

The Good Tidings

“...I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God...” (Luke 4:43)

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THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER
OF GOD UNTO SALVATION
(Romans 1:16)

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the Word of God

John 8:45; Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ

John 3:16; 8:24

Repent of your sins

Luke 13:3, 5; II Peter 3:9

Confess Jesus is the Christ

Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37

Be baptized for the remission of
your sins

Acts 2:38; 22:16

Live faithfully everyday

Matthew 10:22

“See, Here is Water; What Doth Hinder Me to be Baptized?”

This question was asked by the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:36. An angel of the Lord told Philip to go to the Gaza desert. When he arrived he saw a man riding in a chariot and was told to join himself to it. A man from Ethiopia, whose name is not given, had been to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home. He was reading from the book of Isaiah chapter 53. Philip asked if he understood what he was reading. The eunuch said, “how can I except some man guide me.” “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:35-39).

As Philip “preached unto him Jesus,” we learn that it involved the plan of salvation. Nothing in this account reveals that Philip said anything about water baptism. But, it is evident he did from what the eunuch asked. Preaching Jesus involves preaching water baptism. You can’t preach Jesus without it. This is clearly shown in every conversion account in the New Testament. Earlier in this same chapter the people of Samaria heard the preaching concerning Jesus and His kingdom and were baptized (Acts 8:5, 12).

Baptism puts one INTO Christ (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3) where salvation is (2 Timothy 2:10). That’s where one contacts the blood of Christ that washes sins away (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4-6; Revelation 1:5). Baptism is the “new birth” of which Jesus talked with Nicodemus (John 3:3-5). A “new life” begins after baptism, not before (Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

There was nothing to hinder the eunuch from being baptized. When people learn the Gospel and desire to obey it, there should be no hindrance in their doing so. Often, though, people are hindered in their obedience because of false teaching. Is there any hindrance in you obeying the Gospel? Why not study and obey today?

— Garland M. Robinson

The Significance of Christ's Resurrection

Each spring, millions of people around the world acknowledge, in some fashion or another, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead some twenty centuries ago. Modern society calls it "Easter."

The origin of this term is uncertain, though it is commonly thought to derive from *Eastre*, the name of a Teutonic spring goddess. The term "Easter," in the King James Version of the Bible (Acts 12:4), is a mistranslation. The Greek word is *pascha*, correctly rendered "Passover" in later translations. In fact, though *pascha* is found twenty-nine times in the Greek New Testament, it is only rendered "Easter" once, even in the KJV.

Christians are not authorized to celebrate "Easter" as a special annual event acknowledging the resurrection of Christ. Faithful children of God reflect upon the Savior's resurrection *every Sunday* (the resurrection day - cf. Jn. 20:1ff) as they gather to worship God in the regular assembly of the church (cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

We ought to be glad, however, that multitudes – usually caught up in pursuits wholly materialistic – will take at least some time for reflection upon the event of the Savior's resurrection. It is entirely appropriate that Christians take advantage of this circumstance; we should be both willing and able to explain to our friends – at least those who have some reverence for Christianity – the significance of the Lord's resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the foundation of the Christian system (cf. 1 Cor. 15:14ff). If there was no resurrection, Christianity is a hoax, and we are wasting our time. But the truth is, the event of Jesus' resurrection is incontrovertible. Professor Thomas Arnold of Rugby, a world-renowned historian, once said that Christ's resurrection from the dead is the "best-attested fact in human history" (**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**, IV, p. 2569). This being the case, just what is the significance of Jesus' resurrection? Think about these matters.

First, the resurrection is one of the major evidences that Jesus Christ is *the Son of God*. Paul affirmed that Christ is "declared to be the Son of God

with power. . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

Second, Jesus' resurrection represents an assurance that we can have *forgiveness from our sins*. Paul contended: ". . . if Christ hath not been raised, our faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). The reverse of the apostle's affirmation would be this: If Jesus was raised, sins will be forgiven when we obey the gospel – Acts 2:38; 22:16.

