

Jesus' Resurrection and Ours

Romans 1:4

What does the resurrection say? For too many it says "I'm going to heaven when I die!" While this is true, it's not most of what the resurrection says. For Jesus, this is the declaration that He is God's Son. Had He not risen, death would be reigning. But He did rise, and far from us going to heaven, it actually tells us that heaven has come to us. Life is here.

A Dead Messiah

In the greatest bit of Monday morning quarterbacking, we know that Jesus was victorious on the cross. We know it so well that we easily forget how shameful death on a cross was in the first century. To that audience, Jesus' death meant utter failure. Simon bar-Giora stood against the besieging general Titus AD 66-70, hoping to beat him, cleanse the temple, and inaugurate righteous rule. It didn't go as he hoped. In AD 132, the Emperor Hadrian built a temple of Jupiter in Jerusalem, and the next year Simon bar-Kochba began a rebellion and was hailed as the messiah by Rabbi Akiba. His followers issued new coins with AD 133 as "year 1", 134 as "year 2". In 135, Rome crushed the rebellion and he was killed. What was different about Jesus and these failed messiahs? Up until the resurrection, nothing visible. Jesus was cursed by hanging on the cross, which means God damned Him (Gal. 3:13; Dt. 21:23). It looked to be all over.

Declared to be God's Son

Jesus has always been the only-begotten of the Father, the Word of God, the second Person of the Trinity. But on the cross He looked like either an imposter or a defeated god. At His baptism, the Father said Jesus was His Son, but what kind of a father ditches his son to death? The Father raised Him up, and in doing so made a definitive statement that Jesus of *Nazareth* was His Son (Rom. 1:4). If Jesus hadn't been raised, death would not be defeated, and sin would reign (1 Cor. 15:17). But sin doesn't reign because God exalted Him in the resurrection, His name above all names (Phil. 2:8-9). You can translate Romans 1:4 as "He was *appointed* to be the Son of God according to the Spirit of power, by the resurrection from the dead." This was His mission as the second Adam and messiah, and God "fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'" (Acts 13:33). As a true man, Jesus' body was redeemed, and He was adopted into God's family (Rom. 8:23).

Our Resurrection

Our greatest desire is not to get to heaven, as wonderful as that will be, but with the whole creation we "groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:23). We already are the children of God (Gal. 3:26), and yet we long for our adoption to be complete, death fully defeated in our redeemed bodies. Already in the church in Corinth there were people who denied the resurrection in the first century (1 Cor. 15:12). Paul says if Christ didn't rise, they're pitiful and wasting time (1 Cor. 15:17-19, 32). Denying the resurrection was a huge heresy then and might be our greatest blindspot in the church today. All the early church fathers—Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian—taught the importance of bodily resurrection. Your body is the greatest material gift God has given you. The value of your hands, the wonder of sight, the beauty of hearing, all are bodily blessings. The tension of sin we experience in our bodies is not because they are material, but because we are fallen. Yet we're not without hope: "For in this hope we are saved. . . . But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (Rom. 8:24-25). We not hoping for no body, but a better one. The Father raised Jesus as the firstfruits of an enormous crop, so we look back at His resurrection so we can look forward to our own (1 Cor. 15:20). He began in the middle of history what the Jews thought would happen at the end in order to begin the reign of resurrection life (Dan. 12:2). This is not just about individuals, but about the renovation of all creation. Jesus rose in order to *reign*, and the last enemy to be defeated will be death (1 Cor. 15:25-26). The world is moving toward a cosmic spring and everything you do is putting seed in the ground. We'll see things come up we never knew were there (1 Cor. 15:58).

NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

Today's Passage: Romans 1:4

He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

1. What did God say about Jesus when He raised Him from the dead?
2. The Father raised Jesus according to *Whom* in verse four?
3. Paul says because Jesus rose from the dead, our work here on earth done “in the Lord” is not in vain. How do you think the things you are learning in school now will help you in the resurrection?
4. Draw a picture of the resurrected Jesus eating and playing games with people in Jerusalem.

Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

*He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness,
by the resurrection from the dead. —Romans 1:4*