

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS - THE REASON THE FATHER HAS COMMITTED THE FUTURE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD TO THE SON

Easter Sunday, April 9th, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

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IPAD TEXT - Acts 17:30-31 - "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, [31] because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

In so many ways the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central piece of the entire Christian faith. It is pivotal in several different areas:

- a) ***The resurrection completes the saving work of Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross - 1 Corinthians 15:17 - "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."* - IPAD TEXT**

This is a very significant verse. It tells us, perhaps surprisingly, that Christ's death on the Cross, ***unaccompanied by His resurrection***, accomplishes nothing. Let that sink in for a minute. The resurrection ***completes*** the work of redemption. So much so that, Paul says, if Christ isn't raised (even though He died on the Cross) we are still in our sins.

- b) ***Christ's resurrection guarantees our own resurrection from the dead when Jesus comes again - 1 Corinthians 15:22-23 - "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ."*** - IPAD TEXT

What glorious words of hope! How they have sustained countless Christians through sickness, persecution, despair and even martyrdom. Christ's resurrection from the dead is clearly set out by Paul as the first accomplished part of a larger whole event. Eternal life is all of ***one harvest***. And it is already in process in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will follow.

But today I want to consider another significant truth tied to Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is not one that we commonly deal with on Easter Sunday, but Paul says to miss it is a terrible oversight. Paul says ***Father God Himself*** has forever linked the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, to an event still in the ***future***. And this event in the future is one that has relevance for ***everyone who has ever breathed a breath on planet earth***.

I'm saying the resurrection of Jesus has significance far beyond what our world would consider as a ***religious*** perspective. It effects ***everyone*** the way pollution effects everyone, or the weather effects everyone or global warming effects everyone.

In other words, **first** there is the **historic reality** of the resurrection of Jesus Christ - the **fact** that the grave in which He was buried truly was empty three days later - the **fact** that Jesus was seen risen and alive in His body **after** He was crucified. The resurrection of Jesus **actually happened**.

Then **second**, there is the message of **hope** that fills the hearts of all Christians. The risen Christ is now **preparing a place for us in heaven**. We have hope of being with Jesus after we die. Nothing separates us from the love of God **in** Christ Jesus.

But there is a **third** factor the Apostle Paul ties to the resurrection of Jesus Christ that doesn't just have to do with those who believe in Jesus Christ or honor Him as Lord. This third **resurrection factor** has to do with everybody - **Christians** and **non-Christians** alike. It is stated in our opening text from Acts. The resurrection of Jesus Christ establishes Him as the **future judge of all of mankind** - "...he [that is, God Almighty] **has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.**"

Jesus Christ - God the Son - is the selected future judge of everyone who has ever lived - Christians, Jews, Muslims, atheists, agnostics, passionate or indifferent. This is established by His resurrection from the dead.

There are two questions I want to look at that arise out of this tremendous statement made by the Apostle Paul: ***First, why is Jesus the One to judge the world?*** Why not one of the other members of the Trinity. Why not Father God? Why not the Holy Spirit? Why is Jesus Christ, God the Son, the One to whom judgement is committed?

And ***second, what is the significance of this fact?*** What does it *mean* to us that God is going to judge the world by His Son, Jesus Christ? Or, in the title of this message, how does this idea ***shape the meaning of the days in which we all live?*** What are we all called upon to do that is *different* now that Jesus Christ is risen and designated as the judge of the whole world?

Let's look at these two questions in turn:

1) **WHY IS JESUS CHRIST, GOD THE SON, THE APPOINTED FUTURE JUDGE OF THE WORLD?**

Let me go through several Scriptural reasons you may not frequently think about:

- a) ***Christ is appointed our judge because He became one of us and died for our sins.***

There is a place in John's gospel where Jesus actually *tells* us why He is the One who will judge the world - **John 5:26-27 - "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. [27] And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man." - IPAD TEXT**

Notice that phrase, "***He has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.***" There is no phrase used by Jesus more frequently to refer to His Incarnate state - his dwelling among us in human flesh - than the title "***Son of Man.***" Father God grants the role of judge to the Son because the Son is ***one of us*** in a way that the Father and the Holy Spirit are not.

