



The Power of His Resurrection

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*"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."*

1 Corinthians 2:13

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# The Resurrection of Christ<sup>1</sup>

The apostle, Paul, wrote of “the power of His resurrection”. (Philippians 3:10) What is the “**POWER**” of His resurrection? And what is the unique power of “**HIS**” resurrection? In this message we will investigate the resurrection of Christ, and more purposefully, the nature of its “**power**”.

Some deny the resurrection of Christ. And some have concocted various theories in an effort to explain away the resurrection. Theories like:

- The body of Jesus was stolen by the disciples, or by the Jewish or Roman authorities.
- Or Venturini’s “Swoon Theory”, which says Jesus didn’t really die – He just fainted.
- Or Kirsopp Lake’s theory which asks us to believe that the women, the disciples, as well as the Jewish and Roman authorities all went to the wrong tomb.

In his books, *More Than A Carpenter*<sup>2</sup> and *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*<sup>3</sup>, Josh McDowell effectively demonstrates the absence of probability in these and other theories.

He also points out that most unbelievers do not deny or try to explain away the resurrection, they just avoid the issue altogether, not knowing how to deal with the historical facts of the resurrection. But Lawyer, Frank

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<sup>1</sup> John 20:1-18

<sup>2</sup> Tyndale House Publishers, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999.

Morrison, in his book, *Who Moved The Stone*, admits that he had set out to refute the resurrection, but ended up confirming it.<sup>4</sup>

In his book, *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists*, Harvard University law professor, Dr. Simon Greenleaf, concluded that the resurrection of Christ was one of the best-supported events in history.<sup>5</sup>

English scholar, Brooke Foss Westcott, said: “Taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

Lord Darling, former Chief Justice of England, concluded: “There exists such overwhelming evidence... that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true.”<sup>7</sup>

Professor Thomas Arnold, author of *The History of Rome*, and appointee to the chair of History at Oxford University said: “... I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.”<sup>8</sup>

As Josh Mc Dowell concludes: “A believer in Jesus Christ today can have complete confidence, as did the first Christians, that his faith is based, not on myth or legend, but on the solid historical fact of the risen Christ and the empty tomb.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Faber & Faber, 1930.

<sup>5</sup> Cockroft & Co., 1874.

<sup>6</sup> Know Why You Believe, Paul E. Little, Scripture Press Publications, 1967

<sup>7</sup> Man Alive, Michael Green, Inter Varsity Pres, 1968.

<sup>8</sup> The Christian Life – Its Hopes, Its Fears, and Its Close, Thomas Arnold, T. Fellows, 1859

<sup>9</sup> ibid

The apostle Paul asked this question while on trial in King Agrippa's courtroom: **“Why should any of you think it is impossible for God to raise the dead?”**<sup>10</sup> If the God of the Bible exists, it seems to me also, that His raising a human being from the dead would be quite elementary for Him Who has the ability to create everything out of nothing.

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<sup>10</sup> Acts 26:8 New International Reader's Version

# Death

Not all of us are theologians or apologists, but there is something written in the epistle to the Hebrews which speaks of something common to all of us; and that is - “death”. In Hebrews 2:14-15 it says: **“Since all these sons and daughters have flesh and blood, Jesus took on flesh and blood to be like them. He did this so that by dying He would destroy the one who had power over death (that is, the devil). In this way He would free those who were slaves all their lives because they were afraid of dying.”**<sup>11</sup>

Everyone is afraid of the physical suffering associated with death. Many people are afraid of the idea of death itself. Instinctively, we know that what is written a little later in the epistle to the Hebrews is also true: That it is appointed for all to die and then face the judgment.<sup>12</sup> Now we don’t know if we will die because of an accident, or because of a disease, or because of this or that. But we know that we will die.

We also fear other types of death – like the death of a relationship - with a spouse, a child, or a friend. We also fear the death of things like our youth, our mental and physical abilities. We even fear the “death” of whatever financial and physical security we think we may have.

The Scripture says that people live every day of their lives with these haunting fears of death. Human beings seem to be born with a subconscious, fundamental fear of death. This applies to almost every

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<sup>11</sup> This is the God’s Word Translation; but unless otherwise noted, all other Scripture quotations will be from the New King James Version.

