

## **What 'is risen' means, "Focus" 1 of 3 – 8April2023**

Hi all,

Early Christians in Rome were buried outside the city in the catacombs. A catacomb is an underground burial chamber, connected by tunnels, and there are at least 40 of them around Rome. Though some pagans and adherents of other religions are buried there, the vast majority are Christians.

Estimates I've read range from 200,000 to 600,000 people were buried in the catacombs, and you can go to several today and take tours. Bones and skulls are stacked in shelves dug into the rock, and both times I've been I am deeply affected, thinking about all those people in heaven now, and what they went through in life.

Among those hundreds of thousands of burial chambers and passageways is the earliest Christian art. In the same way today we might write the person's name, date of birth and death, and a short thought on a tombstone, they decorated the tomb walls with Biblical art.

Scenes of Adam & Eve, the Good Shepherd, and especially loaves and fish are common. Often pictured is the risen Lord eating bread, fish, and honeycomb (Luke 24:42, Jesus ate honeycomb to prove He was risen). The vast majority of their tomb art was focused on resurrection and the risen Lord.

In all the art in all the miles of tunnels, in all the hundreds of thousands of tombs, there are only 3 crosses, and those dated to be near the end of the use of catacombs as a burial place. Only 3 crosses. The majority of the rest are focused on the risen Lord.

Think about today's cemeteries. How many hundreds of crosses on tombstones we see. How are Christian graves marked on the battlefield and have been for centuries? A cross. Why were they so focused on the resurrection and we are focused on the cross?

The first non-burial related cross is seen on a chapel door in the Vatican in the year 500AD - nearly 500 years after Pentecost of Acts 2:4. For 500 years our brothers and sisters were focused on the resurrection. They were 'life' oriented, not 'death' focused.

### **How did the focus shift from the resurrection to the cross?**

Christianity was legalized in the Roman Empire in the year 313 with the Edict of Milan, just under 300 years after Pentecost. It became the state religion in the year 380.

Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, was rumored to have discovered pieces of the cross during excavations around the city of Jerusalem. Constantine built a big church over what he assumed was the tomb of Jesus, called the Martyrium. That September when they celebrated the completion of the building called church, it became known as the feast of 'The Exaltation of the Cross' and it is still a Roman Catholic feast to this day.

With the Exaltation of the Cross and feast decreed by the Emperor, the church throughout the Empire shifted attention away from the resurrection to 'exalt the cross' instead. Christian culture has been stuck at the cross ever since. The early church was focused on the resurrection. We focus on the cross.

Why do we only celebrate the resurrection one weekend a year when for the first 500 years that was the truth that governed their spiritual lives and their growth in Christ?

Are you cross focused or resurrection focused? One is a focus on self and the other a focus on His power. Listen to songs on Christian radio, church selections, and your own playlist. How many are about how lowly we were, how the cross saved us - and now many are about

the power of God that works in us that is changing our lives and empowering us? Praise God for the cross, but Jesus didn't stay dead.

### **Why are we so focused on the cross?**

Why do we spiritually stop our growth in Christ at 3pm that Thursday afternoon when Jesus died, instead of moving on to Sunday morning? The early church didn't stop at the cross. They lived in the promise and power of the resurrection.

They knew what Paul wrote to the Ephesians in 1:18-20: "...and what is the boundless greatness of His (Father's) power towards us who believe, which He used when He raised Jesus from the dead..."

That should be our focus, the power of the resurrection which the Father directs into our lives. That is the transforming power; it isn't the power of the cross, but the power of the resurrection - according to Ephesians 1:18-20. Let us renew our thinking to what scripture actually says, instead of focusing on the 'power of the cross' focus on the power of the resurrection directed to us by our Father and therefore at work within us.

This inward 'me' focus is in part due to our church culture that focuses on the cross alone and ignores the resurrection. What if we went back in our thinking to Christian life before 500 AD? What if while being thankful for the cross which paid for our sins, we didn't stop there? What if we focused on the risen Lord and the power of His resurrection?

### **Is risen or has risen?**

The term "He is risen" was used by the angels at the tomb to describe Jesus. Why did they use 'is risen' instead of saying 'has risen'? Mt 28:6, Mk 16:6, Lk 24:6.

