

The Glorious Risen Jesus

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now to the book of Revelation, last book in the Bible, and to chapter 1, and we read it, verse 12.

Revelation 1, verse 12. Revelation 1, verse 12.

Revelation 1, verse 13.

Now, we know that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is really the very core, the very heartbeat of the gospel. And it really puts a step into the Christian life.

In fact, there would be no Christian life were it not for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it beggars belief how there are some within the Christian church, and I say the Christian church in its widest field, who doubt the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who will actually say that there wasn't the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 58] And that is madness to say, because the fact is that if there was no resurrection, we're told in the Bible, we're still dead in our sins. To say that there was no resurrection is really to undermine the very heart of the Christian faith.

But we know that there has been a resurrection. And that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we've said it often enough before, is one of the many things that distinguishes the Christian faith from many of the other faiths and religions within the world.

Because, if we use the expression, the leader or the head of the Christian faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the only one of all the faiths who has risen physically.

He has risen bodily. His body was put into a grave, but he rose from that grave. Death could not hold him. And he today is in glory, body and soul.

The body that Christ took in his birth is a body, the body that he took, that body that was formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

[3 : 16] That body is now, as we're going to see here, a glorified, majestic, wonderful body.

And this is how Jesus is today in glory. And that's one of the great, wonderful things that distinguishes the Christian faith very much from others.

Now, Peter is, of course, talking about how David, way back, and we didn't sing Psalm 16, but in Psalm 16, David, and we're told here in Acts, David actually was a prophet.

David was a king.

That his body would not see corruption.

[4 : 56] tells us that in Psalm 16. So David is not, although he's writing about himself, it is very obvious then, and it tells us that here in Acts, that he was actually, in his role as a prophet, was speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ and his resurrection from the dead.

And, of course, Jesus made many appearances after he rose from the dead. He appeared to many people, particularly to his immediate disciples, but also to many, many others.

But they were all followers of himself. And then, of course, we have that lovely scene where Jesus rises, ascends to heaven.

And he ascends to heaven with his hands outstretched in benediction over his disciples. And I love to think that that benediction that Jesus is giving to his disciples, he continues to give to his church. Because he was received up into the clouds with his hands stretched out, blessing his disciples below. And that was the last picture that they had of him, was disappearing into the clouds that received him, with his hands outstretched, blessing them.

[6 : 14] And so it is a picture that we like to think of. And I believe a picture that is true, that the blessing, the benediction blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ is upon the church, even to this very day.

So we're also told in Acts there, as the disciples continued to look, the two angels appeared beside them. And they said, this Jesus that was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

So the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come again. We talk about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was something that Jesus himself mentions quite often in his ministry, that he was going to come back again.

And the Bible tells us very plainly that Jesus is going to return. But the difference of Jesus' coming into the world the first time and Jesus' coming into the world the second time could not be more different.

When Jesus came into the world the first time, he came in, we would almost say secretly, silently. People didn't know. He was born into this world and he came in so quietly, so silently that really nobody would really know or notice.

[7 : 38] But when he returns this time, it's going to be very, very, very, very different. When he came in the first time, his glory was veiled. It was covered.

So people didn't see. This time his glory will not be veiled. And he will be seen in all his glory. And we're told that every eye will see it.

And it's one of the things I'm sure you've often thought about it. I certainly often think about it. And I wonder, I wonder, because we don't know when he's going to.

We often think, we often put these things way ahead. And we say, oh, well, I'll never see that. We don't know. It's one of the things Jesus said about his return is that no one knows. You know, you'll hear of people telling when the end of the world is going to be.

They haven't a clue. Nobody knows. Jesus tells us that he's going to come at such a time as people will least expect. And I often think, I wonder, wouldn't it be amazing just to see the spectacle of the returning Jesus descending out of the sky?

[8 : 47] Coming down, because he will come with clouds. That's what we're told that. And he will come with clouds, and then he will appear. And everybody will see him.

Now, there's a lot of people, and when they say, oh, Jesus is coming again into this world, they'll think it's no big deal, because they think, well, he's just a man. I can deal with that. I can handle that. And they can be quite dismissive of it.

But that's not how exactly it's going to be. Yes, he's going to come back as a man, the man Jesus. But he will come back in all his glory. And there's not going to be anything the world has ever seen before that will equate with this appearing of Jesus.

Because his glory is going to transcend any human description. Because that's what the Apostle John is trying to do for us in these verses.

He was given a vision of the glorious Jesus as he is in heaven now. And he couldn't. He couldn't really describe him.

