

Our Risen King
 Selected Scriptures
 ABC 4/12/20 Easter

Happy Easter. Things have changed since our celebration of Christ's resurrection last year. Many of our Easter traditions are now impossible. Extended families aren't gathering together. Parents aren't inflicting their sons with ties or daughters with hats. No sunrise services. No Easter breakfasts. No egg hunts. But one thing has not changed. Christ is still risen. He is risen! He is risen indeed!

If you think about it, the 1st Easter was a little different too. It started off hopeless & helpless. After all, dead men don't rise. Once a body is laid to rest, that's it. That WAS the case until that glorious Sunday morning when a dead Man did rise. In doing so He defeated death, sin, hell, & Satan forever. He brings us a new covenant, a new life, & makes us new creatures. As one person put it, *The resurrection of Jesus is a sign of God's purpose & power to restore His creation to its full stature & integrity.... In the aftermath of Gethsemane, we catch the fragrance of Eden.... The resurrection is like the 1st day of a new creation.*¹

Last week we looked at Jesus as King as He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Today we see Him as King as He conquers death. As Christians, we focus on the cross, the death of Jesus a lot. & it's easy for us to think His death is more important than His resurrection, but we must see them as a package deal. Throughout the NT, when it talks about the death or cross of Jesus, the resurrection is always in mind. Without the resurrection the cross is meaningless. That's why Paul wrote: **if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain... if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins** (1 Cor 15:14, 17). It was the resurrection of Jesus that gave His death its meaning. In Phil 2 Paul says, **Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, & being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross** (6-8). That's the death part. Jesus, the Son of God, became a man & came to the earth & went to the cross for

¹ Alister McGrath, *What Was God Doing on the Cross?* pp 51-52

our sins. But Paul went on, **For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, & bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven & on earth & under the earth, & that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (9-11).** Paul wrote that because not only did Jesus die as our Savior, He rose as our King. & the greatest glory God will ever receive is on the day when everyone & everything bows down to Jesus as the King who, through His resurrection, conquered sin & death & hell. Is this the image of Jesus we have? Is it the way our society sees Him?

1. The World's Jesus In our culture, when people do think of Jesus, He's thought of in ways that are sometimes biblical, but not complete. Because we don't think of Jesus as Christ the King, our perception of Him is distorted. Let's take a look at 4 snapshots from the life of Jesus that can include these distorted images. These are partial pictures of who He is.

A. Baby Jesus The 1st is that of baby Jesus lying in a manger. It's the Christmas story, where everyone is looking at Him saying, *He's so cute, what a sweet Baby.* Other than it's set in a stable, it doesn't look much different from what you see with any other family with a newborn baby with family & friends gathering around saying, *how cute!* Culturally speaking, baby Jesus is cute, but He's also weak & dependent. But there's one thing He is not in this picture: He's not any threat to our self-centered living or to our comfort zone. This *manger Jesus*, as the world sees Him, doesn't require anything from us. But the reality is different from that. In Mt 2, we read the story of the Magi who came bearing gifts. They weren't bringing gifts for a cute little newborn. They hadn't gone online to see what Mary put on her Amazon wish list. They understood that a King had been born, so the gifts they brought were fit for a king. Matthew also tells us that when the Magi arrived, Herod asked them what they were doing. They told him they were looking for the One who had been born the King of the Jews. Furious, Herod went on a killing spree murdering every male child under the age of 2 in the region. Why? Because he didn't think of Jesus as being a *cute little baby.* Yes, Jesus was born as a baby. He was born so that He might die for us. But He was also born as the conquering King.

