

The Power of His Resurrection

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The Apostle Paul came to realize that as a Pharisee he had been trying to obtain God's righteousness by means of the book of the law (Phil 3:1-12), but that true righteousness comes by means of Christ's faith, which is based on the Father's faith (spiritual understanding & knowledge). Paul considered himself as incomplete as yet (verse 12), but was pressing on to possess Christ's righteousness as his own, even as Christ had possessed him - *him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death* (verse 10). When I read verse 10, I understood fellowship (Gr. koinonia) to be joint participation of his sufferings, inward and in the physical realm, and being made conformable to his death as to be the death of the 'old man', Rom 6:4-7, and could even entail physical death. To know him is to have his understanding, but what does Paul mean *That I may know... the power of his resurrection?*

This Easter millions will be at church for sunrise Easter service, and millions more will attend later that morning in celebration of Christ's resurrection. If there is power in His resurrection, why is it not being manifested on a large scale in churches and people's lives today? Am I the only one who does not see anything happening to stop moral decline in the world today? Where or what is the Church's influence in our society?

Now, John 17:3 says that knowing the Father and Son is eternal life, and 1 John 5:11 says that the Father put this life in His Son, but what does it mean to know *the power of his resurrection?* This statement really grabbed my attention. What proof do we have today of His resurrection: **Acts 10:39-43:** *39. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; 41. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of [living] and dead. 43. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive [deliverance] of sins.* [literal of Greek] The Bible we have today, consisting of the O.T., which the early church used for their proof and understanding of the prophets. There were literally hundreds of eyewitnesses, and some of who were writers of the N.T.

As I read through the texts that use the word 'resurrection', I began to notice other things. **Lk 2:34:** *and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against;* (American Standard). Jesus is a 'sign' because He is a type of what you and I can become! He was a sign spoken against in His day, and is the same sign spoken against today. Understanding why will come out as the study proceeds. The Greek word for 'rising' is translated 'resurrection' 39 out of 42 appearances. Those 'falling' ARE NOT the same ones 'rising', but like today, they are professed believers who reject the truth of the Messiah, His origin, nature and births - and so, they reject the power of His resurrection.

During His encounter with Martha, when Jesus came to raise Lazarus, He told her, *I am the resurrection and the life.* We discussed 'the life' above, so how is Christ 'the resurrection, and why is there power in it? I can see at least four things that contribute to there being power in understanding the resurrection of Jesus:

1. **Jn 5:24-25, 28-29:** *24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes him that sent me, hath eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour comes, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they*

that hear shall live... 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, 29 and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment. (American Standard)

When a person hears and obey Christ's word, they are passed from death to life (verses 24, 25), and Jesus said this was happening 'right now', in His presence while He was on earth. Verses 28 & 29, on the other hand, refer to future resurrections of the bodies of the righteous and wicked at the end of this world. So, knowing that we can be resurrected from the spiritually dead right now simply by listening to Christ as He speaks and directs us via the conscience, is tremendous.

2. 1 Pet 1:3-5: *3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ...* The underlined phrase should read: *having begotten us in the midst (inwardly) unto a living hope.* The power of the resurrection of Jesus is an understanding that births us inwardly, which we understand means 'to be born from above', and which instills in us a living hope that we are being kept by the power of God through spiritual understanding (Col 1:9).

Jesus used the words 'rise' or 'raised' at least 10 times to indicate that He would be killed, and resurrected on the third day, the depth of which doctrine is not widely understood by the laity today. Also, the phrase 'raise up' or 'raised up' is used in 15 other verses to mean resurrection, some of which appear below.

The resurrection that sparked the most controversy in Israel was that of Lazarus, Martha's brother (Jn 11). The Jews understood that by the fourth day a body had begun to decay. When Jesus arrived the fourth day after his death, there were dozens of witnesses of Lazarus' resurrection. Upon asking that the stone be removed from the tomb, Martha said to him, *Lord, by this time he stinks: for he hath been dead four days.* Lazarus' resurrection was such a powerful witness that many of the Jews believed on Jesus, to the extent that the leaders of the Jews were afraid that the whole nation would believe on Him (Jn 12:9), and therefore wanted to kill Lazarus too (Jn 12:10).