The phrase 'is risen' is in aorist tense, meaning Jesus was risen, is risen, and will always be risen. In other words, it is a completion, a state of being, not merely an event. It is a condition of existence, not just something that happened at dawn that Sunday.

The angels were telling the women who came to embalm the body of Jesus that He is in a new condition of existence - a completed existence: Resurrected from the dead. It is a completed work, one that needs no improvement nor can it ever be improved upon. It will forever be unchanged; Jesus is forever in a condition of resurrection.

**It is also important to note the Greek is written in the passive aorist, which means Jesus did not make His own resurrection. He was resurrected through a power other than His own.**

This agrees with Romans 6:4: "...Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father..." It was the glory of the Father that raised His Son from the dead, and that power is so strong, so powerful, so eternal, Jesus is forever in a condition of existence known as resurrection, known as 'is risen'.

The power the Father used to raise Jesus to the 'is risen' state of being, is the same power in you and I, so that we are now and forever also 'is risen' - eternal now, in eternity now, in the family of God now, in heaven now as citizens. Amazing grace!

How the resurrection changed the relationship between Father and Son is next week...until then, blessings,

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## **"Is risen" 2 of 4. Between Father and Son**

Hi all,

Last week I shared how for the first 500 years of Christianity they were focused on the resurrection rather than the cross. I talked about the phrase 'is risen' and how it is a continual state of being, forever a condition of existence.

### **The Son was given so He could be the child born**

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders..." The son given, is Christ, who became the child born, Jesus. Isaiah 9:6

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, Christ. Christ is the title for the Son given, who existed with the Father in glory before the universe was.

Jesus is His human name, given by Gabriel to Mary, and means 'salvation'. (Luke 1:31)

Throughout the New Testament, when you see the word 'Christ', the writer is emphasizing the deity of the Lord. It emphasizes the fact He is God. When you see His name 'Jesus' the writer is emphasizing His humanity, the Man.

When 'Christ' is mentioned alone or first, as in "Christ Jesus", it means the greater focus is on His deity. For instance, I Corinthians 2:16 says we have the mind of Christ. NOT the mind of Jesus, but the mind of Christ is in our spirit.

That means we have God's mind in any situation, any turmoil, there for us to gain His unlimited wisdom to help in time of need. If we were to be theologically correct, Jesus doesn't live in our heart - Christ does.

When using the name of Jesus alone or first as in 'Jesus Christ', the emphasis is on His humanity. For this reason we ask the Father 'in the name of Jesus'. We cast out demons, 'in the name of Jesus'. We lay hands on the sick 'in the name of Jesus'. Jesus is the man who is God, and we as men have authority to use His NAME - Jesus. As men using the Man's name.

### **It may seem like splitting hairs to say Christ lives in me and not Jesus**

But the difference is profound in its effect on our thinking. When the average Christian says they asked Jesus into their heart, their thinking automatically limits itself to focus on the man Jesus. They subconsciously stop at the cross.

When we correct ourselves to say Christ lives in our hearts, then we state the whole Person and Mind of the Father God, the power of the resurrection, abides in our hearts - Christ Jesus the Man who as God oversees His body by the Holy Spirit, making us more than equal to any situation life can throw at us.

### **Christ, God's Son, had not known earth-life personally until He became a man.**

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats take away (human) sin. When He came into the world He said this: 'A body you have prepared Me, for in the blood of bulls and goats you have had no pleasure.'" Hebrews 10:4-6

"He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. And having emptied Himself He found Himself fashioned as a man, and humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross..." Philippians 2:6-8

The Father is a Spirit in the realm of the Spirit, so He has never known hunger, sleep, the need to use the toilet, or temptation. James 1:13 says He is not tempted by evil. One must have a human body to be tempted and the Father does not. He is a Spirit with a Spirit-body. But Christ Jesus experienced all the limitations of being human for He had become a man.

**Resurrection day: The day everything changed between Father and Son.**

When Jesus was resurrected from the dead it meant He would forever be the Son who had tasted death, and conquered it. The Son who had left heaven pure and untainted, was raised from the dead as a man, forever existing in the Life of 'is risen'.

