

Alive Again - the Golden Thread of Life From the Dead

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon highlights the importance of faith and the power of resurrection in the Christian life, as seen in the story of Abraham and Isaac.

Duration: 1:14:29

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, John 3:3, Acts 17:31, Romans 8:29, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 15:14, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 11:17, 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 1:5

Topics: "New Life in Christ", "Resurrection"

Description

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the transformative power of being 'alive again' through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, illustrating how many people, like Nicodemus, may be religious yet lack a true relationship with God. He recounts the story of Jim Wright, who rediscovered his faith and became a powerful teacher, highlighting the importance of understanding the 'scarlet thread' of redemption woven throughout Scripture. Thomas explains that Jesus came to restore the life that was lost in the fall, and through His resurrection, believers are offered a new life that is abundant and filled with purpose. He contrasts the deadness of religion with the vibrant life found in a personal relationship with Christ, urging listeners to embrace the fullness of life that comes from being reconciled to God. The sermon culminates in the call to recognize the significance of the resurrection, which is central to the Christian faith.

Transcript

Just a word, too, before I begin the message, and that is a word about Jim Wright, of whom Richard has been speaking. We live about, just almost 9,000 feet up in the Rocky Mountains at Estes Park, where we have our North American headquarters and the Torchberry Central Bible School, one of the two in that country. And there was a lady living up the mountain, a godly woman, but she didn't know God.

That is to say, she had been religionized and she was not insincere. She attended church regularly, but wasn't a Christian. But she wanted to serve God, and so she did what she thought was the logical thing to do.

So, she quit her job and she went to a theological seminary. And in the 12 months that she was there, she never had to open her Bible once. She was not asked to, nor was it necessary, because nobody referred to her.

Well, she was intelligent enough to realize that that was for the birds. And she knew there was a funny little place called Ravencrest Chalet, which is our Torchberry Center there in Colorado. She didn't know quite what it was all about, but she slipped in one morning, sat in on a lecture.

And the lecturer was Jim Wright, who attended Capony Bible School some years ago. It wasn't quite what he had expected. It shocked him somewhat, and he decided to quit.

But my older boy, Chris, who is now the principal and director, now working in Colorado, took him for a walk around the park and persuaded him to stay, and he did. And rediscovered Jesus Christ, and came alive. When he got back to the United States, being an oil engineer, he took two years off and studied on his own the Word of God for eight hours a day.

And allowed the one who authored it to teach him what he meant by what he had said. Then he took two more years off and did half a day's work and half a day's study. So he established his own Bible seminary and let God teach him.

And God has given him an incredible ministry, and he's one of our best teachers in our Bible school. He's still the owner and director of a large oil engineering firm, but he does that only, you know, to pay for his utilities. The rest of his time, he's available for the Lord Jesus to communicate his life through him.

And I think he'll enjoy his ministry immensely. And while he was lecturing, this good lady, listen, and in passing, Jim Wright mentioned Nicodemus. A deeply religious man, utterly sincere, one of the best of the Pharisees, but he didn't know God.

But to satisfy his curiosity, in the middle of the night, you'll remember John chapter 3, he came to the Lord Jesus, we know that you're a teacher come from God, nobody could do the miracles that you do, except God be with you. And the Lord Jesus said, Nicodemus, except a man be born again. He cannot see the kingdom of God.

And explained to this theologian what it means to be born again. And he was. Well, at the conclusion, he had only mentioned that in passing, this lady came to Jim Wright and said, my name is Nicodemus.

I don't know God. And I've never been born again. So he laid her to cry.

It took him about 35 minutes to do what, in the theological seminary, she hadn't begun to understand because nobody opened their Bibles. Isn't that sad? That's a commentary on a destitute, sterile Christianity that has departed from the one who must be central in your life and mine, because God created man to be inhabited by his maker. And Jesus came into this world on the basis of that redemptive act to put God back into a man.

So that's a little word of introduction to Jim Wright, added to that which has already been given to you by Richard, of whom also you've heard a little bit tonight, and it may interest you to know that he's been awarded the highest scientific honor that can be given to anybody in the scientific world. He specializes in bugs. All right, we're ready to go.

Yesterday, in our morning session, we took a panoramic view of God's redemptive purpose, what I call the scarlet thread of redemption, because the Lord Jesus, Revelation 13, was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. In other words, that redemptive transaction was in the heart of God before ever the world was made. You see, when God created man, he created man differently from the rest of the

animal kingdom, because he wanted in man to have a man that could love God back, but love cannot be compelled.

And that's why he vested in man the moral capacity to choose, and that was a built-in risk, a calculated risk. We, some of us, have been discussing throughout the week how God created the animal kingdom to be governed by a built-in computerized program called instinct, with a rigid interlock between that instinctive thrust and the animal behavior mechanism, the soul, mind, emotion, and will. But when God created man, he created a creature who was not to be automatically governed by a built-in computerized program, but one who could exercise his free option.

Or, as I put it yesterday, given the greatest privilege that God gave to any creature on this planet, the right to exercise the disposition of his choice as creature towards his creator. That was a calculated risk, because if God creates man with the capacity to say no or yes to his creator, the possibility is he may say no. You might say, well, that was very irresponsible of God.

