"Because Jesus is Alive"

THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

A Topical Study of John's Gospel
On the Resurrection
3-31-2024

INTRODUCTION: John 20:26-31

"BLESSED are they that have not seen,
and yet have believed" (v. 29)

***You are truly BLESSED, if you are a believer in the resurrected Christ!**

--How are we BLESSED by His Resurrection?

I. We are BLESSED with
An Assurance that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God
(John 20:31; 2:19-22)

II. We are BLESSED with
A Confidence that Jesus will raise us up from the grave
(John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:25-26)

III. We are BLESSED with
An Eternal Dwelling Place Jesus has been building for us (John 14:1-2)

IV. We are BLESSED with
A Future Rapture because Jesus is coming back for us (John 14:3)

V. We are BLESSED with
An Empowerment by Jesus to do great works for God (John 14:12)

VI. We are BLESSED with
Answers to our prayers by Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14)

VII. We are BLESSED with
The Abiding Presence of Jesus Christ (John 14:18-23, 28-29)

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INTRODUCTION:

Too often we take the resurrection of Christ for granted.

Those of us who grew up in at least a nominal Christian home have heard about His resurrection from childhood, and its impact is often lost. Its importance is often not felt.

No event in history has had a greater impact on people, culture, societies, and nations as the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

> The cowardly disciples were transformed and were even willing to all die as martyrs for their faith
>
> Even Saul of Tarsus, an enemy of Christ, was compelled to believe in Him when he saw the resurrected Savior
>
> Jesus is transforming people today, as He has for nearly 2,000 years

The French humanistic philosopher Auguste Comte once told Thomas Carlyle that He was going to start a new religion to replace Christianity. "Very good," replied Carlyle. "All you will have to do is be crucified, rise again the third day, and get the world to believe you are still alive. Then your new religion will have a chance."

It's hard to imagine what it must have been like that first "Easter" in April 33 A.D. As the dejected, down-hearted disciples learned that their Messiah who was so shamefully humiliated and crucified was now alive! What a tremendous impact that miracle had in their lives.

See: John 20:26-31

Thomas
(From doubter to believer in Christ)

V. 25

Thomas was an *"I've got to see it to believe it"* man. He was a "Show me" man.

Like the agnostics of today, Thomas said, "When I see it, I'll believe it. When I touch it, I'll acknowledge it."

V. 28

"My Lord" - an acknowledgement of Christ's authority.

Thomas recognized Jesus as his sovereign Master, Ruler, owner, boss, the King of his life!

"My God" - an acknowledgement of Christ's deity.

Christ's resurrection is one of the greatest proofs of His deity.

All of His claims (via His names, attributes, and powers) of deity would have been null and void without this authenticating miracle (Rom. 1:4 - *"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."*)

"My Lord and My God" -the resurrection made a personal impact on Thomas. He personally received Christ as His very own Lord and God.

This statement *"My Lord and my God"* marks the climax of John's Gospel (cp. V. 30-31). Everything in this Gospel has been building up to this point.

The theme of the book is now declared!

NOTE: If Jesus was not "God" He (if He was righteous at all) should have rebuked Thomas for taking the name of "God" in vain (Exod. 20:7 - *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taken his name in vain.")*

V. 29

However, rather than condemning him, Jesus commends him for believing that He was Lord and God.

Jesus praises Him for finally believing. And promises a blessing on all others who believe what Thomas did.

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--How are we BLESSED by His Resurrection?

I. We are BLESSED with
An <u>Assurance</u> that Jesus is the <u>Messiah</u> and the <u>Son of God</u>
(John 20:31; 2:19-22)

Jesus said, *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. . . He spoke of the temple of His body"* (John 2:19, 21).

Jesus told His disciples that He would be delivered over to the Gentiles *"to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall rise again"* (Mt. 20:19).

If He hadn't risen, what right would we have to believe Him? He would have been a liar and certainly not the Messiah.

If Jesus had not been raised from the tomb, then He is dead.

If He is dead, then He was no more than a mere false prophet who peddled yet another false religion.

If He remained dead, He left us no solid evidence to back up His claim that He was deity and the Messiah.

If we don't have a living Savior, we don't have a living faith.

And if He is not the way to eternal life, then as Paul said, *"Our preaching [is] vain. . . your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. . .* (all dead Christians) *are perished. . . . [and] we are of all men most miserable"* (I Cor. 15:14, 17, 18, 19).

"The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fundamental event upon which the entire Christian faith rests. . . If the resurrection of Jesus were removed from the biblical account, the Christian faith would collapse, becoming simply another man-made religion" (Charles Stanley).