The Father rightly gave Him a name above every name as a result. Rightly gave Him the kingdom to rule in the lives of men. Rightly made Him to be exalted, honored, revered, and worshipped above all created beings. Philippians 2:5-11

"God (Father) has fulfilled His word to us in that He resurrected Jesus, as He says in the second Psalm; You are my Son, this day I have fathered you." Acts 13:33

**The Father considers Jesus' resurrection as the day He fathered Him.**

Let that sink in. Why would things have changed so much between them that the Father considered resurrection day the day He fathered Him?

Because He left heaven a Spirit-being and returned as a Man. He returned in the human body He 'found Himself in', though transformed by the power of the resurrection. There is right now in heaven with the Father, a man in a human body. The Son of God will eternally exist in a condition of 'is risen', as a man who died and then conquered death.

For ages Christ existed with the Father in the realm of the Spirit. Then He became a man. When He died it was something neither He nor the Father had ever experienced before. And when He was resurrected, He was not to be restored as it had been before the physical universe had been created. Things between them would never again be the 'normal' they had together in glory before the universe was created.

He was resurrected as a man, now with a body made of celestial material, all man, all God. He died as a Man to put His last will and testament into effect, then the Father raised Him from the dead so He could be the Executor of His own Estate and inheritance - the body of Christ, to whom the Father has given the kingdom.

**The relationship between Father and Son could never go back to what it was before He left heaven to become one of us.**

It is the power of the resurrection that changed everything. Everything. Its effects will be felt into the ages to come, for that is what we are promised in Ephesians 2:7 - "...in the ages to come the Father will continue to show us the riches of His kindness which is towards us in Christ Jesus."

Next week, why after the resurrection Jesus is never again referred to as God's only son....until then, blessings,

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**'is risen', 3 of 4, no longer the only Son**

Hi all,

Last week I ended with how the resurrection changed the relationship between Father and Son forever. "This day I have fathered you" the Father said.

The quote is from Acts 13:33 where Paul states one line from Psalm 2: "You are my son, this day I have fathered you." But the whole of Psalm 2 gives us a bigger picture. The first 4 verses set the stage:

**v1-4: "Why do the nations rage and the people plot things in vain?** The rulers take counsel and conspire against the Lord (Father) and His anointed one (Christ), saying: 'Let's take their shackles off and cut their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens (Father) laughs at them. He scoffs at them."

Then v5-12 switch to the Father talking to His Son and Son talking to the Father:

**v5: "Then He will speak to them in His anger,** and terrify them in His fury, saying, 'As for Me, I have installed My King upon my holy hill in Zion (Jerusalem). I will proclaim the order of the Lord (Father).

"He (Father) said to me (Jesus), 'You are my Son. This day I have fathered you. Ask of Me and I will give you the nations of the world as your inheritance, the ends of the earth for your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron and shatter them like an earthenware vessel. Be wise therefore you kings of the earth, be instructed you judges. Serve the Lord (Jesus) with fear and rejoicing and trembling. Kiss the Son (custom of bowing at the feet) lest He be angry with you for His wrath can be kindled quickly. How blessed are all who put their trust in Him!"

When you read Psalm 2 realizing it is the Father talking to His Son it puts our own lives in perspective. The 'this day I have fathered you' is the day of the resurrection, and it was the start of the Lord Jesus receiving the nations of the earth as His inheritance, and His possession which is the planet. Amazing plan, amazing grace.

### **Inheritance and taking possession**

These two parts Jesus received from the Father are important to our own story. We receive the inheritance, which is spiritual. Then we meek will inherit the earth, the possession which is in the natural.

When we were born again we were born into the kingdom. Actually in a unique process, Ephesians 1 tells us the Father used Jesus to be able to legally adopt us. THEN once we accepted that adoption we were also then born into the family. We have the best of both worlds. Legally adopted and then born into the Father's family. Amazing grace.

When born again we start learning about our inheritance, which is a life-long process. "In whom we have obtained an inheritance." "Giving thanks to the Father who has made us able to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light." Ephesians 1:11, Colossians 1:12.

We renew the mind according to Romans 12:1-3, the Greek word being 'metamorphosis' to describe the transformation of our thoughts to think like God thinks about every aspect of ourselves and life. Sometimes we seem to be more caterpillar than butterfly, but renewing the mind to learn of our inheritance is a life-long process.

When the Father gave the people of the earth to Jesus as His inheritance, it includes you and me. Amazing. Jesus inherited you and you in turn inherited Him.

