

# Victory of Jesus

Today is a day of remembrance and celebration. Often on Resurrection Sunday, we remember and focus on an aspect of the events surrounding the day of Jesus' resurrection. It might be the women who came to the tomb. Sometimes it is the disciples who were not initially at the tomb with the women because they didn't believe Jesus would rise. Sometimes we talk about the angels who greeted the women. Other times we have reflected on Jesus' encounter with Mary in the garden at the tomb.

**VICTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS.** We might recall the reaction of the religious leaders. The religious leaders were the bad guys, the schemers and the plotters. They were the men who lied and deceived the people, and motivated people to chant, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Unfortunately, I think they had a party when Jesus finally died on that cross. I wonder what they did that evening with their families. I wonder what they had to say to their wives and children. Did they talk about how difficult Jesus had been, how threatened they had felt, how jealous they were of Jesus? Did they tell their families about how they plotted to kill Him, how they bribed someone to betray Him?

I think they rejoiced. I think they were celebrating. I think they were bragging to one another of how they finally got rid of this deceiver. Matthew 27:62 reveals they understood what Jesus had claimed was going to happen. It says,

deceiver said, "After three days I am to rise again." Matthew 27:62-63 (NASB)

Notice what they called Him! They called Him a deceiver. They understood that Jesus said He would return to life three days later. Verses 64-66 explains their strategy to stop what they most likely believed was going to happen.

"Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal

Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how." And they went and made the grave



secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. Matthew 27:64-66 (NASB)

Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that

**RELIGIOUS LEADERS UNDERSTOOD.** The religious leaders knew exactly what Jesus claimed was going to happen. I think they thought they were really clever. The bottom line

is, they were afraid. They were afraid Jesus was *not* going to be in His tomb on the third day. Their focus was on the events in the physical world. Apparently they were not thinking about spiritual issues at all. They did not realize how Satan had used them. Unfortunately, when we think about Jesus' resurrection, it is easy for us to focus on the physical events also. We think about Him being on a cross with nails in His hands and feet, the spear that went through His side, and the blood. But we can forget that Jesus' death and resurrection was the climax to a spiritual battle, to a spiritual war. It was a conflict between God and Satan. The religious leaders of that day did not understand that.

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN THE GARDEN.** The spiritual war started long time ago in the garden with Adam and Eve. Satan won that battle. He tempted Eve to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and she encouraged her husband to partake. He knowingly sinned and brought sin into the world for the first time. Satan won the initial battle, and the war between God and Satan was on and fully engaged. But God had compassion and love for mankind and made a promise. God said in effect, "Yes, Satan, you may have won the first skirmish, but I promise that I will have the ultimate victory." In Genesis 3:15 we are told that Satan would bite Jesus' heel, and that Jesus would turn around and stomp him on the head.

The Hebrew text is really interesting. When it says that Satan would bruise Him on His heel, and Jesus would bruise Satan on the head—which is the way the Hebrew actually reads—it's in the imperfect tense. That implies that Satan would be biting Him on the heel again and again and again. It reveals that the war would be one battle after another. Finally, one day Jesus would crush Satan's head. Throughout all the Old Testament, the war raged. In one battle, Cain murdered his brother. We are told in Job that Satan came and wanted to motivate Job to sin by blaspheming God. Satan was unsuccessful.

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE BEFORE THE FLOOD.** In Genesis 6:5 we are told that men and women were so wicked that God finally decided to blot them off from the face of the earth with a flood. We are told that the intent of the hearts of men and women were evil only continually. They were lying,

angry, deceptive, greedy, murdering, involved in illicit sex and stealing. They were self-centered, proud, and independent. It was all about "me." They were the "me" generation. We hear that term used today, but I think every generation is the "me" generation. There is an old statement that says that the problem with sin is the center letter, "I." The problem is the focus on "me." It has always been that way; every generation has the same problem. Satan motivates us to sin. He does not cause us to sin; he encourages us to sin. James 1 tells us that we like the temptation he suggests, and conclude, "Whoa, that will be fun. Alright." So we go ahead, give in to temptation and sin. We may not always stop and think about it in those terms, but we sin by ourselves. We do not really need his involvement, but he encourages us to do the wrong thing anyway. He has a purpose! The generation at the time of the flood was the "me" generation. All down through time it has been the "me" generation again and again.

