

Restore Small Group Questions - Authority Triumphant [Easter 2025] - 4/20/2025

INTRODUCTION: The reality of Easter is that Jesus defeated death and drew all men unto himself. How is this true?

John 10:17-18 (NIV) tells us: *“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life —only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”* - Jesus has the authority to take life up again based on the command He received from the Father....for this, the Father loves Him. Here is what Jesus did.

SCRIPTURES and KEY POINTS:

- I. **Jesus Controlled His death** - Looking at it from the outside looking in, one might believe Jesus was not in control of His death — He was arrested, tried, wrongfully convicted, abandoned, rejected, tortured and crucified. Conversations and confrontations with Pilate, Pilates soldiers and the Jewish religious leaders illustrate that, in fact, Jesus was in control of the situation and His death.
- **John 19:10-11(NIV)** - *“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” 11 Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”* Jesus overrode Pilate’s claims that he (Pilate) had the final say in life and death and that the full weight of the Roman Empire was behind him and no one could stop him. Jesus told Pilate that he would have no power if it were not given to him from above. Supernatural over natural!
- **Matthew 27:27-31 (NIV)** - *“Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”* Mocked, Beaten, Spat upon, stripped, Crown of thorns....nothing in the natural would say Jesus is in control.
- **Matthew 27:38-43 (NIV)** - *Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” 41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”* The religious leaders mocked, insulted and taunted Jesus to use His power to come down from the cross. In the natural, no one came down from the cross alive!
- **Matthew 26:53-54 (NIV)** - *Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”* - Again, in the natural, it

looked as if Jesus was not in control but in the supernatural, He was restraining Himself.

- **John 19:30-34 (NIV)** - *When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water."* Jesus died on His own terms....when He was ready, forestalling suffocation and broken legs. Those involved in crucifying Jesus had the illusion they were in control by (1) choosing to beat, mock and execute Jesus and, (2) eliminating the threat to Rome and the Jews that Jesus posed. Likewise, we too can have the illusion we are in control...we treat Jesus as we wish in this life but it doesn't change Jesus whose authority over all creation stands.

II. Jesus' Contract with the Father - However, controlling his own destiny was NOT enough to secure "all authority over heaven and earth. What was needed was for Jesus to fulfill the CONTRACT between Jesus (on our behalf) with God the Father. That contract was fulfilled on the cross through His willingness to lay down His life. No longer do we have to sacrifice animals to atone for sins as we were powerless to perfect our lives on our own as noted in the Book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 10:1-4 (NIV) - *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.*

2 *Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. 4 It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.* It was impossible because the sacrifices didn't fulfill and make us right with God and sacrifices were a constant reminder of the effect of sin.

Hebrews 10:5-10 (NIV) - *Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; 6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. 7 Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'" 8 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"—though they were offered in accordance with the law. 9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* Because of Jesus willingness to lay down His life we have been made holy! The Old Testament contract has been fulfilled...now, we must fulfill our side of the contract with God the Father by being obedient.

Philippians 2:8 (NIV) - *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even on the cross.*

1 John 3:5 (NIV) - *But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins, and in him there is no sin.*

1 Timothy 2:5-6 (NIV)- *For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus. 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all the people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.*

Jesus fulfilled our side of the contract with God the Father...a contract that we could never fulfill, never measure up to, and a level of perfection we could never attain.

III. Jesus Commanded His Resurrection - Jesus authority came in on that first Easter with His own resurrection that declared the legitimacy to His claim “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” We must listen to the one who defeats death because it affects our lives every day to be honest and triumphant.

1 Corinthians 15:17-20 (NIV) - *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 (NIV) - *Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.*

25 *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.* Jesus transfers the kingdom to the Father after conquering all enemies....the last of which is death, but until then Jesus will reign in all authority.

CONCLUSION - For those who put their faith and trust in Jesus, they will reap great rewards as noted in Romans Chapter 8.... But the rewards require an obligation.

Romans 8:11-17 (NIV) - *And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. 12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. 14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

- As children of God we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ but the condition (obligation) is that we share in his sufferings so that we can share in His glory.
- Our obligation must be done in Love for Jesus and with a desire to live our life in purity, holiness, humility and repentance. When we struggle, the Holy Spirit will instill a “want to” within us...not a “have to”.
- While there is still time left on this earth, you and I have the ability to misunderstand, question, ignore and fight Jesus authority...but when the end comes, everyone will submit to Jesus’ authority.
- Jesus controlled his own death, fulfilled our contract with the Father and commanded His own resurrection...this is why “every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus is Lord” — — — Why wait - tomorrow is not promised!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the resurrection of Jesus is important? Why is it pivotal to every believer's right standing before God?
2. Describe the contract between Jesus and His Father and how it was fulfilled.
3. What does it mean that Jesus Christ conquered death? What are the consequences for us now and into eternity?
4. Paul says that the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11); this is the same Spirit that dwells in us. Discuss the confidence that we have as believers for our own resurrection because of the Spirit living within us.
5. Based on the scriptures above, discuss how and why Jesus died on His own terms and not on the terms of the Romans or Jewish leaders.
6. What did Jesus need to do to secure "all authority over heaven and earth"? Discuss the difference between Old Testament atonement and New Testament atonement. Why were the animal sacrifices of the OT not sufficient, but Jesus sacrifice was?
7. As children of God we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ but the condition (obligation) is that we share in his sufferings so that we can share in His glory. What is that obligation? Is it a battle between the flesh and the Spirit; between life and death? Is the obligation a "Want to" versus a "Have to"?
8. Being a co-heir with Christ serves as a powerful reminder to believers of their identity in Christ. Discuss the important aspects of our identity in Christ. How does that affect our day to day transformative relationship with the Holy Spirit?
9. 1 Corinthians 15:24-26 speaks about a 'transfer' of the Kingdom of God from Jesus to the Father. What are the conditions of this transfer? Why does the transfer need to occur?