

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: The Main Event in Redemptive History

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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This is just such a special Lord's day every year, as we celebrate a risen Christ. Those of you who are with us regularly know that we have just recently completed a study of the wonderful account of Jesus written by Luke. It was just really a few weeks ago when in finishing up our study of the gospel of Luke, we considered the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ in some detail, even pulling in Matthew's account and John's account and Mark's account to get a full picture.

It was at that time, you will remember, that I told you no event in history reaches the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the crowning event in God's redemptive history. Resurrection is the cornerstone of Christianity. It is the foundation of the gospel. It is the guarantee of heaven. The message of the Bible is that death does not end the existence of anyone, that every human being who has ever lived will live forever...either in hell or in heaven, either in eternal death or eternal life, either in everlasting suffering or everlasting joy. Not merely as a disembodied spirit, but every person will live forever in bodily form. They will all be raised from the dead.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the provision that guarantees for us that we need not be risen to eternal damnation but can be risen to eternal life. The resurrection of Jesus Christ bodily from death and the grave is a pledge and a promise to all who believe in Him will also be raised in bodily form to enter in to the eternal bliss and joy of the heaven of heavens in the presence of God everlastingly, serving, worshiping and being completely satisfied.

Because the resurrection is of such significance, it dominates the New Testament, and particularly dominates the preaching of the gospel that begins early in the book of Acts and runs all the way through the whole New Testament. The resurrection is not just a feature of Christianity, it is its essential truth. The whole point of the gospel is to rescue people from hell so that they can go to heaven. The whole point of the gospel is to be delivered from judgment into eternal blessing. The resurrection then is not the epilogue, it's not some kind of postscript on the end of our Lord's life. It is the goal of His life, the high point of the gospel. The resurrection is the divine interpretation of the death of Christ, Easter interprets Good Friday. The resurrection is the divine vindication of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, the benefits of that sacrifice begin to be gathered at the resurrection, Christ being the firstfruits. The resurrection guarantees our resurrection.

And, of course, the resurrection of Christ and the bodily resurrection of believers is unique to Christianity. There is no such thing, by the way, as a resurrection without a body, that is not a

resurrection. Christianity does not teach that you live in some spirit form everlastingly in heaven, or in hell, but rather that bodily having been raised from the dead you occupy one of those two places everlastingly. There's no such thing as a resurrection without a body and the resurrection will be a bodily resurrection. For those of us who know the Lord, we will be raised with a body like unto His glorious body, the Apostle Paul said.

The church therefore doesn't meet on Friday. The church doesn't meet on Saturday. The church doesn't meet on Monday or some other day. The church meets on Sunday, the first day of the week because that is the day Christ was raised from the dead. Every time we meet on the Lord's day it is to give testimony to the centrality of the resurrection.

Because the resurrection is so critical to us, the resurrection seems to be always under some kind of an assault from Satan. Through the centuries, critics of Christianity have done everything they could possibly do to deny the resurrection. Denying the biblical accounts as truthful, denying historical evidences in the biblical accounts as having any value or trustworthiness, critics through the centuries have done everything they could to deny that Jesus rose from the dead because if that is, in fact, true or if people can be convinced that it is true, it is the death of the Christian gospel. Likewise, Christians through the centuries have answered the critics barrage, endless barrage with evidences. And there are a myriad of those evidences that prove the validity of the resurrection.

Not all attacks on the resurrection have been so overt. Many of them have been far more subtle attacks on the resurrection which may explain why in order to celebrate the resurrection you have to hack your way through a bunch of candy, eggs and rabbits. Satan has more than one strategy, believe me, to cloud the issue. Or perhaps be confused by Lent, 40 days of deprivation to a limited degree that has nothing to do with the Bible, is never advocated in the Bible, but is borrowed from the worst kind of paganism, which has nothing to do with anything Christian.

One way or another, whether overtly or subtly, pushing the resurrection away is a very important satanic strategy because of its critical nature. In 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 14 Paul says this, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." Our message is empty if Christ is not raised. Your faith in that message and in Christ is also empty if Christ is not raised. Moreover he says in verse 15, "We...meaning the Apostles...are even found to be false witnesses of God because we testified against God that He raised Christ whom He did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. Well of the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, you are still in your sins and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished."