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.** Genesis chapter 11 tells us about the first major false religion. Its proud adherents attempted to build the Tower of Babel. The New Testament tells us that Satan is an angel of light who operates in the area of false religion. False religion has been one of Satan's major tactics throughout all time. The Old Testament is replete with the occult, another satanic tactic. You can see it in book after book. In Deuteronomy there are great warnings about the occult. In Daniel chapter 9 we get an insight about warfare in the spiritual realm. What is described for us is how the demons are interacting with angels, and how warfare is waged in the heavenly realm.

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE CENTERS ON CHRIST.** When we come to the New Testament, the battle between God and Satan continues. One of the first major battles was at the point of Jesus' birth when Herod tried to have Jesus killed.

The next major time was when Satan tried to tempt Jesus to sin in order to prevent Him from dying on a cross and being our Savior. Had Jesus sinned, he would not have been the Holy Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He would have been a sinner, and that would have made it impossible for Him to forgive our sins. So Satan rallied the religious leaders and they plotted to kill Jesus. Satan entered into Judas and Judas made a deal with the religious leaders

for thirty pieces of silver. The religious leaders did not realize that Satan was secretly, quietly, behind the scenes helping them out. In fact, it was probably Satan's strategy and plan all along. Finally at the Lord's Supper, Satan enters Judas and he goes off to do the dastardly deed of betraying Jesus at night in a garden with a cohort of Roman soldiers. When he does, Jesus finally dies on the cross to pay the price for man's sins.

When Jesus died on that Friday afternoon, there were no cheering leaders on the sidelines. There was no band to provide music. Arguably, the crucifixion and resurrection were the most important events in the history of and for mankind. But there was no stadium filled with people cheering for Jesus. Instead, there were Pharisees, Sadducees, probably Herodians and some soldiers who thought this was great sport, glad to see Jesus writhing in agony on a cross as He was dying for you and for me. Some were glad to see that Jesus died. But there was an evil angel—Satan. I think Satan was cheering too. I think he was cheering because he had orchestrated Jesus' death. He had participated in this event. Jesus had freed many people from Satan's demons. Jesus had been damaging Satan's kingdom. Jesus was wreaking havoc on everything that Satan was trying to accomplish.

John 16:11 tells us that Satan is the ruler of this world. In Ephesians 2:2 we are told that he is the prince or the power of the air. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 we are told that he is the god of this world. In Hebrews 2:14 we are told that he wields the power of death. You say, "Wait a minute—in what sense did Satan wield the power of death?" In John 8:44 Jesus is talking to the religious leaders and says,

*You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44 (NASB)*

This verse tells us that Satan has been a murderer from the beginning of time, and he is the father of lies. In what sense is he a murderer from the beginning? From the time that he

told Adam and Eve a lie, and motivated them to sin by violating God's command. In the process of doing that, he was a murderer. He effectively took a knife and stabbed it into their spiritual hearts because he wanted them to die spiritually so that he could get revenge against God. That was his goal. He was a murderer. He would have effectively murdered them, if it was not for the promise of the Savior Jesus Christ who would come someday. Today Satan motivates people to reject Jesus Christ for personal reasons! Satan seeks what Satan wants. Satan is all about "me." Satan motivates people to be all about "me." As a result, some do not come to Jesus because they think He is not fair, or God has not done this or that for "me."

For those of us who are Christians, it can be all about "me" as well. Some think it is more important that I am able to do what I want to do rather than love Jesus and spend time with Him, or gather together with other believers in praise for Him. Satan motivates Christians to dishonor Jesus. He motivates Christians to disobey Jesus. The reasons are all about "me"—that is Satan's tool. He persuaded the religious leaders to follow the same "me" concept.