[9 : 58] Because of the majesty and the glory and the greatness. So he's having to give us, as it were, a kind of imagery of what he was seeing and who he was seeing.

And that is why it tells us that when Jesus returns, that those who mocked him and laughed at him and just had no time for him, that they're going to call on the rocks and the hills to fall on them and cover them.

Because they can't bear to see him. It's going to be so awesome. And there's going to be this dawning realization. We got it seriously wrong. And that's one of the things that the Bible holds out for us.

So John here, who had this vision, remember he had been banished to this island, a wee isle called Patmos. And it was on this island that John, as an old man, was given this vision, this amazing vision.

And the whole book of Revelation is John giving to us of what he was given to see. And I suppose in some ways the language is like what we find in parts of Daniel and parts of Ezekiel.

[11 : 10] But John heard this voice in verse 12. And he turned to see this voice. And I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me. And on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands.

So he saw these seven golden lampstands. And these lampstands, we're told, represented the church. There were seven churches in Asia Minor. But this was representing the church.

And of course, as we know, a lampstand is there for you to put the lamp on or candles or whatever is in it. Oil that is in there, which will be burning. And the point of the lampstand is to hold up and put

out light.

That's what the lampstand is there for. And that really is the purpose of the church. It is there to hold up the light of the gospel.

And to put out the light of the gospel. Because this is not when the church receives. And remember, the church is made up of individuals.

[12:15] Every person who comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes a member of the church. Becomes part of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is not something that we are just to say, Oh, well, I've come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. That's it. And I'm going to go away into my weak corner. I'm not going to get involved with anything or anybody.

That's not what the Lord asks us to do. He says, Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good work and so glorify your Father which is in heaven.

So there is a huge duty and responsibility upon the church of the Lord Jesus Christ for the church, for the individual believer to live out Jesus in this world.

And so these are the golden candlesticks that are there. And it's funny, a lot of people today think the church is utterly irrelevant. I'm sure if you asked the majority of people in Britain today, what place do you think the church has?

[13:18] Probably the majority would say, I don't know. They might see it as something that has well passed its sell-by date, that it's an irrelevancy in where we are in society today.

Well, that's not how Jesus sees it. Because we find here that Jesus is in the midst of the lampstands. He's in the center of the church.

Because the church belongs to him. This is what is precious to him above everything else in this world.

His people are his portion in this world. Out of all that's in this world, his people are his portion. And there will come a day when the church, all believers, will shine and will reflect the awesome glory, the mediatorial glory of Jesus Christ.

It's quite an extraordinary thing. John was given this little glimpse into heaven. The apostle Paul got a glimpse into heaven. They were never the same after it.

[14:24] It was just, it was so awesome. And the Lord, I believe in his mercy, doesn't let us see heaven. I don't think we would have the capacity to take it.

I don't think humanly we could sustain ourselves under the weight of the glory that would be revealed to us.

It's an extraordinary prospect. So John fixes on the one who is in the very center. Now John had been very close to Jesus throughout his time in this world.

In fact, we know there were Peter, James, and John. Jesus took them into different situations to the other disciples. And John himself, he termed himself the disciple whom Jesus loved.

So Jesus and John were very, very, very, very close in this world. But Jesus, John, the last John had seen of Jesus, physically was when he rose.

[15:29] But what he saw now, nothing could prepare him for it. In fact, the result at the end was, we see in verse 17, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as though I was dead.

He collapsed in a heap. It was too much for him. And that's what I mean when we say that, or the Bible says to us, when Jesus returns, people are not going to cope with it.

And that's why they're going to say, they're going to call on the rocks and the hills to fall on them and to cover them from the wrath of the Lamb. And so John sees Jesus here, and he sees him as the Son of Man clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

And of course, this is again just referring to the clothing of the high priest. And we know that this is who Jesus was above all, that he was the high priest who came.

And the priest's great work was to make sacrifice for sin. But we know that Jesus wasn't just the one who came to make sacrifice for sin. He, in fact, became the sacrifice for sin.

[16:43] And this is the pivotal thing that took place in this world. 2,000 years ago, the most important event that took place in the world really was these three days that marked the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And before we go any further, I think we've got to ask the question, what does that particular weekend that took place all these years ago mean to you today?

Because for a lot of people, it doesn't mean anything. A lot of people don't know about it. A lot of people don't care about it. A lot of people are completely indifferent to it. But, you know, it is not just a fact of history. It is a pivotal event in all the history of this world. Because it is an event that we have to respond to one way or another. Because one day, we're going to have to give an answer to the same Jesus in all his glory and tell him what we did with him. [17 : 51] Did we accept him or did we reject him? It's a solemn prospect. But that is a date that every one of us is going to have to keep.