But God was not irresponsible, because ever before he created this world or put man on it, he had provided in the eternal ages of the past a remedy should man exercise his option in his stupidity in the wrong direction. The Lord Jesus, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. In other words, the redemptive purpose of God and the regenerative consequence that he had in mind in restoring men to function was fashioned in the heart of God before ever the world was.

But in foreshadowing the redemptive event after man in his stupidity had believed the devil's line opted out of life into death, believing that he could be a man without God, all the way through the Old Testament, there's the unfolding plan whereby God was preparing the stage for that little baby boy that would be born at Bethlehem as God creator in co-equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit, fashioned in the borrowed womb of a virgin girl, conceived of the Holy Ghost, would be born in Bethlehem to accomplish that reconciling act that allows a guilty sinner to be at peace with God and be restored to life and function. And we took a panoramic view of the unfolding story. The first public proclamation God made of a plan that had been fashioned in his heart in the eternal ages of the past, rebutting the devil in the day that man fell, he said, I'll put enmity between you, Satan, and the woman, her seed and your seed.

If the seed of that woman, Jesus, to be born of Mary, he will bruise your head, he'll destroy you. But in the process, you will bruise his head. Who bruises he on? He'll hang on a cross.

Genesis 3.15. And from that first public announcement of God's plan that he had already decided upon, there's the unfolding story in the scarlet thread that weaves its way through the Old Testament Scriptures. The shedding of the blood of that little lamb, Abel. Genesis, in the fourth chapter.

The shedding of blood for the individual. In the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus, God commanded Moses to take the lamb, shed its blood, and paint upon the doorpost and the lintel of every family home. And the angel of God's judgment passed over the Passover lamb.

Shedding of blood for the family. The high priest going into the holiest of all. He alone on pain of death, once a year.

For the shedding of blood for the nation, family, as for the individual, and the nation. And that scarlet thread leads us relentlessly to that lonely hill outside a city wall where Christ was made sin for us. Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in heaven.

For the blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of the lamb, cleanses us from all sin. Well, that's a panoramic view of the unfolding, redemptive purpose of God that found its glorious consummation in the birth of a little baby boy incarnate in the sinlessness of that humanity in which for 33 years he demonstrated the innocence of a pre-fallen Adam man as God intended man to be died, but rose again. So in addition to the scarlet thread that weaves its way through the Old Testament Scriptures there's a golden thread of life from the dead.

So the Lord Jesus came and he bore this testimony of the assignment that the Father God had given him I'm come, that you might have life. And that you might have it in an entirely superlative quality. More abundant.

It'll represent a joy unspeakable and full of glory a peace that passes understanding and staggers the neighbors You're going to reign in life by one Christ Jesus more than conquerors, not getting by, but triumphant. What kind of people need life? That he, God's dear son, came into the world to give? Or dead people? So it's quite obvious therefore that he didn't come to give us physical life because we receive it from the moment of our animal birth. He came as the only one who could to restore to man that life man lost in the day that Adam fell.

The day man died. So the heart of the gospel is resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 14 If Christ be not risen from the dead.

My preaching says Paul is vain. It's stuff and nonsense. It's got no substance to it.

Even though I tell you about the cross and stir your emotions. If Christ be not risen from the dead, my preaching is vain and your faith is vain. And you're still in your sins.

That's how important, how imperative was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. So we're not surprised that we find that foreshadowed also in the Old Testament scriptures. I call it the power of the third morning.

We're not going to spend long because we've got an immense amount of work to do this morning. A lot of territory to recover. And I don't apologize for asking you to think.

It's quite a useful occupation on occasions. Not like the lady, you know, who said, sometimes I sit some things, but other times I just sit. And when I go to church, I just sit.

And people who go to church and just sit, normally go to sleep. That's why every now and again I have to shout a little louder. Just to wake you up.

We've been hearing from Peter McDonough of the covenant that God made, or confirmed rather, in Abraham. That in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. And of course that seed was the one promised in Genesis 3.15. The seed of the woman, Jesus.

But in the unfolding of God's divine agenda, he raised up a nation. That that nation, the Jewish nation, might become the womb of the incarnate word. As that Jewish nation was the womb of the written word.

And we owe much to that nation. But of that nation, of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Of the house of Judah.

In the city of Bethlehem, the city of David, that little baby boy was to be born. And Abraham was to be part of that God's history. He found it very difficult to believe at first, as all of us know.

Because God told him that he was going to have a little boy by his wife Sarah, who was already too old to bear. And all her days had been barren, physically incapable of having children. And Abraham himself was well over 80 years of age.

And yet he said, you're going to have a child by Sarah. Well he thought that God was getting a little absent minded. But with the best will in the world, and with no little sincerity, he thought he'd get God out of his jam.

First he agreed with Sarah that Eliezer, a servant, should be presented. And God said, uh-uh. So after that, Sarah made a motion.

She said, take the Egyptian bondswoman, whom Peter McDonough mentioned, and bear a son by her. And that'll get God out of his dilemma. And God said, uh-uh.