How important is the resurrection? Critically important. No resurrection, no gospel. No gospel, no salvation. And we are the most deluded duped people on the planet. Everything is held together by the resurrection. For Christians every day is a celebration of the risen living Christ, every Sunday is

another celebration of the risen living Christ. Testimonial, kind of a weekly commemoration of the priority of the resurrection, its centrality, its significance. And then once a year on this Easter celebration, resurrection Sunday we focus all our energies in the direction of the resurrection and rightly we should.

Through the years the resurrection has been ably defended. There have been endless books written on the evidences of the resurrection. Through the years that I've preached, I've preached many, many messages showing those evidences and answering a question...what proves the resurrection? What proves the resurrection? And that is a question that needs to be answered, but I want to ask a different question, I want to sort of tumble that question a little bit in your mind and ask not what proves the resurrection but what does the resurrection prove? What does the resurrection prove?

Because the resurrection happened, what can we be certain of? Number one, the truthfulness of the Word of God...the truthfulness of the Word of God. Go back to Acts chapter 2, the very text that I read to you in our Scripture reading this morning, and I want to readdress that passage because it speaks to the issue before us, the resurrection proves the truthfulness of the Word of God. Acts chapter 2 and verse 24, God raised Jesus up again, says Peter, on the day of Pentecost, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for him to be held in its power. This is the resurrection. And then Peter ties the resurrection into an Old Testament text, it is Psalm 16:8 through 11, in which David is the author, the writer, and he speaks concerning the Messiah. It is a Messianic Psalm. What is interesting about this Messianic Psalm is that David doesn't speak in the third person about the coming Messiah, but rather speaks in the first person as if the Messiah Himself is speaking. This is not abnormal, this is done in Psalm 22 and many other Messianic Psalms and other Messianic passages where literally the very words of the Messiah appear in the Old Testament prophecies. So David is the writer but the Messiah to come is the speaker.

Verse 25, the Messiah in a prophetic sense says, "I saw the Lord always in my presence for He is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken." The Messiah in that prophecy is confident about his security in the future. He's confident that God is before him and that God is determining all the steps. "Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted." Messiah can rejoice in all that He is asked to do because God is there present at His right hand so that He will not be shaken or moved.

"Moreover, my flesh also will live in hope." The Messiah says I know being in the flesh I will face death but my flesh lives in hope. I have hope beyond death. "Because...verse 27...you will not abandon my soul to Hades or allow your Holy One...a very familiar title for Messiah...to undergo decay." The confidence of the Messiah, speaking prophetically, is that God is present with Him, nothing can shake Him or move Him away from that protective power. He can face humanity and even death in hope because He knows that God will not abandon His soul to Hades or allow Him to undergo any decay or corruption.

The testimony is further, in verse 28, "You have made known to Me the ways of life, or the path of life. You will show Me through the grave life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence. This is a prophecy of Messiah.

David was the original speaker. And because it is a first person statement, somebody might think this is David talking about himself. But David could never have been speaking of himself, his soul did go into Sheol, Hades. His flesh did see corruption. No one has ever claimed that David has risen from the dead, although in the future at the resurrection of the Old Testament saints indicated in Daniel 12:2 he will be raised from the dead in bodily form to join his spirit which is with the Lord. But there has been no resurrection of David up to this point. So the Psalm must be talking about someone else. Peter wants us to understand that it's messianic. It is a reference to Messiah, though spoken by David, they are the literal words out of the mouth of Messiah. And that's what he says in verse 29 as he interprets the passage. "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day." His tomb still sealed, by the way, near Siloam in Jerusalem. Can't be talking about him.

Verse 30 then goes on to say, "And so because he was a prophet," David was speaking as a prophet, "and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on His throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh suffer decay." David knew he was not speaking of himself, but he looked ahead and was speaking words that genuinely belonged to the Messiah.

Peter's argument is clear. Psalm 16 refers to somebody. Psalm 16 can't refer to David. Psalm 16 refers in anticipation to one who would come from David's loins, the one who would come from David's loins is the Messiah. The Psalm refers to the Messiah, the Messiah will be raised from the dead before his body ever sees corruption. Verse 32 is the summation of its interpretation, "This Jesus God raised up again to which we are all witnesses."