We all have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. No excuses. Impossible to avoid. And so it's important that we come to terms and that we grasp what Jesus did these 2,000 years ago. And he has risen and he is there still in his high priestly role interceding for us. That's what he's doing in glory.

He's interceding. And what does that intercession mean for us? How does he intercede? Is he saying to the Father, look at all these different people and maybe he's homing in on your life and my life and saying, oh, you'll have to excuse him.

I know, look at all that he's done and all that's wrong and all that's wrong but that's just the weakness of his character. And Father, just can you kind of overlook it?

[18 : 56] That's not how he's interceding. He's interceding by presenting himself and what he has done for us. He shed his blood.

He poured himself out for us. And he's saying to the Father, look at what I have done for these people. Father, you placed all their sin upon me.

And now because of that, then they're free. There's no guilt attached to them. Their sin has been forgiven. Their sin has been pardoned. You know how it says in the Bible that we are accepted in the beloved?

Well, that's what it is. Accepted in Jesus because the Father accepts Jesus. Then that means that the Father also accepts us.

And then we see that, I'll just run through this video. time is going. Very, very quickly, see that the hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. Now this, of course, corresponds to the figure that Daniel saw in the Ingent of Days in Daniel chapter 7.

[20 : 08] And you see this figure here speaking about someone who is, like in Daniel, when we see this character, it is the same representation that is seen by John.

Someone who is altogether all wise, all knowledge, somebody who has always been, who knows from the beginning to the end. That's how it is with Jesus.

He knows everything about you. Everything. There's not one aspect of your life that Jesus doesn't know. Nothing hidden away into some wee corner.

He knows your motives. He understands why you do what you do. Even when you might say one thing and think another, he knows it. We cannot hide anything from the wisdom that is his.

And he is altogether pure. You see, it tells us that it's white as snow. Jesus is altogether pure. Now we can't understand true purity because none of us are pure.

[21 : 13] Because even when you try to live as pure a life as possible, still your thoughts are so often, they're all over the place and our thoughts are often muddled.

Our thoughts are often, you know, sometimes we're ashamed of our thoughts. We say to yourself, do you ever catch yourself and you're thinking and you say, what on earth am I thinking?

That is awful. Well, that's how we are. None of us are pure, but Jesus is altogether pure. Everything about him is pure.

And because of this purity and this holiness and this righteousness and this justice, it means that every aspect of him about him, his love is pure, his joy is pure, his peace is pure, everything is pure.

And it tells us that his eyes were like a flame of fire. And again, he's seeing everything. He knows everything. And I think there's also a picture here almost of the righteous indignation that will be in the eyes of the Lord.

[22 : 19] Because as he looks out in this world, what sorrow this world has. Remember, blood spilt has a voice.

Every murder that takes place, the blood of the victim has a voice. When Cain killed his brother, Abel, he thought nobody knew.

And the Lord came to Cain and he said, the blood of your brother is crying out to me. In other words, the Lord is saying, look, I've seen it.

And what you did demands vengeance. What you did is so wrong. And your brother's blood is crying out for that vengeance.

Now you think of what's taking place in this world today. You think of all the atrocities and the genocide and you think of all the bloodshed that is taking place. What a volume must be crying out before heaven.

[23 : 24] It tells us of Sodom, that the cry of Sodom went to the Lord. So the Lord is hearing all these things and he's seeing all these things and he's taking note of all these things and one day, and I believe that there is a righteous indignation in the eyes of the Lord.

It was shown in the life of Jesus here when he saw people being unreasonable and irrational. Jesus reacted to these things. And that's why there was an incredible sympathy to the outcasts, to those that were despised by the rest of society.

Jesus had a heart for the prostitutes. He had a heart for the tax collectors. He had a heart for the despised. He had a heart for those who were belittled and shunned by others. He went to them. He cared. He hated to see social injustice. He hated these things. So I believe there is almost here a picture of the righteous indignation of the Lord as he looks down into this world.

And then we see his feet like burnished bronze refined in a fire and so on. I have to move through this quickly. And his voice like the roar of many waters thundering who stood at the shore who stood beside the rocks I'm sure when the waves have been pounding or beside a waterfall you can't hear yourself speak.

[24 : 55] Here is the voice of the Lord in all its thunderous power. But you know today that's not how he's speaking to us. He's speaking in the silence.

He's speaking with a still small voice. That's how he's speaking to us just now because today we're in the day of grace and of mercy. That's how he's speaking to you today.

And he's saying to you it's almost like a whisper. What are you going to do with me? Are you going to believe in me? Are you just going to ignore me? You can't ignore me.