<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 9:27

single one of us - except for a few. Now it hasn't happened to me yet, but it has happened to a few Christians I know who have had what we call "near death experiences" – where, during a serious medical condition, they have left their bodies, gone to the place where there is the One Whom the apostle Paul describes as **"He ... who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light"**<sup>13</sup>, and then return to their bodies and live. But now, they live without any fear of death whatsoever. Why? Because they know there is a resurrection from the dead.

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<sup>13</sup> | Timothy 6:16

# Resurrection

In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul writes extensively about death and resurrection – both Christ’s and ours. In a very objective and logical argument he indicates that because Christ has been resurrected from the dead, we can also be assured of our resurrection from the dead:

**<sup>12</sup> 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? <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty, and your faith *is* also empty. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! <sup>18</sup> Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. <sup>20</sup> But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.**

**<sup>42</sup> So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> And so it is written, “*The first man Adam became a living being.*” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> However, the spiritual**



**is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.** <sup>47</sup> **The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven.** <sup>48</sup> **As *was* the man of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly Man, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly.** <sup>49</sup> **And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”** 1 Corinthians 15:12-22; 42-49

Paul's theology was birthed in his encounter with the resurrected Christ. It was on the road to Damascus that the resurrected Christ appeared to Saul. This encounter with the resurrected Christ radically changed everything in his life. His name was changed from “Saul”, which means - “the one asked for”, to Paul, which means - “the small one”. The very essence of his nature was changed from arrogance to humbleness. Paul was changed from being a “church killer” to being a “church builder”.<sup>14</sup> Through this encounter with the resurrected Christ, Paul began a relationship with Jesus Christ, and started to “walk in newness of life”.<sup>15</sup>

Later in his ministry, while writing his epistle to the Philippians, Paul speaks the desires of his heart: <sup>10</sup> **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,** <sup>11</sup> **if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”**<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Acts 9:1-22

<sup>15</sup> Romans 6:4

<sup>16</sup> Philippians 3:10-11

Here Paul says there were four things he desired to experience:

- To know Christ.
- To know the power of His resurrection.
- To know the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.
- To attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Again, Paul desired these four things:

- To know Christ: This is a personal, experiential knowledge which comes from a vital relationship with the living Christ, and includes the next three things:
  - To know **the power of His resurrection.**
  - And to know the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. These first three are all inter-related, and lead to the fourth:
  - To attain to **the resurrection of the dead.**

# Two Types of Life & Death

Paul used two phrases: **“the power of His resurrection”** and **“the resurrection from the dead”**. There is a difference between the “power of His resurrection” and “the resurrection from the dead”: The “resurrection of the dead” is something which lies in the future: Paul said, **“...if by any means I may attain to (or arrive at) the resurrection from the dead.”** The “power of His resurrection” is something, which we can know and experience now, just as Paul did.

Let’s look at something Jesus Himself had to say about these things:  
<sup>23</sup> **“Jesus said to her (Martha), “Your brother will rise again.”**  
<sup>24</sup> **Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”** <sup>25</sup> **Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup>And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”**

John 11:23-26

Here, Jesus told Martha that her dead brother, Lazarus, would rise again. And Martha said she knew **“that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day”**. This is what Paul referred to as **“the resurrection from the dead”**.<sup>17</sup> But then Jesus said to Martha: **“I am the resurrection and the life.”** This is what Paul meant by his phrase: **“the power of His resurrection”**. Martha referred to the resurrection as a doctrine, and as an event, yet

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<sup>17</sup> Mentioned only in Philippians 3:11, but was a commonly held doctrine and found in Jewish writings after the Exile. (*Commentary On The Bible* by Adam Clarke)

future. Jesus said, “I am”. In saying, “I am”, Jesus was speaking great spiritual truths: “I am the resurrection.” “I am the life.” “I am the Author, the Giver, the Sustainer, and the Perfector of all life. I am the Eternal One, and I have eternal life. My kind of life is not affected by sin and death. And to those who are spiritually dead in sin, I can set free from the grave clothes of sin and death, and give newness of life.”

Then Jesus said two things that sound contradictory:

- First, He said: “He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”
- And then He said: “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”

But these statements are not contradictory, if we realize He is referring to two different types of life and death – one is spiritual, the other is temporal.

