

Resurrection Day HIStory

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. It was dark, and He said “Let there be light”; and there was light. Using His words alone, God spoke into existence- day and night; water, sky and land; plants and trees; sun, moon and stars; fish, birds, and all the animals. And then taking dust from the ground God formed man in His own image and breathed His life into Him. Taking a rib out of man he formed woman. And God loved His creation, and He wanted man and woman to truly love him as well, so when he formed them He allowed them to have freedom of choice. He didn’t program them as robots to automatically love and obey Him as their creator, no they would have to make that choice on their own.

So, Adam and Eve, for a time period, enjoyed a close relationship with their creator God, living in the tropical paradise of the garden of Eden. Life was good. No stress, no worries, no fears- just joy. There was fulfilling purpose, true peace, nourishment. It was the life we all desire in the deepest place of our heart, the life that we all sense we were intended to live. God had given Adam and Eve one command to obey: they could eat of any tree from the garden, except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We all know what happened, Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden fruit, and thus lost their innocence, their close friendship with God, and their home in the garden of Eden. Their one act of disobedience- their one act of sin- opened up a spiritual gateway to all of mankind. With that sin, difficulty entered into the world- mankind would have to work terribly hard in order to survive, in order to put food on the table. Survival of the human race would be painful- even in childbearing. Tension entered into the relationship between man and woman, and death began to haunt every single living being. On top of all this, moving forward, mankind would now have a real enemy to constantly deal with, not a slithering snake enemy, but the evil, slithering forces of Satan and demons that were represented by the serpent.

[\(Gen. 3:14-19\)](#) If you think about it- all the pain, hurt, and difficulty with life in this world can be put into these categories: the difficulty of work and provision, the pain of birthing and raising children, relationship tension, death, and the tempting attacks from evil forces that persuade us to disobey God. The reason you and I get frustrated, stressed, fearful, angry, hurt- the reason is linked directly back to this event of disobedience that took place in the Garden of Eden. Yes, thousands of years later, the consequences of *our* inability to be fully obedient to God

continually haunt us. Yet, as we see the problems of our day rooted in the curse of that day, we must also see that the solution of our day is also rooted in the promise of that day. To the serpent, representing Satan and the forces of evil, God said that though he may bruise the heel of mankind, mankind would end up bruising his head. Yes, God's plan was that one day the forces of evil would be dealt a head crushing blow. And in order for mankind to understand the depth of God's plan, God chose to reveal things one step at a time, properly taking time in order to successfully woo mankind's heart back to His.

As the human race multiplied, so did wickedness and rebellion against God. Part of God's plan was to reveal His holiness and justice to mankind, and thus Noah witnessed God's judgment like no one had ever seen before, as those who had completely rejected God were destroyed in a catastrophic worldwide flood.

As the earth was repopulated, God chose the family of Abraham to reveal to the rest of the world His goodness and blessings. Abraham's son Isaac had a son named Jacob, and through Jacob the nation of Israel was birthed. This nation was to know and understand the creator God, to walk in fellowship with Him, to be the mouthpiece through which God spoke to all of mankind. But even early in their relationship with God, they too rejected Him, just as Adam, Eve, and the others during Noah's time did. The people of Israel broke fellowship with their God, and eventually found themselves enslaved by the nation of Egypt.

God still loved His creation, and thus saved His people by sending them a man named Moses. God performed miraculous signs and wonders that only He could do, in an attempt to captivate their attention and win them back into a love relationship with Him. In His very first command to them as a corporate entity, He told them to offer up a perfect, unblemished lamb as a blood sacrifice. This lamb was to die in their place. The sin and wrongdoing of the people was in effect transferred from themselves and placed instead onto the lamb. They were to eat this roasted lamb with bread that didn't have any rising agents in it- no bacteria- just pure flour, water, and oil; and alongside the lamb and purified bread, they were to eat bitter herbs. They were to eat this meal quickly- standing up- not seated, because they were to soon rush out from Egypt. They smeared the lamb's blood over their household doors, and this proved each household's obedience, and they were able to live, as God judged their hard-hearted Egyptian neighbors with the death of the firstborn in every family. This special meal became known as

the Passover meal, it was commanded by God to be done each and every year, it was to serve as a reminder of God's rescue, a reminder that God requires perfection (unblemished lamb), a reminder that death would continue to be the consequence of sin, and a reminder that death would also somehow be the salvation for the one who obeyed God.

