

He Has Risen!

Luke 18:31-34

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At times I have found myself amazed at how dull the disciples of Jesus could be concerning aspects of what the Old Testament revealed about the Messiah. I can understand their confusion before they met Christ and before they were privileged to be with Him 24/7 for over three years, but even after Jesus had poured Himself into these men, the disciples still could not comprehend the truth that the Messiah was to die and rise again. If you don't believe me, listen to Luke 18:31-34,

*“Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, ‘We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be handed over to the Gentiles [the Romans]. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. ³³ On the third day he will rise again.’ ³⁴ **The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.**”*

When I read what Jesus said, He is crystal clear. He is not speaking in parables. And it is not as if Jesus only mentioned this one time. Look with me at Matthew 16:21, which took place shortly after Peter made his great confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God,

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law [they lied about Jesus to the Romans], and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

How did Peter respond to what the Son of the living God told him? Peter took him aside and rebuked him – saying “Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” I once heard a sermon on just those first two words. It was entitled “The Greatest Contradiction in the Bible.” Rebuking the Lord is **stupid!** But if we are honest, we all do it sometimes because we think we know better than God on certain issues. Poor God, He is omniscient and has to listen to our advice and rebukes.

My conclusion about Peter and the rest of the disciples is that they did not understand what Jesus was saying because they had been taught a radically different version of the Messiah. And they had been taught it all their lives. Before the disciples were able to understand what Jesus was saying, they would have to experience a paradigm shift in their thinking about the Christ. John 12:27-34 helps to explain why this was needed. We need to listen to the words of Jesus regarding to His soon coming death, and the words of the crowd to whom He spoke,

“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name . . . ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world [John Calvin understood this as a corrective judgment by God]; now the prince of this world [Satan] shall be cast out [this same word is used in Revelation 20:3 – regarding Satan being cast into the Abyss, so he could not keep the Gentiles in spiritual blindness]. ³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” [it was after Christ's death and resurrection that the Gentiles began to pour into Christ's kingdom]. ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ The crowd spoke up, ‘We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you [supposedly the Messiah] say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’” [put to death]?”

There are two statements made by the crowd that we should ponder. The first is, what did they mean by the Law? It is important to understand that the word “Law” does not have a singular meaning in the Bible. Its most specific meaning is when it refers to the Ten Commandments. A broader meaning is when it refers to the first five books of our Old Testament. But the meaning of Law in verse 34 is even broader because nothing in the Ten Commandments, or the first five

books of Moses, says anything about the Messiah living forever. And so the “Law” can also refer to the entire Old Testament. Context determines its meaning. In the New Testament, “law” has even additional meanings. If we try to make the Law have one meaning, we will be very confused about the Law.

I want to now share some Old Testament passages that support the crowd’s idea that the Messiah would remain forever. In **II Samuel 7:13**, God makes these promises concerning the Messiah, “*He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*” **Psalm 110:4**, “*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You [the Christ] are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizekek.’*” **Isaiah 9:7**, “*He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.*” **Ezekiel 37:25**, written hundreds of years after David had died, states, “. . . and David my servant will be their prince forever.” And just one more: **Psalm 72:1-9**,

*“Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. ² He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. ³ The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. ⁴ He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor. ⁵ **He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations** . . . ⁷ In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more. ⁸ He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ⁹ The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust.”*

From reading these passages it does indeed seem as if the Messiah was to remain forever and have a prosperous worldwide Kingdom. But how can the Messiah remain forever and at the same time suffer death by crucifixion? The only answer is by means of His bodily resurrection. And it just so happens that the clearest Old Testament passage concerning Christ’s crucifixion, also speaks of Christ’s resurrection. Look with me at **Isaiah 53:4-11**,

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted [when Christ was crucified, it confirmed in the minds of most Jews that Jesus could not be the Messiah]. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed . . . ⁸ For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked [He was crucified between two criminals], and with the rich in his death [He was buried in a rich man’s tomb], though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD’S will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied”

Now let’s put ourselves in the sandals of the disciples. Christ’s crucifixion blind-sided them and destroyed their hope of Christ being the Messiah of God. Their confusion was massive because they had seen Christ walk on water and calm a raging storm; they were there when Christ fed multitudes of people with five biscuits and two fish; before their very eyes Jesus had raised Lazarus back to life after Lazarus had been dead for three days; and besides all that, Christ was sinless. How could God allow a person so good and righteous to suffer the humiliation of crucifixion? God the Father ordained it because God the Son became fully man for the purpose of being our perfect sacrifice for sin.

But we must walk in the sandals of the disciples a little further. What do you think was going on in their minds after Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them over a period of 40 days? I personally think that the disciples began to pat themselves on the back for finally understanding how the Messiah could both die and still be with them forever. He had risen from the dead, never to die again. Hoorah! What could possibly stop King Jesus – now that he had risen from the

dead. If He could pull that off, then all the rest of their dreams and hopes would surely come quickly. They may have even returned to arguing about who among them was going to sit at His right hand.