Paul makes the same point in this morning's text:

IPAD TEXT - Acts 17:31 - "... because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Lest you think this is some irrelevant point of theological trivia, please think deeply about the significance and profound **comfort and consolation** we have in this fact: **The One who spilled His blood to redeem us is the very same One who will judge us.** Our **judge** is our **intercessor**. The One who decrees our eternal state is the one who poured out His very life in grace, love and unmeasurable mercy.

Behold the goodness of God in this! It is God's way of **magnifying His wondrous grace** before the whole world. I need not doubt receiving from Jesus Christ at the judgment that which He gave His very life to secure on my behalf. If your judge is your worst **enemy**, you're in deep trouble. If your judge is your **redeemer**, your heart can have great assurance and be at peace.

- b) **Christ is appointed our judge as a suitable result of His suffering and humiliation.**

No one deals with this truth like the Apostle Paul in the book of Philippians:

IPAD TEXT - Philippians 2:8-11 - "...he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that [these words imply the explanation] at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Father God designs that Jesus Christ, who appeared in such lowly and humble circumstances here on earth, who had "**no place to lay His own head,**" who was "**despised and rejected by men,**" should have every knee bow and confess His greatness and Lordship.

This will not necessarily be a **saving** confession for all those who kneel (we know, for example that the demonic creatures in the realms "**under the earth**" aren't going to be saved), but all will be **compelled** to acknowledge Jesus because He alone will be the judge of all.

Paul's point is crystal clear. This will **not** be the baby in the manger. This will not be Jesus, pierced and bleeding on the cross. This will be Jesus with a Name above every other name. He will shine with authority and might and greatness.

- c) ***Jesus Christ is appointed as judge that He might put all His enemies under His feet.***

The Bible says there is something both wonderful and terrifying that is ***going*** to happen, but hasn't happened ***yet***:

IPAD TEXT - 1 Corinthians 15:24-25 - "...Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. [25] For he must reign *until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*"

We don't yet live in a world where all Christ's enemies are under His feet:

IPAD TEXT - Hebrews 2:7-8 - "You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, [8] putting everything in subjection under his feet.' Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, *we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.*"

The writer of Hebrews says there is yet a work to be done with Christ's enemies. The last enemy, of course, is death itself. Death is the **last** enemy. It is not the **only** enemy. There are many enemies that oppose Jesus Christ in this present age. There are so many things that cause us to long for a victory that is only **initiated**, but not **completed**.

Jesus is the appointed judge so He can officially pass sentence on all His enemies. All who reject Him. All who oppose His grace and redemption and Lordship. No one **has** to submit to Jesus right now. People **can** go their own way. But one day Father God will make it appropriate that the **Son** bring all enemies under **His** feet in judgment.

In other words, just as God's **grace** is magnified in appointing our Savior to be the judge of the redeemed, God's **justice** is magnified in having Jesus, God's offer of redemption for the whole world, be the judge of those who have rejected that saving grace. Christ's enemies will be judged by the very One through whom they could have been saved. In this their guilt is doubly magnified.

2) **IF THE RESURRECTION ESTABLISHES PUBLICLY THAT JESUS CHRIST WILL BE THE JUDGE OF THE ENTIRE WORLD, WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FACT?**

I can see several things of great importance:

- a) ***Because Jesus Christ is risen, the days of ignorance about how to reach God are passed.*** Look again at our opening text to see how Paul makes this point perfectly clear:

IPAD TEXT - Acts 17:22-30 - "So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. [23] For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. [24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, [25] nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."

[26] “And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, [27] that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, [28] for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring. [29] Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. [30] *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent....*”

We're meant to see a contrast in **verse 30**. Paul contrasts the “*times of ignorance*” and the time “*now.*” There were the times **before** the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and there is the time **now** after Christ has risen.