That same night the people of Israel were rescued by God, and He led them into the wilderness where He personally would teach them. He gave them the 10 commandments, and other rules as well that would help guide them in a right relationship with Him and with their fellow mankind. As time passed, what happened is that the people, for the most part, followed God's rules, yet still rejected Him in their hearts. They were more concerned with checking the right boxes than they were with walking in a close relationship with their Creator God. They even preferred that a man would lord over them as king, instead of their creator God serving them as their King. Many kings led Israel further and further away from fellowship with God. King David however, was a king that pleased God, yet He pleased God not in living a perfect life. David had some massive catastrophic failures, but what pleased God was his heart. David admitted his wrongness, and he admitted God's rightness. David sought forgiveness from God and chose to turn from His sin, following God and thus enjoying close fellowship with Him.

As mentioned, most of the other kings weren't like David, they rejected God and brought the people further and further away from Him. The people still celebrated the Passover meal, but it's significance- what it was pointing to- was just lost in a cultural tradition. Knowing God required perfection was mistranslated into trying to look perfect on the outside, knowing that death would be the consequence of sin was downplayed and ignored, and knowing that death would also somehow be the salvation for the one who obeyed God was perhaps written off as some sort of spiritual mumbo jumbo. Doesn't sound too different than today- a world of cultural traditions, hypocrisy, ignoring the consequences of sin, not connecting any lines between the dots of the origin of this world, the problem of this world, what death has to do with it, and whose death is able to give life.

After many years of patience, and attempting to call the people to return to a right understanding of Him, God began to connect some dots so that His created

beings could understand. The people had witnessed His just and holy judgement through the flooding of the earth, His salvation and mercy to Noah, His power through miracles in Egypt, His ability to rise up leaders like Noah, Abram, Moses, David. His people would, for a season, walk with Him in right relationship, but then would reject Him, His protecting presence would depart, the people would then realize their mistakes and repent, and then God would rescue. But God wanted this cycle to end. He announced through the prophet Jeremiah: *“Behold, the days are coming... when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people... For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”* ([Jer. 31:31-34](#)) And then through the prophet Micah, God proclaimed that in Bethlehem a ruler would come, one whose origins were from long ago. ([Micah 5:2](#)) And through the prophet Isaiah, *“the people who walk in darkness will see a great light... You [God] will increase their joy... You will break the yolk of their burden... For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace”.* ([Isaiah 9:2-7](#)) These prophecies were announcing the coming of the Messiah, the eternal King that would come and make a way for man’s cycle of rebellion, sin, and death to be ended. The Messiah would come and would once and for all restore the fellowship between God and man. And He would serve as the final Passover lamb required for God’s rescue.

The majority of listeners went on with their day, shrugging off these messages, continuing to reject God. And God sent warnings to His people- that they needed to repent- that there would be consequences if they did not stop doing evil. But the people did not heed the warnings, and God sent the consequences He had warned them of. The nation of Babylon came in and conquered Israel, destroying Jerusalem and the temple, and the people were taken as captives back to Babylon. But... in Babylon, there existed some who had the heart of David, a repentant heart- who mourned their lack of fellowship with God, and longed with all their heart for God to bring the promised Messiah that would once and for all time break the curse of sin on humanity.

This minority group, waited and waited as the heavens were silent, knowing that one day God would save them, bringing them the Messiah that would restore the

hope, peace, and joy that Adam and Eve experienced with God before disobedience entered the world. And in a completely unexpected surprise, God sent *Himself* as the promised Messiah, born to the virgin Mary and her fiancé Joseph, in the sleepy village of Bethlehem. The angel of God told Mary and Joseph to name Him Jesus, the Greek form of Joshua- meaning “God is salvation.”

Jesus grew into a man, and began announcing His reign as King, and began announcing the type of Kingdom in which He ruled. He invited all to turn away from the cycle of sin, rebellion, and disobedience, and to turn to God in repentance for His forgiveness. He wanted all to understand that He was sent by God in order to provide the way in which to have a restored relationship with God. He announced that the world we know would end, and that those who followed Him and received God’s forgiveness would live forever in a new place- His Kingdom, where there would be forever life, peace, joy, and happiness. He proved the validity of what He said by the impossible miracles He performed, giving sight to the blind, restoring the lame to walk, giving hearing to the deaf, healing the diseased, feeding the hungry, even bringing back to life the dead- all foreshadowing life in His kingdom. But He was very clear that He alone was the only way to gain entrance into the Kingdom. He said that He was the way, and the truth, and the life; and that no one comes to the Father but through Him. Upon seeing Jesus, a prophet by the name of John, called out saying “*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” ([John 1:29](#)) The Passover lamb from the time of Moses was the means of rescue of God’s people from Egypt, and it was the yearly means of rescue from sin and God’s judgement in the following years. But now God was identifying the Passover lamb (He Himself as Jesus) through which He would provide the opportunity for permanent, eternal rescue through His death for all of mankind.