Was Abraham insincere? No, he was practicing religion. Trying to serve God without knowing what it takes. The hidden factor.

God himself. But the plan was implemented, and a little baby boy was born. And his name was Ishmael.

Father of the Arabs. And God said, no thank you. We are told of this in the epistles of the Galatians, in chapter 4, where it says, Abraham had two sons.

One was born after the flesh. That is to say, not insincerely, but the best that a man without God can offer to God. Religion, destitute of life.

Christianity, without Christ. Then, it goes on to say in Galatians, in chapter 4, Two sons, Ishmael, born after the flesh, and Isaac, born of promise. All you needed by way of explanation for the birth of Ishmael was a man doing his best for God.

And God said, no. Carnal sweat. A man trying to do for God what only God could do for and through that man.

The other, Isaac, was born of promise. In other words, something God said he would do, was perfectly capable of doing, and did it. But it took Abraham many, many years before he was prepared to let God be God in his life.

Born of promise. The only possible explanation for the birth of Isaac was God himself. Ishmael, men in committee.

Isaac, God in action. That's the difference between a dead religion and a living faith. But God having given, by promise, that little boy to Abraham.

In whom, said he, all the families of the earth are going to be blessed. In that he was the forerunner of the one who was to be born at Bethlehem. Of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Of the tribe of Judah, the house of David, in the city of Bethlehem. The promise. He said, of this little baby boy there is going to be seed as the stars of heaven, and like the sand of the seashore.

And then God says, go and kill him. God said, take now thy son, you'll find it in Genesis 22 and verse 2. Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest. What did God say? Abraham might have

interrupted God, then said, pardon me, I've got two sons.

God said, not so far as I'm concerned. Your only son. Ishmael is your baby, not mine.

Take thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest. Get thee into the land of Moriah, offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell you of. Well you can imagine how Abraham felt.

Here was this bright-eyed little kid, maybe around 12 years of age. His shrill little voice, and every time he entered into the presence of Abraham his heart thumped with excitement and joy. And God says, now take him up the mountain and slay him.

How would you have felt? Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. He claimed the wood for the burnt offering, and he rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him. With a knife in one hand and fire in the other, having loaded that little boy with the wood upon which he was to be bound and slain.

And all the way up the mountain a little voice in his heart was saying, Abraham don't be a fool. You've got the blessing, hang on to it. This is God's gift to you.

How can you slay him? Keep him. But there was another little voice in the heart of Abraham saying, Abraham keep moving. You'll never go see the purpose of God realized until you get to the top and do as you're told.

And he went to the top of that mountain. He bound his little boy on the bundle of wood. And in his heart he said, God when you told me you'd give me this little boy, I didn't believe you.

I thought I was smarter than God, and I made a fool of myself. And I'm not going to make a fool of myself the second time. I don't understand where it's at.

I don't see how you can make of this little child's feet as the stars of heaven stand by the seashore innumerable if I were to plunge this knife into his heart. But I'm not going to make myself a fool again for the second time. If slay him I must, then slay him I will.

And God take the consequences. And a knife flashed in the sun. And at that moment God said, thanks Abraham.

Throw the knife away. That's all I wanted to know. That in your heart now, you've died to the blessing and you've died to the gift, because you realize that the giver is greater than the gift, and the blesser is greater than the blessing.

And because you've done this thing, in blessing I will bless you. And your seed shall be of the stars of heaven and the sand by the seashore innumerable. And on that day Abraham became God's friend.

Part of God's history. Three times in the Bible he's called Abraham God's friend. That's how you become a friend of God.

Be told what to do and do as you're told. Even if you've got to plunge the knife into the thing dearest to your heart. I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless I live, yet not I. Christ lives in me. I'm sharing his resurrection. So when did that happen? It tells you in the fourth verse of the 22nd chapter of Genesis.

On the third day. That's when it happened. It's the power of the third morning.

Life from the dead. See how it's recorded very beautifully in the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 11.

That portrait gallery of men and women of faith. God's friends. Part of God's history.

It says verse 17 of the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews by faith. That disposition that lets God do it. That no longer offers him an Ishmael but lets God give him Isaac.

By faith Abraham when he was put to the test. Had already brought Isaac for an offering. He who had gladly received and welcomed God's promises was ready to sacrifice his only son.

Of whom it was said though Isaac through Isaac shall your descendants your seed be reckoned. For he reasoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead. Indeed in the sense that Isaac was figuratively dead.

Potentially sacrificed in the heart of Abraham. God did actually receive him back from the dead. And gave him into Abraham's arms.

That's the power of the third morning. You find this quite often in the Old Testament. There's a very beautiful story Esther.

Fantastic unfolding of man's relationship to God. How it all went wrong and what God has done to put things right. Getting the wrong man out and the right man in.

The old Adamic nature to be replaced by the divine nature. In a spiritual new birth called resurrection. Christ himself coming to re-invade your humanity.

And live his life on earth in your body as once he lived his life on earth in that little boy. That body that was born of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You see the Christian life today is the life that the Lord Jesus lived then in that body.

Lived now by him the same Lord Jesus in your body and mine. Isn't that incredible? That's the Christian life. The life that he lived then in his body lived now by him the same Jesus Christ.

