

Why Did Christ Rise?

That Christ came bodily forth alive from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, in which he was laid after his crucifixion, is one of the most conspicuous features of the preaching of the Apostles after his ascension. This may be seen from Acts 2.32; 3.15; 4.10; 5.30; 10.40; 13.30; and many other passages. Rather than withhold their witness to this fact, they were prepared to suffer death.

Those who profess to follow Christ must believe this testimony. The apostles teach in the plainest words that Christ's resurrection was fundamental to the Christian faith:

'If Christ be not raised, *your faith is vain*; ye are yet in your sins'.¹

(1) I Cor. 15.17.

Jesus 'shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself'.¹¹

2. Forgiveness of sins leading to eternal life is only obtained through the mediation of a living Christ. His approach to God as an intercessor was the foretold means of reconciliation between God and men:

He 'made intercession for the transgressors'.¹²

'Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins'.¹³

'He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them'.¹⁴

He is the 'one mediator between God and men'.¹⁵

'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous'.¹⁶

'Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need'.¹⁷

3. Christ has been made the judge as well as mediator; and before him, at his coming, all those who are responsible must appear to render account of their lives, and to receive from him according to their deeds — acceptance and immortality if approved; rejection, shame and a return to the grave if condemned:

'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son'.¹⁸

'It is he (Jesus) which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick (living) and dead'.¹⁹

(11) Phil. 3.21. (12) Isa. 53.12. (13) Acts 13.38. (14) Heb. 7.25.

(15) I Tim. 2.5. (16) I John 2.1. (17) Heb. 4.14-16. (18) John 5.22

(19) Acts 10.42.

Why was the resurrection of Christ a necessity for human salvation? Because without a risen, living Christ (in whose crucifixion God's righteousness had previously been declared) there would have been no forgiveness of sins, and no attainment of immortality following upon his death. God will not condone sin. Adam, by partaking of the forbidden fruit, broke the divine law in Eden and thereby incurred the sentence of death: 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die'.² This marked the entry of sin into the world and caused a breach between God and man. This breach has continued ever since. Paul stated a sober truth when he wrote, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned'.³

It is entirely of God's compassion that a way has been provided whereby man can become reconciled to Him and share in the salvation which may be obtained through Christ.

1. God saves, but it is *by Christ*, whom He has made the Saviour, first by bestowing salvation upon him for his obedience, and then by giving him power over all flesh to give eternal life to those who believe the gospel and obey its teaching:

'He (Jesus) offered up ... supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared'.⁴

'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience'.⁵

He 'obtained eternal redemption'.⁶

'He became the author of eternal salvation'.⁷

'Thou has given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him'.⁸

'He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also *by Jesus*'.⁹

'The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live'.¹⁰

(2) Gen. 2.17. (3) Rom. 5.12. (4) Heb. 5.7. (5) Heb. 5.8.

(6) Heb. 9.12. (7) Heb. 5.9. (8) John 17.2. (9) II Cor. 4.14.

(10) John 5.25.

'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad'.²⁰

'I (Jesus) will give unto every one of you according to your works'.²¹

'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works'.²²

'The Lord Jesus Christ ... shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom'.²³

Is it not clear that if Christ had not risen, his death would have been of no value? What was needed was a way out of death. This was effected in Christ's resurrection, after submission to death. There was then provided a living Mediator through whom God's forgiveness could be obtained, and a living dispenser of immortality in the day of judgment to all who come to God by him.

It is not enough to look to the death of Christ. Without his resurrection there would have been no hope. Salvation depends on accepting him through baptism and thereafter living a life in accordance with his commandments. On this theme read: Matt. 7.21,23; John 15.14; Rom. 6.3-5; Rom. 8.13; I Cor. 6.9,10; Gal. 6.8; I John 3.7,8.

(20) II Cor. 5.10. (21) Rev. 2.23. (22) Matt. 16.27. (23) II Tim. 4.1.