Earlier, Jesus had told Martha, *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Believe thou this?* (Jn 11:25-26) Martha said yes, but she was thinking of the resurrection at the end of the world. However, when we come to Jesus Christ, we are spiritually dead and have need of spiritual life. By abiding in Christ, hearing and doing His instruction, we are passed from death into spiritual life. Physical resurrection is a picture of the inward resurrection which has already taken place, and yet, we need these literal things to understand what we cannot see. **Acts 3:22-23:** *22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people... 26. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* (Notice Jesus is the one sent, and not a third God called Holy Spirit, as also indicated in verses 19-20).

3. Rom 1:3-4: *3. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4. And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: The word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14).* Jesus, as the logos (Greek for word) of the Father presents a concept of the Son of God who became a human being with a human

nature, but maintained a ‘spirit of holiness’ His entire time on earth. There is power in understanding that He had a beginning in eternity as the ONLY Son of God, and He became a man who never sinned! This idea is further explained in the next part.

4. **Acts 2:29-32:** *29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

There are at least three points to consider in these verses, which are the most powerful as relating to our hope in a spiritual, and for most, a literal resurrection too. The key to the depth of the scriptures above is in understanding the nature of Christ’s humanity through the depth of the figurative language. Though the New Testament was written in Greek, the writers were Hebrew and expressed Hebrew concepts in their writings. For instance Moses likened the spoken word of God to falling rain and dew (Deut 32:1-2); and Isaiah wrote that all flesh is grass (Isa 40:6). Rain, dew, grass are all literal things that have characteristics that apply to humanity - physically and mentally.

Point 1: Christ was a descendent of David according to the flesh. (Also Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8; Heb 2:16). The pre-existent Son of God came via a human mother, in human form and with a human nature. Paul said that God sent *His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh* (Rom 8:3). Mary, the mother, was an ordinary person with a sin nature, which she passed to her firstborn son - Jesus. This fact many speak against today, which is one reason they cannot receive or understand the power of His resurrection. The awesome idea that a man with a sin nature could live 33 years on this planet and not sin, is the example Christ has set before us!

Point 2: His flesh did not see corruption. ‘Flesh’ can mean the literal body, or it can mean the carnal mind. **Rom 8:5,7:** *5 For those who are according to the flesh, the things of the flesh do mind; and those according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit; ... 7 because the mind of the flesh (KJ = carnally minded) [is] enmity to God, for to the law of God it doth not subject itself...* (Young’s Bible) Jesus was in the grave one whole day and part of two other days, by Jewish reckoning three days. His physical flesh did not see corruption, nor did the flesh of the mind see corruption. It is a spiritual type of what God will do for all resurrected in Christ.

Point 3: His soul was not left in hell. This phrase also can be applied both to the physical as well as to the inward person, as soul is sometimes used of the entire person, including the body. There are two Greek words translated ‘hell’, but present different concepts. This particular word is *hades* ⁽⁸⁶⁾, which is derived from *eido* ⁽¹⁴⁹²⁾ and negated by the Greek alpha. *Eido* means ‘to see’, which when applied inwardly means ‘to understand.’ The Greek alpha reverses the meaning of a word, so the basic meaning of *hades* is ‘to not see.’

In the Septuagint, *hades* is used in place of the Hebrew word *sheol* ⁽⁷⁵⁸⁵⁾, translated ‘grave’ and ‘hell’ 31 times each, and ‘pit’ three times. It is given the definition of ‘a place of the dead.’ Because the good and bad go there, the early church eventually adopted the doctrine of *limbus patrum*, a kind of upper level of Sheol from which Christ delivered them at his resurrection (1 Pet 3:19; Eph 4:9-10). There is at least one denomination that still teaches ‘limbo’ as part of a two compartment hell.

When *sheol* and *hades* are applied as a literal grave (or pit) or the condition of the human mind according to the context, the meaning will become much clearer. **Ps 16:10:** *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell* ⁽⁷⁵⁸⁵⁾;

neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. This is the verse quoted in Acts 2:31 and uses *sheol*. “For thou wilt not leave my soul in a pit (or grave)...” Jesus was not buried in a pit in the earth, but in a hole in a rock (tomb). Earth is a symbol for self (See Mk 4). The human nature, which Jesus had, without God’s understanding is likened to a grave. Therefore, a spiritually dead person can be said to be in a grave and in need of resurrection. Christ alluded to this idea in his teachings: **Mt 8:22:** *But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.* I am not saying Jesus was ever spiritually dead, or that in His humanity He did not have knowledge of God or some of God’s knowledge, but He is a picture of you and I who start out without knowing God.

