

For Private Circulation Only

GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical for spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement

VOL. 19 No. 3 | Mar 2024

He is
NOT HERE
He has
RISEN

PAGE 16

WHY NO EASTER
CELEBRATION?

PAGE 8

APPROPRIATING THE DEATH
OF CHRIST AS A BELIEVER

GRACE & PEACE

VOL. 19 No. 3 | Mar 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

PERSPECTIVE 	THE DEATH OF CHRIST	1
OUTLINE:1 	SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO PETER	6
OUTLINE:2 	RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION	7
ANECDOTE 	SUBSTITUTE SOLDIER	7
PRACTICAL:1 	APPROPRIATING THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS A BELIEVER	8
PRACTICAL:2 	RESURRECTION GROUND: A BELIEVER'S PERSPECTIVE	10
MEDITATION 	THE RESURRECTION POWER OF CHRIST	13
EXHORTATION 	RESURRECTION: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS	14
CLARIFICATION 	WHY NO EASTER CELEBRATION?	16
GOSPEL 	HOW TO ESCAPE DEATH?	17

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

Once again it is the time of the year when the world is remembering the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, a true Christ-lover does not wait for a yearly occasion to remember His Lord. But he will always ponder upon the uniqueness of the person and the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

For, not only it is the very basis of his salvation and sustenance, it is the commandment of the Lord Jesus as well to remember Him. Just before His crucifixion, instituting a new memorial feast for His followers, the Lord said, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cori. 11:24). The New Testament reveals that the early Church faithfully followed this during their weekly corporate worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

THE DANGER OF OVER-FAMILIARITY

Nevertheless, it is possible that despite the regular observance of the Lord’s Supper one may lose sight of the significance of the sufferings and death of the blessed Saviour. For, over-familiarity with anything, without a deep and heartfelt contemplation will lead to contempt. Sadly, the attitude and actions of certain

believers who vigorously and devoutly recall the humiliation of Christ during the breaking of bread gatherings would break even the heart of Christ! The display of their fleshly nature in all its ugliness shows that even a scriptural service could become a ritualistic formality that does not affect the internal life of the participant (Isaiah 1:11-15).



However, such a formal celebration of the Lord’s death and resurrection without grasping the meaning will be detrimental to our practical Christian life. Any misconception or inaccurate thoughts on the person and work of Christ not only undermines the very foundation of Christian doctrine but also wrecks the individual’s spiritual life. In fact, the quality of our Christian life depends upon our individual comprehension and intimacy with the Lord Jesus (John 6: 53–58; 15:5).

IMPORTANCE

It is interesting to note that the scripture gives much importance to the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Christ's death is referred to around 175 times in the New Testament
- It was the major theme of apostolic preaching (Acts 2:22, 23, etc.)
- It is the fundamental part of the gospel message (1 Cor. 15:1–3; 2 Timo. 2:8)
- The theme of heavenly worship includes the death of Christ (Reve. 5: 8-12)
- Even the main theme of the Old Testament is Christ and His mission (Luke 24:44, 46; 1 Peter 1:11, 12)

Someone has rightly said, "Cut the Bible anywhere, it bleeds; it is red with redemption truths". Even from the book of Genesis onward, we can see the Lord Jesus Christ portrayed through various ways (John 3:14; 5:46).

UNIQUENESS

The Word of God presents several distinctive features of the crucifixion and death of Christ. Let us consider few which the Lord Himself stated.

1. It was a pre-planned death, Luke 18:31-33

Some consider Christ's death as an accidental unfortunate end. Notice what the Lord Jesus said as the time approached for His arrest and execution, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the

prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." (Luke 18:31–33).

His sufferings and death were in accordance with the eternal plan of God (Revelation 13:8). He knew it, and He reminded His followers several times that to fulfill the scripture, He must suffer and die. He forbade them from any intervention that would jeopardize this divine purpose (Matthew 16:22, 23; 26:54, 56; Luke 24: 44, 46).