God the creator, redeemer living that life in you. Missed that and you've missed everything. Missed that and you've never understood the gospel.

You don't know the character of the good news. And the beautiful picture given to us there in Esther you see is that she represents the human spirit. Not God's spirit, the human spirit.

Mordecai represents the Holy Spirit and it was under his, the Holy Spirit's instructions. That Esther was to go into the presence of the king unsummoned. To do which was to be already sentenced to death.

Nobody had to be tried if they entered into the presence of the king unsummoned. They were already sentenced as good as dead. But said Mordecai go into the presence of the king and plead for your people.

Because hey man, a tragic picture of the Adamic nature. The carnal mind that is at enmity with God. Not subject to his law neither indeed can be.

And he wanted to assassinate every Jew in the land. Because he hated their law because the law they had was God's law. And Mordecai says go into the presence of the king and plead for your people.

Which to do was to be sentenced to death the moment she crossed the threshold. She said to her servants, to Mordecai, fast and pray three days and three nights. And on the third morning I will enter into the presence of the king unsummoned.

And if I perish, I perish. God take the consequences. But on that third morning when a slip of a girl, her heart thumping like a sledgehammer.

She hadn't resigned her throne as the queen for the queen she was. She hadn't dismissed her servants. She hadn't given away all her beautiful clothes.

But in her heart she was dead. When she crossed into the threshold unsummoned into the presence of the king. But on that third morning the king held out the golden scepter.

The only means whereby one sentenced to death could be saved. When did it take place? On the third morning. And as good as dead, as she entered into the presence of the king.

She was alive again. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. He wasn't inclined to be obedient because he hated the Nineveh.

They were his own nation's enemies. The one thing he wanted God to do was damn them, destroy them, eliminate them. But God told him to go and he ducked, you remember? Went to Tarshish and took a ship to run away from God.

From the presence of the Lord it tells us. In the first chapter of the book of Jonah. God raised a great storm.

And finally those who were on board the ship. The captain and his men, the sailors. Recognized that Jonah was the object of God's judgment.

And Jonah admitted it and said I'm running away from God. And there's only one way that you can be saved. From this storm.

Throw me in the sea. And in his heart. Jonah died.

To himself. And his false ambitions. And his bitter prejudice.

And his hate for another people. But God prepared a big fish, remember? And Jonah was saved. And I always have to be careful the way I say this.

Because I usually get the words wrong and put him in a whale of a belly. But actually it was the belly of a whale. But it was both.

You'll find it in the first chapter of the book of Jonah. You needn't turn to it. The last verse.

And from the bowels as he describes it of the earth. He said I cried to God. I said salvation is of the Lord.

And the whale wasn't of that theological persuasion. And vomited him up. On dry land.

Do you remember what day it was? The third morning. And Jonah was back on track. Fascinating isn't it? The power of the third morning.

But what's the significance? Well, if Christ be not risen from the dead. My preaching is vain. Your faith is vain.

You're still in your sins. You see, the evidence that God gave that Christ had accomplished the redemptive act. Had the right to say, Tetelestai.

Finished. Paid in full. That's what it means in English.

Paid in full. In biblical times in Jerusalem if you bought something in the shop and you wanted a receipt. They wouldn't give you a receipt saying.

Receive with thanks. They'd put Tetelestai. Paid in full.

Today if you go to Israel and buy something in a shop and ask for a receipt. They'll put Tetelestai. Paid in full.

That's what the Lord Jesus meant on the cross when he cried. Father, Tetelestai. You sent me to pay the price to redeem a lost humanity.

Paid in full. Finished. And God demonstrated that that spiritual transaction.

Whereby guilty sinners could be reconciled to a holy God. Had been accomplished to God's holiest satisfaction. Even before he died physically.

God restored to him the Holy Spirit. Whom of his own pre-volition he had forfeited. For your sake and mine.

And to demonstrate that he was alive again spiritually. For your sake and mine. And God raised him from the dead three days later physically.

For he came back to that body that did not suffer corruption. A miracle. And in that body that did not in three days suffer corruption.

Though we're told of Lazarus four days dead he stands. He appeared to his disciples and showed them in his hands the print of the nail. And in his feet.

And he is the one who will judge the world. In righteousness. He'll judge the unredeemed, the lost, the unregenerate.

To be eternally banished from the presence of a holy God. Their rebellion to be confirmed by God. For he will seal their option.

Tells you that in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible. Let him that be filthy. Be filthy still.

Forever. Forever. Let him that be unjustified.

Be unjustified. No peace with God, no redemption, no forgiveness. Still forever.

You see one day if you're not a Christian God's going to confirm your choice. Forever. That verse goes on to say let him that be holy.

Clothed with the righteousness of Christ. The wedding garment. Let him be holy still.

Forever. Let him that be justified. Who's come to Jesus and recognized.

God has accepted me just as if I'd never sinned. Justified. Because on the cross Jesus died just as if he committed all my sins.

And when you come guilty as you are and receive the vicarious substitutionary reconciling act of Christ upon the cross. To which he was sent into this world. You're accepted in the beloved and your sins will be remembered no more.

