)

Paul says,

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” (Phil 3:20-21)

We will live a deathless physical perfection as a glorious replica of Christ Himself.

Our Future King

- Christ's resurrection guarantees that the Christ who came to earth as the world's Savior will come to earth a second time as the world's Ruler.

John writes of Christ's return,

“And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written,
‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’” (Rev. 19:16)

The Risen Christ shall be King over a new heaven and a new earth.

Because of Christ's resurrection we have life because we are in Him,
we have hope because of His great and precious promises,
and we have a future in glory – where there is no sin, no death, no sorrow

A future of...

–unending life as heirs of heaven and earth, with all the angels and all the saints.
Christ will rule as King over all forever and ever, and ever, and ever. Amen!

And He shall reign forever and ever!