



By Dr. Richard Youngblood

***Question: Why was it necessary for Jesus to be raised from the dead?***

If Jesus had not been raised from the dead, he would have remained just another dead martyr. We may have great admiration for the faith and courage of anyone who is willing to sacrifice his life for some seemingly good purpose, but a dead martyr is still dead. He can do nothing more for us. We may be thankful for the teaching and example of Jesus; but apart from the resurrection of Jesus, the gospel message is the same as the record of any other great teacher. It is merely ink on paper. As the apostle Paul stated: “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith” (1 Corinthians 15:14).

But the resurrected Jesus is not another dead philosopher of the past. By his resurrection, Jesus has empowered those who choose to believe in him to live a new and transformed life, a life no longer under the control of Satan and the power of sin. Those who identified with Christ’s death and resurrection in the action of baptism were told: “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:5-6). While we are still capable of sin, we can now overcome the power of sin and temptation by the greater power of our resurrected Lord. We are told that we “belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God” (Romans 7:4). Our resurrected Lord sent the Spirit to live in us and bear the fruit of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). Through the power of his resurrection we can become this kind of person.

Not only does the resurrection bless believers in their present life, but it also gives them hope for life beyond death. Paul said: “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Corinthians 15:19). Then, he added that Christ has been raised from the dead and by that resurrection from the sleep of death he has become “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:19-20). The first fruits indicate that there are more to come. Those who live in the power of Christ’s resurrection will be raised to live with the Lord forever where death is no more.

The whole of the Christian faith that has sustained God’s people throughout more than 2000 years stands or falls on the resurrection of Christ. Through faith in the resurrected Lord, Christians have release from guilt,

freedom to live a new and different life free from the power of evil. They have reason to love and live honestly, soberly and righteously in this present world. Then, Christians have hope of a glorious life eternally with God and Christ where there will be no more death, grief or pain. It may be difficult for some to believe in the resurrection of Christ; but incredible as it may be, that is what Christians all over the world and throughout history have believed. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

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