Forever. That's the day when God will say it's all over. Man has had his last chance.

I wonder where you'll be on that day. Which side of the cross. Now this was confirmed by God in that he raised him from the dead.

You'll find that in the 17th chapter of the book of the Acts. Acts in chapter 17. Just glance at it if you've got your Bibles.

Hope you have. Because that you see is the source of truth. The written word that introduces us to the one who is the truth.

The living word. Verse 30 of the 17th chapter of the book of the Acts. The times of this ignorance God winked at.

But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. He tells us why in the 19th verse of the third chapter. Always link those two together.

Acts 3.19 says repent and be converted. Turn. That your sins may be blotted out.

So God commands all men everywhere to repent. Be converted that their sins might be blotted out. And of course inherent in that statement is the fact if God is at all intelligent.

He commands all men everywhere to repent and be converted. That their sins may be blotted out. All men everywhere may repent.

May be converted. And have their sins blotted out. No limited atonement.

No reservations on God's power. The work of the cross was all embracing. For God is unwilling that any should perish.

Jesus we are told suffered death. Hebrews 2 verse 9. For every man. And the moral option is not his but yours and mine.

Because if God commands only you can obey. God doesn't obey his own command. He expects those to obey whom he has commanded.

Ever obeyed God's command? To repent and be converted that your sins might be blotted out. If not don't be surprised if one day God says I'm going to seal your choice forever. You're lost.

Without hope. Without Christ. And without God.

So then 31st verse then goes on to say. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness. He'll judge the lost for condemnation forever.

And he'll also judge the believer for reward. And he'll do it in righteousness. And by that man whom he hath ordained.

Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he God hath raised him Jesus from the dead. That's why the resurrection you see is imperative. If there are those who.

Deceived by the God of this world Satan don't accept the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Just be very very sorry for them. They have no hope.

They'll be judged. By the one whom God raised from the dead. Now you'll see some interesting things in the word of God.

Look at Psalm chapter 2. Or the second Psalm we call it. And the 7th verse. The 7th verse of the second Psalm.

I will declare. Or rather verse 6. No verse 7. No verse 6. I just want to confuse you a bit. Just to make sure.

In the 6th verse. Yet have I set my King. Upon my holy hill of Zion.

That was the Mount of Olives. In Bethlehem. I will declare the decree.

The Lord hath said unto me. Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee.

This is what God said of the Lord Jesus. Thou art my beloved son. This day I have begotten thee.

Now where do you cast your mind back to? When you read that in the 2nd chapter. The 2nd Psalm and the 7th verse. This day have I begotten thee.

Well you might think that I was going to give you a Christmas message. Did you imagine that had something to do with Christmas? Well you're wrong. But you've always got to let the Bible explain the Bible.

So in order to understand that. You need to turn now to the 13th chapter of the book of Acts. So keep your fingers licked.

And with a plentiful supply of saliva in reserve. Because the Bible you see from Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation is one single total revelation. You can't just pick and choose.

And see I like this little bit. And we'll preach about that and believe that. But I'm not going to turn to the rest.

I'll leave that on the side of the plate like a bone. When the Lord Jesus on the road to Emmaus met the two disciples. Beginning at Moses and in all the scriptures and in all the prophets.

He expounded unto them the things concerning himself. And their hearts burned within them. He gave them central heating.

And if you're cold on the outside I trust that you'll get warm on the inside. As we turn to this amazing book. But in the 13th chapter.

Of the book of the Acts. Paul is speaking. And he says this.

Acts 13 and verse 26. Men and brethren. Children of the stock of Abraham.

Whosoever among you feareth God. To you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers.

That is the religious leaders of his day. His contemporary theologians. They that live in Jerusalem and their rulers.

Because they knew him not. Nor yet the voices of the prophets. Because they repudiated the authenticity of scripture.

And claimed the right to reinterpret Moses and the rest of the Bible. To make it say what they thought was more rational from the human point of view. Nothing new about that.

That's been done all down the centuries. That's how men turned God into religion and Christ into Christianity. Because they knew him, Jesus not.

Nor yet the voices of the prophets. Which are read every Sabbath day. They have fulfilled them.

In condemning him. Can you imagine that? They read this book that foreshadowed the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord. Every Sabbath day.

And fulfilled them in doing exactly what God said would do. They would do as men who didn't know God. They fulfilled them.

Though they found no cause of death in him. Yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him in the Old Testament.

They took him down from the tree, laid him in a sepulchre. They put his body in a tomb. But look at verse 30.

This is the back of grace. But God raised him from the dead. And verse 32.

We declare unto you glad tidings. This is good news. Jesus is alive.

We declare unto you glad tidings. How that the promise which was made unto the fathers. God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children.

In that he hath raised up Jesus again. As it is also written in the second Psalm. Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.

So when was that prophecy and promise fulfilled? When Jesus was born a little baby in Bethlehem. Well now. That glorious statement of God the Father in heaven.

Concerning his son on earth. This day have I begotten you. Referred to the day he raised him from the dead.

Not Christmas. Easter. Easter.

And of course Christmas without Easter would be a dead loss. Just of course as Easter without Pentecost. The day when the risen Savior came to re-inhabit the redeemed humanity of forgiven sinners.