**JESUS' VICTORY AND NOT SATAN'S VICTORY.** Satan's goal is to prevent non-Christians from having spiritual life. Satan's goal is to mess up Christians. He has two major goals. One is for those who have not accepted Jesus. Then he works on those who are believers. He wants to mess up our Christian life by encouraging us to disobey God. You see, Jesus' death looked like Satan's greatest victory. But he did not realize that Jesus' death was actually Jesus' victory. The cross was used as a weapon. The cross was like a weapon that Jesus took and, figuratively speaking, crushed Satan on the head with it (Genesis 3:15). 1 John 3:8 says,

*The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8 (NASB)*

Hebrews 2:14 states,

*Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of*

death, that is, the devil . . . Hebrews 2:14

This verse tells us that Satan had the power of death. In what sense did he have the power of death? He motivated people to sin. The power of death took over and finished the job. 2 Timothy 1:9-10 tells us that when Jesus died on the cross, He abolished death. Think about that for a second. Satan wields the power of death by motivating people to sin. If he can get people to continue to sin, they will spiritually die. But when Jesus died on the cross, 2 Timothy 1:9-10 tells us that Jesus abolished or destroyed death. Do you know what He did? Jesus took away Satan's tool or weapon. 1 Corinthians 15:54 reads like this.

**But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (NASB)**

I like that. Death is like a bumblebee with a stinger. If you take away the stinger, the bumblebee has no power. In this case, death has no ability to cause us to spiritually die. Verse 56-57 says,

**The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:56-57 (NASB)**

This passage tells us that when Jesus died on a cross, He took away the "stinger." He took away the power of death. Satan can try to motivate us to sin all he wants, but if you believe in Jesus Christ there is no spiritual death. Hallelujah! Verse 58 adds,

**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB)**

**REASON FOR THE RESURRECTION.** Great news! Great

promise! Now you might be wondering, "How does the resurrection fit into all of this? Why did Jesus have to come back to life?" First of all, He had to come back to life because the prophecies said so. But let me share some important passages with you. The first passage is Romans 1:3-4.

**. . . concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord . . . Romans 1:3-4 (NASB)**

Verse 4 tells us that the resurrection proved Jesus was the Son of God. The resurrection was proof that He was and is God. Now we must ask, "How do we know that Jesus really is God?" One important passage is 1 John 4:1-2.

**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God . . . 1 John 4:1-2 (NASB)**

Verse 2 makes a very important point. It tells us how you know the spirit of God. Everyone who confesses that Jesus has come in the flesh is from God. Now think about that for a minute. Some people say, "This is teaching that Jesus was just a man." If that is true, then what kind of proof is that? It is not a big deal to say that a man was born in the flesh. That is not a proof of anything. The big test is that Jesus, the Son of God, came in the flesh. I was born in the flesh. You were in the flesh. People down through history have been born in the flesh. It is not a test for a human to be born or become a human. But, if God became a man, that is a test. Those who deny that God took on human flesh and claim that Jesus was only a man are not from God. The message is that Jesus was and is God. The resurrection was proof that He was deity. That is the first proof.

Now let's go to Romans 4:25 for another reason why Jesus was raised from the dead. Verse 25 says that,

He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. Romans 4:25 (NASB)

That's a great verse because it gives us another reason for His resurrection. The resurrection was proof that He could forgive our sins. Romans 8:2 tells us,

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. Romans 8:2 (NASB)

Do you realize what Jesus' death on the cross accomplished? He made it possible for you to be freed from sin and from spiritual death. That is the message of the verse.

Acts 17:30-31 contains a comment that is easily missed about Christ's resurrection.

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. Acts 17:30-31 (NASB)

Did you see the part where it says "furnished proof"? Do you understand of what Jesus' resurrection was proof? It was proof that He defeated sin, proof that He defeated death, proof that He is the Son of God. He will also be the judge of all. Do you know what the death and resurrection of Jesus is all about? It is about victory! The death and resurrection was a real victory for Jesus! The meaning of the Resurrection was victory over sin and death!

**SATAN FINALLY UNDERSTOOD.** I do not think Satan understood what he was doing, or he would not have motivated Judas to betray Jesus. Satan was absolutely clueless. I'm sure Satan was celebrating. Satan had no clue at all as to what was really going to happen. I believe he did not understand the mystery that Jesus was both God and man. Notice what 1 Peter 3:18 teaches about Jesus' death.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to

death in the flesh . . . 1 Peter 3:18 (NASB)

It says that Jesus was put to death in the flesh. I have been asked the question in years past, "How can God die?" God did not die. Jesus' human flesh died. Then we are told in the last part of verse 18 and verse 19 what Jesus did after His flesh died.