The first has to do with spiritual life and death: Jesus said: “He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” We need to understand that true “believing” carries with it the “knowing” that Paul referred to - that personal, experiential knowledge of Christ. And it is impossible to truly know Christ without having a personal, experiential knowledge of “the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”. What does this mean? It means being “baptized” into Christ.

Paul writes to the church in Rome: “... do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

**<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”<sup>18</sup>**

Romans 6:3-5

This is “being conformed to His death”. To “walk in newness of life” means to continue being united to Christ by “denying yourself, taking up your cross daily and following Him”<sup>19</sup> – that is, walking in the way of the cross - self-denying love – this is “the fellowship of His sufferings”.<sup>20</sup> We could call it “a living baptism” – living out our baptism every day. Jesus said that “though we may die” in this way, we will live in the power of His resurrection life.

The next thing Jesus said has to do with temporal life and death: He said: “Whoever lives and believes in Me” - that is, knows Him, the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, and the power of His resurrection – “shall never die” – that is, he will “attain to the resurrection of the dead”.

In his epistle to the Corinthians, Paul explained this doctrine of “the resurrection of the dead”.<sup>21</sup> He said there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. The natural body is of dust of the earth. The spiritual body is of heaven. The natural body bears the image of Adam. The spiritual body bears the image of the resurrected Christ. The natural body is buried perishable, weak and without honor. The spiritual body is raised

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<sup>18</sup> Romans 6:3-5

<sup>19</sup> Luke 9:23

<sup>20</sup> Also see I John 2:6

<sup>21</sup> I Corinthians 15:42-49

imperishable, and with power and glory. All this is pictured in baptism. All this can become a reality here and now in our lives.

# The Power of His Resurrection

In the Corinthian passage Paul said: “Adam became a living human being. The last Adam (that is, Christ) became a life-giving Spirit.” **THAT IS THE POWER** of His resurrection. That is the *power* of His resurrection. What is the power of HIS RESURRECTION? What makes CHRIST’S RESURRECTION different from the resurrection of others? Christ was not the only one who has been resurrected; but His resurrection is different – it has a certain power.

When the prophet Elijah resurrected the widow’s son from the dead,<sup>22</sup> did his resurrection give any power or newness of life to anyone else? When Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead,<sup>23</sup> did his resurrection give any power or newness of life to anyone else? When the apostle Paul resurrected the young man, Eutychus, from the dead,<sup>24</sup> did his resurrection give any power or newness of life to anyone else? No.

But Paul said that “the Last Adam (that is, Christ) became a live-giving Spirit.” **THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION IS THIS:** Jesus gives His life – spiritual life, resurrection life, newness of life - to those who “confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in their hearts God raised Him from the dead”.<sup>25</sup> *Eternal life is the life of the Eternal One. Resurrection life is the life of the Resurrected One.* According to Paul, our

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<sup>22</sup> 1 Kings 17:22

<sup>23</sup> John 11:43-44

<sup>24</sup> Acts 20:7-12

<sup>25</sup> Romans 10:9

natural bodies bear the image of Adam, but our born-again spirits bear the image of the resurrected Christ.<sup>26</sup>

What is the image of the resurrected Christ? In the Book of Revelation, the resurrected Jesus appeared to the apostle John and announced Himself to be **“The Living One”**<sup>27</sup>. John described Him like this: **“<sup>13</sup>and among the lampstands was someone ‘like a son of man’, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup>His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. <sup>15</sup>His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.”**<sup>28</sup>

I would like to suggest that this is some indication of the way resurrection life looks - on the inside – in your spirit.<sup>29</sup> Paul told the Corinthians: **“That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.”**<sup>30</sup>

In Jesus of Nazareth, God identified with us, so that we could identify with Him in the resurrected Christ. When we identify with the sufferings and death of Jesus of Nazareth, we are **“united with Him in the likeness of**

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<sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:49

<sup>27</sup> Revelation 1:17-18

<sup>28</sup> Revelation 1:13-16

<sup>29</sup> See I John 3:2-3 & 4:17

<sup>30</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:16 New Living Translation



His death". When we identify with the resurrected Christ, we are "united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection".<sup>31</sup>

Paul said: "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"; and His good purpose is "to conform us to the image of His Son"<sup>32</sup> – the whole Christ – Jesus of Nazareth and the Resurrected, Eternal Living One – "the One Who was dead" and "the One Who is alive forevermore".<sup>33</sup>

Through self-denying love, we are conformed to the image of the Son of Man – *Jesus of Nazareth*. Through the power of His resurrection, we are conformed to the image of the Son of God – "*The Living One*".

