

IN THE PROMISE

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He is Risen!

*"He is not here; for he is risen, as he said."
-Matt. 28:6*



Easter is the time of year when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This also means we sadly remember His crucifixion -- how he painfully sacrificed His life and made the way for all sinners to find their way back to God.

The Easter holiday reminds me of the Christmas holiday. It occurs every year and there are certain images that immediately come to mind when you think of these times of the year. With Christmas of course, we think of Christmas trees and bright lights, decking the halls, crowded shopping malls, presents under the tree, egg nog, and Christmas Eve services. Thoughts of Easter conjure its own images of Easter egg hunts and Easter baskets, chocolate bunnies, Easter Sunday service and last but not least, the new Easter Sunday outfit. Perhaps before you experienced a relationship with Jesus Christ, you fell into the habit of only going to church on Easter Sunday out of guilt or obligation.

With Christmas, the challenge becomes to remember that Jesus is the reason for the season and to not love the gifts, but the gift-giver, Jesus himself. Easter demands the same effort as Christmas. We should celebrate it daily, not just on Easter Sunday or Easter week. We should reflect on what Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection means to our personal walk with God. Jesus suffered on the cross of Calvary. He sacrificed His life -- giving up His will for the will of the Father.

Beyond our Christian duty to partake in the sacrament of communion, we can observe Easter daily by taking up our cross and maturing our walk with the Lord (Matt. 16:24), laying down our lives for our brethren (I John 3:16), sharing the life-changing message of Jesus with others (Matt. 28:19).

Challenge yourself this season to reflect on the true meaning of Easter long after you hang up your Sunday outfit.

Michelle Neal

IF A PERSON DIES, WILL THEY LIVE AGAIN?

Christianity stands on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Christ arose from the dead three days after he was crucified, He fulfilled prophecy and proved that He truly was the Son of God. Typically, we associate the word “resurrection” with Jesus. But resurrection in general means a rising from the dead or coming back to life. Based on this definition, Jesus was not the only one to experience resurrection. There are other Biblical cases where normal, everyday people were raised from the dead or resurrected. In light of Easter, let us review some Biblical instances.

A Widow’s Son

Elijah was a close friend of a widow and her son in Zarephath. One day the widow’s son became sick and died. Elijah was distraught. He prayed earnestly that the Lord would spare the widow this awful grief and restore her son to life again. God heard the voice of Elijah and the boy’s soul came into him again, and he was revived. Elijah took the child and brought him down to his mother alive. (I Kings 17:17-24)

A Neighborhood Friend

Elisha, the prophet had died and was buried. One day a group of men were carrying a friend to the cemetery for burial. Suddenly, a band of Moabite warriors appeared over the horizon. Because their lives were in danger, the men who were burying the corpse hurriedly threw it into the first tomb in sight. That happened to be the tomb of Elisha the prophet. When the body of the dead man touched the bones of Elisha, the dead man was revived and stood up on his feet. (II Kings 13:21)

Jairus’ Daughter

Jairus’ daughter fell desperately ill and was at the point of death. He rushed out to where Christ was ministering and begged Him to come and heal his daughter. As Jesus went with Jairus toward his home, friends of Jairus greeted them saying, “Trouble not the Master any further, your daughter is dead.” Jesus turned to Jairus and said, “Be not afraid, only believe.” When they reached the house, hosts of people were weeping. Walking straight into the bedroom where the young girl’s body lay, Jesus took her by the hand and said, “Little girl, I say unto thee, arise.” Immediately she arose and walked and the people were astonished with great astonishment.” (Mark 5:22-42)

Other Instances of Resurrection

Widow’s Son from Nain (Luke 7:11-16)

Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

A Group of Saints (Matthew 27:52,53)

Dorcas (Acts 9:40,41)

As the previous instances show, the idea of the dead being raised to life again is not new. It happened in a limited way throughout history and it is going to happen in a massive way during the end times to come.

Death is not the end of the road, especially for the Christian. Jesus said in John 6:40 that it is God’s will that everyone who sees the Son and believes on Him may have everlasting life and that He would raise that person in the last day. When the caterpillar spins its cocoon and winter sets in, it may look like life is all over for that little creature. But when spring arrives, the caterpillar will emerge from his dungeon of death to live again in a brand new way.

John 5:28, 29 instructs that when Christ returns all that are in the graves shall hear Christ’s voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. So to answer the question, if a person dies, will they live again? The answer is “Yes!” What a person does with Christ will determine which of these two ways it is going to be.

Stephanie Forbes



LOVE -- THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

When we think of Easter, we usually think about Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave and well we should. But there is another thought that should come to mind: LOVE. God's love for us is the underlying message of the cross. The Bible is very clear that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that we may have everlasting life (John 3:16).

From the beginning of His ministry to its conclusion, Christ urged people to love one another. Overall, the New Testament teaches us to love everyone: our parents, our children, our spouses, our neighbors, even our enemies.

The question that naturally arises is, why did Christ urge us to strongly love one another. He didn't urge us to resent one another, to despise one another, to be bitter toward one another, to envy one another, to abuse one another, to neglect one another, etc. He urged us to love one another! The reason he didn't tell us to do any of these things is because of the pain and grief that they cause. These things do not bring people together -- they drive them apart. They do not bring joy and gladness -- they bring grief and pain. Love does just the opposite.

The joy and happiness, which flow from a loving relationship, is too large to measure. The first question that love asks is not what can you do for me, rather what can I do for you. Love puts the happiness of others above its own. Small wonder Christ said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34)

Selfishness is probably the greatest enemy love has. The reason for this is because love cares about others, while selfishness cares about self. If God had His way, selfishness would be erased from the face of the earth and love would take its place.

Sometimes, before we can understand what a thing is, we must first understand what it is not. Love is not constantly taking from another person, or solely physical closeness or even a feeling. Love is an emotion that is anchored in the will. It's a virtue that we can accept or reject, ignore or embrace. The bottom line of love is we can give or withhold it from anyone we choose.

There is a real sense in which love involves death -- voluntary dying to ones own passions and desires for the sake of someone else. The greatest display of love ever shown was when Christ died on the cross in agony and shame because of the love he had for sinful humanity. Like Christ, we can show our love for one another and lay down our lives (passions, desires, wills) as it says in I John 3:16. We can honor Christ and His sacrifice of love toward us by meeting the needs of our brothers and sisters in the Lord and others as well.

Stephanie Forbes

Upcoming 2002 Events...

<i>USF Banquet</i>	<i>April 20 - Brownstone Hotel 6 p.m.</i>
<i>Mother/Daughter Luncheon</i>	<i>May 4</i>
<i>Financial Planning Workshop</i>	<i>May 8</i>
<i>Church Service (by the Men)</i>	<i>May 17</i>
<i>Youth Academic Banquet</i>	<i>May 31</i>
<i>Women's Health Fair</i>	<i>postponed until June or July</i>
<i>Single Parent's Seminar</i>	<i>June 1</i>
<i>Pamper-Me Outreach @ YWCA</i>	<i>June 22</i>
<i>New Members' Dinner</i>	<i>June 23</i>
<i>Network of Churches School of Wisdom Conference</i>	<i>June 24 - June 29</i>

IN THE PROMISE is a Christian magazine ministry of **Fulfilled Promise Tabernacle (FPT)** and is designed to strengthen and encourage the Christian in his or her walk with the Lord.

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