. . . put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, in which also He went and proclaimed to the spirits now in prison. 1 Peter 3:18b-19 (NASB)

Do you understand what Jesus did? Jesus visited the demons that were in the abyss and announced His victory over them and death! Victory is what He accomplished. I am confident that Satan at that point understood that he was in a huge amount of trouble. The war between God and Satan was still raging on, but Jesus had finally won the decisive battle. In every war there is a decisive battle, the turning point. What follows afterward is nothing more than skirmishes, but the end is coming. Romans 16:20 describes the current situation.

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. Romans 16:20 (NASB)

This verse tells us that the war is still on, but it is going to end, and God is going to crush Satan.

Revelation 20:7-8 describes Satan's final defeat—He is crushed.

When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. Revelation 20:7-8 (NASB)

These verses are telling us that in the end times, in the latter days of this world, there will be a kingdom that will last a thousand years. At the end of that period, God will allow

Satan to do whatever he wants to do. This will be Satan's final battle of the war. Satan will gather all the world together to fight against God and verses 9-10 tell us what will happen.

And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.  
Revelation 20:9-10 (NASB)

Here we are told about the outcome of the battle, as if it had already occurred. Do you know why this passage of scripture reads like this? It is so certain that it is going to occur, it is referred to as having already been accomplished. Do you know what is going to happen in the end? Satan is going to be thrown into the Lake of Fire, and the war will be over. The war will be over! Hallelujah! Then verse 14 tells us,

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. Revelation 20:14 (NASB)

Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire, death will be thrown into the lake of fire, Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire and the war will be over!

I want to close with Colossians 2:15. This passage of scripture tells us that Jesus will disarm all of His foes.

When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. Colossians 2:15 (NASB)

The Greek word for "disarm" has the idea of a conqueror riding in on a chariot with his troops behind him. The conqueror would lead and the troops would follow. They would march through the city, but guess who would follow behind? It would be the defeated king, the defeated officers, and the defeated troops - the spoils of the battle.

That is what will happen in the end. That is also what happened at the cross. Jesus is the conqueror. He defeated

death. He defeated sin, and He really defeated Satan with a strong blow. But the ultimate, final defeat is yet to come; when it comes, the war will be over.

**RESURRECTION IS PROOF OF JESUS' VICTORY.** Jesus' death was a victory. Jesus' resurrection was proof of the victory. Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "There are no victories at bargain prices." There are no victories at bargain prices. God had to defeat Satan. It was a spiritual battle. It has been a spiritual battle for your soul, for mine, and for the souls of people down through the ages. The only way to win the war had a very costly price. The costly price was the death and suffering of Jesus. Jesus did it for us, and now He offers us the benefits of the victory. Do you know what the benefits are? The benefits are He offers us forgiveness for our sins and eternal life living with God. Those are the benefits of His victory for you and me.

**JESUS IS RISEN INDEED!** If you have never put your faith in Jesus Christ, if you have never asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins, then I encourage you to do that today. In the Beatitudes Jesus tells us that when we come to God, we have to come like a spiritual beggar. The word for beggar there has the idea that you have nothing whatsoever to offer God. The idea is that you are a beggar who comes begging and pleading that you want to be forgiven, that you want to eventually be able to go to Heaven. God is not interested in anybody who is not spiritually a beggar. You have no standing with God if you do not recognize that you have a need. It does not do you any good if you are not interested. Jesus told the people, "Blessed are those who are..." what? Spiritual beggars. "For theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." The way you get your sins forgiven is that you come to God as a spiritual beggar. You have to know that you have a need, that you are a sinner, and you need your sins forgiven. Then you need to ask Him to forgive you. Do you know what God does? God stands ready to lovingly forgive you.

If you are already a Christian, the call for you is really simple: to live like He is truly your Savior and your Redeemer, and to thank Him, and praise Him that Jesus has already won the victory over death.