Third, the resurrection tells the world that *the kingdom of God is ruled by a living sovereign*. The founder of Islam is dead and his bones lie dormant in the earth. But the founder of Christianity – sixty years after His death – appeared to John on the island of Patmos and said: "I am the first and the last, and the Living one. . . I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. . ." (Rev. 1:17-18).

Fourth, Jesus' resurrection proves that *physical death is not the termination of human existence*. God, who is the giver of life (1 Tim. 6:13), has the power to reanimate the human body. Christ's triumph over the grave is Heaven's pledge to us that we too shall be raised. This is why Jesus is referred to as the "firstfruits of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20,23).

Fifth, the Lord's resurrection previewed the *ultimate victory of Christianity over all its enemies*. In the book of Revelation, Jesus is depicted as a lamb that had been slain, but was standing again (5:6). This same Lord was "the lion of the tribe of Judah" that had overcome His foes (5:5). Christians too will overcome as a result of the Lamb's sacrifice and victory over death (cf. Rev. 12:11).

The resurrection of the Son of God should be a constant reminder to us of these wonderful biblical truths. We honor our Master's victory over death – not once-a-year, but every week!

— Wayne Jackson - reprinted from www.christiancourier.com. Subscriptions for the monthly *Christian Courier* costs \$8.00. Send requests to *Christian Courier*, 7809 North Pershing Avenue, Stockton, CA 95207.

The Godhead

The Godhead (also commonly called “the Trinity,” though this word is not found in the Bible) is one of the most difficult things for people to understand. The Bible teaches there is one God (Deut. 6:4; Is. 44:6; 1 Cor. 8:6). The Bible also refers to the Father as God, the Son as God, and the Holy Spirit as God (Eph. 1:3; Heb. 1:8; Acts 5:3,4).

The Bible uses the word “Godhead” or “Divine Nature” in three passages (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9). In the Old Testament, the plural pronoun “us” is sometimes used when referring to God (Gen. 1:26,27; 3:22; 11:7; Is. 6:8). In the New Testament, there are several Scriptures which mention the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all in the same passage (Mt. 3:16,17; 28:19,20; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2).

There is one Divine Nature, but three different persons who have this nature. Dalton Key wrote: “While the word ‘God’ may be used to refer to the Father exclusively (Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:3), it is most often used as a family name, referring to all three members of the Godhead.... There is but one divine family of God in heaven.... Just as husband and wife may be one in purpose, in desire, in unity, in direction; yet still remain as two distinct personalities (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5) ~ so the Godhead, comprised of three distinct Divine Personalities, is One.”

The Father is God (Eph. 1:3). The Son is God (Heb. 1:8). The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3,4). Several Scriptures show the Father and the Son are not the same person (Jn. 8:16-18; Mk. 13:32; Acts 2:33,36; 7:55). However, the Father and the Son are one in doctrine (2 Jn. 9); one in protection (Jn. 10:27-30); one in word and work (Jn. 14:8-11); one in purpose (Jn. 14:16-28); and one in fullness and grace (Col. 2:8-10), but not one person.

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is a person (Jn. 16:7-16). He can teach, instruct, testify, and be lied to (Acts 5:3,4). He also appointed people to preach (Acts 13:2). These are all attributes of a person.

The Holy Spirit had work to do. The Old Testament prophets spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20,21). In the New Testament, the

Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed the truth (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3,4; Jude 3). He told the apostles what to say (Mt. 10:19,20; Jn. 14:26; 16:13).

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the three persons in the Godhead (Jn. 1:1-3,14). Jesus was Immanuel, “God with us” (Is. 7:14; Mt. 1:22,23). Jesus was not “a god,” but GOD, one of the Divine Three.

There is one God, who is revealed in three persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. “God” is the family name.

—John M. Grubb

Very Interesting

If you put a buzzard in a pen six or eight feet square and entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of his ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of ten or twelve feet. Without space to run, as is his habit, he will not even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.

The ordinary bat that flies around at night, a remarkable nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and, no doubt, painfully, until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then, at once, it takes off like a flash.

A bumblebee, if dropped into an open tumbler will be there until it dies unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

In many ways, there are lots of people like the buzzard, the bat and the bee. They are struggling about with all their problems and frustrations, not realizing that if they look up, they’ll find the answer.

