



"The thing is, in this life you can know a great deal about something, and still be wrong."

—Sir Len Hutton

18-Apr-25

Raising Our Conception of the Resurrection

The day after the [Sabbath](#) during the [Feast of Unleavened Bread](#) ([Leviticus 23:10-11](#)) is the day of the [Wavesheaf offering](#), which typifies the resurrection and ascension of [Jesus Christ](#). It also happens to be the same day that most of this world's Christians observe [Easter](#), on which they celebrate His resurrection. Churches hold sunrise services because this is when they suppose Jesus to have risen from the grave, and they joyously proclaim, "He is risen!" ([Mark 16:6](#)). Churchgoers wear their finest new, spring clothes, with many ladies sporting the modern, stylish version of the Easter bonnet. Afterwards, children hunt for Easter eggs and gorge themselves on chocolate bunnies, chocolate eggs, sugared marshmallow chicks, and other goodies. It is all great fun.

But is this the extent of today's understanding of the resurrection of our Savior? Has His awesome overcoming of death become little more than a trite service, new clothes, and candy? Do we realize the profound implications of what happened in that new, rock-hewn tomb just outside of Jerusalem all those years ago? From the way many people treat the holiday, it would seem that they have not truly—deeply—considered what it means.

First, if they had studied the gospels on the subject, comparing the various biblical accounts with the traditional teaching, they would have realized that the Bible's accounts make it clear that Jesus could not have risen with the sunrise on Sunday morning. Notice [John 20:1](#): "Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, *while it was still dark*, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb" (our emphasis throughout). Jesus had already been resurrected! If this part of the "Easter story" is incorrect, what else is wrong? Taking all the clues together, we find that the Bible indicates a Wednesday crucifixion and a late Sabbath—Saturday—resurrection, since, to fulfill the sign of His Messiahship, He had to remain in the tomb a full three days and three nights or 72 hours (for a complete explanation, see our booklet, "[After Three Days](#)").

Second, most professing Christians believe that Christ's resurrection focuses on the fact that, having suffered crucifixion and then being buried in the tomb, He was dead, but three days later, He was alive again. As far as it goes, this is true. Jesus Himself writes to the church at Smyrna in [Revelation 2:8](#): "These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life." However, we must be careful not to be satisfied with the basic truth that He returned to life, for if we do, it does a grave injustice to the spiritual magnificence and significance of the event.

His was no ordinary resurrection, if any resurrection could be considered so. Other resuscitations down through history have been shown to be what we would call "reviving from clinical death": The person's heart stops, his breathing halts, and in effect, he appears dead, yet suddenly, he returns to life. In a similar way, just a short time before His own death, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11), and later, at Christ's death, "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many" ([Matthew 27:52-53](#)). These people were all returned to physical life, and while they are astonishing miracles and must have caused untold wonder and [joy](#) among their grieving relatives, their mortality was merely postponed. They would die again.

Jesus' resurrection was something altogether different: He was raised to *everlasting* life; He would live forever! In his first sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter informs the gathered crowd, "[God](#) [the Father] raised up

[Jesus], having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it" ([Acts 2:24](#)). Paul explains what happened in a similar way in [II Corinthians 13:4](#), "For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God." Finally, the risen Christ Himself says to the apostle John, "I am He who lives, and who was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen." ([Revelation 1:18](#)). The life that the Father returned to Him was not mere physical life but the immortal spirit life of God.

Third, because He has passed from death to life, He makes our salvation and eternal life possible. Paul writes in [Romans 6:8-9](#), "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more." He puts it succinctly in [Romans 5:10](#), ". . . we shall be saved by His life," that is, the life He now lives as our Savior and High Priest. [Hebrews 7:24-25](#) tells us, "But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." In His final prayer with His disciples, Jesus begins with this thought: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" ([John 17:1-2](#)).

In these verses, we see hints of a fourth momentous product of Christ's resurrection that contains weighty implications for us. Paul writes in [Hebrews 1:3](#), ". . . when He had by Himself purged our sins, [Jesus] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Peter also mentions this in his Pentecost sermon: "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" ([Acts 2:32-33](#)).

Because He was raised from the dead, having paid for our sins in His sinless body, the Father has exalted Him to sit with Him on His throne, where He has the power and the authority to "pour out" the Holy Spirit on the elect, giving them the ability to have a relationship with God and to have eternal life through a similar resurrection. Paul writes in [Philippians 3:8](#), 10-11: "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . that I may know Him and the power of His

resurrection, . . . if, by any means, I may attain to the [resurrection from the dead](#)."

In this way, He is "the captain of [our] salvation" ([Hebrews 2:10](#)), the *archegos*, the Forerunner and Trailblazer, who opens the way before God's people and makes it possible for them to attain what He has. And this potential is not limited to some kind of quasi-angelic existence, for the apostle John writes, ". . . when He is revealed, we shall be like Him" ([I John 3:2](#)). Paul concurs in [I Corinthians 15:49](#): "As we have borne the image of the man of dust [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man [Jesus]." Man's potential reaches to the divine!

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is nothing to be taken lightly. We would do well to consider it deeply, since it is so vital to God's purpose and to the eternal future of God's elect.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

New Transcripts

[1813-PM: Jesus in the Feasts \(Part One\): Unleavened Bread](#)

Given by Richard T. Ritenbaugh on 13-Apr-25

[BS-AC06: Acts \(Part Six\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 06-Sep-88

[FT01-10s: Use God's Word as a Mirror](#)

Given by Bill Cherry on 07-Oct-01

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The Resurrection: A Central Pillar](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Absolutely no concept of a trinity appears in the Apostle's Creed (a notion

that did not appear in Catholicism or Orthodoxy until the 4th Century at the Council of Nicaea). Further, the Apostle's Creed provides a powerful affirmation of the Resurrection and Eternal Life as a cardinal doctrine. In the formative years of our previous fellowship, the death of Christ and putting away sin was emphasized, but His Resurrection from the dead was sadly de-emphasized because it was felt that it brought to mind Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox associations with Easter worship. The doctrine of Christ's resurrection is of paramount importance to us, because Christ alone has the keys to our own resurrection and eternal life as First Fruits. The reality of Christ's resurrection permeates the New Testament from John's vision of the resurrected, glorified Christ to the boldness expressed by Christ's disciples and other eye-witnesses to this miraculous event recorded in the Gospels. Paul's encapsulation of the resurrection in I Corinthians 15 was perhaps the template for the Apostle's Creed. Paul assures the Corinthians that if Christ has not risen from the dead, paving the way for our resurrection, our whole practice of religion is futile and useless. But the reality of the resurrection is: (1) Jesus became our Mediator and High Priest, (2) allowing us to have a relationship with God the Father. Through the New Covenant, He has put His Laws into our hearts and minds. As the Second Adam, the First Born resurrected from the dead, He has opened the door of the resurrection and eternal life for those who believe. There is absolutely no resurrection apart from our active relationship with Jesus Christ, striving to emulate Him in every area of life, en

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Resurrection AD 31](#)

by Staff

Matthew 27:52 informs us that more than one resurrection occurred during Passover week in AD 31! This article summarizes the types of resurrections that appear in God's Word, and uses this information to provide answers to the many questions that arise about this astounding miracle.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study (Friday 18-Apr-25) will be **Acts (Part Five)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh**. The Bible Study will be featured on the [CGG homepage](#) from **6:00 pm Friday** (EST) and all day Saturday.

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