Before Christ rose from the grave God judged people by the revelation they had received of Him through the outer world of creation and the inner witness of personal conscience and the creation of His Old Testament people and the giving of the law. People were still sinners because they never fully lived up to the revelation they **had** of God. Paul has already spelled all that out in those very important chapters, **Romans 1 and 2**.

But Paul says the times have been ***split in two*** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection creates a ***“before”*** and ***“after”*** in God’s dealing with the human race. When the ***stone*** moved from Jesus’ tomb, so did the ***moral center of gravity*** for the whole universe. God has been revealed in a way He had never been revealed before. The truth claims of Jesus Christ have all been verified and substantiated. And because of all this, the ***bar of judgment and responsibility has also been raised***.

That leads into the second thing we need to know about the Resurrection and its ***meaning*** for our lives today:

- b) ***Because Jesus is risen, these are days when all people everywhere must repent - Acts 17:30 - “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent...” - IPAD TEXT***

In other words, Paul doesn't just come to these people worshipping their idols to the unknown god and say, "**Well, they're being sincere. And after all, they are searching for the true God. I guess I'll just let them be.**"

No. That's not it at all. That totally misses the point Paul is making in this passage. Paul is saying that God will no longer **pass over** that kind of misguided religious expression. God is now (since Jesus Christ rose from the dead) calling **all** people **everywhere** to repent of their unbelief. Father God has **established proof** - He has "**furnished proof**" in Paul's words - by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

Do you see Paul's point? He's saying it is foolish and wicked to fashion a god out of wood or stone or gold or stocks or mutual funds or land when He has revealed Himself so completely and compellingly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are now days of **repentance**. These are days for **embracing the risen Christ**.

This leads us into the third and last point:

- c) **Because Jesus Christ is now risen, these are days when people must presently reckon with His judgment over all the earth when He comes again.**

IPAD TEXT - Acts 17:31 - "... because he has fixed a day on which *he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed*; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

If we are going to be ***judged*** by Jesus, we must come to terms with the ***authority*** of Jesus. The present Lordship of Jesus is the ***standard*** by which all lives will be eternally measured. My devotion to Him matters more than my devotion to anything else. In other words, there is an urgent ***compulsion*** to allowing Jesus the right to order my life right now, regardless of the degree of inconvenience it may cause to my own self-turned will.

This is what makes the Lordship of Jesus a ***compulsion***. This is what distinguishes ***compulsion*** from ***instruction*** or ***information***. You can tell me how to ***tie my shoes***. That's ***instruction***. I may or may not listen to you, or be able to actually ***tie*** my shoes, depending on how bright I am. You have given me ***instruction***. What I do with it is up to me.

Now let me show you a totally different **kind** of situation. The government tells me I must pay my taxes. That's **compulsion**, not **instruction**. If I **don't** pay my taxes, there will be consequences. That's because **behind** the instruction there is more than merely a **classroom**. There is an **authority** and a **judge**. The authority is what separates **law** from mere **advice**. You must **comply** with law. You are free to **ignore** advice.

So when the Bible says Jesus will **judge the world** when He comes again, it tells me something very important about the **authority** Jesus is to have in my life **right now**. Everyone, everywhere must give proper weight to Jesus Christ because God, in His mercy has "**furnished proof**" to the entire world of the unique role Jesus Christ has as **Savior, Lord, and coming Judge of the whole earth**. He has **established** Christ's authority as Judge by **raising Him from the dead**.

You know the **event** of Easter. Here is the **meaning** of Easter for your life right now. You won't get this message from the Globe and Mail, or the Toronto Star. It's not in Macleans or Time or Newsweek. CNN and City News won't talk about it. But it **is** the meaning of our lives and the meaning of our times in view of the reality of Easter. **The days of ignorance are over - the day of repentance is here - Jesus will judge the world in righteousness when He comes.**

Through faith in Him, here's what I pray that judgement will entail for everyone here this Easter Sunday morning:

IPAD TEXT - 2 Timothy 4:8 - "...Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."