Yes, the executioners did not realize this divine, scriptural aspect to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. Apostle Paul writes, "...none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory". (1 Cori. 2:8)

Apostle Peter declared it in his first sermon, that though lawless hands have crucified Him, He was 'delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God' (Acts 2:23).

2. It was the most painful and cruel death, Matt. 26:38, 39

Our Lord's extreme sorrow and anguish in foresight of His sufferings on the cross reveal the dreadfulness of the agony He went through. Notice the following verses:

"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

"He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is

possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."
(Matt. 26:38, 39)

"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."
(Luke 22:44)

Crucifixion was one of the most cruel and painful methods of punishment. It was reserved for foreign slaves and hardcore criminals only. Because of the intense pain involved, the victims were given wine mingled with gall just before crucifixion to help them bear the pain. It was a kind of sedation. But the Lord Jesus refused to drink it (Matt. 27:33, 34; Mark 15:23).

The sequence of Christ's arrest and execution reveals the intensity of exhaustion He went through. Soon after His arrest, He was taken to three different courts back and forth. He was bound, struck, stripped, and mocked. They spat upon Him and removed His beard. Pilate ordered to have Him scourged for at least 39 times to satisfy the crowd, which resulted in deep cuts and bruises on His body. Bearing His own cross, He had to walk through the streets of Jerusalem up to the place of crucifixion. The pain He suffered while He was being nailed onto the cross and putting it into the pit is unimaginable.



What a pain, shame, and injustice He experienced from the hands of His own creation. The entire trial and crucifixion of Christ was against the natural justice. He was punished even without being proved of His guilt. The entire proceedings took place within twenty-four hours.

Remember, more than the physical and mental agony our Lord suffered, it was the spiritual pain at the hands of His Father that broke Him more. For it was then, during those dark hours He cried, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Matt. 27:46).

3. It was a supernatural death, John 10:17b, 18

Another fact that Christ told us about His death is the supernatural element involved in His death. He said,

"I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

We can observe much difference in the death of Christ from a normal human death.

a. Since death is the outcome of sin, so the Lord Jesus cannot die (Rom. 5:12; 6:23); for He knew no sin, did no sin, and in Him there was no sin (1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:21).

b. He had control over His death. As the Lord said in advance, nobody forcefully took His life. John 19:28–30

teaches us that even as He was on the cross, Christ made sure that every prophecy concerning Him was fulfilled before His death (cf. Psa. 69:21).

c. He gave up His spirit with complete consciousness (John 19:30). His declaration, “It is finished” stands as a testament to the faithful accomplishment of His assignment. Even Pilate was so surprised to hear that Christ was already dead (Mark 15:44 cf. John 19:33)

d. He tasted death, as the writer of the Hebrews puts it, for He took His life back on the third day. (Heb. 2:9; Act 2:24, 32)

All these aspects of His death show that Christ’s death was unique and supernatural.

4. It was a needful death, John 3:14, 15

Why should the Son of God taste death in such an unnatural, painful manner? The Lord Himself answered it repeatedly,

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” (John 3:14)

“The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” (Luke 9:22)

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” (Matt. 16:21)

Notice the repeated expression, ‘Must’. He found it essential, indispensable. Reminding the lifting up of the bronze

serpent to save the dying Israelites in the wilderness (Num. 21:4–9), Christ says, “So must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3: 14b, 15).

Need of man

Just like the serpent-smitten Jews were sick and dying, mankind as a whole were spiritually sick and on the way to destruction because of sin. Paul writes, “...through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned”。“... through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation”. (Rom. 5:12, 18a)

Bearing the burden of sin and its consequences, man from ages searched for a Savior who can deliver him from this body of curse and death. The words of Job as well as Paul affirm this age-old human aspiration:

"For He is not a man, as I am, That I may answer Him, And that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both." (Job 9:32, 33)

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom 7:24)

Job’s search for a mediator and Paul’s longing for a deliverer have been the sincere pursuit of every human. The incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ were needful for man so that they could escape from eternal condemnation.

