



He's Alive! (John 19:31-20:31)

Today we see dig up the cornerstone of Christian claims, that the death of Jesus was not the end; ***He's Alive!*** IF this story is *TRUE*, its power shouldn't be diluted just because you are familiar with it.

* All Scripture is from the CSB (Christian Stand Bible) unless otherwise noted.

Catch the Context *We finished up last week with these powerful last words of Jesus before He died:*

"It is finished." (Jn 20:30)

The debt had been paid in full for all who would turn from sin and trust in Jesus and His payment. We can KNOW that our sin is forgiven - **it is finished!** And with those words, Jesus breathe His last. The sun was just a few hours from going down and the Jewish Sabbath would begin, a time when people would rest from work.

John 19:31-37 ³¹ Since it was the preparation day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special day). They requested that Pilate have the men's legs broken and that their bodies be taken away. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with him. ³³ When they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵ He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. ³⁶ For these things happened **so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: *Not one of his bones will be broken.*** ³⁷ Also, another Scripture says: ***They will look at the one they pierced.***

Romans used a large iron mallet which **broke the legs** of the victim. A crucified skeleton (found in 1968) had both his left calf bones (tibia and fibula) fractured while his right tibia (largest calf bone) was completely shattered.¹ This brutal action was not only incredibly painful and caused more blood loss, but it meant the man could no longer push up to catch his breath, leading to a quick death. But they **they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead.** Just to make sure Jesus was dead, **one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear.**

It is clear that Jesus being **pierced** so that **blood and water came out** is important to John (the author), but not all scholars agree WHY John highlights this. The writer notes that **he is telling the truth.** What's the POINT? **Jesus is DEAD. He is not faking it.**

All this all occurs on Passover weekend. Check out the imagery! Just as during the Exodus from Egypt, the Lamb of God has been slain so that God might PASS-OVER those who trust Him with their sin (instead of judge them guilty for their sin). The reality that Jesus really is DEAD is so significant because of the claim that John, the **one who saw this**, is about to make.

* False teachers denied the Messiah was really human, teaching that he only appeared to be so (see 1 John 2:22-23; 4:2-4; 5:5-6), so the Messiah could not really die, but only appeared to die. John here wants his readers to realize that the royal Messiah was truly human and had truly died.²

See the Symbolism? At this point of Passover, the people in Jerusalem have killed and eaten the unblemished lamb, just as their ancestors had done back in Egypt. They recalled how the blood of the lamb was put on the doorpost of each home in Egypt, which:

- 1) protected them from God's judgment
- 2) released them from bondage.

During the butchering of the lamb, the families were careful not to break any of its bones.

Exodus 12:46 ⁴⁶ It is to be eaten in one house. You may not take any of the meat outside the house, and **you may not break any of its bones.**

All this pointed TO what Jesus went through that day! The Lamb of God had taken the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29).

¹ N. Haas, "Anthropological Observations on the Skeletal Remains from Giv'at ha-Mivtar," IEJ 20 (1970): 38-59 (includes numerous sketches and photographs).

² Grant R. Osborne, John: Verse by Verse, ed. Jeffrey Reimer et al., Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 446.

Further, John mentions another prophecy fulfilled from Scripture, from Zechariah 12:10. This passage speaks of unbelieving Israel looking on God's representative, **the one they have pierced**, and mourning for their unbelief. That's what happened THAT day. We see this happen over a month later in Acts 2 as Peter confronts his Jewish people with this reality.

Acts 2:36-37 ³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, **whom you crucified**, both Lord and Messiah." ³⁷ When they heard this, **they were pierced to the heart** and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brothers, what should we do?"

This will continue to be the case for Jews who realize their people were responsible for crucifying their Messiah (see Rev. 1:7).

John 19:38-42 ³⁸ After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus—but secretly because of his fear of the Jews—asked Pilate that he might remove Jesus's body. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and took his body away. ³⁹ Nicodemus (who had previously come to him at night) also came, bringing a mixture of about seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes. ⁴⁰ They took Jesus's body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the fragrant spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ There was a garden in the place where he was crucified. A new tomb was in the garden; no one had yet been placed in it. ⁴² They placed Jesus there because of the Jewish day of preparation and since the tomb was nearby.