What's at stake in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? What does the resurrection prove? It proves the trustworthiness of the Word of God, the believability of the Word of God, the accuracy of the Word of God, the truthfulness of the Word of God.

Turn to Acts 13. This becomes a staple part of apostolic preaching. In the thirteenth chapter of Acts, again the dominant cord in the apostolic preaching is the resurrection of Christ as the fulfillment of prophecy, as the fulfillment of prophecy. And in chapter 13 we move from Peter preaching on Pentecost to Paul the preacher, Acts chapter 13 and verse 29, "It carried out all that was written concerning Him, concerning the Lord Jesus, they took Him down from the cross and they laid Him in a tomb." Verse 30, "But God raised Him from the dead and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the

people.” That would be all the Apostles and including 500 people in Galilee who saw Him at one time. “And we preached to you the good news, the gospel of the promise made to the fathers. And what is the promise that God has fulfilled? This promise to our children is that He raised up...in that He raised up Jesus.”

The promise of the Old Testament is a risen Messiah. The good news of the promise made to the fathers that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus. And what Old Testament passage did that fulfill? It is written in the second Psalm, Psalm 2 verse 7, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You, today I have given you life.” That is an Old Testament prophecy of the resurrection. As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.” That's from Isaiah 55 and verse 3, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.”

In other words, I will raise you from the dead to receive all that was promised in the Davidic Kingdom, the Davidic Covenant. By the resurrection, God was affirming Christ as His Son and guaranteeing that the promised blessings that were to come through David's seed would come through Him.

And there's more. Verse 35, therefore He also says in another Psalm, and Paul here uses the same one Peter did, Psalm 16, “You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.” For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay. But He whom God raised did not undergo decay. “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and everyone who believes is freed from all things which you couldn't be freed through the Law of Moses.”

The testimony of Peter on Pentecost, the testimony of Paul is the fact that the resurrection is prophesied in the Old Testament. What is at stake in the resurrection? The veracity, the integrity of Scripture.

Turn again to the twenty-sixth chapter of Acts, Acts chapter 26 for another affirmation and vindication of prophetic accuracy in Scripture. Again this is Paul talking to Agrippa, 26:22, we can pick it up there. “So having obtained help from God...he says when the Jews were trying to put him to death...I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the prophets and Moses said was going to take place.” And what did the prophets and Moses say? This is a way to refer to the Old Testament, “That the Christ was to suffer and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead, He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” The Old Testament referred to here as the prophet and Moses, spoke of the death of Messiah and His resurrection.

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead means the Scripture is true. If the resurrection didn't happen, Scripture cannot be trusted and if it can be broken in one place, it is not trustworthy any place.

Turn to John chapter 2, a prophecy of a different kind. Not an Old Testament prophecy, but a New Testament prophecy from the very lips of the Messiah Himself, even our Lord Jesus. John chapter 2 verse 19, "Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.'" And they did and He did. They killed Him and in three days He was alive again.

The Jews then said, "It took 46 years to build this temple and You will raise it up in three days? But He was speaking of the temple of His body so when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this...listen to this...and they believed the Scripture and the Word which Jesus had spoken." Affirmation of both the Old Testament Scripture and the New Testament Scripture coming from the very lips of Jesus. As I said, you kill this body, not talking about the earthly temple, and I will raise it in three days. He did and they believed the Scripture.

That's the first thing I want you to understand. The resurrection proves the truthfulness of Scripture. You can believe the Scripture because it predicted this just exactly as it happened.

Look back to Luke 24...Luke 24 and verse 25. We're on the road to Emmaus, Jesus with a couple of His disciples. You remember the account. They're distressed because Jesus has died. Verse 25, "He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart, to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for the Messiah, the Christ, to suffer these things and to enter in to His glory.' Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, the Old Testament, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the scriptures." That would be things concerning His death and things concerning His resurrection.

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 starts out giving us this summary of the gospel. "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you which also you received in which also you stand....here it comes...by which also you're saved if you hold fast the Word which I preached to you unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received," and here's the gospel, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures." The resurrection proves the truthfulness of all the Scripture prophecies that the Messiah would die and rise again.