Need of God

Not only His death was man's need, it was needful even for God to satisfy the righteous demands of His law. It was His unchangeable law that stated, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4c, 20a) and "without shedding of blood there is no remission". (Heb. 9:22 cf. Lev. 17:11)

When the blood of the bulls and goats could not take away the sins of man, God the Father sent His Son to be the perfect sacrifice once and for all (Heb. 10:4, 12). The sinless, perfect One bore our sins on His body and went to the cross. As Isaiah puts it, "Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed." (Isa. 53:4a, 5; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2: 24; 3:18, etc.)

Paul's words are fitting here,

"Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Rom .3:35, 26)

The atoning sacrifice of the sinless Lamb of God on the cross satisfied the demands of God's own holy law. The Lord Jesus Christ became our substitute and atoned for our sins taking our place. Thus the cross demonstrates the righteousness of God as well as His love and mercy for the



fallen man. (Rom. 5:8) On the cross, as the psalmist says, "Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed." (Psa. 85:10).

5. It was a victorious death, Rev 1:18

Just as He predicted, the Lord Jesus Christ came back to life triumphantly on the third day. Death could not hold Him for He was God. His tomb is open and the body is missing. Only the linen cloths that wrapped the body were there. Christ came out of the clothes without disturbing the folds (John 20:5-7). Through many appearances, He proved that He is not a victim but a victor who has defeated death and lives forever (Acts 1:3; 1 Cori. 15:4-8).

His victory over death has many implications:

a. He is the Great God, the Creator, and the Sustainer (Rom. 1:4; Tit. 2:12). All what He claimed to be is absolutely true. So, He is reliable and trustworthy.

b. Atonement for the sins of man is done once and for all (Heb. 10:11, 12; 1 John 2:2). Now God is free to forgive and save anyone who trusts the saving work of Christ. Thus, the guilty, condemned sinner can be released from the bondage of sin and its consequences (Rom. 3:25, 26; 4:25; 1 Cori. 15:17c; 1 Peter 1:18, 19).

c. Satan and the evil forces have been defeated (Colo. 2:15; Heb. 2:14). Hence we don't need to live under his bondage.

d. Finally, life beyond death has been confirmed. Death is not the end, it's only a transition (1 Cor. 15:21, 22; 1Thess. 4:14).

Of course, there is much more about the sufferings and death of Christ. Never forget this fact: though Christ died for the

sins of every man, it's effective only to those who humbly acknowledge it by confessing their sins.

What is your response to these truths behind the agony of the Lord? Do you experience and enjoy the practical implications of the work of Christ on the cross? Failure to appropriate the efficacy of this vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God is the uttermost fault anybody can commit today (John 3:18, 19).

The most suitable response at this juncture is to fall prostrate at His feet in worship and yield to Him for a victorious life in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

NTK

OUTLINE : 1

Sufferings of Christ according to Peter

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1) He suffered unjustly, | 1 Peter 2: 21, 22. |
| 2) He suffered as planned eternally, | 1 Peter 1:11, 12 |
| 3) He suffered in the most humiliating manner, | 1Peter 2:23 |
| 4) He suffered in the most painful manner, | 1Peter 2:24 |
| 5) He suffered as a substitute of sinful man, | 1 Peter 2:21, 24; 3:18 |
| 6) He suffered an efficacious suffering, | 1Peter 2:24b; 3:18 |
| 7) He suffered as a triumphant one, | 1Peter 3:21b, 22. |
| 8) He suffered as an example, | 1 Peter 2:21; 4:1 |

NTK

"The Son of God suffered unto the death, not that men might not suffer, but that their sufferings might be like His."

George Macdonald

OUTLINE : 2

Jaimon K. Sam, Alwar

RESULTS OF THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is the very core truth of the Gospel. (1 Cor 15 3-4) Notice eleven blessed effects of it.