Even his resurrection would be a dead loss. But you see we've turned Christianity into a calendar. And where have we put it? We've hung it on the wall.

Because we've lost Jesus. And substituted religion, Christianity for Christ. Well this isn't the only reference to this fact.

You look at concerning his resurrection. Romans 8 and verse 29. Look at Romans 8. 29.

Think of it. Whom he God did foreknow. Recognize that God knows the end from the beginning.

He lives in the present tense. He doesn't know the past. He doesn't know the future.

It's eternity. Isaiah tells us that God inhabits eternity. That's why he writes history in advance.

And can tell you what is going to happen through people. Even though they made the choice. Because the eternal timeless God who knows the end from the beginning.

Can read their thoughts then as he can read yours now. Whom he did foreknow. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his God's son Jesus.

That he, Jesus, might be the firstborn. Among many brethren. In that same 15th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

Turn to that. It's only a page or two. Turn to the right.

If Christ, verse 17, be not raised, your faith is vain. It's empty. It's an exercise in futility.

Even though you recite your creed a thousand times. It's worth nothing. If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain.

You're still in your sins. They also which are fallen asleep. Physically dead in Christ are perished.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ. Just as a noble idealist whose example we've got to imitate. We are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ. Risen from the dead. And become the first fruits.

Of them which slept. Turn to Colossians and chapter 1 verse 18. Colossians chapter 1 and verse 18.

This is the heart of the gospel. He, Christ, is the head of the body. The church.

A fellowship of redeemed sinners. Not a denominational organizational entity. But a fellowship of those redeemed.

Whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of life. And he's the head of that body. The church.

Who is the beginning. He is the firstborn. From the dead.

That he might have the preeminence. He is the firstborn from the dead. On the day that God begat him.

This day have I forgotten thee. Look at Revelation and chapter 1 verse 5. Revelation. Chapter 1 and verse 5. It's speaking of the witness.

The witness. Capital W. The Lord Jesus. John verse 4. To the seven churches which are in Asia.

Grace be unto you and peace from him. Who is. Who was.

And who is to come. In the three dimensions of time. He was.

He is. And will be. The same yesterday, today and forever.

The first begotten. Of the dead. Grace be unto you and peace from him.

Who is. Was and will be. From the seven spirits who are before his throne.

And verse 5. From Jesus Christ. Who is the faithful witness. And the first begotten.

Of the dead. Does that baffle you? Yesterday morning. You sang a chorus.

Don't turn to it. 105 in the blue chorus book. Volume 1. The Christ is the head.

For Christ is the head of the church. The first to rise from the dead. That he might be ruler supreme over all.

And reconcile us unto God. All praise to the head of the church. By him we shall rise from the dead.

That we might be rulers to reign over all. Bearing witness to the power of God. Who of course raises the dead.

Now you sang that. If you were here. Did you know what you were singing? Christ is the head of the church.

The first to rise from the dead. You sang it. Was he the first to be raised from the dead? Who raised Lazarus from the dead? Who raised Jairus the little daughter from the dead? Who raised Dorcas from the dead? Or Jesus? Who raised that little boy from the dead? That you read about.

In the first book of Kings. Elijah. Who raised the Shunammite woman's little boy from the dead? Elijah.

How then was the Lord Jesus the first to be raised from the dead? You sang it. He's the head of the body, the head of the church. The first to be raised from the dead.

Who's going to raise you from the dead? What do you mean by that? Do you really understand the gospel? Who was the first to be raised from the dead? Well physically the Lord Jesus certainly wasn't because he raised Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, Dorcas. As in the Old Testament. Little boys were raised from the dead.

He wasn't the first to be raised from the dead physically and yet the Bible says he was the first to be raised from the dead. He was the first begotten. The first groups of them that slept.

Turn to Acts in chapter 26. Book of the Acts, 26. And the two verses, verse 22 and 26.

Recognize the connotation of what took place for he was in the presence of the king, Agrippa, on trial for his life. In other words, Paul had absolutely no idea as to whether he was going to live for more than another couple of hours. Because at any moment the king might say, take him out and execute.

Cut his head off. Now when you're on the threshold of death like that you're very careful about what you say. So on trial for his life, before king Agrippa said he to him, in the 26th chapter of the book of Acts, 22nd verse.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. He says, please don't tell other people that you needn't worry much about what Paul said because it was a Pauline doctrine. That's a lie and a heresy.

There's no such thing as a Pauline doctrine. Only the truth, timelessly, eternally, and the truth is a person. Jesus said, I am the truth.

And Paul says, I'm simply telling you that what God told in Old Testament times, in the only Bible I've got, Old Testament, what would happen? Verse 23. That Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead. And should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles.

So the Lord Jesus, according to the Old Testament, the old prophets of the Old Testament and Moses, the Bible of which Peter tells us in the first chapter of his second epistle, holy men of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Not a bundle of human essays, but a divine revelation. Christ was to be the first, having suffered, to be raised from the dead.

Quite obviously that wasn't physical resurrection. Because he was not the first to be raised physically from the dead. But he was the first to be raised from the dead.