Secondly, the resurrection proves not only the trustworthiness of the Word of God but the deity of the Son of God...the deity of the Son of God. There are many affirmations in the New Testament about His deity, many witnesses to His deity. Angels witnessed before His birth that He would be a holy child, that He would be the Son of the Most High. Demons even understood that in Mark 5:6 and 7, the demons identified Jesus as the Son of the Most High God. In John 9 you have a man born blind who knows that Jesus is the Son of God. Peter, James and John at some point all acknowledge the deity of Jesus Christ. Thomas says, "My Lord, My God." Nathaniel says, "You are the Son of God." Even Martha acknowledged that. John the Baptist, John 1:34, "I saw the...I saw and bore record...he

said...that this is the Son of God.” Even a Roman soldier at the crucifixion said, “Truly this is the Son of God.”

But unquestionably the supreme testimony to the fact of His deity comes from God the Father. “This is My beloved Son,” at His baptism, “whom I'm well-pleased.” “This is My beloved Son at His transfiguration, listen to Him.”

In Romans 1:4 we have a very explicit statement. Paul begins this great epistle, Romans chapter 1, “Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an Apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.” And again, here comes a summation of the gospel. “This is the gospel...verse 2...which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy scriptures” Again, all the elements of the gospel were promised, prophesied in the Old Testament. Concerning His Son who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh...then this, verse 4...who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.

It was the resurrection from the dead that was the supreme declaration of His deity. God declared Him the Son by resurrection from the dead. You're My Son, this day I have raised You, to paraphrase Psalm 2. Acts 13:30 says, “God raised Him from the dead.” The resurrection then is the declaration of His deity, the affirmation of His deity. His deity was affirmed at the annunciation. His deity was affirmed in the virgin conception. His deity was affirmed in His baptism. His deity was affirmed in the most triumphant way, at His resurrection. He is the true Son of God.

Remember what Peter said in Acts 2:36 that by the resurrection, He is declared to be both Lord and Christ. He has three titles, three offices, He is a prophet. The authentication of His prophetic office came through His resurrection, proof of the validity and authority of everything He said came through His resurrection. He is a priest, He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, no beginning and no end, an eternal priest who continues to live forever interceding for us. That everlasting priesthood is validated by His resurrection. He is a King. His right to rule and reign again is validated by His resurrection into which He then passes beyond the pale of death into life and grasps the fulfillment then of all the promises ever made to Abraham and David and in all other covenants of promise. He becomes the one alone who will rule forever for He has conquered death...prophet, priest and King, Son of God, the deity of Christ is affirmed by His resurrection.

Number three, the completion of the salvation of God. We know from the very beginning that you should call His name Jesus, the angel said, for He will save His people from their sins. That's why He came, the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life as a ransom for many. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, we understand that. He went to the cross to die for men's sins, but that in itself was not the end, that in itself was not enough. I understand that there is a tremendous interest in the cross of Christ. The interest in the cross of Christ is not only for the sake of the work accomplished there, but there is so much pathos in the

event of the cross. There is so much leading up to it. There's so much about how He was treated in His life. There's so much about the days before His death in Jerusalem, the horrendous mockery of justice that was miscarried in His case, the terrible abuse that He received, the widespread rejection, all of the features of that. And then the horrible physical suffering and pain and punishment and then the agonizing unbearable experience of the cross itself. The cross, I understand, is loaded with all kinds of pathos. It draws out of us all of our emotion, all of our passion and therefore all of our interest. And the resurrection, in a sense, doesn't have any of that because we can identify with His suffering, we can't identify with His resurrection yet. Suffering we understand. Pain we understand. Sin-bearing we understand for we bear our own sin, the guilt of it and the discipline for it even in this life.

