

“If They Had Known ...”

Introduction:

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, such a major focus in scripture indeed. In the OT there are many pointers looking forward to that astounding event. In the NT most are looking back in time to that transforming event, although so much of the NT is closely focused on how the resurrection of our Lord Jesus has changed everything for us all now, today, and always.

So, it is not because Christ is dead, that he has died, that we are remembering our Lord Jesus today, but because he is risen — and become the first fruits of them that have fallen asleep (1 Cor. 15).

Our faith is not in a dead Christ Jesus but in our living Lord. Surely, we would not be celebrating on this resurrection Sunday at all if it were not for Christ's death on Calvary.

Yes, many do celebrate on this day worldwide (billions even) who do not know the good news of salvation by grace through faith alone — but we who know such blessed news are focused today on the miracle of salvation and how the resurrection of our Lord Jesus certifies, authenticates, and even brings to reality for us sinners the full benefit of Christ's sacrifice and death.

Indeed, we have been granted a full and free forgiveness of all of our sin and sins and in addition also have received the gift of his perfect righteousness! Amen and amen. So this resurrection signifies so much more than what many have come to know who know not our Lord Jesus as savior and redeemer.

Our Scripture Today:

1 Cor. 2:6-10

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known [it], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed [them] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

The prophetic record was all about Israel and God's redemptive plan for them though it was clear that before Israel was constituted salvation was available as Abraham's faith had proven so clearly. But that the Gentiles might be saved independently of Israel would have been, Paul writes here, too much for the princes of this world, whether in the heavenlies, or on this earth. Now that is something to ponder indeed and I pray that God would give us understanding of the great blessings granted to us Gentiles according to the riches of his abundant grace, even the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. Amen.

1 Cor. 15:1-4 [The grace gospel]

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve ...

...

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

There is much here in this few simple words, yet words that have turned the world upside down (or rather the opposite). Christ died FOR OUR SINS, was buried, and was raised bodily and physically from the dead. And then six witnesses are listed, the last being the apostle Paul. WITNESSES! Those that testified, even, in many cases (most?) unto death, for the word translates witness here is the same word as sometimes translated martyr!

The message of the coming redeemer is an old message indeed even though so few, sadly, have come to know and love it. Blindness is deep and so wide spread in this dark world. But the message of the coming redeemer is a message that was from the very beginning opposed by Satan with his murders and lying wonders. It is a message that was formulated even before the foundation of the world, even in eternity past, and is an essential part of the redemptive plan of Almighty God. For before Man was formed from the dust of the earth, before Adam was created and given life by the breath of God, the Lord God knew Adam and had already anticipated his eventual fall and rebellion. And, his redemption was already part of the plan of the ages.

My focus today will be on the TESTIMONY of the resurrection was given from the beginning. . . BY GOD HIMSELF (both before and after Adam's fall), ADAM

through ABEL, through ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB, JOB, DAVID and ISAIAH among many others ... And then through John the baptizer and in due time, through CHRIST himself. THE TWELVE carried the witness and the testimony on after Pentecost and finally, PAUL (out of due time) was saved. ... THE TESTIMONY CONTINUES STILL TODAY.

What Did They Know About Christ and His Resurrection?

Our Outline:

- **What They Knew — According to Prophecy**
- **What They Knew — Regarding the Types, the Suffering Servant, and the Redeemer (Prophet, Priest, King)**
- **What They Knew — As Christ Himself Revealed It**
- **What They Knew — According to Sacred History (A Quick Review)? [The gospel accounts]**
- **What They Could Never Have Known — According to the Mystery [“What Had Eye Not Seen Nor Ear Heard?”]**

I. What They Knew — According to Prophecy:

- **Regarding the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15) - The seed will be the ultimate and final victor over the serpent - “it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” There is hardly in scripture any promise more directly relevant to our subject today on this Resurrection Sunday than this one here ...**

II. What They Knew — Regarding the Types, the Suffering Servant, and the Redeemer (Prophet, Priest, King):

Psalm 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Quoted by Peter in Acts 2 [David, as a type of Christ in many ways]:

[READ] Acts 2:22-32

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29 Men [and] brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

So David boldly and in great detail testified as to the resurrection of Christ. His Psalms are filled with these prophecies.

- ***Regarding the Suffering Servant: [The coming prophet, priest and ruling king]***

Is. 53:1-8 [The suffering servant — See also Psalm 110:1-4, etc.]

1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

[READ] Is. 53:9-12

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- ***The Redeemer - 13 times this word is found in Isaiah alone. Is. 54 & 59:20 & 21 seed; Job. 19:25***
 - ***Rev 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.***

III. What They Knew — As Christ Himself Revealed It:

- ***Most of Christ's earthly ministry is about his Messiahship...***
- ***His Death and then His Resurrection***
 - ***A baptism to be baptized with (Lk. 12:50)***
 - ***The prophecy of "this temple" being destroyed (John 2:19-22). "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up ..."***

IV. What They Knew — According to Sacred History? ... The gospel accounts

- ***What is the scriptural context of our Lord's public ministry? What did they know, or rather, should they have known, that they then would NOT have crucified him? Who knew? Who knew what the prophets had written? Who knew the truth?***

- ***What is truth (John 18:38) Remember Pilate's fateful words, "What is truth ... I find in him no fault at all." He said this in response to our Lord's words:***

John 18:37 "... Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and **for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.** Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

- ***What is the scriptural context of the Lord's ministry of truth? Well, it is what had been written afore by the prophets, of course. And what was that? In a nutshell, as it were, it was as the prophet Isaiah had written:***

Is. 59:20-21

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

21 As for me, this [is] my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that [is] upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

And what do we have here, an expansion of The Seed of the Woman prophecy of Gen. 3:15, only here in reference specifically to God's people, Israel.