— Bulletin Digest

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you (1 Peter 5:7).

Be Faithful unto Death

In a very simple but very profound statement the Apostle John wrote, "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). These inspired words to the church at Smyrna should challenge Christians wherever they find themselves today: "Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life."

Faithfulness to God requires a strong personal commitment. Christians who are truly committed to God are in the minority in the church of today. Our service to God should be "heartily service." A servant must serve his physical master "heartily" and just so we much serve Christ Jesus, our spiritual master "heartily." "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men" (Col. 3:23). Our commitment must be that, "whatever we do in word or deed, we will do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 1:17). Personal commitment to God should be a strong point for every Christian! Our goal is not simply for people to attend church services; but our goal is for people to make a genuine commitment of their life to Christ.

Faithfulness to God requires a strong personal choice. Each person must choose to be faithful or it will never happen. God blessed the people of Joshua's day. Even though it was true that those people had truly been blessed by God, their faithfulness required a personal choice. Hear the words of Joshua 24:13-15, "I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant. Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me

and my house, we will serve the Lord." The people understood the need for a personal choice. They responded by saying, "...The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey" (Joshua 24:24)! With word and life let us respond by saying, "our God we will serve."

Faithfulness to God requires a strong and complete obedience. Jesus said, Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). Jesus saves those who "obey." The Hebrew writer wrote, "though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Without obedience there can be no salvation. Obedience causes people to believe (Mark 16:16). Obedience leads to repentance (Acts 2:38). Obedience leads to confession of faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10). Obedience leads to baptism into Christ (Rom. 6:1-5). It is in obedience that a person is saved from past sins and added to the church (Acts 2:47). Only those who obey have the right to wear the name "Christian" (Acts 11:26).

Faithfulness to God requires a strong resolve to put Him first in our lives. Becoming a Christian is not enough. This is only the beginning of a life which is to be lived for God daily. The Lord must be first in the hearts and lives of His followers. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). The Macedonians had it right when "they first gave themselves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5). The Lord is satisfied only when He has "preeminence" in our hearts and lives. Paul wrote, "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). Christians must forsake all, and with a strong resolve, serve God faithfully. "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33).

Faithfulness to God requires a strong interest in His Word. The Bible has been called our "roadmap from earth to heaven." The Bible is both

unique and powerful because of its source--God! "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Not one day should be allowed to pass without our studying the Word of God. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The Bible tells us who God is and who we are. It outlines our responsibility toward Him. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The righteous man will delight himself in God's law. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2). The Bible tells us how to become a Christian and how to live for Him daily. Study your Bible. Make God's Word a part of you.

Faithfulness to God requires strong self-discipline. "Discipline" is one of the forgotten words of Christianity. There is almost no church discipline and very little self-discipline. Self-discipline must be learned and practiced. Paul wrote, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified" (1 Thess. 4:3-6). Christians must be "not walking according to the flesh, but according to the spirit" (Rom. 8:1). Paul spoke of self-discipline saying, "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27). Faithful Christian living requires discipline.

Faithfulness to God requires strong, dedicated service. Christians should seek opportunities for service. These opportunities are

often right before our eyes. Paul wrote, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). Jesus spoke of serving Him by serving others. He said, "And the King will answer and say to them, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me (Matt. 25:40). Christianity is a lot more than what we do on Sunday morning. James wrote, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Seek opportunities to serve God daily remembering that even a "cup of cold water" given as an act of service or in the name of a disciple will have its reward (Matt. 10:42).

Faithfulness to God requires continual and strong spiritual growth. Peter wrote, "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18). Christians must grow in order to be able to discern between good and evil. "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14). Spiritual growth must move us above this world. Even though still "in" the world the Christian is not "of" the world. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36.) Matthew records God's plan for spiritual growth in Matthew 16:24. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." As a Christian you must set your mind on things above (Col. 3:1).

If you are not a Christian you should become a Christian today (Acts 2:36-41). If you are a Christian be faithful to the Lord in daily Bible study, in your commitment and daily living.

— Charles Box