

Good News From Heaven

Matthew 28:1-10

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Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." Matthew 28:1-10

A few years ago, when I was in my undergraduate school, I used to pass by a college that was named after a religious guru. This man was very influential and had a huge following. Politicians, high ranking officials and even the head of the government of India would go to seek this man's blessing.

One day this guru made an announcement. He said he would appear on the moon. He gave the date and time he would supposedly appear on the moon. And his followers took his words seriously. With much anticipation they gathered and gazed at the night sky. However, nothing happened. This man never left earth.

Throughout history there have been a few men who have made outrageous claims. But none have lived up to their claims. They have all died including this guru. Buried or cremated. Their bones are still in the grave or their ashes scattered.

But one man, Jesus Christ, stands apart from any other human being who has ever lived on this earth.

Jesus was every bit human as you are but Jesus did exactly what he said he would do.

Jesus said he would suffer and die and on the third day rise from the dead. That is quite an extraordinary claim!

Now, why does it matter if Jesus did what he said he would?

So what if Jesus did what he said he would?

I would like for you to consider three things – what Jesus said, what Jesus did and why it matters.

First Consideration:

Jesus said that he came down from heaven.

Here are at least *four* statements from Jesus.

John 3:13 No one has ascended into *heaven* except he who descended from *heaven*, the Son of Man. The phrase “Son of Man” is a self-reference to Jesus.

John 3:31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from *heaven* is above all.

John 6:37-38 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from *heaven*.

John 6:50-51 This is the bread that comes down from *heaven*, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from *heaven*."

Now if you pay close attention, these statements of Jesus sound like a contradiction. Jesus was a man and human just like you and I.

So how could Jesus say he came down from heaven?

Well, I am not the first one to ask. The people who heard these statements from Jesus in his time asked the same questions as well.

John 6:41-42 So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from *heaven*'?"

Either Jesus made up claims about himself or those who hear him did not understand what he said. Some have concluded that Jesus was out of his mind during his time. Some said he had a demon.

What did Jesus mean when he said came down from heaven?

This is what Jesus meant. Jesus existed in heaven long before he took on humanity. He was born as a man, lived as a man, died as a man and rose from the dead on the third day. But before Jesus took on humanity, Jesus was simply there. Jesus as The Son of God did not have an origin but He is the

Originator. As the Son of God, He is with God the Father, equal to God and as God. This is who Jesus is and this is what the people in this time failed to understand. John 1:1-2

So the Son of God enters humanity as Jesus. Here is what Jesus said to his disciples before he was crucified.

And taking the twelve, he said to them, “*See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.*” ³² *For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon.* ³³ *And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.”* Luke 18:31-33

And Jesus did exactly what he said he would do.

Second Consideration:

What Jesus *did*:

The first day of the week, these women had come to the tomb to see a crucified dead man. But the angel tells them. He is not here. He is alive. He is Risen! Next thing you know, Jesus appears to his disciples and greets them. A modern way of saying would be “Hi”. So Jesus tells his disciples these things:

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,* ⁴⁶ *and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,* ⁴⁷ *and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.* ⁴⁸ *You are witnesses of these things.* Luke 24:44-47

Four different authors wrote about his resurrection. More than five hundred people saw Jesus after his resurrection.

And finally the disciples also saw Jesus ascend into heaven.

Acts 1:9-11 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into *heaven* as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into *heaven*? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into *heaven*, will come in the same way as you saw him go into *heaven*."

Jesus came from heaven. Jesus became a man. Jesus died and rose again. Jesus has gone back into heaven. Jesus is above all. And Jesus will return one day. And for those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior, their names are enrolled in heaven.

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” Phil 3:20-21

Third Consideration:

Why does it matter?

Here is why it matters:

Jesus Christ is Good News for all humanity. Jesus Christ is Good News for you. It matters because without Jesus Christ, this world is on the highway to destruction. Without Jesus Christ there is only one destination after death. That destination is hell. Yes, a literal hell. Not an imaginary hell. Not a temporary place like a prison where someone goes for a few years and is released for good behavior. Hell is a place where there is no escape for good behavior. Only regret and pain. Imagine a place where a furnace like fire that keep burning *and* can never be put out. Imagine a place where is constant crying, weeping and grinding of teeth and you can never leave the place. *This is exactly how Jesus described hell to be.* (Matthew 13:42).

