

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Topical Bulletin, April 2022

During this month, we Christians will celebrate Easter Day, the feast of the resurrection of our Lord. Accordingly, the timely topic for this bulletin is: **Why Jesus Christ's resurrection is truly important.**

Before we can consider the importance of Christ's resurrection, we must understand exactly what Jesus' resurrection actually consisted of, since all sorts of falsehoods are promulgated concerning the event. The Holy Bible provides us with the full truth concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as we shall presently see; for, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." (Matthew 28:1-15)

Comment: Observe in the above Scripture quotation that the tomb where the Lord's body had been laid – after His crucifixion, death and burial – was now empty. Additionally, a holy angel informed the women that JESUS IS RISEN. The place where the Lord had lain was no longer occupied by His lifeless body, for He was indeed risen back to life. Furthermore, as the women departed and ran to bring Jesus' disciples the good news of His resurrection; Jesus, Himself, met those ladies and they held Him by the feet. However, Jesus' high-church enemies, among the Jews, bribed some of the Roman soldiers who had been guarding the tomb, paying them to lie and say that Jesus' disciples came during the night and stole Jesus' body (as if the disciples could actually pull-off such a stunt against professional armed Roman soldiers). Nevertheless, the lie continued to be commonly reported among the Jews, and it still is; but, lies do NOT change the facts. It is plainly evident that Jesus' resurrection did occur and was His BODILY resurrection. JESUS LIVES!

“And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24:36-48)

Comment: Notice that on the first Easter evening, Jesus visibly appeared to His disciples, who had failed to believe what the women, and two of His disciples, who had met Him on the way to the village of Emmaus, had reported concerning His bodily resurrection. The disciples were gathered together when Jesus appeared that evening, standing in their midst. At first, the disciples thought they were seeing Jesus’ ghost, an apparition, a spirit, a phantom, and they were scared. However, Jesus subsequently invited them to handle His body, consider His wounds from His crucifixion, and thereby see for themselves that He was truly alive. Jesus even ate food in their presence, which surely proved He is a real, living, human being: the same God-man and Savior the twelve had known and studied under for over three years. Therefore, it is again plainly evident that Jesus’ resurrection DID occur and was His BODILY resurrection. JESUS LIVES!

Now that we have been assured by Holy Scripture that Jesus Christ’s resurrection DID occur and was His BODILY resurrection, we will specifically focus on the timely topic: **Why Jesus Christ’s resurrection is truly important.** Again, the Holy Bible will supply the answers we need.

**“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”
(1 Corinthians 15:1-8)**

Comment: The apostle Paul, by inspiration of God, informs us that the Gospel he preached was the message of Christ’s dying for our sins, followed by Christ’s burial and His bodily resurrection the third day, in accord with God’s Word— the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, it was clearly foretold of old in Holy Writ, when David the psalmist wrote by inspiration of God, “thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” (Psalm 16:10) Additionally, hundreds of people saw Jesus alive after His resurrection, as we read above in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. It’s a fact: JESUS LIVES!

Holy Writ informs us that Jesus our Lord is He, **“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Romans 4:25)**

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” (Romans 6:9-10)

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” (1 Corinthians 15:12-17)

Comment: Note the vital importance of Jesus Christ’s bodily resurrection, for the fact of Christ’s resurrection is proof-positive that He truly paid for our sins, in full; and, that we, too, will be raised to life eternal, according to body and soul, on the Last Day. Jesus promised His followers in John 14:19, “Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.” Fellow Christians, because Christ lives forever, we, too, shall live forever!

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” (1 Corinthians 15:19-23)

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:25-29)

Comment: Jesus gives spiritual life to spiritually dead folks by means of His Word, His Gospel in particular. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17) “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17) Furthermore, Jesus Christ’s bodily resurrection is proof that ALL people will be raised back to life, when Jesus visibly comes to earth again to judge the world. “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” (Revelation 1:7)

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend

into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Romans 10:4-11)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5)

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:53-57)

Comment: Note well that only those who heartily believe in the living Lord Jesus Christ, as their personal Savior, will be raised to eternal life; while all unbelievers will be raised to shame, as they are sentenced to never-ending death in hell, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark 9:44) Indeed, it’s a fact, for Holy Writ declares: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16-18) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John 3:36) “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16) Yes, ALL sincere believers in Jesus Christ will come forth unto the resurrection of life; while ALL unbelievers will come forth unto the resurrection of damnation!

JESUS LIVES! JESUS IS LORD! JESUS IS THE ONE TRUE SAVIOR OF SINNERS! Accordingly, **Jesus Christ’s resurrection is truly important.** “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Romans 5:6-10) “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” (Romans 8:34) Therefore, let us rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior lives and reigns to all eternity, for from God’s Holy, inerrant Word, we know: **Why Jesus Christ’s resurrection is truly important.**

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