**"And the earth as your possession"**

As we learn of our inheritance we start taking possession of our part of our world. Meek means teachable and humble. We learn, we grow, we start taking back what the devil had stolen. Instead of curses upon our family we begin insisting the blessing be upon our family. We start making good decisions. We start thinking with logic rather than emotions, based on revelation of truth from the Father.

We start taking possession of our land, our part of the world. That is what Jesus is doing, one person at a time born into the kingdom. We are merely doing what Lord is doing, for His kingdom stretches to include us and our lives and those we love and care about. Inheritance and possession. That's what the Father gave Jesus on resurrection day, and by extension, to you and I. We cannot be separated from Him and the effects of that resurrection day for we are one with Him; He is in us and we in Him.

This is why 'is risen' is so important. It is a state of being. An eternal condition of existence for Jesus and for you and I. Amazing grace.

### **After resurrection day Jesus is never again called the only Son of God**

Because Acts 13:33 and Psalm 2 show us resurrection day started the day for Jesus to get His inheritance of the people of the earth (Jew and non-Jew alike), and take possession of the earth, He is called 'the first born from the dead' from that day on.

John 3:16 tells us He left heaven He was "His only begotten Son", but when He was resurrected it was as the first born among many brethren.

"Those He knew ahead of time (would receive His Son) He determined they would be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the first born among many brethren." Romans 8:29

"And He is the head of the body, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18

"But you have come to the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, of those written in heaven, and to God (Father) the judge of all, and to the spirits of just people made perfect (complete in heaven)." Hebrews 12:22-23

"And from Jesus Christ, the first born of the dead and Prince of the kings of the earth..." Revelation 1:5

### **He is first born from the dead, what number are you?**

You and I are included as those who follow the first born from the dead. There are times we feel more like a caterpillar than a butterfly, but those days don't change the fact we have been born from the dead. One day we will receive glorified bodies like Jesus - made of heavenly material. But for now, we are learning to walk in what He was given - an inheritance and a possession. He 'is risen' and we are in Him...amazing.

We will conclude next week, until then, blessings,  
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**'is risen' 4 of 4 - Word made flesh**

Hi all,

Do you remember the moment in your childhood when you realized your parents were once children too? You had never thought of them having a life before you until that moment. Your thoughts of their existence began with you, never realizing until that moment they had a life before you came along.

### **That is how many think of the Lord Jesus**

They only know His life from the gospels. But Christ lived before He became a baby in Bethlehem, and was intimately involved in the lives of men and women down through the centuries. It is an eye opening and wondrous thing to consider Christ's life before being conceived in Mary's womb as Jesus.

### **Before Bethlehem**

Genesis 1:26:"God said:Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." The Hebrew word for 'God' is Elohim. 'El' is God and 'im' means plural. Literally, "Gods said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

This is the first insight into Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Genesis 2 opens with a summary of creation, then turns to specifics in v7:"And the **Lord God** formed man out of the dust of the ground..."

We see "Lord God" coming out of Elohim to actually create man, and setting him up in the Garden of Eden. It isn't the Elohim, but the Lord God - Jehovah Elohim - Who came out among the Elohim to be revealed as the Lord God, or in Hebrew:Yahweh Elohim. (Jehovah/Yahweh is Latin/Hebrew)

### **The King James Version translates this as 'Lord God' (Jehovah Elohim).**

It is this 'Lord God' (Jehovah Elohim) who came out from the Elohim who formed man's body, breathing into it causing the molecules to change from clay and dust to flesh and blood.

Genesis 2 through 4 is very specific, telling us this same Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) caused the animals to pass by Adam to see what he would name them. Who caused a surgical level sleep to fall on Adam so He could take of his body to form Eve.

It was this Jehovah Elohim (Lord God) who walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the garden, confronting them after they had sinned. We are told in Genesis 3:21 it was the Lord God/Jehovah Elohim who made coats of skins as the first animal sacrifice to cover sin, that became their clothes.

It was this Jehovah Elohim who confronted Cain when the thought of murdering his brother came into his mind, and the one who dealt with him after he refused Jehovah Elohim's efforts to stop him after the murder.

This same Jehovah Elohim appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Centuries later this same Jehovah Elohim appears to Moses at the burning bush, in Exodus 3:14 identifying Himself as "I AM", the ever-present one. In v15 when Moses ask for His name He tells him He is the 'Lord God' (Jehovah Elohim).