Nobody really wants to go to hell. Some people talk about hell when they curse. There are some people who joke and say, *“I’ll be partying in hell”*. No, they wont. And such a partying hell does not exist. Some people ignore the subject of hell altogether. They either don’t believe in hell or don’t care about hell. Maybe the thought of after-life has crossed your mind.

The Bible has a clear answer. *The soul that sins shall die. All have sinned and have come short of God’s standard. Every one dies and after death comes judgment.*

But why judgment?

Well, man was not originally destined to death, judgment and hell. The Bible tells us that God created man and woman in his own image. Man was made to live contently and enjoy a relationship with God. But man rebelled against God. Man turned his back against a good God. Man became an enemy of God. At this point I have to pause and ask the question - Is man’s rebellion against God that bad? Is humanity really that sinful? It is worse that you realize. We live in a time when good is called evil and evil is called good.

And God is grieved by the actions of humanity every day. And yet God must and will judge because that is His Righteous character. God is a perfect Judge.

The only way to escape the judgement of God is to put faith in Jesus Christ who took the judgment of God.

I owed a debt to God. And I could never pay back the debt. Jesus simply paid my debt. Jesus forgave all my sin. Some people have tried doing good deeds to earn credit with God but no amount of good deeds can satisfy God.

Some great men have tried and failed. One of them even admitted he made an attempt and failed.

Gandhi in own words said he did not seek redemption from the consequences of sin but a remedy from sin itself, from the very thought of sin. So he lived his whole in search for truth. And at the end he admits that he did not find the truth. Why? Gandhi liked the teachings of Jesus Christ. His favorite book was on the Sermon on the Mount but rejected the offer of Jesus Christ.

That is why what you *believe* about Jesus matters.

Jesus mattered so much that the early disciples had to make a statement when they were threatened if they ever talked about Jesus. So in the face of death threats and severe persecution, they said these words.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under *heaven* given among men by which we must be saved."

Gal 1:8 But even if we or an angel from *heaven* should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

Why did Jesus come from heaven?

Jesus came to give. Jesus came to give abundant life, peace and joy.

John 6:31-33 "For the bread of God is he who comes down from *heaven* and gives life to the world."

John 10:10 "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly".

John 14:27 "my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you".

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

John 6:58 "This is the bread that came down from *heaven*, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died.

Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

And who does not want a satisfying life, joy and peace? But all these things are temporary in some sense. But here is one thing Jesus *gives* no else is able to give.

Let me give an illustration:

Last week, a friend shared with me that his co-worker was dying of cancer and was taken to hospice.

The family had gathered to say goodbye. And my friend could not hold back his tears. He knew his co-worker well. He considered him a close friend. So the thought of losing him was painful. And as emotional as that moment was, I thought to myself “what is one thing I could possibly give to a dying man?”. Zero. Nothing. You have to be living and breathing to experience *fulfillment* and *joy* and *peace*. When everything is stripped away from you – possessions, family, friends and what have you, what else remains. We were born naked. One day our bodies will decay and return to the dirt. Whether we like it or not, that day will come.

So I told with my friend. Give him Jesus.

What does Jesus *give* and *how*?

“*I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live..*” John 11:25

Christ Jesus came from heaven into the world to save sinners from death.

How?

By giving up his own life. Jesus saves sinners by *giving* himself. Unless a seed falls into the ground, it will not bear fruit. Similarly, Jesus gave up his own life so that others can live. Jesus was humiliated. Jesus was beaten, mocked, spit upon, flogged, publicly humiliated, shamed, rejected and crucified and left alone to die. Jesus went through this pain and agony to bear the bear the burden of my sin. The sin of the whole world. To bear your sin.

What Jesus gives you cannot receive by giving money or by doing some good deed.

You *must* receive it by *repentance* and *faith*.

Repentance simply means changing your mind. Its accepting that you a sinner before a Holy God. Its having grief, having sorrow and being broken hearted about your sin condition because God is grieved by your sin.

Faith simply means you *trust* only in Jesus that he died for you and rose again that you may have eternal life.

If you have never trusted in Jesus Christ, Jesus says, *Repent* and *Believe*.

Turn and Trust in Jesus Christ. Jesus promises to give you rest.

Jesus Christ is the Good News from Heaven.