

Last year's Easter message presented the evidence for the resurrection. Professor Gary Habermas has dedicated his professional life to the examination of the relevant historical, philosophical, and theological issues surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus. He has read every article available on the resurrection, approximately 3500, in English, French, and German. His conclusion is that the vast majority of scholars agree with three statements regarding resurrection. 1. Jesus' crucifixion is a fact. 2. The disciples of Jesus truly believed that Jesus rose from death. 3. Jesus' enemies believed He rose from death. The best explanation for those three accepted facts is that Jesus indeed rose from death. (For more information see the sermon *Resurrection, What Difference Does It Make Now?*)

This year I would like to present the question, "Why was resurrection necessary?" There are widely accepted answers among Christians. I have said that it was evidence that His sacrifice in our place had been accepted by God (1 Timothy 3:16). It fulfilled prophecy as evidence that Jesus was indeed God's Messiah (Psalm 16:10). It bolstered the flagging faith of the disciples (John 20:28). It gave evidence that Jesus' message was unique and should be believed (Acts 3:15). It gives us hope for our own resurrection and proves Jesus is victorious over the power of death (1 Corinthians 6:14). Those answers are all true and important. That would make a good Easter message.

The Apostle Paul, however, gives us another answer. <sup>23</sup> But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Romans 4:23-25 Paul was describing the salvation of Abraham which was simply by his believing faith in God which was counted to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3). In the same way, we are saved when we believe that God raised Jesus from death. He was delivered up for our trespasses. He willingly chose to go to Jerusalem and remain in the Garden of Gethsemane as He watched the soldiers come to arrest Him. He knew what faced Him (Matthew 20:19). He only did the Father's will and the Father's will was to deliver Him up for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:10). Do you believe that? Good, but that is only half of what Paul wrote that we must believe.

He followed that by writing that Jesus was raised for our justification. I have to tell you that I only recently understood what that means, thanks to the commentator Charles Hodge. Someone asked me about that verse a year ago and I couldn't give them an

**Commented [PW1]: 1 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

**Commented [PW2]: Psalm 16:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

**Commented [PW3]: John 20:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

**Commented [PW4]: Acts 3:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

**Commented [PW5]: 1 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

**Commented [PW6]: Romans 4:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

**Commented [PW7]: Matthew 20:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

**Commented [PW8]: Isaiah 53:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

answer, but it seems like it is pretty important that we understand it since it is requirement to believe it if we wish to be counted as righteous by God.

By the way, that is the only way we are getting into heaven. God will never allow anything that is not righteous into His kingdom (Revelation 21:27). Thank God, or it would be just like this world. Those made righteous in God's sight by this believing faith will be perfected when they see Jesus (1John 3:2). He will finish the work He started in us (Philippians 1:6), so don't be discouraged because you haven't arrived yet. If Paul thought he had not yet attained (Philippians 3:13), what chance do we have in this life? While we should be growing more and more Christ like, we will not be perfect until God is done with us on our arrival before His glorious presence.

So what does this second requirement of faith, believing that Jesus was raised for our justification, actually mean? I think the Jews had no problem understanding this. The picture was before them on a yearly basis. On the Day of Atonement the High Priest would slay the sacrifice for sin, a young goat. The priest would take another goat and place his hands on its head and announce the sins of the nation and then have it driven into the wilderness, signifying the sins removed from the people (Leviticus 16:9-10). But it is what happens next that relates to our passage. I'll read Hodge's explanation.

