

The Work Of Jesus: The Savior Of The World

"Life Foundations: Christian Faith Essentials", Part 5

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THE BIG IDEA: JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN PROVIDE SALVATION FROM SIN AND ETERNAL LIFE TO ALL WHO BELIEVE!

'And there is salvation in no one else [other than Jesus Christ]; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among, by which we must be saved.' (Acts 4:12, NASB)

Six Key Stages Of The Existence Of Jesus Christ

(Reviewing the first three covered last time, covering the last three today)

I) THE PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST: BEFORE HE CAME TO EARTH AS THE "GOD-MAN"

- 1) The PRE-EXISTENCE of Jesus Christ: He existed before His birth.
- 2) The ETERNALITY of Jesus Christ: He existed well before His birth— always, eternally.
- 3) The PRE-INCARNATE ACTIVITY of Jesus Christ: Active in creation and as the Angel of the Lord.

II) THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST: CONCEIVED AND BORN AS THE "GOD-MAN"

- 1) Jesus Christ took upon Himself HUMAN FLESH at birth, yet without sin.
- 2) The incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ was PREDICTED in the Scriptures.
- 3) The incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ events...
- 4) The incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ as the "GOD-MAN". ("Hypostatic Union")
- 5) The incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ involved His "SELF EMPTYING". ("Kenosis")
- 6) The incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ maintained His INABILITY to sin. ("Impeccability")

III) THE LIFE OF CHRIST ON EARTH: THE MINISTRY OF THE "GOD-MAN"

His birth, CHILDHOOD, ADULTHOOD, MINISTRY, JUDEA, GALILEE, JERUSALEM.

IV) THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: HIS SACRIFICE FOR SIN

(adapted and modified from C. Ryrie, "Basic Theology", p.267-269)

1) Meaning: Christ's death on the cross PAID for mankind's sins, RESTORING US to God.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us... we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son... (Romans 5:8, 10b, NASB)

2) Method: Christ's death on the cross was offered in OUR PLACE and on our behalf.

For Christ died for sins once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God... (1 Peter 3:18a, NIV)

3) Means: Christ's death was ultimately the WILL of God, not the result of man or cruel fate.

...Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will. (Mark 14:36b, NIV)

4) Christ's resurrection is absolutely ESSENTIAL to our faith, not optional.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith... (1 Corinthians 15:14, NIV)

5) Christ rose in the SAME body He died in, only now it was GLORIFIED.

"The Same Post-Resurrection Body..."

Recognized by people (John 20:20)
Wounds from crucifixion retained (John 20:25-29)
Capacity to eat food... (Luke 24:30-33, 41-43)
Breathed on His disciples (John 20:22)
Body had flesh and bones (Luke 24:39-40)

"...But Now A Glorified Body"

Could move through physical barriers (Luke 24:36)
Could appear and disappear at will (John 20:19)
...But did not need to eat (Luke 24:30-33, 41-43)
Apparently unlimited by physical needs
Held the glory of God (Revelation 1:12-16)

6) Christ's resurrection serves as a PROTOTYPE for our resurrection.

But Christ indeed has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:20, NIV)

*So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable...
It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.* (1 Corinthians 15:42,44, NIV)

But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2b, NIV)

7) Christ's death initiated our JUSTIFICATION before God, His resurrection completed it.

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. (Romans 4:25, NIV)

V) THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST: CHRIST'S RETURN TO HEAVEN

(adapted and modified from C. Ryrie, "Basic Theology", p.270)

1) The ascension of Christ was **PREDICTED** in the Old Testament.

When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men... (Psalm 68:18, NIV)

The Lord says to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'
(Psalm 110:1, NIV)

2) The ascension of Christ was **FULFILLED** in the New Testament.

After he had said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going... (Acts 1:9-10a, NIV)

3) The ascension of Christ was **SIGNIFICANT**: It allowed Christ to continue His ministry.

VI) THE POST-ASCENSION MINISTRY OF CHRIST: CHRIST'S RETURN TO HEAVEN

(adapted and modified from C. Ryrie, "Basic Theology", p.270-274)

1) Christ's **PRESENT** ministry in heaven: What He is doing now.

a) He sends the **HOLY SPIRIT** to all who believe.

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you. (John 16:7, NIV)

b) He serves as **HEAD OF HIS BODY**, the church.

...which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms... and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body...

(Ephesians 1:20,22-23a, NIV)

c) He serves as **HIGH PRIEST**, interceding for believers.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus Christ the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses... (Hebrews 4:14-15a, NIV)

d) He sets up a **HOME IN HEAVEN** prepared for believers.

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2, NIV)

2) Christ's **FUTURE** ministry in heaven: What He will do in the future.

(Much more will be covered in "Eschatology", the study of last things, towards end of this series).

a) He will **RAISE ALL THE DEAD** back to life and send them to their eternal destiny.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 = NT saints, Daniel 12:2 = OT saints, Revelation 20:5 = unbelievers)

b) He will **REWARD ALL PEOPLE** according to their works in judgment.

(1 Corinthians 3:11-15 = believers, Revelation 20:11-15 = unbelievers)

c) He will **RULE THE WORLD** in righteousness, beginning with His Millennial Reign on earth.

(Predicted to David: 2 Samuel 7:16, Fulfilled in the Millennium: Revelation 20:4-6)

VII) JESUS CHRIST GOD'S SON, SAVIOR: A FINAL SUMMARY

(adapted and modified from C. Ryrie, "Basic Theology", p.254-259)

1) Jesus Christ is the great PROPHET: He is the ultimate spokesman "for God to us".

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.
(Hebrews 1:1-2, NIV)

2) Jesus Christ is the great PRIEST: He is our ultimate spokesman "to God for us".

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.
(Hebrews 7:25-26, NIV)

3) Jesus Christ is the great KING: He is the ultimate ruler of all.

But about the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.'
(Hebrews 1:8, NIV)

SUMMARY THOUGHT: OUR ONLY RESPONSE TO THE GREAT ACT OF SACRIFICE, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST IS A LIFE THAT WORSHIPS HIM!

VIII) QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS OR FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- 1) When you think about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, do you think about the event as mostly showing God's power, fulfilling God's promise, or playing the key role in justifying us before God? Discuss each aspect and how each is vital to the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday.
- 2) The term "ascension" is sometimes confused with "resurrection". From what you learned in this session, define each and describe the difference between the two.
- 3) What surprised you most about the post-ascension activity of Christ? What did you find familiar?
- 4) What are some ways you can appreciate Christ as your Savior who made the way for you to spend eternity in heaven (can there be an easier question!)? Find two or three ways in which you can apply this session to your life.