1. It proves the deity of Christ, Rom 1:4
2. It opens the door for repentance and forgiveness, Acts 5:30 - 32
3. It confirms our salvation, Rom 4:25; 1Cor 15: 14, 17
4. It gives hope to believers for a future inheritance, 1Pter 1:3, 4
5. It demonstrates the transforming power available for believers, Eph 1:19, 20; Phil 3: 10
6. It guarantees the hope of Christ's second coming, Acts 1:11; John 14:3; 16:22
7. It guarantees our life after death, John 14:19; 1Thess 4:14; 1Cor 15: 21, 22
8. It's a precursor to the bodily resurrection of the dead, Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:18
9. It gives proof to the coming judgment of the world, Acts 17:31
10. It affirms the faithfulness of God in His promises, Acts 13:32-35
11. It inspires God's people to live and die for Him, 1Cor 15:58; 2Cor 4: 14, 16

ANECDOTE

Substitute SOLDIER



During the Second World War, one of the prisoners from the Nazi concentration camp in Poland escaped. The enraged commander announced to the 600 prisoners of the camp that if the escaped prisoner was not found, retribution would be on the lives of ten among them,”

The fugitive was not found. The next day evening, on July 1, 1941, the camp commander Col. Fritsch lined up all the prisoners and began to select ten out of them, calling out ‘You,’ ‘You’ and asking them to come forward. One man who was thus selected, cried out, “My wife! My poor children!”

When he had chosen ten prisoners and they were lined up to be marched off, one of the other prisoners came forward and offered himself to be taken up in the place of the man who cried out. Though astonished the camp commander accepted the offer of Maximillian Kolbe and spared the other man. Kolbe died a martyr.

Source: Unknown

APPROPRIATING THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS A BELIEVER

We, born-again Christians are passionate about our Lord's sufferings and death, but do we really experience the efficacy of Christ's death in our daily practical life? Apart from forgiveness, reconciliation, regeneration etc., there are a few more precious realities that we ought to know and appropriate because of the death of Christ. Let us consider three of these things:

1. Our death to sin, Rom. 6:7, 11, 12

Paul begins Romans chapter 6 with a poignant question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Affirming his negative answer he elaborates the wonderful reality of our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Just as a dead slave is liberated from the master, by virtue of our death with Christ on the cross, sin lost its dominion or claim over us. In other words, to live in sin, to cherish evil thoughts etc., is a contradiction that denies the efficacy of the cross.

2. Our death to self, 2 Cor. 5:14c, 15

"...if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." (2Cor. 5: 14c, 15)

Not only does our death with Christ affect our relation to sin but even to ourselves. Paul himself testifies, "I have been crucified with Christ: it's no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." (Gal. 2:20) No more I, no more selfish ambitions or promotions.

A life contrary to that is a denial of the effectiveness of Christ's work for us. In other words, if the death of Christ has any effect on our life as we claim, we cannot live for self or self-glory.

3. Our death to the world system and its principles, Gal. 6:14; Colo. 2:20

"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal. 6:14)

"If you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why as though living do you subject to regulations..." (Colo. 2:20)

The moment we identify with Christ our Savior, the world begins to see us as rejected and despised as they did with the Lord Jesus. Similarly, we too should see the world system as something contrary to God and His purposes, and hence we need to maintain separation from the world.

In Colossians, Paul spoke of the believer's death to the traditions of the world (Col. 2:20, 8). Here he refers to the man-made teachings, ideologies, and rituals that do not help a believer. Apostle John speaks of all that is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). In other words, this world system has a lot of things that can satisfy the cravings of our old sin nature and the appetite of our eyes. A believer, who is conscious of his death to the world with Christ, will always be away from all these affections and attractions. (1John 2:15, 16)

On the contrary, if we still cherish worldly thoughts and ways of life, John says the love of the Father is not in us. Moreover, we deny the efficiency of Christ's death for us. This means that we are not effectively affected by the cross of Christ.

Death daily

How is it possible to practically experience the result of the cross in our life? Paul writes regarding this in the following perspective,

“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” (Gal. 6:17)

“We who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake...” (2Cori. 4:11, 12)

It is important to know, acknowledge, and count ourselves as dead with Christ (Rom. 6:6, 11). Further, the indwelling risen Lord Jesus Christ empowers us to live in the newness of



life. It's a shame and even painful thing for the Lord Jesus to see that even after His sufferings and death we still cherish sin, exalt self, and live for the world.