But here is where Jesus threw them another curve ball. He was not going to remain with them in His physical body. He and the Father had already made arrangements for Christ to ascend back into heaven and be seated at the right hand of God the Father. And Jesus assured the disciples that it was to their advantage that He do so. Listen to His words in **John 14:12**, “*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*”

Have you ever puzzled over the greater works Christians are to perform because Jesus ascended back into heaven? I know that I have not physically raised anyone from the dead, like Jesus did – but I have been used of God to see people spiritually raised from the dead. And you know what – spiritual resurrections last forever. The bodily resurrections that took place in the Bible were great, but everyone raised from the dead, except for Jesus, went on to die again.

I have also been reminding you that because Christ’s followers have the indwelling Holy Spirit and we have been developing a Biblical worldview – that is in touch with reality – Christianity has helped to birth science, medicine and technology, which has resulted in millions of people recovering from illnesses that would have killed them at the time Christ. But let’s go back to the greater blessing which is occurring because of Christ’s ascension. It is spoken of in a veiled way in **Psalm 110:1-2**,

“The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’² The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion [Jerusalem]; you will rule in the midst of your enemies.”

This is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament and refers to a conversation between God the Father and God the Son at the time of Christ’s ascension. The strongest encouragement from this passage is not seen until we study how the Old Testament uses the phrase “footstool for your feet” – which in Psalm 110:1 refers to a footstool for the feet of **God the Son**. There are five other places in the Old Testament where the phrase footstool of or for God’s feet appears:

I Chronicles 28:2-3 reads, “*King David rose to his feet and said: ‘. . . I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the **footstool of the feet of our God**, and I made plans to build it.³ But God said to me, ‘You are not to build a house for my Name.’”*

David wanted to build a temple for God, to house the Ark of the Covenant, but his son Solomon ended up doing it.

Psalm 99:5, “*Exalt the LORD our God and worship at **the footstool of his feet**; he is holy.*”

Where did Israel gather to worship God? At God’s temple, the place of God’s special presence upon the earth.

Psalm 132:7-13, “*Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at **the footstool of his feet** . . .¹³ For the LORD has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling.” Jerusalem is where God’s temple was built.*

Isaiah 66:1, “*This is what the LORD says: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is the **footstool of my feet**. Where is the house you will build for me?’” This whole earth was originally designed to be God’s temple. And in the Eternal State, it will be His temple again.*

Our last reference is found in **Lamentations 2:1-7**. Jeremiah writes these painful words after Babylon destroyed God's temple in 586 B.C., "*How the Lord has covered the Daughter of Zion [Jerusalem] with the cloud of his anger . . . he has not remembered **the footstool of his feet** in the day of his anger . . . ⁶ He has laid waste his dwelling*"

In light of the meaning of "**footstool of his feet**" in all the passages we have read, we cannot avoid concluding that God the Father promised His Son, at the time of Christ's ascension, that He will make Christ's repentant enemies into temples. Is God presently doing this? Yes. The Apostle Paul writes to the believers at Corinth in **I Corinthians 3:16-17**, "*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.*"

Mark Alvis was once at enmity with God, but by God's grace, through faith in Christ, I am now a temple, a footstool of Christ's feet. And so are all of you who trust in Christ. All over the world, enemies of Christ are becoming temples of God as obedient Christians carry out the Great Commission – which is to make disciples of all the nations.

But what about people who do not repent and trust in Christ as their Savior and Lord? They will be put under Christ's feet in judgment. The mercy seat in God's temple was not always a place of mercy. If the High Priest did not bring an acceptable offering, the Mercy Seat would become a Seat of Judgment. It is noteworthy, that when Christ spoke to the unrepentant Pharisees in Matthew 22:44, He referred to Psalm 110:1, but He did not use the word footstool [temple], rather He spoke of His enemies being judged beneath His feet.

Ironically, the good news of the gospel can be a fragrance of life for those being saved, or the smell of death for those rejecting Christ. Either way, both groups [the lost and the saved] will ultimately end up confessing that Christ is Lord – but for unbelievers that confession will do them no good. Listen to **Romans 14:9-10**, "*For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living . . . ¹⁰ For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.*"

Paul then quotes Isaiah 45:23. I am going to read **Isaiah 45:22-25**, so you can see the fuller context,

*"Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other . . . ²³ Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear [confess]. ²⁴ They will say of me, 'In the LORD alone are righteousness and strength.' All who have raged against him [the lost] will come to him **and be put to shame.** ²⁵ But in the LORD all [who have embraced Christ] . . . will be found righteous and will exult."*

And so are we going to embrace Christ and become temples of God, the places of God's special presence, or will we reject Christ and be put to shame? Let's pray.