Joseph & Nicodemus (2 secret disciples of Jesus & members of the Sanhedrin - the Jewish Supreme Court who handed Jesus over to the Romans for crucifixion) did something sacrificial. Instead of allowing Jesus' body to be thrown into a common grave with other criminals, they treated his body like a KING; cleaning His body, wrapping it in cloth, adding expensive sticky fragrances, and placing Him in Joseph's new family tomb, in fulfillment to a 700 year old prophecy.

Isaiah 53:9 (CSB) ⁹ He was assigned a **grave** with the wicked, but **he was with a rich man at his death**, because he had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully.

Just 1 sundown before that, Jesus was having dinner with his disciples. Their KING was gone and they were confused & scared. HOW could this happen to their Master, the ONE they thought could be the Messiah? And now...what would happen to THEM? Mary and the other female disciples were distraught too, but they looked forward to the first day of the week, the day following Sabbath, because they wanted to give Jesus one last moment of honor, to anoint his body one more time. So...

John 20:1 (CSB) ¹ On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark. She saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, & Luke) note that the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb were nowhere to be seen. When Mary (John doesn't mention the other ladies present) looked in the tomb, Jesus' body is gone (Luke 24:1-3).

Mary runs to Peter and John to tell them that Jesus' body has been taken. They go see the site for themselves, but upon arrival, they see something they WEREN'T expecting to see: the body of Jesus wasn't there, but *the grave clothes WERE* (John 20:3-6). Why would someone steal the body of Jesus, and yet take the time to peel off the sticky grave clothes? And there was something else strange.

John 20:7 (CSB) ⁷ The wrapping that had been on his head was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a separate place by itself.

It's at that point that John writes that **he believes**, but they still don't fully get it. They did NOT understand that Jesus had to raise from the dead. Still confused, Peter & John went back to where they were staying (Jn 20:9-10).

John 20:11-13 (CSB) ¹¹ But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. As she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² She saw **two angels** in white sitting where Jesus's body had been lying, **one at the head and the other at the feet**. ¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "Because they've taken away my Lord," she told them, "and I don't know where they've put him."

What Mary saw when she looked in the tomb is strikingly similar to those who are familiar with the Old Testament, and this is probably not by accident.

Exodus 25:19-20 (CSB) ¹⁹ Make **one cherub at one end** and **one cherub at the other end**. At its two ends, make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat. ²⁰ The cherubim are to have wings spread out above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and are to face one another. The faces of the cherubim should be toward the mercy seat.

The **mercy seat** was recognized as God's throne, the place where the blood of the sacrifice was placed to atone for the peoples' sin on *Yom Kippur* (The Day of Atonement).

The Ark of the Covenant was an image representing what MARY saw THAT day! The angels were sitting on the mercy seat, the very place where the lamb of God had been placed!

John 20:14-18 (CSB) ¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus. ¹⁵ "Woman," Jesus said to her, "why are you crying? Who is it that you're seeking?" Supposing he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you've carried him away, tell me where you've put him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." Turning around, she said to him in Aramaic, "*Rabboni!*"—which means "Teacher." ¹⁷ "Don't cling to me," Jesus told her, "since I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "**I have seen the Lord!**" And she told them what he had said to her.

Jesus tells Mary not to cling to him. They had more work to do. She was to go tell the other disciples His message, and that's exactly what she does. Later that same evening, the disciples were locked away, still afraid of those who had handed Jesus over to the Romans for crucifixion. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there with them and saying...

John 20:19-20 (CSB) ¹⁹ ...Peace be with you." ²⁰ Having said this, he showed them his hands and his side. So **the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.**

And from then on, these formerly distraught, confused, scared followers of Jesus were transformed into focused, empowered, bold, and unashamed followers of Jesus. **HE'S ALIVE became their anthem and the rhythm of their lives.** They would never be the same...and WE shouldn't be either!

BIG TRUTH: Believers should Be Living like Jesus is ALIVE.

