

He Is Risen Indeed!

Wilmore, Kentucky

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On Easter Sunday, all around the Christian world, bells will toll and preachers will proclaim ... "He is risen." And the energetic response from every congregation will be, "He is risen indeed!"

But is God being fully recognized for what He has accomplished through the resurrection of Christ Jesus? The same Scriptures that reveal the fact of the resurrection, also reveal that through Christ **ALL** will be saved. Not one soul will remain in death, or in the torments of hell, as many today are declaring.

Despite the joyful sounding proclamations being made in churches around the world today, the message being preached is not pure joy. It is as if the church is shouting, "He is risen, but the benefits He provides through His death and resurrection are only for those of us who are smart enough to believe in this short lifetime." How egotistical!

Some may argue, "This is not egotistical ... it is what God has said, and so I believe it!"

But this is **NOT** what God has said. This may be what most Bible teachers and preachers and scholars say today, because they have been raised and educated within a system that has, through the years, incorporated error into its teachings. If we are willing to set aside the traditions and teachings of man, and look directly to the Word of God, studying intently, we will see the truth that God will most definitely, at the end of the ages, save all of mankind!

There are two points I would like us to consider.

First ... the **FACT** of Christ's resurrection. Some in Paul's day were saying that Christ had not been raised from the dead. "*How are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?*" (1 Corinthians 15:12). As in Paul's day there are many skeptics in the world today. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is doubted.

Paul responded by pointing to the many witnesses to the resurrection, including over 500 brethren who saw Christ after He had been raised (1 Corinthians 15:6). And Paul also had his own testimony ... a life-changing supernatural experience on his way to Damascus where the resurrected and glorified Lord appeared to him, spoke to him, blinded him, and convinced him that this Jesus Christ whom he had once persecuted was truly the Lord ... and was resurrected from the dead.

The historic fact is that Christ was raised from the dead. Every Christian around the world believes this fact, since this event is the heart of the gospel.

Now the second thing to be considered ... the **IMPLICATIONS** of Christ's resurrection. And on this point all Christians do not agree.

Most Christians will say that because Christ died and was resurrected, those who believe are saved and will one day go to heaven ... but those who do not believe in this lifetime are damned and will upon death go to hell for all eternity. This doctrine received the stamp of "orthodoxy" in the fifth century. (*Note: "Orthodoxy" is simply the majority opinion among Christians. It should not simply be accepted as undisputed fact without question. If the "church fathers" were wrong in the 3rd – 5th centuries; and I believe they were on some points; then we are locked into error forever if we are unable to review, question and dispute certain elements.*)

Anyone who studies the Bible carefully and objectively will see very clearly that God intends to ultimately save all mankind. Not a single soul will be damned endlessly as most in the church believe to be the case today.

“(Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class:” (1 Corinthians 15:20 – Concordant Version)

Note the parallel between Adam and Christ. Is any man excluded from the dying condition inherited from Adam? Shall, then, any man be excluded from being vivified (made alive) in Christ?

All will be made alive ... but not all at the same time.

“the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ’s in His presence; thereafter the consummation ...” (1 Corinthians 15:23)

There is an order to the resurrection. Part one has been completed ... Christ has been roused from among the dead. Next will be those who are Christ’s. But phase three is the “consummation.” ...

“whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet.” (15:24)

We take notice that Christ does not reign forever. He will reign **UNTIL** He completes His objective and all enemies are under His feet ... subjected to Him. All are not yet subjected to Christ, but one day all will be subjected.

“The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet.” (15:26)

Today the believer has subjected himself to Christ, but the non-believer is not yet subjected. But one day **ALL** will be subjected. And when this happens the last enemy ... death ... will be abolished.

The lake of fire that is referred to in Revelation is called “the second death” (Revelation 20:15). As long as the lake of fire remains in existence, there remains the second death. But one day there will no longer be a need for the lake of fire, and it too will be abolished. We know the lake of fire must be abolished because it is called “the second death,” and we are told that death is the last enemy and will be abolished.

There will come a day when there is no longer a need for the lake of fire, or sovereignties, or authorities or powers ... because these things will have fulfilled their purpose, and ALL will be subjected to God. And then ...

“then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:28)

The permanent existence of the lake of fire, or of an eternal torment as many within the church teach, is **impossible**. How can God be All in all if there are still some lost souls being tormented forever? How can God be All in all if a single soul remains in rebellion and is not yet reconciled to Him? If these souls subject themselves to God they will no longer be enemies. They, too, will have come to realize as we believers do today that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Like us, even the most rebellious will be subjected to God. And God will be All in all.

The lake of fire will have served its purpose as a means of bringing all things into subjection, reconciled to God.

How sad that most within the Church today have been misled by erroneous Bible translations; translations produced for the sake of profit ... or with the goal of being easy to read instead of being accurate translations of God's perfect Word ... or translations indoctrinated with the predetermined traditions of men instead of being faithful, objective translations. How sad that those who led the Church in the fifth century thought they had God totally figured out, even though many did not agree with them ... to the point that any who opposed them were cast outside the church or even killed.

The stubbornness of man cannot overcome the sovereign will of God. The hatred and contempt and rebellion that seems to run rampant in man cannot overcome the love and wisdom and power of God. How sad that most today do not realize how **huge** are the love, grace and wisdom of God ... that He is **leading** this universe to the point where all things are reconciled to Him.

In 1 Timothy 4:10-11 we read that the living God is: ***“the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers.”*** Yes, **especially** of believers ... for believers recognize in this lifetime what God has accomplished in Christ (at least to some degree). But note that He is not the Saviour **exclusively** of believers. He is the Saviour of all mankind!

We can learn from the case of “doubting Thomas” (see John 20:24-29). The other apostles came to Thomas telling him that Christ was risen. (Just as the apostles proclaim to the world today, in the form of the Bible.) But Thomas refused to believe unless he could see the Lord for himself. (Just as so many today who will not or cannot believe.) So was Thomas cast out into everlasting torment because he refused to believe? No; the Lord came to Thomas, and allowed Thomas to see and to touch ... whereupon Thomas believed.

Blessed are those who believe without seeing. Yes, God is the Saviour **especially** of believers. But He is also the Saviour of **all** ... and one day all will believe (although some may see the Lord face to face before this happens.)

He is risen! He is risen indeed! And as a result ... absolute perfection and total reconciliation of all will one day come to pass. What a grand day of reunion that will be.

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