Resurrection, we don't understand. And so I think there's a level of indifference toward the resurrection because it's so unfamiliar to us. But if we wanted to concentrate on the resurrection with at least equal interest as our concentration on the cross, we would be serving the biblical purpose well. For if Jesus doesn't rise, He isn't the prophet, He isn't the priest, He isn't the King promised. If He doesn't rise, He's just Jesus Christ, Superstar and His death is the death of an ordinary man with no saving value. But He did die and Romans 4:25 is critical, actually verse 24 is a good place to start. It says, "For our sake also to whom it will be credited as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." And then this, "He was delivered over," that's a technical term for being arrested, executed, meaning the cross. "He was delivered over because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification." That's why I say the resurrection brings the completion of the salvation of God. He was raised in order to assure us that in the sight of God He had satisfactorily paid the price in full for our sins. Christ is raised from the dead to make a declaration to the whole world that He had offered a satisfactory sacrifice. He could have been raised from the dead quietly, privately and gone back to heaven with no one knowing, but it needed to be a declaration, it needed to be public. It needed to be brought to light. It needed to be fully manifest that He was raised from the dead by the will of the Father because He had so perfectly paid in full the sacrifice for sin. His sacrifice being accepted, He is raised and exalted to the Father's right hand and forgiveness of sin is therefore made available to all who believe.

If you deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, you deny His substitutionary sacrifice for sin. Everything that comes to us in salvation, comes through the resurrection. Salvation promises us eternal life, everlasting life. He can't give that life if He doesn't possess it. If He doesn't rise, we don't rise. If He doesn't live, we don't live. On the other hand, because I live, you will live also, John 14:19.

The Holy Spirit who is the power of regeneration, who is the power of spiritual life, the Holy Spirit cannot even do His work apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I cannot send the Holy Spirit until I go back to heaven and then I'll send the Spirit. You can't send the Spirit until He returns to glory, He can't return to glory unless the Father exalts Him to glory. The Father won't exalt Him unless He has accomplished redemption on the cross, and when He did, He raised Him from the

dead, seated Him at His right hand and He dispensed the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then becomes the power in our lives as believers. Forgiveness of sin, He is the propitiation for our sins, He is the one who paid in full and satisfied God. And now we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He has gone into His high priestly work, interceding for us at the right hand of God. The bestowal of spiritual gifts, Ephesians 4 says, that He descended and then He ascended and gave gifts to men, all the necessary spiritual enablements and endowments, they're all based on His resurrection. All the spiritual power that we have comes from His resurrection. Matthew 28:18 He said, "All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." And then in Acts 1:80 said, "You shall receive that very power when the Spirit comes upon you." "We are now able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think according to the power that works in us," Ephesians 1 says, "even the power that raised Him from the dead."

Everything we have in salvation ties back to the resurrection, even being brought in to a new relationship with God. We have literally died with Christ, Romans 6 says, in His death and risen with Christ in His resurrection, and now we walk in newness of life. And we are no longer slaves of sin but servants of righteousness. Everything in our salvation connects to the resurrection and baptism, of course, is the beautiful picture of that death, burial, resurrection to new life because we are in Christ in His death.

What does the resurrection prove? It proves the truthfulness of the Word of God, the deity of the Son of God, the completion of the salvation of God, and fourthly, the establishment of the church of God...the establishment of the church of God.

You remember in Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build My church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it, or prevent it." The gates of Hades is simply an expression meaning death. He said, "I'll build My church and death won't stop it." And first of all, of course, He had in mind His own death. That would have been impossible if He hadn't risen. If He hadn't risen from the dead, there would be no true church and we would be another false religion like every other false religion in the world.

But again, back to that wonderful first chapter of Ephesians, verse 20, it says that, "He raised Him from the dead, God did, seated Him at His right hand in heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in to subjection under His feet, that's all things, and gave Him as head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." That is just an incredibly powerful statement.

By the resurrection, Jesus not only was affirmed as Lord of all things, Lord of the universe so that all rule, all authority, all power, all dominion, every name that is named in this age and the one to come is all under Him, under His authority, but He gave Him the one who is Lord over all as head to the church. He is the head. And what do we mean by the picture of the head? The head we understand,

a head has a body. A head doesn't function without a body. And that's the imagery and so it says, "Head over all things to the church which is His body."

It's incredible to think about it, folks, but the resurrection secures for Christ headship over His body and we become the church and we are essential as an expression of His life, as essential as a body is to a head. Listen to the words of John Calvin. This is the highest honor of the church. "That until He is united to us, the Son of God reckons Himself in some measure imperfect."