### **The Lord God, the I AM, in the flesh**

In John 8:58 Jesus answered the religious leaders when He claimed to have known Abraham:"Truly, truly I tell you. Before Abraham was:I AM."

At that moment those leaders put it all together - this man standing before them claimed to be the One in the Garden of Eden, the One who appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the One who appeared to Moses - and rather than repent on their knees, they picked up stones to kill Him. Christ had a life in ancient history, even pre-history before He became baby Jesus. Standing before them was the Jehovah Elohim in the flesh.

### **Samuel changed everything**

Samuel is the first of Israel's prophets to the kings. Israel came into being as a nation coming out of the Sea when leaving Egypt. When Moses and later Joshua died, they spent about 300 years being led by various Judges - no king, no legislative body, just Judges. You now some of them:Gideon, Deborah, Samson, and the last one:Samuel.

When Samuel was a boy the Lord God appeared to him. Not understanding it was the Lord calling to him, the boy had to be told by Eli the High Priest who it was. I Samuel 3:10 says: "And the Lord (Jehovah) came and stood as He had the previous times, and called to him..."

The chapter ends in v21 with this statement, which changed how the Lord would for the rest of the Old Testament, be known: "The Lord appeared again to Samuel at Shiloh, and **the Lord (Jehovah) revealed Himself to Samuel (as) the Word of the Lord.**"

From this point on, the I AM, the Jehovah Elohim, would be revealed as the **Word of the Lord**, or, **the Word of God**. When you read the prophets of the Old Testament, whose works span centuries, you will find in most that "the Word of the Lord" they received, came through a visitation of the Lord - Christ - I AM, Jehovah Elohim.

Jeremiah 1:2: "The Word of the Lord came to me..." and called him to be a prophet. He objected, saying he is but a child (Hebrew word used for 'child' indicates a teen about 13 years old). Then Jeremiah says in v9: "Then He put out His hand and touched my lips..."

Here we see just one example of the Word of the Lord coming as a vision - visitation by Christ, to this OT prophet. (My series, "I AM; Who Jesus is and Where He Came From" goes into more detail on OT appearances by Christ.)

#### **From Isaiah and Ezekiel, to Jeremiah and Hosea**

They saw the Word of the Lord, guiding Israel and mankind through the centuries. David knew Him. In Psalm 110:1 he writes: "The Lord (Father) said to my Lord (Christ), be seated until I make your enemies your footstool."

Peter tells us David saw the resurrection of Jesus by the Holy Spirit, as per Acts 2:25-31: "...he (David) seeing this before, spoke of the resurrection of Christ..."

After centuries and centuries of the Lord God revealing Himself as the Word of the Lord to mankind from Adam to David to the OT prophets, the apostle John opens his gospel with these awe inspiring words: "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and was God...And the Word became flesh and lived among us."

#### **What an amazing thing**

This Word of the Lord, this Jehovah Elohim who sculpted Adam's body and breathed into it (Holy Spirit was the breath of God), the One who appeared to Abraham and Moses, to Isaiah and Jeremiah - became permanently, a human being!

The relationship between Father and Son changed when the Word of the Father took upon Himself flesh, but even more so when this Word of the Father suffered death. And yet again at His resurrection. The Word of the Father now a human being raised from death - the Man who is God - living forever in a state of 'is risen'.

This is Christ in you - the One who spoke to Moses, who appeared to Abraham and the prophets - Christ in you. Now doesn't that end all argument against you being weak? Doesn't it end all argument if you 'feel' you lost your salvation (though a believer) because you did this or that? Doesn't knowing his end all self-image issues? Doesn't it end all formulas by which to approach God? No wonder we are told 'come boldly to the throne to receive mercy and grace! No formula needed - come right to the Father!

We cannot earn that love, we cannot improve upon it. As Romans 8:32 says, the Father who used His Son to create all things, then gave us His Son. Having given us His Son we have therefore, received all things!

Christ in you - amazing grace, you and I are forever living in the power of the is risen. "That you may know the hope of the invitation extended to you, to know the exceeding greatness of His (Father's) mighty power which He used to raise Jesus from the dead, which power now works in you..." Ephesians 1:17-23. Period, paragraph, over and out. Amazing grace.



New subject next week, until then, blessings,  
John Fenn

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