B. Good Jesus Let's move forward 30 some years & look at the 2nd view of Jesus that's socially acceptable. This is good Jesus doing miracles & telling everyone to be kind & nice. In people's minds, He's kind of a mix of Mr Rogers & Ghandi with a little bit of super powers thrown in. He's healing people & says some good things. Again, this Jesus is absolutely no threat. This Jesus isn't only cute but also good. But that's not the Jesus of the Bible because when you read His story sometimes He doesn't fix everything. He's even kind of rude at times. In Jn 5 there's a story of a guy who had been an invalid for 38 years. One Sabbath, Jesus heals him, tells him to pick up his mat & walk. The Pharisees are angry because the guy is working on the Sabbath. So they call him in & question him, *Who healed you? Who told you to pick up your mat?* He didn't know so they let him go. As he leaves, walking through the temple, Jesus comes up to Him & says, *Quit sinning or something worse will happen to you!* (1-16). Because many people's image of Jesus is that He's so good & nice, we kind of ignore that. Sometimes Jesus wasn't very *nice*. Then there's the story of the woman who was caught in the act of adultery in Jn 8 who gets dragged before Jesus. The Pharisees come to Jesus & say, *The Law of Moses says we're supposed to stone her. Jesus, what do You say?* & Jesus says, *Moses was right. Whoever here is without sin, let him throw 1st stone.* & no one does. The accusers all walk away. & we read that story & think, *Can you believe that? Aww, Jesus is such a nice guy.* Except Jesus then turns to the woman & says, *Don't sin again. Goodbye* (1-11). No asking how she feels about the whole experience or what her family is going to do or if she needs a support group or counseling. Just, *Stop sinning. Goodbye.* He also cleanses the temple twice (Jn 2:13-25; Mt 21:12-17). Not the kind of Jesus the world is drawn to. Why did Jesus do this kind of thing? Was He just being mean? No, it's because Jesus didn't see Himself as Mr Fixit or Mr Nice Guy. He saw Himself as a He really was, as King. & when a king walks in & speaks the truth, he expects everyone to listen. That's why Jesus sometimes did it that way. But somehow society sees Jesus as nothing but cute & nice. Got a problem? *I'll just bring it to Jesus & He'll fix it & then I'll go on with my life.* Listen & don't hear what I'm not saying: Of course, Jesus can, & sometimes does, fix things. He is good, nice, & compassionate. But He always does & says things as the King who expects to be taken seriously.

C. Dying Jesus The 3rd image that a lot of people have is that of Jesus on the cross. For some, they see Him as a good guy who tried to change the world but got killed for it. For others it carries the idea of Jesus saying, *I really don't want you to sin but if you do, don't worry, it's OK. Sin is no big deal because I've already picked up the tab for you.* That's why a lot of people think, *I can live like hell because I have the cross, so I'm OK. I can live my life my way; I can do whatever & then, say, 'Oh, by the way, Jesus, I remember You dying on the cross, please forgive me' & then back to my own way again.* In this image of Jesus, it's almost like He needs you to keep sinning so He has a reason to die. Jesus is like a foolish father who bails you out time after time & never holds you accountable. I don't think anyone would say out loud they actually believe this about Jesus, but how else do you explain the thinking, *I can live like hell, then run to the cross because cute, good Jesus will say, 'It's OK. Let's hold hands, sing Kumbaya, & all is forgiven.'* This Jesus, just like cute & good Jesus is no threat to our selfishness & pride. But, again, the reality is so different. The death of Jesus on the cross doesn't mean sin is no big deal. His death, that He was in absolute control of from start to finish, actually means that sin is a huge deal. It's an offense against a holy God that is worthy of death. The Bible tells us that on the night He was betrayed, Jesus prayed to the Father 3x asking if there was another way to deal with this sin of the world. The Father's answer was there was no other way. To redeem the world, Jesus, God incarnate, must die. & not just like fall asleep & pass away in the middle of the night. He had to die a horrible death, experiencing God's wrath against our sins, knowing He was innocent, that He'd done nothing to deserve it. He had to die in the place of sinful people who actually deserved to die. Sin is a huge deal to God. Again, don't hear what I'm not saying. Jesus did give His life for our forgiveness & if you've placed your faith in Him as your Savior, He's paid for every sin you've ever committed, every sin you will commit, & sins that you don't even know you've committed. It's a done deal. But in return He says, *Be My devoted follower. Be My loyal slave. Take seriously what I take seriously.* & He says that because not only is He the Savior, He's also King.