However, Paul declared in Romans 1:4 and Jesus is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, <u>by the resurrection from the dead</u>:

II. We are BLESSED with
A Confidence that Jesus will raise us up from the grave
(John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:25-26)

Jesus has power over the grave.
Ill. As a young man, D.L. Moody was called upon suddenly to preach a funeral sermon. He hunted all through the four Gospels trying to find one of Christ's funeral sermons, but searched in vain. He found that Christ broke up every funeral He ever attended. Death could not exist where He was. When the dead heard His voice they sprang to life. ex. Lazarus.

Christ's resurrection assures the believer that He too will rise again.
Ill. 400 years before the birth of Christ, Socrates, the renowned Greek Philosopher, drank the poison hemlock and lay down to die. "Shall we live again?" his friends asked. The dying philosopher could only reply. "I hope so, but no man can know"

At Lazarus' tomb Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn.11:25).

Our union with Christ assures our resurrection with Him.
Read: Rom.6:8-9; Col.3:1-4.
"Christ is the firstfruits of them that slept"

The Lord Jesus by His resurrection took away Satan's power to cause a fear of death. The Bible teaches that He took upon Himself flesh and blood "that through death he might destroy him that had power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb.2:14,15).

There will be no funerals in Heaven!
"The Christian dies to live" D.L. Moody

An unresurrected Christ could not give eternal life (Rom. 6:23) to anyone.

If He did not conquer death, what hope would we have that we would? (since He is our life - Col. 3:4).

Job 19:25-27 -
"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me."

Revelation 1:17-18 -
". . . Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Christ is sovereign in the area of physical death.

"keys" denote: ownership, authority, control.

Christ has the right to say who goes where. He is in control. He controls when you will die.

1. Believers should not fear death or Hell.
(This is the comfort John received by the statement)

Death had its gates (Ps 9:13, 107:18; Is.38:10) But Christ has the keys to the gates.

Ill. of an emperor's limitation. The Emperor Theodosius having on a great occasion opened all the prisons and released his prisoners, is reported to have said: "and now would to God I could open all the tombs and give life to the dead"

2. Unbelievers should fear death and Hell.
(Because you don't belong to the One who is holding the keys)

The very things about Christ which should cause a believer not to fear, should cause an unbeliever to fear. The Bible says "For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life."(II Cor.2:15,16).

"Keys" (plural) Christ has double power - He either saves from Hell, or He consigns (sends) to Hell.

"Hell" = Hades: The place of the spirits of the unbelieving dead.

ILLUS: Hymn - "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds my future, and life is worth the living just because He lives!"

If it wasn't for the resurrected Christ imparting His life (Jn. 1:4, 11:25, 14:6) to us, there would be no hope for eternity. Life would begin in the womb and end in a coffin.

III. We are BLESSED with

An <u>Eternal Dwelling Place</u> Jesus has been building for us (John 14:1-2)

"My Father's House" = the third Heaven, Paradise, the abode of God.

"Many mansions" – Many dwelling places . . . "Mansions" – *monai* (old word from *meno*, to abide, abiding places, in N.T. only here and verse 23 . . . Many places to live right with the Father.

Since these dwelling places are in the Father's House, they are the most beautiful, most wonderful, most luxurious, most enduring, of the highest quality in all creation. Hence, the translation "mansions" is quite appropriate.

"According to Jesus, heaven is a real place. It is not a product of religious imagination or the result of a psyched-up mentality, looking for 'pie in the sky by and by.' Heaven is the place where God dwells and where Jesus sits today at the right hand of the Father. Heaven is described as a kingdom (2 Peter 1:11), an inheritance (1 Peter 1:4), a country (Heb. 11:16), a city (Heb. 11:16), and a home (John 14:2).

"The word *Father* is used fifty-three times in John 13-17. Heaven is 'My Father's house,' according to the Son of God. It is 'home' for God's children! Some years ago, a London newspaper held a contest to determine the best definition of 'home.' The winning entry was, 'Home is the place where you are treated the best and complain the most.' The poet Robert Frost said that home is the place that, when you arrive there, they have to take you in. A good definition!"

(Wiersbe, pp. 349-50)

Since Jesus came from Heaven and since He is omniscient, He would have told His disciples if the arrangements were any different.

"I go to prepare a place for you" – By His going to Calvary and by His going to Heaven, Jesus went to make ready a literal place for His bride.

(Note: The domestic preparations are in perfect harmony with the Jewish marriage practices of the day, whereby the groom-to-be would be separated from His betrothed bride for a while [usually a year] to make preparations for their life together. He would then, at the right time, go to take His bride to his home to consummate a life-long marriage.)

"I go to prepare" – Notice who the builder is!

It is the Father's house, but Jesus is the carpenter of that house (the Carpenter of Nazareth is the builder of all things!).

Everything God ever made, He made through the instrumentality of His Son.

