

Celebrating the Impact of Easter

Resurrection Sunday, April 4, 2021

Thesis: Yes, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are about salvation, about eternal life. And, I believe that the Scripture teaches that the purpose of the life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus involves so much more; and, the theme of Scripture is different than what most people think.

Text: Matthew 28:1-20

Easter is so important to us as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the day that God vindicated his Son by raising him from the dead. Three days earlier, Jesus was mocked mercilessly, tried unjustly, beaten brutally, and crucified cruelly.

1. What does the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus mean for us?
2. What does it mean for you?
3. What does the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus mean for creation?

Most people say that the resurrection of Jesus is about salvation, and it is.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:16–17).

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:9-13).

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And, I believe that the Scripture teaches that the purpose of the life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus involves so much more; and, the theme of Scripture is different than what most people think.

Most people in our culture think salvation is about going to be with God in heaven after they die. But is going to heaven really what the Bible calls good news? Is going to heaven really the theme of Scripture? Is going to heaven what this life is all about?

In an overview of the Scriptures this morning, I want us to consider that the purpose of the life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus is more than just restoring us **morally** and is more than just saving us for heaven.

Jesus restores us to our **relationship** (as sons and daughters of God), **mission** (partnering with Jesus and others on Christ's mission), **vocation** (stewards and co-regents of creation), and **destiny** (habitation of God).

1. **Morality.** In Christ we have become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). **We have been restored morally by the power of God's forgiveness** [we have all sinned against God, turned our back on God, and gone our own way (Romans 3:23-26)], **God's redemption** [Jesus paid a debt we could never pay (Romans 6:33)], and **God's love** (John 3:16). [There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for another according to Jesus (John 15:13). And, Jesus said: if you love me, you will keep my commands. The motivating power for moral obedience is love for God (John 15:9-17).]
2. **Relationship.** In Christ we are restored to our relationship as sons and daughters of God, like the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:14-21) and restored to right relationship with God.
3. **Mission.** In Christ we are **called to partner with Jesus together on his mission in the earth** of working for the common good; serving the poor, the marginalized, and those in need; and, restoring individuals, social systems, communities, and nations to God's design (Matthew 22:37-39; 25:31-46; 28:18-20; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21).
4. **Vocation.** In Christ we are restored to our created purpose: to be co-regents (co-rulers) with God (Genesis 1:26-30; Luke 9:1-2; Matthew 28:18-20; Revelation 5:8-10).
5. **Destiny.** In Christ, God fulfills his desire to be at home in us and with us (John 14:23).
 - a. Throughout all of Scripture, God always declared his desire to be at home in us and with us.
 - b. Making his home in us and with us is the theme of Scripture from the Garden of Eden in Genesis, to the choosing of the people of Israel (to be filled with God and to be a light to the Gentiles), to the Tabernacle and Temple (clear illustrations of the Lord's desire to dwell with people), to Jesus (in whom God puts heaven and earth together), and to Revelation

21 and 22 (where heaven and earth are ultimately joined; he is our God, we are his people, and he dwells on earth with us).

- c. Because of the work of Jesus, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit individually and collectively as God intended (Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5).

According to the Scriptures: The writers of the New Testament often reference the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Sometimes their references are to specific verses and passages. At other times, their references are to the themes of the word of God.

1. *"...all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet..." (Matthew 1:22).*
2. *"And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet..." (Matthew 2:15).*
3. *"Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49).*
4. *"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us..." (Luke 1:1).*
5. *He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44).*
6. *"While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled" (John 17:12).*
7. *...and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus... (Act 1:16).*
8. *Jesus answered, "It is written..." (Matthew 4:4).*
9. *And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written..." (Mark 11:17).*
10. *As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet... (Luke 3:4).*
11. *For it is written... (Luke 4:10).*
12. *He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).*
13. *His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me" (John 2:17).*
14. *At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him (John 12:16).*

15. *“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life” (John 5:39-40).*

According to Scripture: the big picture.

From the beginning, God desired to put heaven and earth together.

It started in the Garden. God walked with man and woman and invited us to rule with him over creation in an intimate relationship with God. And, we dropped the ball.

Next, God chose a people in whom he could make his name known. He chose Abraham and raised up the people called Israel. They were called to be a light to the nations. They were to embody what it meant to live with God and for God. They were called a royal priesthood in order to represent God to the nations and the nations to God. And, they dropped the ball.

So, God sent his Son. God brought heaven and earth together in the man Christ Jesus.

Jesus showed us how men and women were meant to live: in right relationship with God, one another, and creation. He lived in willing submission to the leadership of God. Jesus lived in humble dependence upon the Holy Spirit. He lived in loving union with the Father.

Jesus came to demonstrate and proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, to show us what it is like when God rules in and through someone. Jesus showed us how we were to rule and reign with God over disease, darkness, demons, and death. Jesus showed us about the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Jesus embodied love for God and for others, an inexhaustible and unquenchable love.

Through Jesus, God turned everything around. From Eden, the devil polluted and corrupted God’s good creation. From the edges of our planet, God’s kingdom is expanding and extending throughout the whole earth as intended. Christianity is expanding exponentially, and the glorious light of God’s people is radiating forth (Isaiah 60:1-5).

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. 2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. 3 Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. 4 Lift up your eyes and look

about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the arm. 5 Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come” (Isaiah 60:1-5).

Currently, we are called to join with Jesus on his mission, together with others, to demonstrate and proclaim the kingdom of God. We exemplify the kingdom of God through love, faith, sacrifice, service, humility, submission, community, etc.

When Jesus comes the second time, followers of Jesus will rule and reign with Jesus to put things back together as God intended them to be (Revelation 19:1 – 20:6). For a thousand years, we will partner with Jesus to restore every sector, every nation, and all of creation back to God’s intended design.

Then, God will come and put heaven and earth together, just as our God desires, designed, and intended. (See Revelation 21 and 22.)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” 5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true” (Revelation 21:1–5).

The impact of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus is that God is making all things new. We are in the middle of the story: the now and the not yet. In and through our lives we see the first fruits of God making all things new. Ultimately, Jesus will come again, and we will partner with him to make all things right. **Until then, the impact of the life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus is seen in the lives of his followers as they partner with Jesus on his mission in their lives, their families, and their spheres of influence.**

For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is

in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:14–21).

We invite you to let God make you new today. We invite you to no longer live for yourself but to live for Jesus, the one who died for you and was raised again. We invite you to join Jesus and others on his mission. And, we invite you to be reconciled to God. All of that can happen for you today, because he is risen. He is risen indeed!