D. Risen Jesus The final view the world has of Jesus that I want to mention is one that's associated with Easter & the resurrection. This is the ticket-to-heaven Jesus. You've seen this imagery, right?

Jesus is outside the tomb & kind of glowing. The Roman soldiers are looking in amazement & the implication that a lot of people draw from that imagery is that *Jesus beat death, so that means everyone will. It's all going to be fine. Heaven is for everyone because Jesus went before us.* Just like cute Jesus or good Jesus or dying Jesus, this Jesus doesn't impact our self-centered choices or comfort zone at all. He's just going to be there waiting for us when we die. &, until then, we don't need to worry about anything else He said or did because that was His main purpose, making it possible for us to get into heaven someday.

2. King Jesus What's amazing about all these pictures & cultural images is that even though they have their roots in Scripture, (I'm sure Jesus really was a cute baby; He was a miracle-working, good teacher; He did die on a Roman cross; & He did rise from the dead), none of those images come close to capturing all of who Jesus is. What does Jesus look like now? He's not the surfer dude we often picture. John tells us:

I saw heaven opened, & behold, a white horse, & He who sat on it *is* called Faithful & True, & in righteousness He judges & wages war. His eyes *are* a flame of fire, & on His head *are* many diadems; & He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, & His name is called The Word of God. & the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white & clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, & He will rule them with a rod of iron; & He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. & on His robe & on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, & LORD OF LORDS" (Rev 19:11-16).

This is the Jesus we celebrate today. This is the Jesus of the resurrection. This is the Jesus who one day is coming back as the King over this world & everything in it. That's not to say that Jesus isn't a caring & compassionate Savior. That's not to say we can't turn to Him no matter who we are & what we've done & receive forgiveness. It doesn't mean we need to cower in fear after we come to Him because now we might tick Him off & He might change His mind about forgiving our sins & lash out at us. Instead, it means that Jesus' compassion & forgiveness don't come from a position of weakness or helplessness. It comes from a position of power & strength, from the position of One who has the absolute right to judge & condemn anyone or anything that doesn't recognize His claim to kingdom authority. This is the King of kings prepared to go to battle for the Kingdom of God & for righteousness. This is a King you don't mess with. Only a fool would believe that Jesus

is cute, good, dying, ticket to Heaven guy, without also recognizing He's King of Kings & Lord of Lords.

As we know, God is the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1). He's perfectly holy, worthy of all worship, & will punish all sin (1 Jn 1:5, Rev 4:11, Rom 2:5-8). We also know that all people are sinful (Gen 1:26-28, Ps 51:5, Rom 3:23) & alienated from & hostile to God, & subject to His just wrath (Eph 2:1-3). That's a problem we can never solve. Thankfully, God solved it. He sent His Son, Jesus, who is fully God & fully man, to live a sinless life, to die on the cross & experience God's wrath that we deserve, & rise from the grave in order to give His people eternal life (Jn 1:1, 1 Tim 2:5, Heb 7:26, Rom 3:21-26, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Cor 15:20-22). Therefore, God calls everyone everywhere to repent of their sins & trust in Christ in order to be saved (Mk 1:15, Acts 20:21, Rom 10:9-10). That's the only way to be made right with God. You can never be good enough to earn salvation. But Jesus lived the perfect life that we can't live & He died the death we're supposed to die so we could be forgiven & live as His people for all eternity. & Jesus rose from the dead, conquering death & sin. His sacrifice was accepted by God on our behalf. He is alive & will never die again. That's our King!

