

GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL
the PROMISED *land*
RESURRECTION SUNDAY CELEBRATION
Jesus Triumphs!

We have been studying how the Israelites who came as slaves out of Egypt longed for a home of their own. We, like them, long for a place to call home. And, no matter whether we are happy and content with our earthly surroundings, for the believer this world will never be our home.

There is a wonderful song which is often sung at funerals entitled Beulah Land – I'm kind of homesick for a country to which I've never been before. No sad goodbyes will there be spoken for time won't matter anymore. Beulah Land, I'm longing for you and some day on thee I'll stand. There my home shall be eternal. Beulah Land -- Sweet Beulah Land

How can we stand in a place, we long for and yet have never been? The bodily resurrection of Jesus is the answer! The Greek term for resurrection, *anastasis*, literally means, “to stand again.” Because of Jesus Christ and His standing up from the dead, resurrection has come to mean the restoration of the whole self by God Himself who gives life and creates it anew for those who trust in Him after we pass through the valley of the shadow of death.

Those who have experienced the death of a loved one know that after that loved one has died, they are never the same again. Consider Jesus who died for our sins. Because of His death and resurrection, those who put our faith and trust in Him will never be the same again. It is the believer's destiny to be like Jesus and He is alive forevermore! We read of John's vision of Jesus in ***Revelation 1:17-18 (ESV)*** ¹⁷ *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.* The resurrection of Christ is the reason His children need not fear death.

For Christians every first day of the week as we meet together (the day that Christ arose) is a celebration of His resurrection. In the Christian faith, Easter has come to mean the celebration of the resurrection of Christ three days after His crucifixion. It is the oldest Christian holiday and the most important day of the church year because of the significance of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the events upon which Christianity is based.

The day of Christ's resurrection from the dead has come to be called Easter. The word ‘Easter’ is an English word derived from the name of a Germanic goddess of ancient fertility rites. In the ancient Church, the celebration of the Resurrection was called Passover. I personally prefer Resurrection Day! No matter what you call the day, Jesus is Alive!

As we specifically celebrate the day that Christ arose from the grave, let's look into the three aspects of how Jesus accomplished this triumph – this victory over the grave.

1. Jesus triumphs by giving up His status.

Read Philippians 2:5-7 (ESV) ⁵ *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* ⁶ *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* ⁷ *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*

In verse 5, mind means the attitude that Jesus exhibited. In fact, the NIV translates verse 5 this way: *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.* What kind of attitude did the Son of God have? He was thinking of others, not Himself when He left heaven for us!

The *form of God* has nothing to do with the shape or size of God. **John 4:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*” The word “form” describes “the outward expression of the inward nature.” In eternity past, Jesus Christ was equal with God. Jesus was not only equal with God but He is God. **Colossians 1:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.* John describes Jesus as the Word in **John 1:1 (ESV)** ¹ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Yes, this very One who was the *form of God* was willing to take on the *form of a Servant*. From the form of God, He emptied himself into the form of a man. Late commentator Herschel Hobbs describes God changing forms like pouring a glass of water from a round glass into a square glass without losing any of the water. Yes, God changed form from heaven to earth; however, He did not lose any of who He was. God the Father was still on His throne and God the Son came to earth for the purpose of being raised up on a hill called Calvary in order to save us from our sins. In the transfiguration of Jesus during His earthly ministry, we see a visible manifestation of the inner glory of Christ's person, accompanied by an audible voice from heaven. The transfiguration of Jesus gives us a glimpse of His being in the form of God.

Read Matthew 17:2 and 5 (ESV) ² ² *And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.* ⁵ *He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”*

The voice from heaven saying, “*Listen to Him*” speaks to us down through the ages. He is the Son of God who came to this earth and became a servant. If we are to possess the mind of Christ – the attitude of Christ, then we must take on the attributes of a servant ourselves.

