



The Resurrection: The Key to Understanding the Gospel (part 5 of 5)

By Jim Fowler, *contributing writer*

Truth of God

"*What is truth?*" asked Pilate (John 18:38). Many have been trying to find the clue to sorting out truth ever since. The "truth of God" is often left encoded in propositional truth statements. Truth is regarded as logical accuracy of sentential statements in accord with the evidence available. Thus, men regard their premises, their precepts, and their principles as truth.

The "truth of God" is personified in Jesus Christ, who said, "*I AM the way, and the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6). "*Truth is in Jesus*" (Eph. 4:21); He is "*full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). It is by the availability of the Resurrection-life of Jesus that what Jesus promised is made real in our lives: "*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32, NKJV), later explaining that the Son shall set you free (John 8:36). Jesus, as the living Word, is truth (John 17:17). The Spirit of Christ is the truth of God (1 John 5:6). The resurrection reality of the risen and living Lord Jesus is the "truth of God" that He wants all men to know and experience.

Power of God

The "power of God" is often concealed in the machinations of Christian religion. The hierarchical powers of ecclesiasticism exercise their authority and control in strong-arm tactics of coercion. Other religionists develop a "power-theology" that stereotypes God in demonstrations of miraculous power-manifestations. The word of God to Zerubbabel was, "*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts*" (Zech. 4:6). Jesus told the Sadducean religionists, "You do not understand the scriptures or the power of God" (Matt. 22:29).

Jesus was "*declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead*" (Rom. 1:4). "*Christ (is) the power of God*" (1 Cor. 1:24). When the risen Lord Jesus dwells in us, we have "*the surpassing greatness of the power of God*" (2 Cor. 4:7), "*working in us*" (Eph. 3:20). The "*power of Christ dwells in us*" (2 Cor. 12:9). The gift of grace is given to us "*according to the working of His power*" (Eph. 3:7), and we are "*strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man*" (Eph. 3:16). That is why Paul desired to know "*the power of His resurrection*" (Phil. 3:10). The resurrection reveals the power of God.

Grace of God

Oh, the tragedy of allowing the "grace of God" to remain statically chiseled in the hieroglyphic forms of religion. Grace is often depicted as merely the "undeserved favor of God" - nothing more than the graciousness, mercy, or pity of God. Yes, that is the extent of the understanding of grace in the old covenant, because the Hebrew language did not even have a word that corresponded with the New Testament concept of "grace." Yet, Christian religion has allowed grace to remain solidified and static as merely the "threshold factor" of redemptive grace, as typified in the acrostic: God's Redemption At Christ's Expense.

It is in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ that we see grace is the dynamic activity of God in the life of the risen Lord Jesus. "*Grace is realized through Jesus Christ*" (John 1:17); the "grace of God was given to us in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:4); grace was "*freely bestowed on us in the Beloved*" (Eph. 1:6). "*The grace of God has appeared (in Jesus Christ), bringing salvation to all men*" (Titus 2:11). We have an identity as "Christians" participating in the Resurrection-life of Jesus, only by the grace of God (1 Cor. 15:10). The Christian life, the life of the risen Lord Jesus lived out in us, is only lived by the dynamic of God's grace. As Christians, we do not want to nullify such (Gal. 2:21), but to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:43), which is ever-sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9), to the very end (Rev. 22:21). The grace of the Resurrection-life of Jesus is the essence of the Christian gospel.

Church of God

The understanding of the "church of God" is often hidden in false impressions. Some view it as a building, others as a "worship experience" or a meeting, others as a social grouping of like-minded ideologues, and still others as a political institution.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ defines the "church of God" as those who are "called out" to be all God intends them to be by His activity of Resurrection-life in and through them. Jesus Christ is the "head of the Body, the church" (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18, 24). The church is the "*Body of Christ*" (Eph. 4:12), the collective expression of the life of the risen Lord Jesus, the resurrection community, the "*church of the living God*" (1 Tim. 3:15). The world is supposed to see the out-working of the life of Jesus Christ on earth today, as the Resurrection-life of Jesus functions in the interpersonal relationships of Christian peoples.

These are but a few of the "things of God," the significance of which are only explained and interpreted by the dynamic of the Resurrection-life of Jesus Christ. We could go on to decode the concepts of the righteousness of God, the wisdom of God, the peace of God, the glory of God, the city of God, the way of God, the covenant of God, the house of God, the temple of God, the holiness of God, the sovereignty of God, and many more. The "*deep things of God*" (1 Cor. 2:10, NKJV), which remain so mysterious, hidden, concealed, and unintelligible in Christian religion, must be decoded and deciphered by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The realization of the resurrection is the "key" that unlocks the revelation of God from the hieroglyphics of religious terminology. The resurrection reveals the message of God made available by God's grace and written down so many centuries ago. It is that Jesus Christ is "the summing up of all spiritual things" (Eph. 1:10). Everything God has to give is made available in the Resurrection-life of Jesus Christ.

The gospel is not a series of encoded pictograms of doctrinal truth obfuscating what God intended to express. The gospel is Jesus Christ, "*the resurrection and the life*" (John 11:25). Christianity is Christ!

James (Jim) A. Fowler (California, USA) is a contributing writer for IOM America - Transformational Biblical Worldview & Exchange Life Development.

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