John 1:3
All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Col. 1:16
For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Hebrews 1:2
Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

When our family purchased a home, I became a carpenter. However, my work is filled with defects. It is not so with the Carpenter of the Father's house!

As the hymn goes: "I've got a mansion just over the hilltop in that bright land where we'll never grow old. . ."

1 Cor. 2:9
But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

"A place for <u>you</u>" – meaning His disciples, true believers. No universalism here! Only believers in Christ are having their mansions built.

A place which is "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away...reserved in Heaven for you" (I Peter)

A place without termites, roaches, leaky roofs, con-edison bills, property tax, vandals...

IV. We are BLESSED with
A <u>Future Rapture</u> because Jesus is coming back for us (John 14:3)

Since preparations are being made for the Bride of Christ, He must return to bring His Bride to the home He constructed for her.

"I will come again" – I will return, I will come back.

"I" – His coming is personal (He will not stay in Heaven and send someone else on His behalf, although He will come with His holy angels).

"Will" – His coming is certain

"Come again" – His coming is to this planet (He will return to the same globe He walked on before).

The return of Christ is a doctrine taught throughout the New Testament. For example:

Matthew 24:30-31
And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31] And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

James 5:8-9
Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. [9] Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

"And receive you unto Myself" – *paralambano* – to take someone to His side.

This event is the Rapture (*paralambano* is also found in the Rapture text of Matthew 24:40-42 - "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. "

"That where I am, there ye may be also" – The bride and groom must be together.

Why He would want us (wretched yet redeemed sinners) next to Him is beyond my understanding, yet He loves us!

This promise is fulfilled spiritually at the believer's death ("For to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord"), but it will be fulfilled physically at the resurrection of the just (as believers receive a new, transformed body – 1 Cor. 15:51ff).

This interim time period is a time to:

*wait for His coming

I Th. 1:10 - "Wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

*look for His coming

Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savor Jesus Christ"

*be ready for His coming

Mt. 24:44 - "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

*to desire His coming

Rev. 22:20 - "Even so come Lord Jesus"

Get ready for a Family Reunion!

I Thess. 4:16-17 - "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Get ready for a New Body!

I Cor. 15:51-f - "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed..."

V. We are BLESSED with An Empowerment by Jesus to do great works for God (John 14:12)

"Greater works" – (*megas)* not better in quality, but bigger in extent. More far-reaching, because Jesus would empower His servants from His glorified position in Heaven. [Who can do a better miracle than raising a dead man back to life?]

What is a greater work than healing a lame man's body? Answer: saving a lame man's soul. What is greater than raising a dead man's body physically and temporarily? Answer: Saving a dead man's soul spiritually and eternally! God does this, but He does it through our preaching the Gospel.

As Charles Ryrie states: "The greater works are greater in extent (through the worldwide preaching of the gospel) and effect (the spiritual redemption and placing in the Body of Christ multitudes of people since the day of Pentecost)."

Salvation miracles bigger in extent and effect would be possible due to the fact that Jesus would soon **"go unto My Father."** After His ascension, He would not be limited to work in a limited geographical capacity, but would do a world-wide work. It is in this sense that Jesus uses the comparative term "greater" in v. 28.

These greater works are also greater in quantity.

The "reason for this expansion (is) made possible by the Holy Spirit as *Paraclete* – 16:7." (Robertson, p. 251)

VI. We are BLESSED with Answers to our prayers by Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14)

v. 13

"In My Name" – Not to be a mere formality to the ending of our prayers, but really means to pray according to Christ's will (desires).

SEE Ryrie note.

ILLUS: When I was a boy, my mother would write a note and sign it, authorizing me to pick up a prescription from the pharmacist. I was not going to the pharmacist in my name, but in hers, seeking to get her will accomplished and not my own. Prayer is not getting my will done in Heaven; it is getting Heaven's will done on earth through my prayers.

The mention of "His name (is) as the open sesame to the Father's will. See also: 14:26; 15:16; 16:23, 24" (Robertson, p. 251).

Due to the oneness between God the Father and God the Son, the Father is glorified when the Son answers people's prayers! And He is glorified when people pray according to the desires and will of the Son of God.

"In Jesus name, Amen" – would be better left off of our prayers if we are not really coming to the Father with requests that glorify the Son.

After Christ's ascension to the Father's right hand, He would hear and answer prayer from Heaven!

v. 14
"Anything" is limited or qualified by the phrase **"In My Name"** – This means: Anything according to Jesus' will.

1 John 5:14-15
And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: [15] And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

To pray **"in My Name"** is to pray in harmony with Christ's willl.

You can't pray in His name unless you believe that He is God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father!

"I will do it" – Jesus answers prayer. This is yet another proof of His deity;; for who can answer prayer except God only?

