

Paul and the Resurrected, Ascended, Glorified Lord Jesus Christ

Earthly or heavenly Jesus?

With predictable and monotonous regularity, we in the Grace Movement are accused of worshipping our apostle Paul by those who do not truly believe that CHRIST IS RISEN and that the words of Paul are the words of the resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” (I Corinthians 14:37 AV)

They cling to the words spoken by the Lord PRIOR to the MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF GOD AND MAN - the sacrifice of the Lamb of God at Calvary and his subsequent resurrection and ascension.

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;” (Hebrews 10:12 AV)

They cling to the words of the Lord in his role as a MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:” (Romans 15:8 AV)

They cling to the words of the Lord PRIOR to the FALL OF ISRAEL.

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?” (Romans 11:11-12 AV)

They cling to the words of the Lord AFTER THE FLESH.

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” (2 Corinthians 5:16 AV)

The whole Bible is addressed to them, they say. They worship Jesus Christ, they say. But do they worship the present resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ or do they worship the past earthly Lord Jesus Christ manifest in the flesh, who came “not but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”?

“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Mat 15:24 AV)

If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain

It is highly likely that those who do not magnify Paul’s office are minimising or underestimating the Lord’s resurrection. If they are totally fixated on what the earthly Lord Jesus Christ had to say and pretty much ignore what the heavenly Lord Jesus Christ had to say (through Paul), are they taking the Lord’s resurrection seriously? If they don’t take Paul seriously then chances are they don’t take the resurrection seriously and chances are they are not saved.

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 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. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” (1Cor 15:12-23 AV)

If they are not interested in what the resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ had to say through Paul, then they probably don’t truly believe in the resurrection from the dead. They lose interest in the Bible at the end of the gospel of John - the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul are a major anti-climax. They believe the Lord ‘left the building’ and never returned to reveal the mystery to Paul.

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal 1:11-12 AV)

Life and immortality brought to light

If on the other hand you are among those who have come to see that what the resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ had to say through Paul is of even greater importance to us than what the earthly Lord Jesus Christ had to say, chances are you are saved. Why?

- Because belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is a prerequisite to believing what he had to say to our Apostle Paul.

“And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;” (Acts 26:15-16 AV)

- Because belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is a prerequisite to magnifying Paul’s office of Apostle of the Gentiles.

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” (2Tim 1:10-11 AV)

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:” (Rom 11:13 AV)

- Because belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is a prerequisite to salvation.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, **and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**” (Romans 10:9 AV)

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; **By which also ye are saved,** if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, **and that he rose again the third day** according to the scriptures:” (1Cor 15:1-4 AV)

Earthly Lord came to Jews. Heavenly Lord sent Paul to Gentiles.

Why is what the resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ had to say (through Paul) of even greater importance than what the earthly Lord Jesus Christ had to say? Because the earthly Christ came to fulfil the law, promises and prophecies made to God’s intended holy nation of priests for planet earth – Israel.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” (Mat 5:17 AV)

The risen, glorified Christ appeared to the Apostle Paul and sent him as masterbuilder of a new creature, a new church of God's heavenly people, with membership solely on the basis of belief in the gospel.

"And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."
(Acts 22:21 AV)

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1Cor 3:10-11 AV)

"Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17 AV)

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Galatians 6:15 AV)

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col 1:18 AV)

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," (Eph 1:13 AV)

It is because of Israel's unbelief that we Gentiles have an amazing opportunity.

"Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:" (Rom 11:20 AV)

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom 11:25 AV)

That by his grace we can go straight to heaven and avoid God's wrath.

"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1Thess 1:10 AV)

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1Thess 4:16-17 AV)

If no resurrection then no point in Christianity

If the Lord did not rise from the dead and ascend to heaven then his visitations with our Apostle Paul are pure fiction and Paul was a dreamer or a lunatic.

If the Lord did not rise from the dead and ascend to heaven then Christianity may as well shut up shop and we can all become science-worshipping, sexual-intellectual atheists destined only to become worm food when we die.