So the phrase ‘His soul was not left in hell’ should read ‘His soul was not left in a grave.’ His physical body was not left in a grave, and the grave he carried between His ears, like you and I have, was destroyed, death was destroyed - the OLD MAN was put to death! Paul sums it up nicely: **Rom 6:5-7:** *5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

Summary: The scriptures testify how the Son, like you and I, was born and made of a woman, took the nature of man, grew up and was taught by parents in much the same way. No doubt Mary must have told him the story of His birth, and how angels revealed the birth of *Christ the Lord* to shepherds, who visited him right after He was born (Lk 2:11); Simeon and Anna prophesied concerning him at his dedication (Lk 2:25-38); and wise men from the east came to visit and worship Him when He was 1-2 years old. The Father’s divine influence was present in the Son’s life as a human being, from birth to death. It is the Spirit of the Father teaching us today of the reasons to show forth the experience of His only begotten Son and how these things affect each of us. Here are some examples from Ephesians and Colossians. Read the two chapters, because I want to quote the verses accurately and plainly from Paul’s prayer. Read, and re-read these scriptures and imagine being in the image and fullness of God and having His power contained in the correct, precise and full knowledge He is giving us.

Ehp 1:15-20: *15 Because of this I also, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love toward all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks in your behalf, making mention of you in my prayers, 17 so that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in His correct, precise and full knowledge, 18 being enlightened, the eyes of your understanding (heart - some manuscripts), so that you may perceive what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what the exceeding greatness of the power toward us who are believing, according to the energy of the power of His might, 20 which He energized in the Christ, having raised him out of the dead, and set him at His right hand in the heavenlies [things & places]...*

Col 1:3-4, 9-14: *3 We give thanks to the God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying concerning you, 4 having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have toward all the saints,... 9 Because of this, we also, from the day on which we heard, do not cease praying in your behalf, and asking in order that ye may be filled with the full, correct and precise knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10 to walk worthily of the Lord toward all, pleasing in every good work being fruitful, and growing into God’s full, correct and precise knowledge, 11 being strengthened in every power, according to the might of His glory to all endurance and long-suffering with joy. 12 Giving thanks to the Father having made us fit for the inheritance of the saints in the light, 13 who delivered us out of the authority of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; 14 in whom we have the liberation by means his blood, the deliverance of the sins...*

So, to realize the power of His resurrection in our lives, we must understand:

1. There is a spiritual resurrection that happens in the mind when we come to know Christ, and which precedes the literal resurrection.
2. Jesus' own resurrection, understood and applied inwardly, births within us a living hope of an eternal inheritance reserved for each of us in and by the power of God.
3. Because Jesus took our sin nature, maintained a spirit of holiness and was resurrected from the dead, He was declared to be the Son of God with power, and that power was the Spirit of the Father.
4. Jesus took our sin nature, without sinning, and put it to death on the cross. **Heb 2:16-17:** *16. For verily he took not on (him the nature of) angels; but he took on (him) the seed of Abraham. 17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto (his) brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* (Supplied by translators)

Please notice the supplied words in verse 16. Having looked up meanings of the words, here is how the verse could be rendered and be accurate: *For verily he absolutely did not take possession of angels; but of Abraham's seed he took possession.* The idea that Jesus took man's nature, 4000 years after the fall of man, can be concluded without a doubt from verse 17: *it behoved him to be made like unto (his) brethren.* Therefore, the King James translators correctly supplied the concept in verse 16. The word not in verse 16 is the Greek absolute negative, which so stated, renders the language in the strength it was intended.

Jn 5:24: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* Hearing Christ becomes more powerful when one applies the idea of the Hebrew word for hearing (*shama*⁽⁸⁰⁸⁵⁾), which carries the meaning of *listening, understanding and obeying*. It is the spiritual concepts of the written word that brings life, and these are only understood as the Father reveals them through Christ to the inner soul. Through them, we are taught principles by which we are to live, daily listening for those impressions of the heart which come from His guiding voice. To have eternal life now is to be passed from death to life; it is to be born from above; it is to be resurrected in the power of the Savior! May the power of Jesus' resurrection be a reality in your personal life. Amen!