For he was the first man on earth who forfeited the life of God to whom God restored that life. The firstfruits of them that slept. Now we're going to get back just to the diagram for a moment or two.

We don't have too much left. But if we could switch that on and these lights are out, that's fine. Try again, that's it, fine.

Now some of you are familiar with this, but others not. And I don't, unfortunately, have time enough to bring you up to date. But just simply to indicate to you that this is man in his innocency, the first man Adam, innocence, and then the fall when sin came in.

He was given a body on this planet, X, X. He was given a soul, mind, emotion and will, a behavior mechanism. But he was given a human spirit that distinguished man from the animal kingdom to be inhabited by God, the Holy Spirit within the human spirit. Oil in the lamp.

God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the triune Godhead represented by God the Holy Spirit within the human spirit so that God through the spirit could teach the mind, control your emotions, direct your will, so govern your behavior that all mankind could look at man, that all creation could look at man and know

what God was like. But then sin came in because the devil persuaded man to believe that he could be a man without God. He believed it and God did exactly what he said he would do.

I will withdraw my life, in that day you will die. Not physically, for he didn't die physically until he was over 900 years of age. But God said in the day that you eat by an act of disobedience, evidence your new attitude of independence, you'll die.

And die he did. For God removed the Holy Spirit from the human spirit. Man was left physically still alive but the glory has departed, the image of God.

He still had a soul, mind, emotion and will no longer directed and governed by the Holy Spirit but now governed by an alien agency of satanic origin called the carnal mind that we talked about yesterday which is that enmity with God is not subject to his law neither indeed can be. He was not only dead spiritually but he was distorted, being spiritually destitute. A principle at work within his behaviour pattern in the book of Esther, hayman in the palace prostituting the authority that the king Ahasuerus had in him leading his people astray.

Here's the fallen man, the natural man, the animal man spiritually dead, soulishly alive but abused, misused by an alien agency called the flesh so that all that men see in man's behaviour is not the fruit of the spirit but the works of the flesh. Greed, lust, pride, hate all those things. Jacob, the fulfilment and consummation of the divine plan and the scarlet thread that ran through all that God gave to man in the Old Testament that foreshadowed the good thing to come.

Christ, born at Bethlehem given a body, soul and a spirit like yours and mine from the moment of conception where life begins indwelt and full of the Holy Ghost so that the father through the spirit knew what to do taught his mind, controlled his emotions directed his will so Jesus could say as real man he that has seen me has seen exactly what we intended all creation to see when we created Adam what God is like.

But he came to redeem us to accomplish the reconciling act and there was only one way he could do it because the wages of sin was death not just physical death secondary consequences the wages of sin was the forfeiture of the life of God for whom man was made created so engineered that the presence of the creator within the creature is indispensable to his humanity it takes God to be a man and that's why it takes Christ not Christianity to be a Christian but for 33 years he demonstrated the innocence of a pre-fallen Adam but God made him to be sin for us in his own body where? not in the grave but on the tree on the cross and when God made him to be sin the Father and the Holy Spirit had no alternative but to withdraw their presence from Jesus as Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit had

no alternative to withdraw their presence from Adam in the day he died in other words there happened to Jesus on the cross a God-forsaken man my God, why hast thou forsaken me? and for three agonizing hours of darkness there was separation for your sin and mine between the Son who was sinless and the Father and the Holy Spirit but three hours later a wonderful thing happened the Holy Spirit came back to the human spirit of our Lord Jesus and he was raised from the dead the firstfruits of them that slept the first begotten and God said this day have I begotten you and it was not until the Holy Spirit had come back to the human spirit and the Lord Jesus was spiritually alive again that he could cry in triumph and he was still on the cross physically alive or he couldn't have said it

finished it's all over Father, mission accomplished and at that moment as I reminded some of you yesterday that had barred access into the holiest of all the presence of God saved to the high priest once a year on pain of death who had first to sacrifice for his own sins and Jesus never did only yours and mine and Jesus was alive again the firstborn so here's the first man Adam innocence in the fall here's the fallen man unregenerate spiritually dead here's the second man the Lord from heaven Jesus Christ the only real man ever born because the only other real man who fell was created the second man the last Adam the son of God from heaven but why did he do that? so that you and I he having suffered a death like ours we now might enjoy a resurrection so that God without doing violence to

his own righteousness might be able to restore the presence of God to forgiven sinners for his sake who died in their place isn't that magnificent? that's salvation so if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son not just physical death not just spiritual death both much more being reconciled to life much more being reconciled we shall be saved by that life his life that he forfeited that his father restored to him and he now gives to you and to me to me to live is Christ reconciled to God by his death that's redemption the blood transaction saved by his life the blood transfusion that puts the life of God back into the soul of man indispensable to the likeness of God in the character of man to restore us to image so there you have the regenerate man but alas,

hear what? the carnal Christian why the carnal Christian? because you see although the life can be restored to us without the light may not be on in the illustrations that I've used of a bulb with dirt at the point of contact clean it off that won't enable the lamp to shine it's got to receive again the dirt being out the life for which it was created that the light might be on and in a lamp like this instantly it happens but in you and in me it doesn't because there's an alien agency still within the soul of man after redemption after regeneration that was in man before redemption and before regeneration the old Adam nature and the moment you come to Jesus and claim forgiveness through his blood and he who received his life by the gift of the Holy Spirit this old Adamic nature says

