

Special: Spring 2024 #3

March 31, 2024

Series Title: Behold Our King!

Today's Message: The Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Every Sunday gathering (the first day of the week, John 20:1) is a reminder of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And every gathering must be approached reverently and with great joy for we are not just assembling for “church”, we are joining a heavenly assembly. Hebrews 12:22-24 tells us plainly, “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.”

What Hebrews 12 tells us is that there is a heavenly assembly, and the risen Christ is actively mediating the blood of the new covenant! It is an assembly of the redeemed who have gone before us and entered into their heavenly rest. An assembly in joyful exultation, rejoicing because He who was dead is alive! Revelation 1:17-18 reveals the words of our risen, ascended and glorified Lord Jesus Christ when He tells John to write, “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

The writer of Hebrews tells us that we who are here on earth but who regularly gather together in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord, the risen Savior, are entering into the heavenly assembly. When we look upon Him, beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ we are in unity with the saints and angels in heaven! Revelation chapters 4 and 5 vividly describe the heavenly scene as one of awe and wonder and glory and adoration, exultation and praise. Revelation 5:13 gives us a glimpse: “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

How is this possible? How is it possible that we are in some sense ingathered with the heavenly assembly? My dear friends, it is because the Glory of the Ages, the eternal Son of God became flesh and made His dwelling among us having come from the Father full of grace and truth (John 1:14). It is because of Him, He who took up our infirmities and by whose stripes we are healed that we come! It was because Christ, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, bearing its reproach for the sake of the God’s elect that we come to the joyful assembly both now and forever more! We come because He was raised from the dead on the third day just like He promised (Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5!). And that’s why you are here in this room today gathering with other precious saints: He is Risen!

Today let’s rejoice with the heavenly assembly and gaze upon Jesus Christ the risen Lamb of God! As we do let’s remember that for the last two weeks, we have considered the “person” of Jesus Christ, namely, His unique role as High Priest and Sacrifice. This week we will consider His work in the following way: We will look intently, but not exhaustively at His 1) Death and Burial; 2) His resurrection and the witness to it; and 3) His ascension and promised return.

I) The Death and Burial of Jesus Christ.

A) Why a death?

- 1) From God’s point of view concerning the sons of the first Adam:
 - (a) God’s judgement against sin is death: Romans 6:23: “The wages of sin is death...”
 - (b) At the instant Adam trespassed God’s command to not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil the trespass brought death. Instantly “they became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body. (Boice)” Instantly they died spiritually, and consequently their fellowship and communion with God died.

- (i) As time went along their personalities began to shrivel and die. Morally their hearts began darkening and their thinking became futile, dark, corrupted, and *lonely*.
- (ii) Finally, there was a slow but steady corruption of the body until the body died.
- (c) Death came to all human beings born in the human lineage of the first man Adam!
 - (i) Romans 5:12 says, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—”
- 2) From God’s point of view regarding His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.
 - (a) He did not have to die. He was without sin. God was under no obligation in any way to offer His Son in a *life for life* transaction.
 - (i) Ezekiel 18:20a: “The soul who sins is the one who will die...”
 - (a) He was without sin!
 - (ii) God initiated the plan to redeem/ save His people before the foundation of the world.
 - (a) “He (The Father) chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world...” (Eph. 1:4a)
 - (iii) Ephesians 2:4-5: But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love for us, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions. **It is by grace you have been saved.**
- B) What kind of death? A saving death. A death of appeasement: guilt removed; justice satisfied.
 - 1) A most shocking death: The kind of death Christ suffered was that of a blameless, unblemished, undefiled man perfect in righteousness, but ABSOLUTELY necessary for our redemption!
 - 2) A substitutionary death: He died in place of sinners because God put Him forward as the propitiation for sin. (*hyper*—in place of; substitute.)
 - (a) Romans 3:25: “God presented Him as the propitiation for sin through the shedding of His blood—to be received by faith.” (**see also Rom. 5:6,8, 10; 1 Peter 3:18**)
 - (b) 2 Corinthians 5:21: “God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”
 - 3) An acceptable death: A good, pleasing and perfect sacrifice on behalf of sinners!
 - (a) Romans 4:23-25: “The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him (Abraham) alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.**”
 - (b) 2 Corinthians 5:19: “...that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them.” (“*them*” being those who have rec’d the message and believed.)
 - (c) J.I. Packer: “The wrath of God is as personal and as potent as His love; and just as the blood shedding of the Lord Jesus was the direct manifesting of His Father’s love toward us, so it was the averting of His Father’s wrath against us.”
- C) His Burial. A real body laid to rest in a tomb.
 - 1) A real body laid in a tomb. Each of the 4 gospels give an account: Mt 27; Mk 15; Lk 23; Jn 19
 - 2) A fulfillment of Scripture: messianic prophecy and messianic doctrine:
 - (a) Acts 2:22-31 i. Messiah’s death; ii. Messiah’s incorruptible body (sinless); iii. Messiah raised.
 - (i) Acts 2:31: “Seeing what was ahead, he (David; see 1 Pet.1:11) spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to the grave, nor did His body see decay.”
 - 3) His burial is one of the key points of the Gospel as we read in 1 Corinthians 15:4.
- II) **The Resurrection and the witnesses to it.**
 - A) The importance of the resurrection: It is predicted in OT and claimed by the apostles and witnesses.
 - 1) The Prophets predicted Messiah’s resurrection. (Some are hard to understand but are explained.)