John 20:21-23 ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. **As the Father has sent me, I also send you.**" ²² After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Jesus sent His disciples as HIS AMBASSADORS to share the GOOD NEWS, just like HE had. They were to teach their disciples to do the same thing. The Lord then gave them a taste of the Holy Spirit's Presence, whom they would experience in fullness on Pentecost (see Acts 2) **as he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

D.A. Carson and John Calvin's³ note that "the disciples are here sprinkled with the grace of the Spirit, but not saturated with his full endowment of power until Acts 2."⁴

"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." As Jesus' ambassadors, the apostles had the privilege and responsibility to offer forgiveness to the lost world. Then, like judges, they could hand down the declaration: "**You are FREE**" or "**You are CONDEMNED.**"

- To those who turned from sin and turned to Jesus the apostles could communicate "Your **sins...are forgiven!**"
- But to those who refused to repent, they would say, "Your **sins...are retained**" - NOT FORGIVEN. * See the significance of 'binding' & 'loosing' in Matt. 16:19; 18:18).

Thomas wasn't around when Jesus showed Himself to the others. But a week later...

John 20:27-29 ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don't be faithless, but **believe.**" ²⁸ Thomas responded to him, "My Lord and **my God!**" ²⁹ Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.**"

What did Thomas say!? Thomas called Jesus his **Lord** - authority, boss, ruler; but he also calls Jesus his **God!**

If Jesus were NOT God, this would be the perfect time to correct this mixed up idea. Instead, Jesus affirms what Thomas claims by saying, "**You have believed.**" He has believed WHAT? That **Jesus is ALIVE**, and that Jesus is his **Lord** and his **God**.

And then Jesus calls **those who have not seen and yet believed...blessed.** Who is THAT? That's people like YOU and ME - those who agree with Thomas and believe that **Jesus is ALIVE** and that He is **our Lord** and **our God!**

BIG TRUTH: Believers should Be Living like Jesus is ALIVE.

³ John Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John, vol. 2* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 268-269.

⁴ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 650.

The author has completed the reason for his writing, showing who Jesus is by 7 signs:

- 1) Turning Water into Wine (Jn 2:1-11)
- 2) Healing the Official's Son (Jn 4:46-54)
- 3) Healing the Lame Man of 38 years (John 5:1-15)
- 4) Feeding the Multitude (John 6:1-15)
- 5) Walking on water (John 6:16-21)
- 6) Healing the man blind from birth (John 9:1-7)
- 7) Raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-45)

But this last sign is the greatest of all time! HE'S ALIVE!

John 20:30-31 ³⁰ Jesus performed **many other signs** in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that **by believing you may have life in His Name**.

Are you a BELIEVER? There's one quick way to tell.

BIG TRUTH: Believers should Be Living like Jesus is ALIVE.

- ➡ **Ask Yourself: Does MY life demonstrate that Jesus is alive?** Do I SHOW that I'm a Christian and not just SAY that I'm a Christian?
- ➡ **DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?** Great! We don't want you to believe what we say just because we say it! We want to help you EXAMINE the EVIDENCE! If you will send Jackie, Justin, or Christy a TEXT this week, one of us WILL touch base with you today or tomorrow.

* **Want to talk further?** Please contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon! Or call our **deacons & wives**: Tom & Martha Waddail, Steve & Debbie Bass, Freddy & Joyce Howard, Jere & Darlene Burnette, Alan & Christy Androski, Willy & Melissa Gamalero.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What challenged or encouraged you from today's teaching? (Look back over your notes and share!)
2. Look back at these Scriptural prophecies & fulfillments: Exodus 12:46 & Jn 19:36; Zech 12:10, Jn 20:37, Acts 2:36-37, Rev 1:7; Isaiah 53:9 & Jn 19:38-42, Ex 25:19-20 & Jn 20:11-13. Take some time some time to share how Jesus so powerfully fulfilled them and how that impacts you.
3. Have you ever considered or studied theories that discount the resurrection of Jesus (e.g. swoon theory, stolen body theory, hallucination theory)? If so, share which ones and why you were or were not convinced.
4. Read **John 20:11-12** & **Exodus 25:19-20**. Do you find the similarity to the Ark of the Covenant and what Mary saw in the tomb (2 angels) to be significant? Explain your answer.
5. What does the resurrection appearance of Jesus first to Mary (and the other ladies), and his command for her to tell his male disciples, say about how Jesus values females?
6. Read **1 Corinthians 15** and answer this question: Why is the resurrection of Jesus the cornerstone of Christianity and what would it mean if Jesus did NOT raise from the dead?
7. What daily difference does the resurrection of Jesus make in YOUR life? What are some evidences that demonstrate that you live like **Jesus is ALIVE & He is your Lord & God?**
8. Pray for one another this week. Consider texting or calling same sex believers to pray and share together this week.

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