that's as far as it's going to go I can't get you to hell now but I'm going to make sure that Christ doesn't get his seat in your heart and make the place of his feet glorious to beautify the place of his habitation I'm still going to abuse, misuse and prostitute your humanity so this is the picture of the carnal baby Christian he's got life every now and again there'll be a glimpse of that life of what he does and says but mostly others will only see again an ugly exhibition of the old Adamic nature in a forgiven sinner that's the carnal Christian who's regenerate he's alive but he doesn't evidence the life that the life of God is there to produce but here's the regenerate man and spirit-filled Christian who says in my flesh dwells no good thing I am crucified with Christ I realize I'm

fit for nothing more nor less than what happened to the one who took my place sentenced executed and buried I am crucified with Christ there's a cross nevertheless I live yet not I Christ lives in me my hands are his to work with feet to walk with lips to speak with eyes to see with ears to hear with mind to think with heart to love to me to live is Christ resplendent with the restored glory that has its origin in Christ for Philippians 2:11 the fruits of righteousness not the works of the flesh the fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ incredible that you and I should be re-invaded by the creator God so that he gaining access to the human soul and only can as Esther gained access into the presence of the King is in our hearts we're prepared to die to ourselves and be alive unto God

marvelous where do you find a picture of this regenerate man but carnal Christian we'll have to conclude with that and make you sad but come back tonight and I'll make you glad so very quickly in these last two

minutes which I don't really have 1 Corinthians chapter 3 1 Corinthians and chapter 3 and the first verse however brethren I could not talk to you as to spiritual men but as to non-spiritual men of the flesh in whom the carnal nature the old Adamic nature predominates rears its ugly head and gives an ugly exhibition of its own satanic character greed lust pride alcoholism jealousy murder drug addiction all those things not as to spiritual men but men of the flesh in whom the carnal nature so predominates relishing its own carnal appetite greening back to the cucumbers and leeks the

pots all the things that we left behind in Egypt but I love them I want to get back if I can as the carnal Christian who lives in the wilderness as to mere infants you've been born spiritually again in Christ but you're unable to talk yet because you've got nothing valid to say because your life belies the profession of your faith now he's not saying this to non-Christians don't imagine that this is to the unregenerate, the lost doesn't it? look at verse 16 16th verse do you not discern and understand that you, the whole church at Corinth are God's temple his sanctuary that God's spirit has his permanent dwelling in you to be at home in you collectively as a church and also individually is he saying they're not Christians? if any man have not the spirit of Christ he's none of his only

those who have the Holy Spirit are his he's saying don't you know that the Holy Spirit lives in you and that you're the temple of the living God the problem is you see no sunrise without sunset you haven't gone with Jesus into a place of death so although God in his mercy to his sake has redeemed you blotted out your transgressions you've not yet given to the Lord Jesus a place with his feet in your heart Ezekiel 44 but he says this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet but until you give me until you give me from the human spirit a place of my feet in your human soul mind, emotion and will I can't reach the throne and you'll remain abused, misused and prostituted by an alien agency from which I came to redeem you I fed you with milk you're not solid food again

and again the epistles he says I wanted to give you solid meat that I could only give you milk because you're a bunch of suckers who've never discovered what it takes to be a Christian all you know is how to become one because somebody did his thing two thousand years ago but you've missed the whole point and failed to realize he did that then so that he could raise you from the dead as the father raised him from the dead by restoring to you the life the father restored to him reconcile to God by his death to be saved by his life even yet he said you're not strong enough to be ready for it you are still unspiritual having the nature of the flesh under the control of ordinary impulses as long as there are ending jealousy wrangling factions and one after another a church splits into

fragments and scatters to the winds because Christ has no place to his feet in their heart who say I'm a believer I'm a saved Christian I'm on the way to heaven I'm redeemed he's got no place to his feet in their heart he can't reach his throne so ego is still strutting around that's why churches split and break up into fragments God is disgraced in the sight of an unbelieving world wrangling factions among you unspiritual of the flesh behaving yourselves after a human standard like mere unchanged unredeemed unsaved unregenerate human beings that's the carnal church that's the carnal Christian that's the children of Israel whom God brought out from Egypt to get into Canaan who lived for 40 miserable years in their own self-imposed poverty in the wilderness never had a stomach to get in to

that for which they'd been redeemed and brought out pardon me for asking but what's your address?

Egypt unregenerate lost still dead in trespasses and sin the wilderness regenerate yes, alive again but still dominated by the alien agency that is hostile to God and not subject to his law a carnal baby Christian or

do you live in Canaan? what's your address? in the land that God promised where manna ceased because you could eat of the old corn of the land chew on pomegranates milk and honey and eat the grapes of Eshgar and spit pips at each other out of the joy of being truly alive in that quality of life that has no possible explanation but Christ in the Christian putting God back into the man with a place in your heart to his feet so that he can reach the throne and reign king in his king

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