God allows this spiritual transformation to become somewhat *visible* on the outside in our character and in our lives – *visible*, if not to ourselves, then to others.

The Gospel is the message that Jesus suffered, died, was buried, and resurrected on our behalf.<sup>34</sup> The normal Christian life is not only believing this message, but *becoming the message* – daily identifying with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection - "a living baptism". To surrender to His lordship is to surrender to "the Way of the Cross". If we walk in a relationship with Christ - daily growing in a personal, experiential knowledge of Him, the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, we will also be a witness to **THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION**.

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<sup>31</sup> Romans 6:5

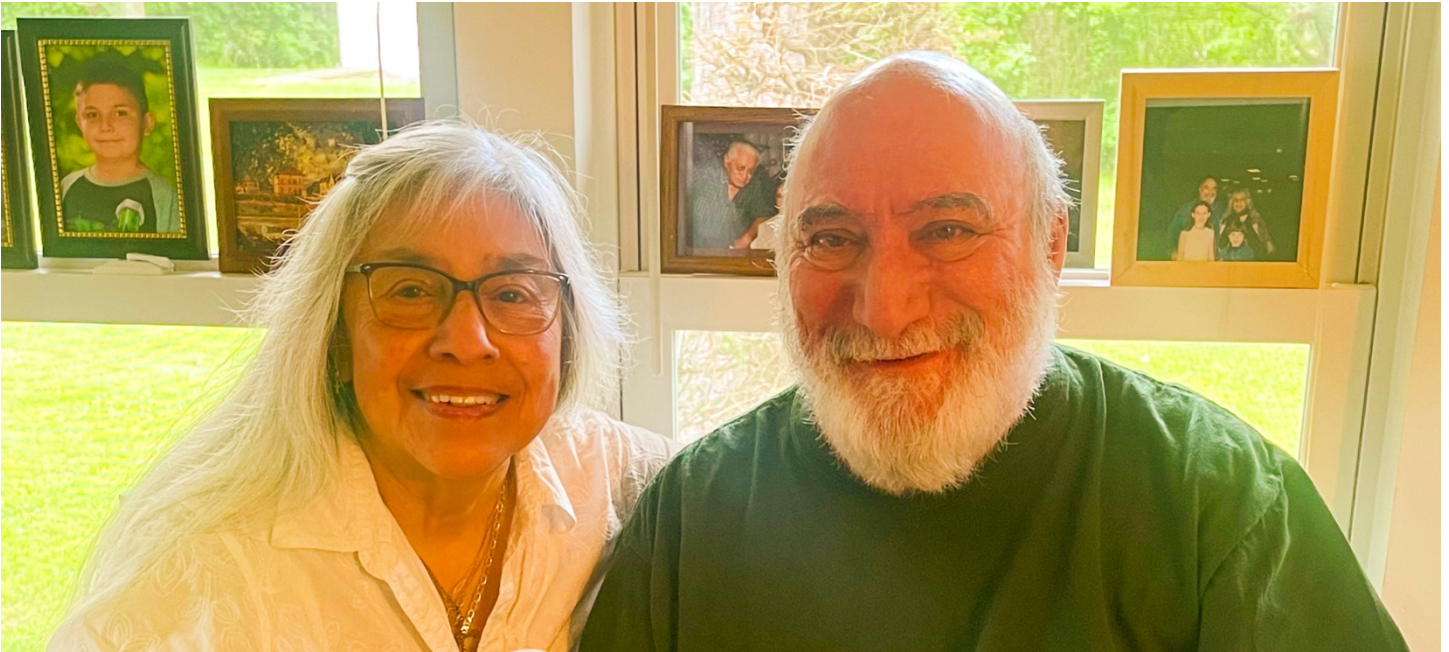
<sup>32</sup> Romans 8:28-30

<sup>33</sup> Revelation 1:18

<sup>34</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Bill & Frances Furioso

~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, disciplined many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... [www.AtChristsTable.org](http://www.AtChristsTable.org)

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