Let us be aware of the true meaning of Christ's sacrifice and experience its effect in our daily lives. Let us bear the mark of Christ, and be willing to die daily. Though alive, let's live as if dead to the things around us.

We need to live just as the Lord lived, ‘seeing many things but not taking a note, hearing yet not paying any attention’ (Isa. 42:19, 20). Then, the sufferings and death of Christ will have full meaning and value in our lives. Surely, then He will be satisfied by seeing the fruit of His labor (Isa. 53:11).

“There is no health of soul, nor hope of eternal life, except in the cross.”

Thomas a Kempis

PRACTICAL : 2

Dr. Joel Albert, Aurangabad

RESURRECTION GROUND: A BELIEVER'S PERSPECTIVE



Every believer who lives in the current dispensation knows that had it not been for the great work of redemption done on the cross, we would have been on the path of destruction and eternal separation from the Lord! And when we consider the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, that day is the day of victory because of which our faith is strengthened and our hope becomes sure!

Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Cor. 15:14, “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” Can we all just take a moment to think about what impact the resurrection of the Lord has made in my life as a believer? Are we just living our lives as time passes, being satisfied with the fact that we as believers are going to heaven? It’s high time that we need to change our perspective and understand how we can be victorious Christians.

Many think of the birth, the death, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as reasons to Celebrate. My dear ones, we instead need to contemplate on what the incarnation, life, sacrifice, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ mean to us! We need to understand that we

need to glorify God instead. And how does a believer glorify God? It is through our lives, attitude, and service! If God could do something so wonderful for us, what are we doing in return?

The answer to that can be seen in what can be considered one of the greatest practical chapters in the Bible, John chapter 21. Let’s just consider vv.1-14 and see how we ought to live in the good of the resurrection! There are 4 things that we notice here:

- i. **THE REGRESSION**
- ii. **THE RECOGNITION**
- iii. **THE REVISION**
- iv. **THE REJOICING**

1. THE REGRESSION:

Well, how much should the disciples have progressed in the three-and-a-half-odd years that they had spent with the Lord? But where do we see them? In v.3, we see Peter taking 6 of the disciples and going back to square one! How sad it is that after listening to the wonderful words of the Master Himself and having witnessed the wonders of his life, they still could go back to what they had left! It was as if the resurrection meant nothing to them.

How about us? How often do we find ourselves forgetting the impact and the wonder of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ? One of the greatest issues in the 21st century is spiritual stagnation and regression.

Victorious Christian living is so rare to see these days because we have gone back to prioritizing the world and the things of the world over the Lord, and sadly, we all have our own excuses! What effect does it have in our lives? It eventually affects our recognition.

2. THE RECOGNITION:

a. The lack of recognition (v4):

When the Lord stood on the shore in the morning, none of the disciples recognized him. What a sad state! Those who spent time with the Lord night and day, especially Peter, James and John, could not initially identify Him. That is exactly what happens in our lives as well when we neglect our personal quiet time with the Lord, our family altar, and our assembly meetings, and we prioritize the cares of the world and neglect the Lord.

Many of us would argue that we know the Lord. We would argue that our knowledge about the person of God and the doctrinal truths is unparalleled. But think of it this way. If we have spent the first 10 years of our lives with a friend who later got relocated for 10 long years, would we be able to recognize them easily? Would we be able to know their present likes and dislikes? Absolutely not! We knew that person but because of the prolonged separation, we gradually forgot them! This is exactly what many Christians today are experiencing! It is about time we set our priorities straight.

b. The look of recognition (vv5-7):

When the Lord called out to them and commanded them to cast the net on the right side of the ship, they complied! And when they caught the big catch of fishes, it caused John to exclaim "It is the Lord!"

I strongly believe that we need more preachers and teachers who point us to Christ. We need to know that when we prioritize the Lord, the Word points to Christ!

We're reminded of the two travelling to Emmaus when they spent time with the Lord and heard what He said, they reminisced about the wonderful way in which the Lord revealed Himself through Moses and the prophets (The scriptures available at that time).

