

**Eph. 1:19-2:10, The Resurrection of Christ FOR and WITH Us**  
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**H. Van Dyke Parunak**

**Overview**

The opening chapters of Ephesians gives us three levels on which we can consider the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each requires an appropriate response from us.

1. As an historical fact, it invites our belief. But it is more than just another fact to record in a history book.
2. As something done FOR our benefit, it invites our acceptance. Unlike many historical events, it brings us positive blessing. But it is more even than a blessing.
3. As something done WITH us, it invites our submission.

Setting: In 1:19 Paul prays that they might understand God's power toward believers. Then he goes on in the following vv. to expound it.

**A. 1:20-22a, The Fact: Christ Rose**

Paul presents this as a straightforward historical fact: "God raised him from the dead."

1. Modern people mock at this idea as unscientific, and some so-called "theologians" try to accommodate their skepticism by speaking of a "spiritual" resurrection of Christ, or expostulating on the meaning of an event that they confess never happened. But this skepticism is not new. In Acts 17, Paul preached the resurrection in Athens, and "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked" (v.32). The NT insists that he rose physically, bodily, from the dead, and was seen by over 500 witnesses.

But is this reaction really due to honest intellectual inquiry?

2. Natural man today knows of no power greater than death. The richest of us cannot buy our way out of it; the strongest cannot defeat it; the wisest cannot outsmart it. We all must face it. By defeating death, the Lord Jesus has demonstrated his power and authority above all of creation, 20b-22a.
3. This is probably the real reason people don't want to acknowledge the physical resurrection of Christ. It would imply that he is the most powerful being there is. There is no way to reject or oppose such a person.
  - a) If Jesus is just a first century rabbi who died an unfortunate death and whose followers entertained a romantic but unscientific myth about his resurrection, we can take him or leave him.
  - b) But if he actually did overcome the grave, and is actually alive now, how can we neglect him? Acts 17:31, God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in

righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead."

*The resurrection of Christ is a terrifying concept. It confronts us with someone who is undeniably more powerful than we are, someone to whom we must answer. But through God's grace, we can be on the same side as this tremendous power, rather than against it.*

**B. 1:22b-23, The Blessing: Christ Rose FOR Us**

In this capacity as "head over all things," God has given him to the church! Our bodyguard, our champion, the one who fights our battles for us; our David, to protect us from the Goliaths of this world. The fact of the resurrection makes Christ a fearful judge to those who reject him; at the same time, it makes him a powerful deliverer to those who receive him.

*Yet Paul's main emphasis goes beyond Christ's resurrection as a blessing that we receive. It is also an experience that we share in our daily lives.*

**C. 2:1-10, The Experience: We rose WITH Christ**

**1. 2:1-3, Our State**

Note the shift between 2 and 3 from "you" to "we." He says two things about "you," then the same two things about "we," but in reverse order. A key example of the contrast between our position and our practice, what we intrinsically are and how we actually behave.

- a) 1, "You were dead." Our *position* apart from Christ. We didn't feel dead--but neither does a physically dead person. The fact is that we were separated from God by our sin.
- b) 2, "You walked...." Our *practice* as unbelievers, following the pattern of the sinful world, and through it following the prince of this world, Satan.
- c) 3a, "We had our conversation...." Again, a focus on *practice*. The focus has moved from outside influences to inside ones--from Satan and the world to our own lusts.
- d) 3b, we "were children by nature of wrath." Back to our *position*, and one that the unbeliever finds extremely threatening.
  - 1) In semitic thought, to be a "child of X" is to be characterized by X. Cf. Deut. 25:2 "son of stripes" = "one beaten," 1 Sam. 20:31 "son of death" = "a dead man."
  - 2) "Wrath" here is most naturally God's wrath. Just as we were called "dead" in v.1, separated from God, so we are now described as having been the deserving objects of his wrath.

3) "By nature." Here's the worst part. This is not a state that we earn, nor one that others do to us, but one that is part of our nature. We are born this way. Men are not sinners because they sin; they sin because they are inherently sinners, sinners by birth, sinners "by nature."

## 2. 2:4, 7, God's Motives

Though we were "children of wrath," yet God has not conducted himself toward us in wrath, but according to three other motives:

- a) Rich in mercy. LXX reflex of *xesed*, "covenant faithfulness." He has promised from the first to provide a solution to human sin; he will not back down on his promise.
- b) Loving. He has singled us out, chosen us for himself.
- c) (v.7) Grace, favor showed us in spite of our unworthiness, because of the worthiness of our Substitute, the LJC.

## 3. 2:5-6, Our Experience

Note the similarity with what was said of Christ in 1:20.

- a) Quickened us: made us alive.
- b) Raised us up, just as "he raised [Christ] from the dead."
- c) Seated us in heavenly places, just as he "set [Christ] at his own right hand in heavenly places.

The point is that we are raised WITH Christ. His resurrection is ours; his new life is ours. Easter is not just in celebration of his life; it commemorates ours as well.

## 4. 2:8-10, Our Obligations

- a) 8-9, not to save ourselves. We cannot. It is a free gift, bestowed upon us by a heavenly Father who loves us and has kept his promise to redeem us.
- b) 10, we ARE required to live out the life he has placed within us, to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God (Rom. 6:11). Cf. Col. 3:1-15. If I truly am a partaker of the resurrection and life of Christ, he will dominate my thinking, my behavior, my associations.

## Summary

- 1. Christ's resurrection is both a fact that we should believe, and a blessing that we should receive. But it is more than that; it is something in which we share.
- 2. If we indeed are partakers of it, our lives and priorities will show that.
- 3. If they do not, that's evidence that we are still "dead in trespasses and sins," "children by nature of wrath," and we should give top priority to making sure of our relation with God.