But what did they know, our question remains. Nearly nothing, it seems:

- ***John 18:39-40***
39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

- ***Indeed, Truth had fallen in the streets as Isaiah the prophet had written many centuries earlier:***

Is. 59:1-4, 14-15:

1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4 None calleth for justice, nor [any] pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

...

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he [that] departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw [it], and it displeased him that [there was] no judgment. [See also in Jer. 5:1]:

- ***But it had come to be that our precious Lord Jesus, so meek and so mild, the friend of sinners, our savior and redeemer, was, as it were, “appointed unto death, even the death of the cross”, and all, even his own people turned against him:***
- ***Even the leaders of the nation of Israel called out seemingly in one voice together:***

Ps. 22:8 He trusted on the LORD [that] he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. [See also where this is alluded to in Mt 27:41

- ***Ignorant of what had already been revealed about the redemptive plan of God, the Jewish people even dared to call out in unbelief of what had been written with these damning words: “Crucify him, crucify him!”***

But our Lord's response was so different from theirs:

- ***“Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34), and then, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mt. 27:46)***
- ***“It is finished” (John 19:30) followed, his last words on the cross. It was noon and it was dark, perhaps darker than it had ever been before at noontime, often the brightest hour of the day.***
- ***But, though death IS a snare, the “Snares of death could not hold him” - the sure mercies of David:***

Ps. 18:5 “The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.” But they could not hold him.

And so we come to that most blessed morning:

- ***And then, after three days, early in the morning came the women to the tomb, not in faith, but unbelieving. BUT THEY SAW THAT THE LORD WAS RISEN INDEED! BUT THEIR TESTIMONY WAS NOT BELIEVED!:***

[READ] Lk. 24:10-11 “It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” [See also Mk. 16:2& 9; Lk. 24:1, Jn. 20:1]

***“Low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Savior,
waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!***

Refrain:

***Up from the grave he arose;
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives forever, with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!” Robert Lowry***

- ***But, by God's grace and enabling power, there were a great many eye witnesses beyond these initial women at the empty tomb (Acts 1:21-22). They were called by the name, μάρτυς, or witnesses. This word speaks volumes, doesn't it?***

...

And there were many, and finally, even one who was “Born Out of Due Time”, the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:8)

- ***And so, finally coming to know what he should have known all along but did not, Peter revealed his lord’s resurrection as he boldly preached that and the coming judgment beginning in Acts 2***
- ***And then Peter as well in his first letter:
1 Pet. 1:19-20
19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you...***
- ***But, according to the Sacred Secret Given to Paul, we find even more revealed — much more as we have so often seen in our studies down through the years.***

I have asked the question over and over this morning, “What did they know”, or rather, “what should they have known”? Now the question changes to “What could they not have known?” For neither God’s people, or their own prophets, or even the apostles, and surely not even the rulers of this world, even Satan himself, could have known the rest of the story, for it had never been written:

V. What They Could Never Have Known — According to the Mystery [“What Had Eye Not Seen Nor Ear Heard?”]

[READ] 1 Cor. 2:7-10

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known [it], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed [them] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

[READ] 1 Cor. 1:26-31

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.
 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

- *From before the foundation of the world there was a plan that included us! Praise God. The plan “from after” was for Israel and the Kingdom — the “from before” was for us!*
 - *Col. 3:1-4 [“Positional” truth]*
 1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*
 2 *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*
 3 *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*
 4 *When Christ, [who is] our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*
 - *Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him, in love having predestinated us ...*
 - *2 Tim. 1:8-10*
 8 *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;*
 9 *Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*
 10 *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:*
 - *Tit. 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; [God promised it then - among the persons of the Trinity, it would seem, before the world began]*

- ***“Christ was raised a life giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45) See also Rom. 1:1-4 and so very many other scriptures in Paul’s letters. This is his major theme. Our life is Christ’s and the abundance of grace is our gift (Rom. 5:17) and there are so very many, many more blessings we have received though the glorious death, burial, and resurrection our Lord Jesus.***
- ***Our Heavenly Hope and Expectation — The Rapture of the Church which is His Body (1 Thess. 4, 5 & 2 Thess. 2)***
- ***Our faith eternal with so many promised blessings already already present with us today:***
 - ***Even Eternal Life here and now:***
21 “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - ***We have even come to possess a new nature therefore and with that the Holy Spirit himself. And so we may live in newness of life! Amen. Such power. Such glory. Such grace.***
 - ***The privilege of Suffering with our blessed Lord:***
 - ***2 Cor. 4:11-12 “For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” [See also Col. 1:25-29]***
 - ***Our Eternal Weight of Glory:***
2 Cor 4:15-18
15 For all things [are] for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.
16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day.
17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

- **Ah, the scope of this, the grandeur of it, the glory of it! And all based on the resurrection our blessed Lord Jesus - alive for ever more and us with him**

Christ's death and resurrection ensure the death and resurrection of all! Some to life and others to everlasting death — who is sufficient for these things? Our resurrection is not only something wonderful to be anticipated, it is to be enjoyed today? Physically we have not been given new life. But spiritually we surely have.

- **Author of the Hebrews: Heb. 9:22-28 Sacrifice and heavenly presentation by Christ of his own blood - he is the high priest now and awaiting his return; Heb. 12:1-3 Great cloud of witnesses ... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Truly, our faith is a RESURRECTION FAITH! The eternal covenant (13:20), “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant...” and the opening verses in the same letter, “... after he had purged our sins sat down at the right hand of God in heaven” all say the same — Christ is risen and the entire testimony of God's redemptive program depends fully upon it.**