

## **The Wednesday Word, April 15, 2009: The Prison Doors Opened!**

*“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. --1 Corinthians 15:20*

An Irish graffiti artist once wrote, “God is dead, Buddha is dead, Mohammed is dead and I’m not feeling well myself!”

Even though he got it wrong about God, he was right about the two religious leaders. In the light of this, have you ever considered that most major religions are actually following the teachings of some dead guy? But here’s some good news, Bible Christianity is not like that. Our leader is very much alive. It’s true, He was dead for three days, but He then, as we remembered last weekend, He came bursting out of the grave in resurrection power.

The resurrection of Christ proves that everything Jesus ever taught was true. Had He been a liar, He would have stayed in the grave. But not only so, the resurrection also tells us that our sins have been actually bought and paid for by Christ alone!

Let me illustrate. Let’s say that you are living abroad and you break a major law of that foreign country. You are sentenced to jail for three years, but you appeal to the authorities for mercy! They come back to you and say, “Hey, the law’s the law! A crime has been committed and has to be paid for. You have to go to jail for three years.” Then you say, “I know someone who may be prepared to help me. What if a substitute served my sentence in my place?” The authorities then reply, “Under our law, that’s acceptable. If you can find someone to serve your entire sentence, we will allow that!

Let’s say then that you find a willing substitute who is prepared to be treated as though he were you. He goes to prison and is punished on your behalf and in your stead. This is great! But consider this, the entire time he is in prison you don’t see him. Three years pass by and during that time, you can’t rest easy! You don’t know for certain that your crime has been paid for. You assume it has, but you have no evidence! You have no assurance!

Then one day the prison doors open and out walks your substitute. Because your sentence has been served, he’s free; he’s been released from prison! **YOU NOW KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT YOUR OLD CRIME HAS BEEN PAID FOR!** You now know for sure that no one can charge you with that old offense. You now know with a certainty that the law is no longer after you. You have served your sentence in the person of your substitute. Your substitute is out of jail and is walking free, therefore, you are free indeed!

Jesus, our substitute, paid our debt. On the cross, He paid for our crimes! He was punished for every single sin that we had ever committed or will ever commit. In Christ alone, justice was fully satisfied and to demonstrate the reality of this, Jesus was raised from the dead! He’s now alive and we are, therefore, totally and completely free! No one can now bring a charge against God’s elect (Rom 8:33)! We have already been punished in the person of our substitute! Our substitute is alive. He is risen from the dead. Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10) may cry out in his fury and hatred saying that we deserve death, but his accusations cannot be heard since our sins

have already been laid on Jesus. The resurrection is proof that His payment has been accepted and that we have been punished in full.

The resurrection is our receipt that all our sins have been bought and paid for by Christ alone! Because of the doing and dying of Christ, God Himself will never open up a case in His court against us to re-examine our wickedness. It is finished. Christ is risen!

Today, Jesus' tomb remains empty. He is not there for He is still alive and will be forever! His resurrection and empty tomb will forever be our assurance that we have been fully justified. The resurrection is a graphic illustration that all charges against us have been dropped.

And that's the Gospel Truth!