On the night of His death, it just so happened, that it was the time in which the yearly celebration of the Passover meal occurred. That night he was gathered with his followers and as they shared a meal together, he taught them the new way in which to celebrate God’s rescue. They weren’t eating standing up as did Moses and the people during the first Passover. God’s word says they were reclining at the table, perhaps conveying the idea that because of what Jesus was about to do, people could finally have rest, and not have to scurry about in their own strength in order to arrive to salvation. There wasn’t any mention of bitter herbs, no, God was taking away the bitter herb curse of death. And the focal point

wasn't an unflawed, beautiful, wooly lamb, but rather an unflawed, beautiful, holy lamb of God who said *"this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."* ([Luke 22:19](#))

Not taking an animal's blood to paint the outside of a home, rather Jesus showed true obedience in right relationship with God was something that must be *internalized*- not just performed on the outside. And so, taking the cup he said *"Drink from it... for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."* ([Matt. 26:27-28](#)) And this is why to this day, we, along with followers of Jesus around the world, celebrate what has become known as the "Lord's Supper." What started as the Passover meal- a commemorating event of households that were obedient and "passed over" by the angel of death and thus rescued by God because of being covered by a lamb's blood- that event is still celebrated by individuals and households who are now unaffected by the angel of death, because of God's rescue provided by the blood of Jesus, the lamb of God.

As surprising as the manner in which God himself showed up on earth in the human flesh of Jesus, so was the way in which He made it possible to enter into His Kingdom. Jesus Himself said that He would suffer and die and then 3 days later rise from the dead, but when it happened everyone was shocked. They first were astounded that He was dead, and then 3 days later they were astounded that He was alive. Passover lambs in the past had stayed dead. This one though, Jesus, defied all reason, science, and logic. Knowing that it was mind blowing to the world, Jesus made certain to appear, and re-appear to many witnesses to prove that it was really so. Rome and the Jewish leaders surely made every effort to cover up and dismiss the truth of this impossible reality that had occurred, yet they were unable to. Murdering those who proclaimed the resurrection did not stifle the truth- no, the news of what Jesus had done only spread further.

And it wasn't until sometime later that people began to look at God's story from the beginning of creation and see that all along God was pointing to His rescue through Jesus. From the promise of bruising the head of the serpent in the beginning of the Bible, throughout all the Old Testament, entering into the gospel books of the New Testament, God is pointing to Resurrection Day. We can see that Jesus was the Adam who instead lived rightly and obeyed God, the Noah who would provide salvation from the destruction of the earth, Jesus was the Abraham

who would bless all nations of the world, He was the Jacob who would have a nation of sons and daughters, He was the Moses rescuing His people from captivity, He was the perfect unblemished Lamb sacrifice for the sins of the people. He was the David whose heart pleased God as king, He was the Jeremiah, Micah, and Isaiah foretelling the future reality of the coming Messianic Kingdom. The New Testament books that follow the four gospel accounts, they point back to Resurrection Day. The whole reason behind them being written is Resurrection Day. But they also point *forward* to a *future* Resurrection Day, the day followers of Jesus will, like Jesus, be resurrected from the death of this world, into new life, life like it was intended to be. The Bible ends with a description of this new life... *“a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him.”* ([Rev. 22:1-3](#)) The curse mentioned, is the same curse from the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis 3. The curse- of hard work, survival, pain, relationship tension, death- will be done away with in the life to come for the followers of Jesus, all because of Resurrection Day. Yes, the havoc of our real enemy will end as the serpent will eventually die from the mortal wound Jesus dealt to its head.

Jesus is bringing all creation back full circle to the beauty in which it was intended to be, He is the one sent for you and I, who is now preparing a place for His followers in His kingdom. This is the story of Easter- the story of rescue, repentance, redemption, and reconciliation- this is the story of the Bible, this is the most important story you will ever hear. And we have the freedom to choose how we will respond to this story. God is reaching out through His son Jesus, and we each have the choice to allow Him, as eternal King, to rule in our hearts. If you have any questions about how your story fits into His story, we'll be available after the service, please come and let's talk about it. As you leave today on this Easter Sunday, may His story of history remain fresh in your mind. May you be encouraged, thankful, and joyful as you soak in its significance, power, and hope.