We need to look toward Christ. He is guiding us and commanding us constantly, but we often give a deaf ear to Him and enjoy the figurative fishing of the world, which ironically does not give us any satisfaction at all! That look of recognition led the disciples to repentance, which in turn led to revival among the disciples because v.12 says, "Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" — knowing that it was the Lord."



3. THE REVISION

When the disciples came to the shore, we see the Lord was ready with a fire of coals, some fish and bread as well. And now the focus turns to Peter. Just put yourself in Peter's shoes for a moment. Imagine him sitting there, still a bit wet, sitting by the fire of coals and the fishes and bread. It may have brought some memories back to his heart.

a. The fire of coals would have been a fresh yet bitter memory.

The last time he was in front of such a fire, he had sworn, shouted, and betrayed the Lord. The Lord may have been reminding him of his failures and how he was brought back because of his repentance. Many times, we too think about our failures and understand how unworthy we are to be in the presence of the Lord but we are there only because of His death, burial and resurrection.

b. The bread and the fish would have been a slightly distant yet sweet memory.

In John chapter 6, many followed the Lord Jesus Christ for materialistic gains after experiencing the miracle He did with the 5 loaves and 2 fishes. They, however, eventually left Him when He said, "I am the bread of life". In contrast, Peter said to the Lord in John 6:68, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." The Lord also reminds us of our victories from time to time, to encourage us to press on.

4. THE REJOICING

Finally, we see the disciples sitting in fellowship with the Lord. And there we also see two reasons to rejoice:

a. The Lord asks them to bring their catch of fishes (vv. 10-11)

Did He really need that? Certainly not! Because He already had bread and fish prepared for them. But still, He asked them to bring the fish that He had helped them to catch, considering it their service to Him! It brings out the beautiful principle of being fellow-labourers with the Lord. The joy of serving the Lord with Him is indeed incomparable! And that is what they experienced here. When we serve him we too need to remember that it is He who helps us and gives the ministry; the means to do the ministry and even to reap the rewards. Oh, the joy of serving the Lord, with Him by our side!

b. The Lord takes the bread and the fish and gives to them (vv. 12-13)

This shows us the beauty of fellowship and communion with the Lord. Not only can we sit at His table and reap the blessings that we have received but we can also be sure of the fact that we are joint-heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), reaping the benefit and blessings from Him!

May the Lord help us to remember the resurrected Lord, rethink and restructure our priorities, repent of our follies, and return to Him with a heart of repentance so as to remember His goodness and rejoice with Him, reaping the benefits that He has in store for us!

MEDITATION

Paulson Joshua, Kochi

THE RESURRECTION POWER OF CHRIST



“I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Philippians 3:10)

I. Unveiling the Blessings of His Resurrection Power:

- 1) Reminds us that we are raised and seated with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).
- 2) Assures us of our future transformation into glorified bodies like His (Philippians 3:21).
- 3) Highlights the exceeding greatness of His power available to us (Ephesians 1:19).
- 4) Emphasizes that His power enables extraordinary possibilities beyond our requests (Ephesians 3:20).

II. The Impact of His Resurrection Power in Paul's Life:

- 1) We witness Paul's salvation, a testimony to the transformative power of Christ's resurrection (Acts 9).
- 2) Paul finds strength and contentment in Christ's resurrection power amid physical afflictions (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
- 3) Paul's ability to navigate any circumstance through Christ's empowerment (Philippians 4:13).
- 4) This also illustrates how Paul's ministry is fueled by the effective working of Christ's power (Ephesians 3:7).

So Paul is advising us to be strong in the resurrection power of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:10).

III. Experiencing Resurrection Power amidst Adversity:

- 1) The Word of God reveals how Apostle John encountered Christ's resurrection power in Patmos, leading to the revelation of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1).
- 2) The Word of God demonstrates John's empowerment by Christ's resurrection, enabling him to fulfill the divine purpose of writing the book (Revelation 1:17).