Jesus isn't thundering but he's whispering. And the spirit deals so quietly so gently within our hearts. I hope today that you're listening.

And then we see that in his right hand there were seven stars from his mouth and these of course are angels we're told that later on. And from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

[26 : 03] The sword of course is that which is both offensive and defensive. And God's word we're told in the Bible is the sword of the spirit.

And this is the amazing thing about God's word. God's word is described in different ways in the Bible. It is described it's sharper than a two-edged sword that it pushes right in right into the very depth of your being.

It's like a hammer that breaks. We're told it's like dynamite. Well maybe they didn't have dynamite in these days but the word *dunamai* which is the word power in Greek is where we get our word dynamite from.

And that is the impact of God's word. It's like dynamite. It blows apart. And that's what happens when a person becomes a Christian because you know naturally we have a resistance.

We have a stubbornness against the gospel. It's just it's inbuilt within us. This no I'm not going to give in. I'm strong enough. I can handle life myself.

[27 : 12] I'm not going to go down this road. But you know when the Lord begins to work within our heart and the Holy Spirit comes that's exactly what he comes it comes like dynamite and blows us apart.

We're told that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The *dunamai* of God unto salvation. The dynamite of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. Blows apart.

Blows away the resistance so that now you're willing to accept the Jesus up until now that you are pushed away, resisted, rejected. And so there is this word and his face shining in full strength just like the sun.

Bright like the sun with the power, with the heat, with the impact, with the effect. You know you can't look in the sun. You can't stare in the midday sun. It begins to blind your eyes.

We're told it's a dangerous thing to do. Well here is the glory of Jesus described in this way. And we see that it was all too much for John.

[28 : 16] And we see that John, 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.

He says, I am the living one. Isn't that wonderful? The living one. The living one. That's who Jesus is. He was dead, but he's a living one.

He is the source of all life. He is life in himself. He is the source of human life. He is the source of the life of this world.

He is the source of the life in the believer. He is life. And you know, it's kind of crazy to turn away from the one who is light and life.

Because when we look around this world, you know, you would think that by this time, when you think of all the conferences, all the books, all the meetings, everything that has been done to aid world peace.

[29 : 27] After the First World War, they said there will never be another war. Well, it wasn't very long until there was another war, an even worse war. And after the Second World War, they were saying, well, we can never ever, ever have a war like that again, ever.

And so there's every attempt that made to keep people to live together in peace. And here we are, we're just so advanced in technology and in science and in medicine and all these things, and we still can't live together in peace.

The world is in a mess when you look at it. If we are to follow the way that so much of the atheistic philosophy is going, we should by now, we should be living in a utopia.

It should be a world full of dreams. But it's not. It's the same old world with all the same old problems. others. And Jesus stands alone as the only one who is really saying, look, I have the answer to the problems and it's me.

Trust in me. Believe in me. Accept in me. Accept me as your Lord and your Saviour. May we today accept this risen Saviour as our own.

[30 : 46] Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks for your word and for your greatness and your goodness and your mercy. And we ask, O Lord, that we might be able to see that today the Jesus that we adore, the Jesus who is the head of the church, Jesus Christ, him crucified, him that rose from the dead, him who has ascended into glory, him who is the great mediator and head of the new covenant.

O Lord, today we give thanks for all that you are and for the way that you are working within your people. Lord, bless us and do us good. Bless a cup of tea in the hall afterwards and take us all home safely for giving us our sin in Jesus name.

Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 99 from Sing Psalms, Psalm 99, verses 1 to 5 and that's on page 130.

page 130, Psalm 99. And the tune is Arlington.

The Lord reigns from his throne on high, let all the nations quake. He sits between the cherubim, so let the whole earth shake. Great is the Lord on Zion Hill exalted over all.

[32 : 11] Upon his great and holy name let all the nations call. the king loves truth and equity established by his might. And Jacob you have done for us all that is just and right.

Exalt the Lord our God with us, let all the world abroad before his footstool worship him for holy is the Lord. Psalm 99, 1 to 5, the Lord reigns from the Lord is on his throne on high, let all the nations quake.

He sits between the cherubim, so let the cherubim, so let the whole earth shake.

Great is the Lord on Zion Hill, exalted over all, upon his great and holy name, upon his great and holy name, let all the nations come.

the king of truth and equity, he established by his might, in Jacob you are done for us, in Jacob you have done for us, all that is just and right, let all the Lord our God with us, let all the world abroad, before his boots to worship him, before his boots to worship him, our holy heavens adorned.

[35 : 22] Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forever more. Amen. Amen.