



How the Resurrection was Preached and Believed in the Early Church

Paul's first missionary sermon

Acts 13:26-31; 38-39

I. The resurrection was preached, as a fact.

"God raised (Jesus) from the dead," ... He was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses ..." Acts 13:30,31

By doing this, Paul was what? Exposing his own previous unbelief in Christ and his cruel persecution of Christians.

Historians tell us it is astounding that Christianity got off the ground with first-century Jews.

Why? Jewish people were the last people on earth to believe a human being could be God. Jewish people did believe that at the end of time there would be a resurrection, but certainly not when Rome still occupied them.

Paul found Christianity outrageous before his conversion, but he had to deal with it when Jesus appeared to him.

II. The resurrection was preached as having fulfilled the prophet's message.

"We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors³³ He has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. Acts 13:32

Community Group Questions:

1. Christianity exploded upon the Roman Empire because the resurrection meant you had an unending future, you had personal value, you had certainty, and a future beyond your imagination.

Which of these four resonates the most for you?

2. When Jesus said to Thomas in John's gospel, "*Blessed are those who believe without seeing*", what do you suppose that blessedness might be? (One thought maybe, Acts 9:16) Have fun with this one!

3. Hypothetically, explain to an unsaved friend how the resurrection is proof your sins are forgiven.

These promises of the Hebrew Scriptures were that the future of the world is not one of darkness but of light and glory.

No matter how bad things got with the Israelites corruption and disobedience God always offered a way back and a way of hope that no amount of darkness could overcome.

That was best evidenced by how Christianity triumphed in the Roman Empire.

How did that happen? *The answer by many non-Christian historians was the doctrine of the resurrection, it was like nothing the world had ever seen.*

- **Resurrection means you have a future.**

Resurrection fulfilled people's longings for the future more than anything else that has ever been proposed.

- **Resurrection is personal.**

The doctrine of the resurrection- Jesus was raised from the dead and those who believe in him will be raised from the dead too and we'll get our bodies; that means you'll still be you!

- **Resurrection promises the future is certain.**

"The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus ... Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed." Acts 13:27,28

He's not just trying to make the leaders in Jerusalem look bad. He's trying to say that Jesus Christ died, but he didn't die for his own sins.

"Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses." Acts 13:38,39

*If Jesus didn't die for his own sin and the resurrection proves God vindicated him, then who did he die for?
The answer is he died for you and me.*



Martin Luther: *"If you're suffering, if you're going through dark times, if you're facing death, and you're not absolutely sure God is for you, absolutely sure God accepts you, absolutely sure all of your sins have been paid for and you're going to be with him, then the knowledge of a bright future, if you're not certain it's for you, is of no consolation."*

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

- **Resurrection is beyond our imagination good.**

Heaven isn't a consolation prize for what you've lost. The resurrection is the *restoration* of what you've lost.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Revelation 21:3,4

This is why the ancient world looked at this and said, "I want to believe that." I look at the world today and ask, "Why don't you want to believe that?" **Pastor and author Tim Keller**

Why indeed?