Conclusion:

As believers, we are not left alone but empowered by the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. Just as we have found redemption and salvation through His death and resurrection, we also find strength and success through His resurrection power. Let us live in anticipation of His second coming, embracing the hope and power He offers for victorious living.

RESURRECTION: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Resurrection is one of the basic doctrines of Christianity, and it is a powerful teaching and promise of God. The secret of resurrection maybe beyond science for some but it is proved by the Word of God - The seeds of each plant rise after a long period.

“And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.” (1 Cori 15:37-38)

Importance

Resurrection may not be familiar to many communities, but Jesus Christ referred to it in His sermon and demonstrated it through His own resurrection. To Martha He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25, 26)

Many may find it difficult to believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, but without faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, no one can be saved from their sins. (Romans 10:9)

Apostle Paul wrote poignantly,

“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” (1 Cor. 15:12–17)

Without the doctrine of resurrection, Christian faith is worthless and all the efforts in Christ’s name are a waste! The main point of 1Corinthians 15 is Paul’s argument to assure every believer of the resurrection, both of the Lord as well as the saints in Christ.

Evidenced by the Apostles

The dramatic transformation that took place in the lives of the feeble, frightened apostles soon after meeting the risen

Savior is noteworthy. By the end of the gospels, we see them to be timid, even returning to their past profession - fishing. However, the forty days post-resurrection appearances of the risen Lord strengthened their faith (Acts 1: 1ff). From Acts 2 onwards we see them witnessing to the resurrection of Christ boldly and courageously, despite the threat of the Jews. They spoke to the Jewish priests and elders, “we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20)

Implications

If we strongly believe in the resurrection of Christ with our whole heart, then so many of our perspectives, mentality, and motives will drastically change. We will be able to sing even when imprisoned for the sake of gospel. We won't be afraid of death or life. If we have the courage to die for Christ and the truth, any circumstances will not stop us.

Nowadays, the conditions in several parts of India are just as in the apostolic era. The days are coming soon when every believer will have to pay dearly for their faith. If we die for the Lord, we will be raised up and receive a reward. You might ask, “What is the guarantee?” Christ has risen up from the dead!

Apostle Paul's words in the context of resurrection are challenging,

“..always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. 4:10, 11)

“Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.” (2 Cori. 4:14)



My beloved brethren, let us live and die for the Lord Jesus and the wonderful faith that we hold on to. It is rewarding, encouraging, hopeful, and peaceful. Let us worship God who saved and blessed us to be partakers of the abundance of opportunity and inheritances of heavenly blessings.

***“There are some sciences that may be learned by the head,
but the science of Christ crucified can only be learned by the heart.”***

C. H. Spurgeon

CLARIFICATION

A.M. Daniel, UK

Why No Easter Celebration?

We have the ultimate right to celebrate what we believe. It is not my business to interfere, even though I and everyone can criticize. As a Christian, from an Islamic background, my newly found faith meant doing much research and examination at all spiritual levels, and it continues to be so after more than half a century; I enjoy the sweetness of faith and am excited about it! I value St. Anselm calling the Christian faith, “The faith that does not throw the brain out”. I expect a committed Christian, at least, to try to understand why, as we remember the events surrounding Christ's suffering and triumph, especially, what Jesus went through in His last days here in the flesh. I personally do not celebrate Easter because I am a Christian, and you may wonder why.

My Story

To clarify, unlike, assumingly, the majority of Christians, I grew up learning about and observing loads of myths, by sheer destination, and I was also fond of Greek mythology by choice. I had the delight of visiting and seeing many fabulous temples and fascinating statues of various gods and goddesses as well.

In my fine arts classes, I have sculpted my bust and crafted a model of Aphrodite - the Greek goddess of beauty. The Romans had Venus with similar attributes and a goddess of fertility. By saying that, one may see that I am not a statue breaker, but an art admirer.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, “The English word Easter, which parallels the German word Ostern, is of uncertain origin. One view, expounded by the Venerable Bede in the 8th century, was that it derived from Eostre, or Eostrae, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility.” This makes the name close to one of my favorite and more ancient, love stories, Astarte and Adonis.

