

The Good News of the Resurrection!

Our Lord Jesus is referred to as the "Suffering Servant" in the Psalms.

He came to serve, as He Himself said. And He also came to suffer, for our sakes, as prophesied throughout the Old Testament.

And as with many good servants, they are often taken for granted.

To top it off, He was the only **truly** good man who ever lived, being **without sin**.

And therefore He was the only One who TRULY went through undeserved suffering!

Let's read a brief part of **Isa 53** which reminds us of this truth:

Isa 53:7-9 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.*

*8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?*

*9 And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,*

*although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

The book of Hebrews also attests to the Lord's purity and innocence in chapters 2 and 4.

And it was this very purity that qualified Him to die as our Substitute; being a fully acceptable sacrifice to God the Father...

... the blood from the pure Lamb was shed for the sins of man.

And while it's very true that Jesus died for our sins...

... without His resurrection, we wouldn't have proof of His victory over sin and death!

Let's be reminded about this stupendous event in human history...

Matt 28:1-10 *Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.*

*4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 **He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.** 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."*

8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

One simple question should come to mind: **Without Jesus rising from the grave, what hope would we all have??**

And what hope would the disciples have had?? (many of them went on to suffer and die a martyr's death for their belief in His resurrection from the dead, **so apparently they really believed they saw Him risen from the dead!!**)

From our perspective, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, how would we know He was truly the One??

What would make Him different from any other religious leader that proclaimed supernatural origins??

Remember, **the Gospel includes the Resurrection of Christ**, as stated in Holy Scripture.

In other words, if you say you believe in Jesus but you don't believe He rose from the dead, then you just might believe in *"another Jesus"*, as in **2Co 11:4**.

Why do I say that?? - because **the Resurrection is clearly stated as a part of saving faith...**

1 Co 15:3-4 *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,*

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

Ro 10:9 *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved*

This is why our Gospel definition on the website clearly includes the Resurrection as part of the Good News!

The Gospel: (as it appears on nccdighton.org and 4only1.org)
Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, humbled Himself to die on our behalf. Thus, He became the sinless sacrifice to pay the penalty of our guilt. He rose from the dead to declare with power that He is Lord over all, and He offers eternal life freely to sinners who will surrender to Him in humble, repentant faith.

We might say the Resurrection is the very capstone of the Gospel.

And here's what beautiful; not only were the 4 Gospels eyewitness accounts of his life and His resurrection...

... Christ's resurrection is a part of documented human history!

This very real Person, Jesus of Nazareth, whom **multiple ancient historians** recorded details about...

... this precious Person gave Himself up at Calvary for us, and **it is attested by historians that His tomb was then found empty!**

First of all, an ancient historian named **Josephus** has attested in his writings from first century Jerusalem that a man named **Jesus**

performed many miracles, and then was later put to death by crucifixion.

And then we have other ancient historians of that day, specifically **Justin Martyr and Tertullian, who record the claim of that day; that his disciples stole the body.** (clearly implying His body was missing, as mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew).

These are worldly historians who lived and wrote of the events back in Jesus' day and times.

Mt 28:11-15 *While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers 13 and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." 15 So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.*

Why would someone say that the disciples stole the body if it were still in the tomb??

Wouldn't that be a foolish claim, if the authorities could just go to the tomb and see for themselves it was still there???

Well, apparently it was missing, even attested to by the Pharisees, and by ancient historians.

The evidence is there for us to believe.

Even Abraham believed God could raise his son Isaac from the dead to fulfill His promise.

Heb 11:17-19 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, 18 of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 19 He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.*

Rom 4:22-25 *That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." 23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

Jesus Christ's resurrection is proof that God accepted His Son's sacrifice for our sins!

If His sacrifice wasn't acceptable, He would have remained in the grave!

And, if there were no resurrection, then what are we doing??
Isn't this all about being saved from sin and death??

1Co 15:19 *If in Christ we have hope in this life only [aka, no hope of resurrection in Christ if Christ wasn't indeed resurrected], we are of all people most to be pitied.*

The **Truth** is that Jesus rose from the dead, overcoming death once for all!

And the **Truth** is that if you are a believer in Christ, you are baptized into union with Him, and have been given eternal life.

Let's see **what Jesus said about the resurrection**, when He was answering the Sadducee's critical questions about marriage in heaven....

Lk 20:34-38 *And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, 36 for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him."*

This is why Jesus said what He said to Martha, Lazarus's sister:

Jn 11:25-26 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me **shall never die**. Do you believe this?"*

Let's take a moment to **ponder** what the Lord Jesus Christ said to Martha...

Jn 11:25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life...*

Jesus **IS** the Good News, you see... our focus should always be on the **Person**, not just the historical event.

We celebrate the event, of course... but it's His beautiful Person who we believe in and are in union with.

His Precious Person!

We must not become religious, but rather always remember it's about **a relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ** that truly matters when it comes to the Gospel. **Jn 5:39-40, 6:47-58**

Jn 5:39-40 *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness **about me**, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*

It's about this wonderful, supernatural Person who willingly gave up His body and blood to save us.

John 6:47-58 *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 **I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.***

52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever

*feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as the fathers ate and died. **Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.** [impossible unless we are resurrected in Christ]*

As believers in Christ, **we have eaten of Him**, by faith...

... and when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are saying we believe in Him and His great sacrifice for us...

...and each time we fellowship this way and read Holy Scripture together, we dine on this same Bread, He who is called the Word of God.

The Resurrection is the capstone of our faith and it's why we have eternal hope!

Rom 6:4-11 *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

*5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall **certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.** 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin.*

*8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that **Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.** 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he*

lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

So, we have Jesus as our LIVING HOPE.

This is why men like Peter were **willingly put to death** for His Name...

... because **THEY SAW HIM** resurrected from the grave!

And that's why Peter wrote this so boldly...

1 Peter 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Jesus knew He had to die for us to make new life possible for us.

The old must die, and a brand new life is required for us to live with God forever.

In God's Plan...

... **only death can bring new life**, just as a seed that goes into the ground "and dies", and then raises to a new life and a new body by the power of God! **Jn 12:23-26, 1Co 15:35-49**

Jn 12:23-26 *And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified* (notice Jesus is referring to Himself and His

own destiny). *24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

This is another prophecy, and picture, of our Lord's resurrection!!

And then Jesus goes on to describe how believers are willing to die to self as they look to their new life in HIM.

25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

But a true new life, as even proven by nature itself, only comes through death, as the dead seed in the ground illustrates.

Paul also expounded on this same principle and the resurrection from the dead...

... he himself at one time being an ENEMY of Christ, but after seeing Him resurrected, His eyes were opened and He was given much wisdom from the Spirit.

1 Co 15:35-49 *But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" 36 You foolish person! **What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.** 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 **But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.** 39 For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the*

glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

As we close this Resurrection Special, let's read a couple more eyewitness accounts of His resurrection, and **His new imperishable body** He appeared in, as recorded by the apostle John....

Jn 20:19-21:14 *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."*

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

24 Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

21:1 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. 8 The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.

12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

My friends, don't be a doubting Thomas!

God has provided us **eyewitness accounts** of Jesus' resurrection, and that his tomb was empty was even recorded by ancient historians of the day.

Do not doubt, but have faith, as the Holy Spirit is prompting you to do right now.