So, what does His resurrection, His Kingship mean to each one of us? Jesus told His disciples after His resurrection, **All authority has been given to Me in heaven & on earth.** That's king talk, right? The believers who saw the risen Christ with their own eyes & touched Him with their hands spent the rest of their lives talking about the resurrection. Yes, they preached crucifixion & atonement but the message of the cross wasn't the most controversial thing they had to say. The claims the apostles made about Jesus's death were wildly scandalous, but they were persecuted & martyred not because of what they said about His death, but because of what they said happened next. The sermons in Acts are filled with the resurrection, showing over & over what His resurrection means for those who follow Christ. No one doubted that Jesus died, but they refused to believe He rose from the dead. The Jews weren't as offended by the cross as they were by the empty tomb. The largest stumbling block was a boulder, rolled away from the tomb that could not hold Him. King Jesus is not dead. & when He rose from the grave, He guaranteed for us the greatest realities in

the world. In 2020, as our King, here's what He's done, is doing, & will do for us, all because of His resurrection.

A. God has defeated death for you. Satan conspired with Judas, Pilate, & the Jewish leaders to kill the Author of life, but God raised Him from the dead (Acts 3:15), **putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power** (Acts 2:24). If you've put your faith in Jesus, death cannot hold you. Jesus said, **I am the resurrection & the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies** (Jn 11:25). Jesus rose to prove He'd defeated death. Until He rose, death seemed to win. **For the wages of sin is death** (Rom 6:23), & *none* is righteous, no, not one (Rom 3:10). So how could sinners have any hope of escaping death? God had promised everlasting life centuries before, but Jesus' resurrection revealed it was certain for His chosen, redeemed, & adopted children. Though many had lived & believed & died before Him, Jesus was the *firstborn* from the dead (Col 1:18). & if there's a *first*, God means for more to follow.

B. God has purchased all His promises for you. Jesus rose to prove the OT promises & warnings were truly from God. God's promises have always been the only hope for those living under the death penalty. But Jesus' resurrection brought those promises into high definition.

They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the 3rd day & granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us who ate & drank with Him after He arose from the dead.... *Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins* (Acts 10:39–43).

The promises simply seem too good to be true, until we see God raise Jesus from the dead. Suddenly, what seemed impossible to us was wonderfully possible & guaranteed by God Himself in His Son's resurrection.

C. God will judge every sin committed by you or against you. While Paul was waiting in Athens, he preached, **God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead** (Acts 17:30–31). Jesus rose to prove He'd one day judge all sins, every sin we've committed & every sin committed against us. When God raised Jesus from the dead, He made it clear that every sin would be punished: on the cross

for all who repent & believe & in judgment for all who refuse. If you're alive with Christ, there's now no condemnation for you (Rom 8:1), & no sin against you will be overlooked or excused by God.

D. God will restore everything wrong or broken. Peter calls his fellow Jews to Jesus, saying, **repent & return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; & that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time (Acts 3:19–21).** Jesus rose to prove He'd eventually return & make all things right. This pandemic gives evidence that this world is broken. & this Easter is another statement that our hope is as alive as Jesus is. The world will one day be rid of sin, including all its causes & consequences. In God's wise & loving plan, that day is not today. But today is a great day to stop beside the empty tomb, & remember what *will* be one day.

E. Your bondage to sin is great, but God really can set you free. In Acts 4, Peter healed a man lame from birth, telling him to walk in the healing power & name of Jesus. The priests came to arrest Peter & John, **being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people & proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2).** In custody & under trial, Peter boldly says,

let it be known to all of you & to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, **THE BUILDERS, *but* WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*.** & there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved (10–12).**

Jesus rose to prove that you really can be saved from your sin. No, you don't deserve salvation & you could never achieve it in your own strength. If Christ did not rise from the dead, hope would have lain next to Him in the grave. But He is not dead & therefore we have hope. Even in, especially in, uncertain times we have hope because of living King Jesus. Our sins condemn us to everlasting judgment (Mt 13:41–42; Rev 14:11) & enslave us to death (Rom 6:16–20; Eph 2:1). But Jesus Christ rose from the dead to cancel our debt, nailing it to the cross (Col 2:14), setting us free from sin for the glory of God. Paul preaches about the resurrection,

David ... fell asleep, & was laid among his fathers & underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins

is proclaimed to you, & through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses (Acts 13:36–39).