*With a dead Saviour, a Saviour over whom death had triumphed and held captive, our justification had been for ever impossible. As it was necessary that the high priest, under the old economy should not only slay the victim at the altar, but carry the blood into the most holy place, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat; so it was necessary not only that our great High Priest should suffer in the outer court, but that he should pass into heaven to present his righteousness before God for our justification. Both, therefore, as the evidence of the acceptance of his satisfaction on our behalf, and as a necessary step to secure the application of the merits of his sacrifice, the resurrection of Christ was absolutely essential, even for our justification.* (Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983 reprint], p.129)

The High Priest had to take the blood of the goat into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it on the mercy seat that covered the Ark of the Covenant, which is between the presence of God in the form of the Shekinah and the Law within the Ark that condemns us (Leviticus 16:15). That was a picture of what was to come. In the same pattern, Jesus had to take His sinless blood to the real Ark of the Covenant in heaven, presenting His righteous life on our behalf (Hebrews 9:12). That is our justification – just as if we'd never sinned. When God looks at our record He sees the life of Jesus. He was raised for our justification. Thank Him for that! Rejoice!

In another passage Paul tells us that this is God's plan for us. Here are two of the most wonderful verses for us who believe, for they tell us of our future. <sup>29</sup> For those whom

**Commented [PW9]: Revelation 21:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Commented [PW10]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

**Commented [PW11]: Philippians 1:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

**Commented [PW12]: Philippians 3:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

**Commented [PW13]: Leviticus 16:9-10 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD and use it as a sin offering,

<sup>10</sup> but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

**Commented [PW14]: Leviticus 16:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.

**Commented [PW15]: Hebrews 9:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

*he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* <sup>30</sup> *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* Romans 8:29-30 God's intention for us is to end up being in the image of Jesus. Who do you want to be like, a sports hero, a political leader, a billionaire? The people of God long to be more like Jesus.

For now, let us skip over the issues of foreknowledge and predestination and jump to what God does with those whom He calls. He justifies us. Then He glorifies them. We've been talking about the resurrection being for our justification as an essential belief for those who are righteous before God. Now let's look at what comes next, glorification.

It's important for us to understand these terms by the way they are used in Scripture. Throughout the Scriptures man is called to glorify God (Psalm 22:23; 1Chronicles 16:24). That means to bring Him the honor that is rightfully His by our words and actions. **When our words and actions line up with His character we are glorifying Him. We are expressing who He is and how worthy He is of all our praise.** We are created for His glory. That is to express His love, mercy, and grace in our words and action.

This term "glory" is used frequently in Jesus' High Priestly Prayer of John 17. <sup>1</sup> *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,* The glory of anyone is that he or she is Christ like, or we could say expresses in some way the character of God. Jesus was praying that He would bring God glory by perfectly expressing God's nature in what He was about to endure. <sup>2</sup> *since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.* <sup>3</sup> *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* <sup>4</sup> *I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.* We can see in verse 4 that glorifying God is doing His will for our lives. For Jesus this was to show the gracious love of the Father in giving us eternal life and helping us to know God the Father through His life and words.

<sup>5</sup> *And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.* When Jesus was incarnated, He left behind some of the expressions of deity (Philippians 2:6-7), such as the radiance the disciples saw on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2). He longed to fully express the full nature of the Father again, which is Jesus' natural glorified state. That is how John saw Him in the Revelation (Revelation 1:13-16).

<sup>6</sup> *"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.* To manifest

**Commented [PW16]: Psalm 22:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! ;

**Commented [PW17]: 1 Chronicles 16:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

**Commented [PW18]: Philippians 2:6-7 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,  
<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

**Commented [PW19]: Matthew 17:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

**Commented [PW20]: Revelation 1:13-16 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,

<sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

the name of the Lord is to display His attributes. It is another way of saying He had shown the disciples the glory of God.

*<sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.* John 17:7-10  
Because the disciples believe Jesus is from God, they belong to God. Soon, they too will believe that Jesus was raised for their justification. But notice that verse 10 says Jesus is glorified in His disciples. That is to say that the disciples are beginning to show the nature of Jesus by the words and actions of their transformed lives (1John 2:6).

