

Our study, dealing with the first degree of Christ's glorification, namely, His resurrection from the dead, was divided into four questions:

1. Did Christ rise from the dead?
2. How did He rise?
3. For what purpose did He rise?
4. What are the benefits or fruits of His resurrection?

We worked on the third question, For what purpose did He rise? which was divided into six purposes:

- a) For God's glory;
- b) Because of the prophecies;
- c) Because of God's decree;
- d) Because of His dignity;
- e) To maintain the office of Mediator;
- f) For our salvation.

We covered all but the last purpose of Christ's resurrection last week, which is that He rose from the grave for our salvation. This purpose can be divided into three sub-purposes:

- i. Our justification.
- ii. Our regeneration.
- iii. Our resurrection and glorification.

- i. Our justification.

Rom 4:25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Our justification is dependent thereon that the wrath of God be completely satisfied, not only in the historical sense, but also in the eternal sense. All our sins, past, present and future must have been atoned for, or the atonement would be imperfect, falling short of providing justification.

Anyone can die during the punishment of one's transgressions: believer or unbeliever. Surviving the punishment is what God alone can accomplish, which is why Jesus had to be God and man. Very God and very man.

The concept of surviving God's presence, either in His glory or His wrath is not an invention of the New Testament.

Deut 4:30-33 When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. ³¹For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. ³²Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? ³³Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived?

Here God explains to Israel that they survived His glory because of His covenant with their fathers, which God swore to them. Therefore, we see God being faithful to his covenant preserves His people. Similarly, the covenant with Abraham preserves the true Israelites, the spiritual descendants of Abraham, the elect whose names have been written in the book of life before creation.

Just as a point of interest: In Exodus 33:20 God said to Moses "... no man can see me and live." But, here in Deut 4:33 we read that they survived God's presence. In Isaiah 6:5, we see the same thing. Elsewhere God showed Himself to Abraham, sat down, and ate with him. If "no man can see [God] and live" then it must be the Second Person of the Godhead, the Mediator, who temporarily assumed flesh for whatever reason it was necessary, but at the very least for the reason of God's providence through the order of nature.

Therefore, it became the Mediator to survive the punishment and to do that the Mediator had to be one who could lay down his life to fully suffer the punishment and then, once the

sacrifice was complete, or as Christ said it on the cross, "it is finished," He took up His life again.

It is necessary that we have a complete understanding of the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, the infiniteness thereof because if we misunderstand what it means it could lead to recklessness, thinking that we may sin at leisure since our sins won't cause the loss of our justification, or to despair believing that we should isolate us from the world to avoid unnecessarily draining Christ's sacrifice for the atonement of our every-day sins.

Rom 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

John 17:15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one."

When we sin, Christ's atonement, or payment, on the cross paid for that and every other sin, too, satisfying the Father's wrath against that payment, so it would not reach the sinner. The reprobate, however, does not have such a compensation or payment made by Christ and they cannot escape God's wrath. It is proper that the apostle Paul should warn us that we should not deliberately sin because we are no longer under the law, but we should consider the awesome deliverance that Christ worked for us and sin no more.

Rom 6:1-14 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ²May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so

that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.

⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

¹⁰For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

¹¹[Similarly,] consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

It was, therefore, inescapable that the Mediator would rise from the dead for our justification so that we may escape eternal death. Or, we may also say that it became the Mediator to deliver us in such a manner as to overcome death entirely in us.

The fact that Christ first had to overcome death in Himself was not an invention of the New Testament either, because it was the fulfillment of what had been predicted,

Hos 13:14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? I will have no compassion"

1Cor 15:54, 55 "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

By so doing, He confounded his enemies who had reviled Him when, hanging upon the cross, saying,

Matt 27:42 "He saved others, ... but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him."

So, to summarize:

If He had not conquered death, He could not have bestowed upon us the benefits which He had merited for us by His death. It belonged to the office of Mediator as we have shown last week, both to merit and bestow benefits.

Had he not risen from the dead, we could not have certainty that He had satisfied the required payment for us. It would have been a certain argument that He had not made this satisfaction, but was overcome by death and the burden of sin, because where death is, there is sin. It would have been inconsistent with the justice of God if He did make satisfaction but remained under the power of death.

It was necessary that Christ should rise again, as well that He might make satisfaction for us, so that we may know that He has fully accomplished this, and merited benefits for us.

Finally, He himself applied these benefits to us and thereby perfectly justified and saved us by His merits and efficacy.

If we, then, say that we are justified by faith, we mean that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us.

ii. Our regeneration.

The word 'regeneration' only appears in two verses in the Bible, but the Bible is strewn with the principle and teaching of regeneration.

Mat 19:28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Tit 3:5-7 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The regeneration here is to be understood as the renewing (rebirth) of all things since Elijah already came to 'restore all things' in the form of John the Baptist. (Matt 17:11-13.)

Is 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."

Is 66:22, 23 "For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. ²³And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from sabbath to sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before me," says the LORD.

Ezek 11:19, 20 "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

In Daniel 7, we read about Daniel's vision and how the saints of the Highest One will prevail against the four beasts.

Rev 21:1-5 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

So, we see that regeneration simply means to be renewed or where it refers to the elect, it means to be born again.

John 3:3-7 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

1Pe 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1Pe 1:17-23 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. ²⁰For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ²¹who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. ²²Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

We must take care, however, that we do not separate our justification and our regeneration, as if they are separate processes. Rather, they are inseparably joined – one cannot be regenerated without justification, which is why we set out to prove that Christ rose from the grave to justify us, imputing

unto us His righteousness by faith. Therefore, we cannot profess the benefit of Christ's sacrifice and be silent as to the grace of regeneration; or cling onto regeneration and be silent about His merits on the cross which worked for us righteousness by faith.

It is, therefore, impossible to be regarded as righteous by the merits of Christ without being renewed by His Spirit unto a holy life. It is also impossible that anyone in whom the Spirit of regeneration dwells, not to glory in the free adoption of God. In short, God receives no one into favor who is not also made truly righteous.

Having said that, we need to recognize a distinction between justification and regeneration. Regeneration is impossible without justification and justification is false unless it is followed by regeneration. The First Cause of our justification is the will of the Father who willed each individual one of the elect to receive justification through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His Son. And every one of them will be renewed at the appropriate time and circumstance as the Holy Spirit determines. The latter cannot occur if the former has not been established by the Father.

They are both blessings which we receive from Christ and should be extolled as such bearing in mind how they came about lest we derogate the one or the other.

Next week we will continue to look at Regeneration.