For our forgiveness & freedom, Christ has died, risen, & set us free (Gal 5:1). That's our King.

F. God will not only rescue you, but people from all over the world. Jesus was the promised Messiah of Israel, but He didn't die & rise only for Jews. Again, Paul preaches, **I stand to this day testifying both to small & great, stating nothing but what the Prophets & Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, & that by reason of *His* resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the *Jewish* people & to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22–23).** Jesus rose to prove God had chosen people from everywhere in the world, not just from Israel, but from Asia, Africa, & America, too. His blood is sufficient to purchase people from every tribe & language & people & nation (Rev 5:9). His death not only reconciles us to God, but reconciles us to one another across every conceivable barrier & boundary. & His resurrection is powerful enough to hold out hope to people everywhere on earth. Jesus isn't only the King of the Jews, He's the King of all people.

G. No evil can disrupt God's good plans for you. The death of Jesus looked like the greatest defeat. Instead of ascending to a throne & conquering His enemies, the promised King had been humiliated & crucified. But at the precise moment when it looked like evil had won, God was accomplishing His greatest victory. As Peter preaches to the Jewish officials, he says Jesus was **delivered over by the predetermined plan & foreknowledge of God, He was nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men & you put *Him* to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power** (Acts 2:22–24). Jesus rose to prove that God is sovereign even over the worst evil in the world (Acts 2:23). In the ultimate act of rebellion & injustice, God was, with love & grace, saving His people. & by raising His Son from the dead He promised to work all things, including the hardest & most painful things in your life, for the good of His children. Jesus isn't just a cute Baby, a good Teacher, a dying Savior, or a risen get-out-of-hell-free-card guy. He is King of kings.

We serve a risen Savior. We serve a risen & reigning King. Yes, the events of the world today can trouble & hurt us. The economy can tank. We may be isolated, lonely, anxious, & uncertain. Loved

ones may die. But that's the worst it can do, because Christ the King is risen from the grave. This virus can never separate us from God's love (Rom 8:31-39). It can never remove our unshakable hope of a far greater country in the life hereafter, where every tear will be wiped away & where sickness, sorrow, sin, & death will be obliterated forever as Jesus makes all things new (Rev 21:4-5). The evil of this world can't change the fact that God's already blessed us with every spiritual blessing, promised us an unfading inheritance, & positionally seated us in the heavens with the living King, Christ Himself (Eph 1:3-14; 2:1-6). The world may look scary to us, but in the grand scheme of things its influence is very limited. One day God will effortlessly sweep covid-19 away along with every other sickness, pain, trial, & atrocity of this life, & He'll replace it with all that is good & pure & joyful. & the greatest news imaginable is that you & I will be there to see it, because Christ the King is risen from the grave.

Yes, Easter is a little different this year. But that's okay, because Easter isn't really about traditions. It's not about family gatherings or Easter egg hunts or special services. It's about the fact that King Jesus is risen from the grave, & on the basis of His death & resurrection, He promises eternal life to all who trust in Him. So whatever happens over the next few months, we can completely trust Him. Even if everything in this life comes crumbling down around you, you can cling to the real Jesus, Christ the King, the wonder-working Savior, who triumphed over death & redeems all that is broken & undone. **He is risen! He is risen indeed.** PRAY

For a good reminder of who our King is, watch the video below as Dr. Shadrach Meshach Lockridge talks about our King. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE>

As always, if there's anything I or the elders can do for you, if you have prayer or physical needs, don't hesitate to let us know. I look forward to seeing you all in person at some point of time in the future. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, & into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you (1 Pt 1:3-4).**