What consolation it is for us to learn that, not until we are in His presence does He possess all His parts, or does He wish to be regarded as complete. He's the head, we're the church, His body. The church brought into being, brought into existence as the completion of Christ through the resurrection. And as the living Christ has lived, moved through history, the history of the church triumphantly, so the church has moved triumphantly as well. And Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2 that He causes us to always triumph in Christ. The church lives today despite constant attack, despite corruption, counterfeiting, the church has survived all false teachers, false representatives, all sin, all worldliness. The church, the true church, is still alive, still empowered by resurrection power.

The resurrection proves the truthfulness of the Word of God, the deity of the Son of God, the completion of the salvation of God, the establishment of the church of God. Number five, it proves the inevitability of the judgment of God...the inevitability of the judgment of God.

Turn please, for a moment, to John 5. One of the great texts in the gospels, John 5, and Jesus gives a warning here about judgment. Starting in verse 22, "For not even the Father judges anyone but He has given all judgment to the Son so that all will honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who doesn't honor the Son, doesn't honor the Father who sent Him. The Father has committed all judgment to the Son, it is incumbent upon men then to honor the Son who will be their judge. Verse 24, "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly I say to you, an hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live, for just as the Father has life in Himself, even though He gave to the Son to have life in Himself and He gave Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and will come forth. Those who did the good to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil, to a resurrection of judgment."

God keeps very accurate records...very accurate records. And they're all going to be held up on the day of judgment. For those who have only a record of evil, they will be a part of the resurrection unto damnation. For those who have a record of good, evidences of a transformed life, they will be part of the resurrection of life. Christ is the judge.

On what basis is Christ the judge? On the basis of His resurrection. Verse 26, "Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son to have life in Himself." That's the resurrection. He raised Christ to be the judge.

What this text is saying is that everyone will live forever bodily, cause that's what a resurrection is. There will be some who will have a body fit for hell and some a body fit for heaven. For those who hear the gospel of God concerning Jesus Christ, they will receive a body suited to heaven. For those who reject the gospel, they will have a body suited for hell. The resurrection of life, or the resurrection of judgment, He is the judge and He is given the authority to be the judge because of His resurrection. That is more specifically indicated to us in Acts 17, listen to these words. Paul in Athens, verse 29, Acts 17, "Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man, therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance...that would be past times, what does it mean overlooked? God overlooked in the sense that He didn't render final special judgment on every sinner on ultimate sins. There was an overlooking. However, now God is declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent because a universal final act of special judgment is coming, verse 31, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, through a man. What man? A man whom He has appointed. Who is that man? Having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.

Special judgment, God withheld in the past. Final judgment, God withheld in the past, but now He has fixed the day of special judgment on the world and His judge is none other than the one He raised from the dead. He has raised to be the judge. And every person will face Him, either to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord." Or to hear the condemnation that sends that person to hell. He's raised to be the judge. There is no judgment if there is no risen Christ.

Finally, the resurrection proves the eternal bliss of the people of God...the eternal bliss of the people of God. In John 14, just quickly, Jesus said this, "Don't be troubled in heart, you're not losing Me, I go to prepare...what?...a place for you and I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also. In that place we will have a body like unto His glorified body. In that place...according to Revelation 21...there will be no tears, no sorrow, no crying and no death, the eternal bliss of heaven, purchased for us by His resurrection."

That great fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians where we began this morning tells us the perishable will put on imperishable, mortal will put on immortality, death will be swallowed up in victory and we will say, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What's at stake? What does the resurrection prove? That Scripture is true. That Jesus is God. That salvation has been accomplished at the cross. That the church has been made His body. That judgment is coming for unbelievers and that heaven is being made ready for those who believe.

Father, we thank You again for the testimony of Scripture, consistent testimony as always, how it weaves together without contradiction to tell us the truth in such powerful ways. We praise You for that. Thank You for this wonderful time of celebration. Thank You that Christ lives, we live and shall live forever. Lord, by Your power and Your grace today, draw some who are still dead in their trespasses and sins, draw them into life, draw them to Your Son. May they see Him in the beauty and the glory that a penitent sees and may they see themselves for what they are, wretched sinners on the brink of an everlasting punishment. Rescue them, Lord, today for Your glory. And use us to spread the message that Christ is alive and because He lives, sinners can enter into life. We thank You, Lord, that we've had this opportunity to worship You, we continue to do it even as we part. We give You all honor in Christ's name. Amen.

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