We ask the Father, yet <u>Jesus answers</u>. Why? Because Jesus is the working power of God.

Everything the Father ever did or does, He does through the instrumentality of His Son. From the act of creation to the act of redemption; from the act of sustaining creation to the act of one day judging, destroying, and re-making creation. It is Jesus who did it and will do it.

Direct prayers to Jesus were made by Stephen in Acts 7:59 and in Revelation 22:20.

Angels don't answer prayer; neither do dead saints! But Jesus does! Because He is God!

VII. We are BLESSED with The <u>Abiding Presence</u> of Jesus Christ (John 14:18-23, 28-29)

v. 18
"I will not leave you comfortless" – lit. I will not leave you orphans (*orphanous)*.

"I will come" – Who will come? Jesus, in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

--How does Christ live in our hearts? By His Spirit
--How does Christ enable us to do all things? By His Spirit

"As surely as the Spirit would be with them and in them, so wold Christ. It would be impossible to differentiate the two, just as the Son and the Father are indivisible – 2 Cor. 3:17." (Wiersbe, p. 1105)

2 Cor. 3:17
Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

v. 19
"Because I live, ye shall live also" – in context this means: "Because I live in you (via my Spirit), you shall live also."

As Jesus says in verse 20: **"I in you."**

v. 20
"At that day" – At what day?
1) At the Day of Pentecost, when Jesus comes via the Spirit (v. 18)
2) At the Resurrection Day, when we rise to live eternally (v. 19)

v. 28
"I go away" – After giving His life He would <u>ascend</u> to the Father's right hand.

"I come again unto you" – Here, not speaking of the second coming (as in verse 3), but His coming in the person of the Holy Spirit (as in verse 18).

'If ye loved Me ye would rejoice" - What better place is there to be than with "the Father."

"My Father is greater than I"

The word translated "greater" is "meizon" (μειζων - from "megas"), which compares extent, not essence; degree, not quality. Note: Jesus did not say the Father was "better" than the Son (πλειων - Mt. 5:20; 12:41).

God "the Father," being Spirit (Jn. 4:24) had a more extensive influence on the world than the Son, who was limited to a physical body while on earth. In other words, Jesus being incarnate could only be at one place at one time while on earth (He surrendered the use of His omnipresence for a time - Heb. 2:9). This is why He said that His disciples should "rejoice" when He spoke of His ascension to the Father (v. 28).

After Jesus received a glorified body following the resurrection and after He ascended to Heaven, He was restored to His former greatness (Jn. 17:5; Mt. 18:19; Phil. 2:9). He can now work on a larger scale geographically (cp. v. 12; SEE Eph. 1:20-23, 4:10; Col. 3:11 - "Christ now fills all things").

Though this is not the point in John 14:28, it is also important to note that the Father is greater than the Son in position (headship) in the Trinity (I Cor. 11:3). What the Father DOES, He does THROUGH the Son, BY the Spirit. There is "subordination" in the modes of operation or function, but never any difference in essence mentioned in Scripture.

v. 29

"I have told you before it come to pass" – Jesus is speaking about His death, departure and His coming back to the disciples (v. 28) in the person of the Holy Spirit.

'Ye might believe" – God's predictions and accurate fulfillments produce faith.

Matthew 18:20 -
"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Conclusion:

Because Jesus is alive:

- **He is in the midst of believers who assemble in His name**

  Matthew 18:20 - *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

- **He is <u>with</u> those who carry out His Great Commission, even until the end of the Age**

  Matthew 28:20 - *I am with you alway, even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

- **He is not a victim of death, rather He <u>holds "the keys"</u> of death and of Hell**

  Revelation 1:18 - *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death

- **He sovereignly controls the universe**

  Colossians 1:17 - *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

- **He is the <u>Head of the Church</u>**

  Colossians 1:18 - *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things* he might have the preeminence.

- **He <u>lives inside</u> of believers**

  Colossians 1:27 -Christ in you, the hope of glory

- **He <u>completes</u> us with all spiritual blessings**

  Colossians 2:10 -*And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

  Ephesians 1:3 -*Blessed be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ

- **He <u>strenthens</u> us for service**

  Philippians 4:13 - *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*

- **He <u>supplies</u> all of your needs**

  Philippians 4:19 - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

- **He gives <u>peace</u> to our hearts and minds**

  Philippians 4:7 - *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*

- **He gives <u>gifts</u> to His Church**

  Ephesians 4:8 -*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

- **He <u>saves</u> all who call upon Him**

  Romans 10:13 -*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

  Without the resurrection, what would we believers be living for? What is our effort for? Why such church gatherings? Why evangelistic efforts? What hope do we have? What meaning is there to life?

  Our labor would be vain! (I Cor. 15:58)