Jesus thought of us and was willing to literally become a servant! Paul traces the steps in the humiliation of Christ: (1) He emptied Himself, laying aside the independent use of His own attributes as God; (2) He permanently became a human, in a sinless physical body; (3) He used that body to be a servant; (4) He

took that body to the cross and willingly died there for us. What grace – the wonderful matchless grace of Jesus!

2. Jesus triumphs by humbling Himself on the cross.

Read Philippians 2:8 (ESV) ⁸ *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

In the Old Testament Age, Christ visited earth on occasion for some special ministries (Genesis 18 is one example) but these earthly visits were temporary. When God the Son chose to be born in Bethlehem, He entered into a permanent human body. He willingly humbled Himself *in human form* that He might lift us up! His obedience was unique to Him – He died in our place. Since He was obedient unto to death for us, it stands to reason that we should be obedient servants in our life for Him. **John 15:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.*

3. Jesus triumphs by rising again and receiving all praise and glory.

Read Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV) ⁹ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

When John and I first began dating, he brought his reel-to-reel to my house. Yes, I know I am showing my age by even mentioning something as antiquated as a reel-to-reel. For those of you that don't know, a reel to reel is something that played taped music. You might call it the 70s version of an iPod. John said, "I think you will like these songs." When I began to listen to them, I think that was when I first realized that we were destined to be together. One of the songs, was "There's Something About that Name." Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. There's just something about that name. Master, Savior, Jesus! Like the fragrance after the rain. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Let all heaven and earth proclaim. Kings and kingdoms shall all pass away but there's something about that name. Yes, there is something about that name – *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

What name did Jesus receive after His resurrection that He did not have before? In His exaltation He was given the name Lord! Jesus is Lord of All! Men had done their worst to God's Servant, but the Father exalted Him and honored Him. Men gave Him names of ridicule and slander, but the Father gave Him a glorious name! In His humiliation He was given the name Jesus. In his exaltation, He has been made Lord. Peter said in **Acts 2:36 (ESV)** ³⁶ *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*

The name Jesus is Greek for Yahweh is Salvation. Are you able to call Jesus – Lord – Lord of your life? Has He become your salvation? Many people believe that this life is all we have. Is it any wonder that

we live in such a sad and depressed generation? Believers understand that since Christ rose from the dead, we will resurrect too – that is stand again! **1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* What does being the firstfruits mean? The firstfruits are the choice examples of a crop harvested first and dedicated to God. One of the feasts of the Old Testament was the Feast of Firstfruits. As the Lamb of God, Jesus died on Passover. As the sheaf of firstfruits, He arose from the dead three days later on the first day of the week. When the priest waved the sheaf of the firstfruits before the Lord during the festival, it was a sign that the entire harvest belonged to Him. When Jesus was raised from the dead, it was God's assurance to us that we shall also be raised one day as part of that future harvest. To believers, death is only 'sleep'. The body sleeps, but the soul is at home with the Lord.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:23 (ESV) ²³ *But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

Charles Stanley says, "Believing that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead is essential for Christians. Merely recognizing that He died for our sins is not enough; we must accept His resurrection in order to receive eternal life... Resurrection is not a denominational issue or a point for theological debate. Either we believe Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven or we do not. If we reject His victory over the grave, we deny ourselves a place in eternity. But if we accept the truth, we will be saved."

The day we celebrate as Easter or Resurrection Day is a glorious day! The bodily resurrection of Christ is the anchor of our faith! The resurrection of Jesus points to another day that is coming – perhaps even today! **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.* ¹⁸ *Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

Three unique sounds will be involved in this event: the Lord's shout, the voice of the archangel and the sound of the trumpet.

Jesus Christ will give a shout of command just as He did outside the tomb of Lazarus.

Why the voice of the archangel? The angelic hosts will share in the victory shout when Jesus comes the second time just as they were present the first time He came! Their words at that time are recorded in **Luke 2:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

Then, there is the trumpet call! Trumpets were used to declare war, to announce special times and seasons, and to gather the people for a journey. The trumpet of God will sound to call us home to heaven – our promised land! **1 Corinthians 15:52, 57 (ESV)** ⁵² *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.* ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*