

“The Relevant Power of the Resurrection—Then & Now”

Easter Sunday 2024

March 31, 2024

INTRO... Easter’s Encroaching Irrelevance

“the most popular holidays are Thanksgiving (81%), Christmas (77%), Memorial Day (76%), Mother’s Day (75%), Veteran’s Day (74%), Martin Luther King Jr. Day (71%), Labor Day (70%), Father’s Day (70%), New Year’s Eve (66%), and Halloween (65%) ...Easter (65%) (Lifeway Research, today.yougov.com survey)

...Theologically ...Easter should displace Christmas in Getting Our Attention!

— If you care for Jesus at all; if you want to welcome his influence in your life; if you have any inclination to ELEVATE Him to some respected status—Then the Resurrection is the Most Important Thing that Defines His Storyline as Important! ...AND the Power of the Resurrection is THE Most Relevant Thing to Your Future Hope

Philippians 3:7-11 *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

(1) The Power of the Resurrection—THEN!

...The Power Needed THEN” **...an awareness of the type of power that must be exerted to reverse the controlling grip of death!**

DEATH’s Personification...

1 Corinthians 15:25-26 *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:*

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ *“O death, where is your victory?*

O death, where is your sting?”

— Heb 2 validates this “Prowling, Grim Reaper Character” as inflicting FEAR upon our entire lives! — **Heb 2:14-15** *...that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

DEATH’s Origin...

Rom 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

“...the biblical view of death is that every human being dies because of God’s judgment on sin. Not only is that the picture of Genesis 2:17, but Paul uses judgment language, not naturalistic language. It is not as though death were a kind of disease that broke out from a virus. Paul said, ‘One trespass [Adam’s] led to condemnation for all men’ (Rom 5:18). Condemnation is a legal term—a sentence delivered by a judge. It is not a consequence of nature; it is a rendering of the court of heaven—God’s just decision. ...God brings the judgment of death onto all humanity, and he calls that judgment an enemy—both of man and of himself. Death is a judgment from the hand of God, and it is murder in the hand of Satan (John 8:44). God governs death as owner of life and judge of the world, and, under God, Satan ‘has the power of death’ (Heb 2:14).” **John Piper**, “Providence”, p.360

...So, to understand “the Power of the Resurrection” is to understand that “Escaping the Grip of Death” is more than merely reestablishing a Heartbeat!

“Have you forgotten the Deep Magic?” asked the Witch. “Let us say I have forgotten it,” answered Aslan gravely. “Tell us of this Deep Magic.” “...Tell you?” said the Witch, her voice growing suddenly shriller. “Tell you what is written on that very Table of Stone which stands beside us? ...Tell you what is engraved on the scepter of the Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea? You at least know the magic which the Emperor put into Narnia at the very beginning. You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a kill.” ... “And so,” continued the Witch, “that human creature is mine. His life is forfeit to me. His blood is my property.” **C.S. Lewis**, “The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe”, p.139

How Do You Solve the Problem we Call DEATH? ...It is an Every-Person-Reality! ...It is an Historic Precedent! ...and It is On It’s Way for Each of Us!!

??—Science & Technology

...Science & Technology can NEVER solve the DEATH Problem ...Because Death is NOT a DISEASE— it is a Condition of Judgment! ...It is the Outcome of God’s Righteousness Interacting with Our Sin!!

...But there is a “Secret” Vulnerability

— “**Elrond**: The ring cannot be destroyed, Gimli, son of Gloin, by any craft that we here possess. The ring was made in the fires of Mount Doom. Only there can it be unmade. The ring must be taken deep into Mordor and cast back into the fiery chasm from whence it came.” (from “The Fellowship of the Ring”, 2001)

Death is a LAW! ...It is a prescribed condition that man has NO CRAFT to be able to solve. ...IT Will Take a Secret Power that is BEYOND MAN!

Rom 8:3-4 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us...

Acts 13:38-39 Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

...Man has NO Ability to get free of the GRIP of DEATH!! ...But Death had a “Secret Vulnerability” —If Somehow the Righteous Requirement of the Holy God could be Met—man could be released!!

"Oh, you're real, you're real! Oh, Aslan!" Cried Lucy and both girls flung themselves upon him and covered him with kisses. "But what does it all mean?" asked Susan when they were somewhat calmer. "It means," said Aslan, "that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of Time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards." **C.S. Lewis**, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe"

...Jesus has the Strange Power to be able to "TURN BACK DEATH"!!

"The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was, in itself, a marvelous display of power. To raise the dead body of our Lord from the tomb was as great a work as the creation. ... He said, "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up." He also said, concerning His life, "I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again."

What strikes me very forcibly is this — no mere man going to his grave could say, "I have power to take my life again." The departure of life leaves the man necessarily powerless — he cannot restore himself to life. Behold the sacred Body of Jesus embalmed in spices and wrapped about with linen. It is laid within the sealed and guarded tomb — how can it come back to life? ... Strange power — that spirit of His which had traveled through the under lands and upwards to the eternal Glory — had power to return and to re-enter that holy Thing which had been born of the virgin and to revivify that flesh which could not see corruption.

Behold the dead and buried One makes Himself alive again! ...He was master over death, even when death seemed to have mastered Him — He entered the grave as a captive but left it as a conqueror. He was compassed by the bonds of death but He could not be held by them. ...If, in the extremity of His weakness He had the power to rise out of the sepulcher and come forth in newness of life, what can He not accomplish now?" **Charles Spurgeon**, "The Power of His Resurrection"

...So Now—the Requirement of the Law has Been Met—But Man Will Need Something MORE ...if He is to "Come to Life"—He will need the intrusion of the "Resurrection Power of God". ...We're NOT "Forgiven DEAD People"!!

(2) The Power of the Resurrection—NOW!

Philippians 3:10-11 *...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

"I do not think, however, that Paul is here thinking so much of the power displayed in the resurrection as of the power which comes out of it — which may most properly be called, "the power of His resurrection." This the Apostle desired to apprehend and to know."

...When we believe in Jesus we receive a new life and rise to a higher state. ... Wonderful is the change worked by the new birth! Faculties that were in you before are purged and elevated. But at the same time, new spiritual faculties are conferred and a new heart and a right spirit are put within you. Wonder at this — that the risen Christ is able to give us an entirely new life! May you know, in this respect, the power of His resurrection! May you know the peace, the repose, the power of your risen Lord! May you, like He, be a stranger here, soon expecting to depart unto the Father!

I wish I could venture further to unveil this secret force and still more fully reveal to you the power of our Lord's resurrection. It is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the energy upon which you must depend ... It must all be "according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." I want you to feel that power today. I would have you feel eternal life throbbing in your bosoms, filling you with glory and immortality!" **Charles Spurgeon**, "The Power of His Resurrection"

...Easter was never meant to be a "Mere Commemoration" ...it was the revealing of an "Ongoing, Present, Influential Power"!! Paul was actively engaging it in his life when he said, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection."

...The Same "Power of the Resurrection" that worked its "Deeper Magic" (the Mystery of Tapping Into God's Posture of Favorable Engagement of Our Lives) is NOW at work in the Daily Spaces of Our Lives!! ...Yes, it will be active with us on the Final Day—when the "Grim Reaper" comes ...BUT, Paul is mindful that it is ACTIVE in His Life Daily!!

Philippians 3:12-17 *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ 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, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*