Pagan origin

In brief, Easter was a pagan festival celebrated in spring long before the advent of Christ. The name was adopted by some English Christians in the 7th or 8th century and made to associate with the Passover, which originally occurred in Spring in the Hebrew month of Nisan - April in the Gregorian calendar (Exodus 12:1-14); during which the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead took place.

So, from Anglo-Saxons' pagan feast in honor of the goddess Easter (associated with hare and eggs) to the resurrection of Jesus! Forgive me to say, as a Bible student I cannot see the connection, except, losing the real story. Because celebrating Passover has its ancient biblical roots and multiple prophecies that are fulfilled in Jesus. (Acts 2: 23 – 27; 1 Cor. 5:7)

On a social level, whether my neighbors celebrate Easter or Fitr... I would love to, politely and very sincerely, wish them well. I am delighted to greet you, as early Christians did, Cristosanesti, "Χριστός ἀνέστη" Christ is Risen/Resurrected. The reply comes, alithosanesti "αληθώς ἀνέστη" truly/ indeed risen.

Hallelujah, what a Savior!

HOW TO ESCAPE DEATH?

We want to start on a somber note. Death is inescapable. Whether we are healthy, wealthy, wise, or mighty, no one can escape this imminent event. Some are spending millions of dollars on science and technology to reverse the ageing of their bodies. Yet, God the Creator declares, "All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades" (Isa. 40:6, 7). "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement" (Heb. 9:27).

Unique Man

Nevertheless, there was one Man in history who made an astounding claim about His life: "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (John 10:18)

This is Jesus Christ of whom it is written, "the same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:2). He is uncreated, coequal with God, who came in the likeness of men into this sinful world. Of mankind, it is written, "all have sinned" and "sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (Rom. 3:23, James 1:15). But of Christ it is written, "in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

Sin, the root cause of death, was not found in Him. Thus, by the glory of His nature and the glory of His sinless life, He could not die.

Men tried to destroy Him out of envy and hatred. They tried to cast Him down the hill (Luke 4:29), they sent soldiers to arrest Him (John 7:44), and they even tried to stone Him to death (John 10:31). But no one could do anything to Him before His hour came.

Controlled Death

When His hour was come, He told those who came to arrest Him, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53). His enemies couldn't overtake Him, but He would allow them to apprehend Him. He reprimanded the governor who thought it was in his authority to crucify Christ saying, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above." (John 19:11).

In a divine arrangement incomprehensible to man, they crucified Him, thinking that this would destroy Him. But He would not die due to intense sufferings or the crucifixion. But when the time was come, He said, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit:" and having said thus, He gave up the ghost (Luke 23:46). He was in complete control of when He should lay down His life. On the third day, He rose again from the dead. It was gloriously proclaimed that day – "He is not here, for He is risen as He said" (Matt. 28:6).

Death for Life

Christ died on the cross for our sins, so that we can live through His death. Here, we present to you One, who mocked death by defeating death. When we confess our sins and trust in Jesus Christ for our salvation, we receive the same assurance of resurrection in Christ. We can then boldly look at the face of death and say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Death is not the end for those who trust in the Lord. An endless life awaits them on the other shore.

GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement

GRACE & PEACE - ONLINE



Join our WhatsApp group:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/BC6SOk36FeR6lkIxqmNKSS>



Access both HTML and pdf files:

<http://gracepeace.net/gap/gap.htm>

'Grace & Peace' is an electronic periodical, sent out monthly, aiming the overall spiritual growth of Christian Believers everywhere. You can reproduce this e-periodical fully or in part in any medium, provided it is unedited, and retain the original author / copyright information and a reference to our website gracepeace.net

For further details contact:- gracepeaceu@gmail.com

Prepared, and posted by **Nelson Thomas Kumaramparampil (NTK)** for the Glory of God & the Joy of the saints.

Editorial assistance: **Tom Jacob**

Design & Layout: **Jiju Mathew, Dhanya Mohandas**

Technical Support: **RJ Deals**

www.gracepeace.net

visit our website



join whatsapp

