

## Most Significant Event Part 2

07/28/2013

Hymns: 91 Crown Him with Many Crowns 13 In the Garden  
Scripture: Psalm 30

Rich Person	Enterprise	Charity
Cornelius Vanderbilt	Railroad and Steamship Lines	Vanderbilt University
Andrew Carnegie	U.S. Steel	Carnegie Foundation
John D. Rockefeller	Standard Oil	Rockefeller Foundation
Henry Ford	Ford Motor Company	Ford Foundation
Sam Walton	Walmart	Walton Family Foundation
Bill Gates	Microsoft	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

What do these men have in common? Each accumulated vast wealth in this country and each is associated with a distinct and different enterprise. Each had a vision, seized unique opportunities, took calculated risks, and worked tirelessly to achieve their high goals. They amassed fabulous fortunes by making **big decisions** along the way.

As committed as these men were in pursuing their passion, the Bible is filled with examples of people with **an even greater** level of commitment. Can you think of any? Here a couple:

1. Esther: *...I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.* (Esther 4:16)
2. Widow's mites: *... she ... cast in all that she had, even all her living.* (Mark 12:44)

Today, we're going to see how God **put everything on the line** to secure for us the priceless gift of eternal life.

To review, you may recall that last time, we considered the **most significant event of history**. We learned the following five points:

1. God's point of view is Son-centered.
2. Five of our nine Bible summary passages contained a reference to this event.
3. Peter said God planned this event before the foundation of the world.
4. We heard direct testimony of it from Apostles Peter and Paul.
5. We learned of the overwhelming weight of evidence from those who witnessed the event.

We pick up our study today of the resurrection of Jesus Christ at the end of the Seventh Chapter of the Book of Acts as we hear from Stephen:

Acts 7 (Stephen)

*[51] Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears,*

speaking to the Jews here and obviously not mincing any words

**Most Significant Event Part 2**  
**07/28/2013**

*ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:  
as your fathers did,  
so do ye.*

*[52] Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One [that's their Messiah, Jesus Christ]; of whom ye have **been** now the betrayers and murderers:*

*[53] Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

*[54] When they heard these things, they were **cut to the heart**, and they **gnashed on him with their teeth**.*

We've heard of an audience throwing rotten tomatoes at a speaker, but try to get this picture. Stephen's message was so compelling, **so convicting** that his audience reacted **in a rage**. The Bible said that they **gnashed on him with their teeth**. Now that's what I call audience participation!

*[55] But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, **looked up stedfastly into heaven**, and saw the glory of God, and **Jesus standing on the right hand of God**,*

There we have it, Stephen saw the **resurrected** Lord Jesus Christ.

*[56] And said, Behold, I see **the heavens opened**, and **the Son of man standing on the right hand of God**.*

Here Stephen **testified** to the fact of the resurrection.

*[57] Then they [that is the Jewish mob]*

- (1) cried out with a loud voice, and*
- (2) stopped their ears, and*
- (3) ran upon him with one accord,*

*[58] And*

- (4) cast him out of the city, and*
- (5) stoned him:*
- (6) and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose*

*name was Saul.*

So if some of you fall asleep or need to get up and leave early, that's okay. We **appreciate**

your attention  
and  
the fact that **you don't have stones** in your hands or even rotten tomatoes for that matter.

## Most Significant Event Part 2

07/28/2013

*[59] And they stoned Stephen, ... [and Stephen calling] upon God , [said] **Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.***

There he again testifies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*[60] And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*

Does that sound familiar? That's what our Lord said from the cross “*Father, forgive them* [referring to those who crucified Him] *for they know not what they do*” (Luke 23:34).

*And when he had said this, he fell asleep* [that is, he died].

If you didn't catch it, the Apostle Paul was the one formerly named Saul **at** whose feet the audience with stones laid their clothes in the passage we just read. But by the time of Acts chapter 13 just six chapters later (that we looked at the previous time), Saul had met the Lord and been miraculously converted -- transformed by the power of God into the Apostle Paul.

Our final summary passage that testifies to the resurrection comes from Hebrews. After listing the heroes of faith in chapter 11, the writer sums things up:

Hebrews 12 (Apostle Paul?)

*[1] Wherefore seeing we **also** are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, [that is these heroes of faith] let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

*[2] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross [He died a horrific death], despising the shame [he also endured mockery and rejection], and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus Christ has risen to take His place at the right hand of the throne of God. Now, before we go any further, let's consider another question related to the resurrection.

### Who raised Jesus from the dead?

This is an excellent question to ask those who do not believe in the triune God. Many of the cults that may come knocking on your door will give lip service to the divinity of Jesus Christ, but what they **actually** believe about Him is **far different** than what the Bible teaches.

Many years ago, I heard a radio preacher make reference to a simple hand calculator in his description of how the cults err. He said they:

- Add – to the Bible
- Subtract – from Jesus Christ
- Multiply – heresies
- Divide – the church

## Most Significant Event Part 2

07/28/2013

In our current context, we can see that *subtracting* from Jesus Christ is the particular point that applies most directly.

Who raised Jesus from the dead? God the Father.