Jesus' greatest display of glory was yet to come. We think of it being the resurrection, but that is only part of it. It was also seen in the crucifixion, for the crucifixion shows us the nature of God in justice and also in love. A day earlier Philip and Andrew came to Jesus with a request from the Greeks for a meeting. It was time for the message to go into all the world. Jesus gave a strange response. *<sup>23</sup> And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.* John 12:23-24 The hour of Jesus' glorification was the cross, for it was there He manifested the nature of God for the world to talk about ever since that day.

Now notice what He said next, *<sup>25</sup> Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup> If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.* John 12:25-26 Do you want glorification? Real glorification is showing the heart of God. In glorifying God we are honored by God. But look at the price (Luke 14:33)!

Right now in Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, and other parts of the world, Christians are glorifying God by their deaths, and in doing so they are glorified, or we could say honored by God, or demonstrate God's heart. This is what Jesus said of Peter's death. *<sup>18</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."*<sup>19</sup> (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me." John 21:18-19

**Commented [PW21]: 1 John 2:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

**Commented [PW22]: Luke 14:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Believers don't seek personal glory, but in glorifying God, they are like Jesus, which is glorious. It is always costly (Luke 14:28). It is being a servant (Matthew 20:28). It is putting yourself last to bring glory to God. Without selfish motivations, we find God glorifies us as we bring Him glory. Remember how we began. Jesus was raised for our justification. Those who He justified He also glorified. Glory is the destiny of the believer because their heart is transformed to have one desire, which is to bring glory to God. We just want to know Him and make Him known. The more we do so the more blessed we are even though it costs.

Remember it is Jesus who has justified you, if you believe He died for your sins and was raised for your justification. And Jesus is the One who glorifies you. You can't express the nature of God on your own. You can't change your heart by your desire and effort. It must be the life of Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). He is the One who glorifies God through you and in the process sees that you are glorified.

Sound too good to be true or too impossible considering your present condition? Then listen to Jesus' words later in that High Priestly Prayer. <sup>22</sup> *The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one*, John 17:22 The life of Christ in us not only unites us but leads us into increasing Christ likeness (2Corinthians 3:18).

This was Jesus' mission, to seek out His bride and transform her into a radiant bride without any blemish (Ephesians 5:27). That is a glorious bride, of the same nature as Himself, in perfect unity with Him. But to do so He had to pay her penalty, and be raised for her justification. Here it is again from the author of Hebrews. <sup>10</sup> *For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering*. Hebrews 2:10 It was fitting that He suffered, for the penalty of sin had to be paid. He did so to bring us to glory, to prepare for Himself bride a radiant bride.

I hope you now understand that Jesus was raised to present to the heavenly Father the payment for the penalty for our sins and His righteous life on our behalf. That justifies us before God. But it doesn't end there. That alone would be so wonderfully gracious that eternity wouldn't be enough time to express our gratitude (Revelation 7:12). No, He goes on from there to glorify us, which is to make us fit to be His bride, to live forever in an intimate relationship with this One who loves us to such a great extent. It truly is the greatest love story ever told, and we are right in the middle of it. We are being transformed into the likeness of Christ, bringing Him glory, and in the process being glorified. It is often painful as it was for Jesus, but nothing is more wonderful. Nothing holds greater promise. He was raised for your justification. And those He

**Commented [PW23]: Luke 14:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

**Commented [PW24]: Matthew 20:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Commented [PW25]: Colossians 1:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**Commented [PW26]: 2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

**Commented [PW27]: Ephesians 5:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

**Commented [PW28]: Revelation 7:12 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup> saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

justified He also glorified! Keep the reality of justification and the goal of glorification before you. It will change the way you look at everything.

#### Questions

- 1 On what 3 facts do scholars agree?
- 2 Review reasons for the resurrection?
- 3 What must we believe to be righteous?
- 4 What does "raised for our justification" mean?
- 5 What is the OT foreshadow of it?
- 6 What is after justification?
- 7 How is that seen?
- 8 How is it possible?
- 9 How was Jesus glorified?
- 10 Why are we glorified?