

Jesus Lives, Jesus Lives! By Chacko Thomas

Mr Chacko Thomas (right) is presently a Minister-at-large with Operation Mobilisation. He served for 15 years on OM Ships Logos, Doulos, and Logos II. His ministry has taken him to 107 countries in six continents. One of his few passions is to see the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord and His values blessing the nations.



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"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." The Risen Lord (Revelation 1:17b-18. NIV.)

The legacy of Jesus:

Once again we join in with more than two billion professing Christians from across the world for the annual Easter celebrations. After Good Friday comes Resurrection Sunday.

The great Christian thinker C. S Lewis, in his book "Miracles", wrote about Jesus' resurrection: "He has forced open a door that had been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because He has done so. This is the beginning of the New Creation. A new chapter in Cosmic history has opened." Wow! Praise the Lord.

The legacy of Jesus who walked on this planet 2000 years ago is that "there are over two billion professing Christians in the world and the number is growing by thousands every day. In spite of its weakness, the Christian Church has been an immense influence for good throughout the world. ... One historical event has been the dynamic motive driving centuries of this loving, selfless service – the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." writes John Blanchard, in *Man Alive*, a chapter in his book *Why Jesus?* I have often wondered: Where would India, Africa, China or the West be today, if it was not for Jesus Risen from the dead?

Resurrection, what is it all about?

Unlike resuscitation or re-incarnation, writes Rev. David Pawson, "in Resurrection, you come back as yourself with a new body that will not grow old or die – an immortal body; the kind of body that God wanted you to have in the beginning ... you live in your new body for ever."

Rev. Pawson, in his late eighties, went on to say: "I am looking forward to getting my new body because I have a theory, and it is shared by many Christians through the ages, namely that one day my body (like His body) will be thirty-three. I can't wait to be thirty-three again! That was when I was my best – physically, mentally, emotionally ... Jesus hasn't got any older, and we shall have a glorious body like His that does not get older. Think of it – never celebrate a birthday again! Don't worry, you will be happy about that!" (Rev. David Pawson in *Seven Wonders of His Story*. Check out www.davidpawson.org).

Lazarus and Jesus brought back to life:

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, not many weeks before He himself went to the cross. At the command of Jesus, Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, came back to life, but all wrapped up. He needed to loosened, set free because he was being brought back into his old body, not resurrected in his new body. So Jesus said, "Unwrap him and let him go", which they had to do.

"They never had to do that with Jesus because he did not come back into the old body. The old body actually disappeared, simply ceased to be, and the result was that the bandages simply collapsed flat and the head bandage was simply left rolled 'up by itself. When John the Apostle saw that, the Bible says, 'He believed'. We don't know quite what he believed, but he said he believed that no man had taken that body. You could not get a body out of those clothes and keep them wrapped up. John believed that something supernatural had happened in the tomb." (David Pawson.)

Jesus Raised from the dead on the Third Day:

Why is it that the prediction that Jesus would "rise from the dead on the third day" is repeated eleven times in the Gospels? (Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, 26:61, 63; Mark 8:31, 10:34; Luke 9:22, 18:33, 24:6, 7; John 2:19) Was it for the consolation of the disciples? Or was it so that we can know for sure that He is all that He claimed to be, because precisely on the third day Jesus rose again from the dead? Imagine that it did not happen. Christianity would be dead in the water. Amazing, not only did Jesus rise from the dead, but He did it on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:4, quoted below).

The Apostle Paul, who brought Christianity to Europe in AD 50, (two years before St Thomas brought the same Good News to us in India), wrote to the Church in Corinth in Greece, saying:

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that **He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen

asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also." (1 Corinthians 15:3-8 NASB.)

Space will not allow me to unpack these significant verses but they are worth pondering over.

The Wonder of His Resurrection:

On that Resurrection morning, before the disciples met the risen Lord, they were shown the empty tomb and the grave clothes that were wrapped around His body for burial. His body was absent but the grave clothes proved that no one had tampered with the dead body. The huge stone was rolled away, so that they could look in and even go in and examine the tomb closely. This was followed by eleven recorded appearances (and disappearances) of the Risen Lord, appearing to varying numbers of believers over a period of 40 days in varying places. Space will not allow me to write about each appearance. But I shall give the relevant references for those who would want to look them up: Mark 16:9; Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:15; 24:34; 24:36; John 20:26; 21:1; 1 Corinthians 15:6; 7; Matthew 28:17; Luke 24:50-51. "They lasted only 40 days and they led, not into disintegration, but to profound joy and wholeness," observes Rev. Michael Green.

Transformed by the Risen Lord:

On Good Friday we find these disciples enveloped in gloom, despair, fear and in hiding. Easter Day changed them dramatically. The changed lives of the disciples stares us in the face throughout the New Testament. They turned the world upside down, or rather right side up. Comments Rev. Green on the people named in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, quoted above: "Peter was transformed from a coward into a man or a rock and a martyr. The twelve were changed from a frightened rabble into a fearless church. Paul was changed from a rabid persecutor to a fearless apostle. James was changed from a sceptic to a Christian leader. Indeed, you could say that the church began on Easter Day. It cannot be traced back any earlier than that. The Church was launched by the resurrection".

Allow me to close with an old Hymn that expresses the triumph of the Risen Lord.

Low in the grave He lay,
Jesus my Saviour,
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus my Lord!

Chorus

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,

And He lives forever,
With His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus my Saviour;
Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus my Lord!

Death cannot keep its Prey,
Jesus my Saviour;
He tore the bars away,
Jesus my Lord!

(Robert Lowry, 1874)

Jesus Said, “Because I live, you shall also live!” John 14:19

Exactly twenty years ago, my wife and I faced the unthinkable. Our son passed away due to cancer. But God met with us. It was time to practice what we have been preaching. We knew, because of what the Lord has done for us, we will see him again before the Throne. So with tears in our eyes and joy in our hearts we said goodbye to our 17 years' old son. Written on his tombstone are the words of the Lord Jesus "Because I live, you shall also live." We look forward to the great reunion day.

Jesus Lives!