- (a) Psalm 16:10: “You will not let your Holy One see decay.” (Explained in Acts 2:27, 13:34)
- (b) Quoting Psalm 2:7 in Acts 13:32-33: “We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers He has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.’”
- 2) If the prophecies concerning His resurrection are not true, then neither is your faith in Christ!
 - (a) “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Corinthians 15:20)
- B) The necessity of the resurrection: If Christ has not been raised, we are still in our sins (1 Cor. 15:17)
 - 1) Negatively, If Christ is not raised: (1 Corinthians 15:12-19)
 - (a) Then, the preaching of Christ and our faith is useless (15:14)
 - (b) Then, the witnesses who testify to His resurrection are false witnesses about God. (15:15)
 - (c) Then, if Christ be not raised then your faith is futile, and we are still in our sins. (15:17)
 - (d) Then, if Christ is not raised then those who have died hoping in Him are **lost**. (15:18)
 - (e) And, if Christ is not raised all of us who hoped in Him, are to be pitied above all. (15:19)
 - 2) Positively, because Christ is “indeed raised from the dead...” (15:20-28)
 - (a) He is the firstfruits (representative) of all who have fallen asleep holding to faith (15:20).
 - (b) ...reversing the curse of the first Adam bringing life instead of death (15:21-22).
 - (c) ...assuring His second coming and our gathering to Him when He comes (15:23).
 - (d) ...and now has all-authority and over every dominion, authority and power (15:24).
 - (e) ...He has authority to destroy death at the end of things (15:26; 2 Tim.1:10; Rev. 20:14; 21:4).
 - (f) ...we share in His victory over death through faith in the Person and Work of Christ (**15:57**).
 - (i) We will be raised with incorruptible bodies like His glorious body (15:51-54; Phil. 3:21).
- C) The confirmation of the resurrection by witnesses. These witnesses provide infallible evidence!
 - 1) The Scriptures (the OT prophets) witnessed His resurrection (15:4).
 - 2) Jesus gave witness to His resurrection (see John 2:22; Luke 24:25-27; John 20:27; Rev. 1:18).
 - 3) The women, Peter and John came to the empty tomb on the first day of the week (John 20:1-9)
 - 4) The angel at the empty tomb said, “He is not here. He is risen...” (Matthew 28:6)
 - 5) Mary Magdalene was the first person to see the risen Christ (John 20:15-18).
 - 6) Jesus appeared **in body** to Peter and the twelve (1 Cor. 15:5, also see the Gospel accounts).
 - 7) Jesus appeared to 500 believers at the same time (15:6).
 - 8) Jesus appeared to James and all the apostles in **a body** (15:7; Luke 24:33, 36, 37; Acts 1:3-4).
 - 9) Last of all, Jesus appeared to Paul (15:8; Acts 9:3-6).

III) The Bodily Ascension and Promised Bodily Return of Jesus Christ the Lord.

- A) For forty days Jesus appeared bodily to the disciples and taught them (Acts 1:3-8).
- B) The Bodily Ascension.
 - 1) Acts 1:9: “After this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud (shekinah) hid Him from their sight.”
 - (a) Mark 16:19: “After the Lord had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven and He sat at the right hand of God.”
- C) The Promised Bodily Return of Jesus Christ the Lord.
 - 1) Acts 1:11: (The angels spoke to them) “‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.’”
 - 2) Mark 16:27: “For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father’s glory with His angels...”
 - 3) John 14:3: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me...”
 - 4) Revelation 22:20b: “Yes, I am coming soon.”