Father

Galatians 1

*[1] Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, **and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;**)*

Son

John 2

*[18] Then answered the Jews and said unto him [speaking of Jesus], What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?*

*[19] Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.***

*[20] Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?*

*[21] **But he spake of the temple of his body.***

*[22] **When therefore he was risen from the dead,** his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.*

Holy Spirit

Romans 8

*[11] **But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.***

### How Important Is the Resurrection?

So we've seen a lot of emphasis in this resurrection story in the summary passages and we've learned that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit **each** raised Him from the dead. Certainly this was a key event in the Bible, but what about creation, the covenant with Abraham, Jesus' birth, or the crucifixion? Weren't they important? How can we say that the resurrection was the **most** important event?

Hold that thought. In order to answer that question, we need to mention something else we'll be using in our ongoing study aimed at unfolding scripture.

You may recall **the time before** the last time we got together that is, **four** weeks ago, we began looking into nine Bible summary passages. The purpose of them is to assist us in identifying **key events in the Bible** as we try to unravel its mysteries in priority order. Another similar aid we will use is **key chapters of the Bible**. With the caveat that this list may change or expand, here's the starter list of key chapters with their topic:

Chapter	Theme
---------	-------

**Most Significant Event Part 2**  
**07/28/2013**

Genesis 1	Creation
Genesis 3	Fall of Man
Psalms 23	Resting in the Lord
Isaiah 53	Crucifixion of the Savior
John 3	The New Birth
Romans 8	Christian Living
I Corinthians 7	Marriage
I Corinthians 13	Love
<b>I Corinthians 15</b>	Resurrection
<b>Hebrews 11</b>	Faith
Revelation 20	The Final Judgment
Revelation 22	Heaven

Did you notice the chapter that has the theme of the resurrection? Notice also **that one** of our nine summary passages **comes** from this chapter. I Corinthians 15 is the Bible's guide to the resurrection. In it we have the definition of the Gospel and a full description of the resurrection of Christ and of all those justified by faith in Him.

While this chapter merits a complete study, our task for today amounts to understanding the importance of the resurrection. We'll skip forward to verse 12:

[12] Now **if** Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that **there is no resurrection of the dead?**

Among the Jews at least we know there were Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees, believed in the resurrection, but the Sadducees, like some scientists today, believed in **nothing** supernatural. One way to remember this is that the Sadducees were *sad* because they had **no hope** of an afterlife.

Also at the time of the Apostle Paul some in the Corinthian church must have had problems with the concept of the resurrection.

After just making it very clear that Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the dead as witnessed by Paul and many others who remained alive at that time if anyone wished to consult a direct witness, he builds a very logical case using something philosophers call the *Law of excluded middle*: "Everything must either be or not be." He starts with a negative premise, proves it to be false to validate the positive premise.

[13] *But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:*

He just finished proving that Christ **is** risen, but he moves ahead with a *what-if* assumption that He is **not** risen.

**Most Significant Event Part 2**  
**07/28/2013**

[14] *And if Christ be not risen, then is*

*our preaching vain, and  
your faith is also vain.*

[15] *Yea, and*

*we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up  
Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.*

And who are the we? First, the Apostle Paul implicated himself. He testified earlier in this same chapter that Jesus rose from the dead. We have seen in our summary passages:

Acts 2 – Apostle Peter  
Acts 7 – Stephen  
Acts 13 – Apostle Paul

Also the Apostle John attested to it in:

John 21

[14] *This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was  
risen from the dead.*

Then of course we have Jesus Himself. As we just read in John 2:18-22, he said destroy (kill) this temple (His body), and He will raise it up in three days. If He did not rise from the dead, Jesus Himself would be a liar.

For emphasis, the Apostle Paul summarizes the core of his argument:

[16] *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:*

And the result

[17] *And if Christ be not raised,  
your faith is vain;  
ye are yet in your sins.*

[18] *Then  
they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*

[19] *If in this life only we have hope in Christ,  
we are of all men most miserable.*

Now the Apostle Paul turns to face reality:

[20]

**Most Significant Event Part 2**  
**07/28/2013**

*But now is Christ risen from the dead,*

This is a clear fact that he had personally witnessed.

*and become **the first fruits** of them that slept.*

Jesus is the first and only one to rise bodily from the dead into His glorified body. All others who have died still await the resurrection of their body.

*[21] For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

*[22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

*[23] But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

When will those who know Him receive their resurrected body? The verse we just read said **when He comes again**. This is the coming event called *the rapture*. The case is closed. **As** the Apostle Paul just so methodically laid out, the resurrection **is** the most significant event of history.

### **Application**

A little over a week ago, Betsy and I traveled to Myrtle Beach for a two-day ocean getaway. It was a pretty typical nice time at the beach in the summer. The ocean was warm, the sun bright, and the breezes refreshing. One of the many attractions there is the Ripley's **Believe It Or Not** Museum. There you will find exhibits of unusual, bizarre, and fantastic facts.

The application for us is we have a choice with respect to the resurrection – to **believe it** or **not**. There's no middle ground. God designed it that way. If we don't accept Him, we reject Him. As the Apostle Paul showed, God put **everything on the line** with respect to the resurrection. We too have everything on the line with what **we do** with the resurrection. What will **you do** with this most significant event in history?

### **Benediction**

#### **Jude 24-25**

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory **with exceeding joy**, To the only wise God **our Saviour**, be **glory** and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.