



“THE CHRIST OF EASTER!”

BOOKLET 3

OF

“Effective Christian Living” Series

BY

RON G. CHRISTIAN

THE BIG QUESTIONS

#3

"THE CHRIST OF EASTER!"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>CHAPTER</i>	<i>TITLE</i>	
1.	<i>"HOW DO I PERSONALLY BENEFIT FROM CHRIST'S RESURRECTION?"</i>	<i>...3</i>
2.	<i>"WHAT RELEVANCE DOES THE RESURRECTION HAVE IN MY LIFE?"</i>	<i>6</i>
3.	<i>"CAN I CONCLUDE THAT THE RESURRECTION IS HISTORICALLY RELIABLE?"</i>	<i>..... 13</i>
4.	<i>"IN MY SIN-RENT WORLD, CAN I EXPECT JUSTICE FINALLY TO BE VINDICATED?"</i>	<i>..... 19</i>
5.	<i>"CAN I FIND LASTING CHANGE IN MY INNER NATURE?"</i>	<i>.....23</i>
6.	<i>"WHEN I FEEL WEAK, WHAT IS MY SOURCE OF POWER?"</i>	<i>.....27</i>

*"HOW DO I PERSONALLY BENEFIT FROM
CHRIST'S RESURRECTION?"*

Great things were accomplished when Christ arose from the dead. The resurrection vindicated Christ's righteousness; Proved God's promises; Demonstrated God's power; Sealed Satan's doom; provided man's salvation; and guaranteed man's future resurrection life!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Do you possess and enjoy the hope, which the resurrection has brought into our despairing world? That hope has been given to our world through the sacrificial depth and glorious resurrection of Jesus.

However, that hope only becomes yours personally and experientially as you take the living Christ into your life as Savior and Lord. You must abandon all hope for salvation, aside from Jesus Christ.

You cannot save yourself! Only the resurrected Christ can save you. Turn your life over to the One who has conquered your enemy — DEATH!

Confess your sins today and let the

power that raised Christ from the dead touch and transform your life!

TIME FOR PERSONAIZED PRAYER!

"Loving God, you raised Christ from the dead for various reasons, but perhaps the greatest reason was to demonstrate Christ's righteousness and His power to make sinners (like me) righteous and holy and gracious! To make 'bad men good'!

To transform human nature! You, O Christ, the resurrected One, have the power to deliver me from the bondage of fear and death! I ask, just now, that your resurrection power will forgive all my sins, and write my name in your 'Book of Life' "And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15).

I gladly surrender my little will to your big will (your perfect will that is committed to my total well-being for time and eternity). In your great hands, I am in the hands of 'Perfect Love'. You will never do me any harm, and you will (with my cooperation) use all the various sufferings of my life, to perfect my character (to make me a person

who is more loving, kind, and tender, a person who is warm and approachable and understanding). O God, even though there will be many trials and tests throughout my life's journey, please make me into a beautiful and winsome person - reflecting (imperfectly) the very character of Jesus Christ! May the power that raised Christ from the dead, both initially and progressively change me into a very loving person!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You become like the person whom you most 'gaze' upon! Fix your gaze upon the resurrected Christ!

2.

"WHAT RELEVANCE DOES THE RESURRECTION HAVE IN MY LIFE?"

Where are those who say they want to believe in God but not in Jesus Christ?

The fact of the matter is, if one does not believe in Jesus Christ, he cannot genuinely believe in the true God. One may entertain some illusionary concept of God, but he will not know the true God without knowing Jesus. The fact of the resurrection makes possible knowledge of Jesus, which in turn enables one to know God.

Wrote Peter, "Through him (Jesus) you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

In 1st Peter 1:2 Jesus claimed to be God. Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30). Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (John 14:9); Jesus claimed that

all authority was given to Him. "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus claimed to come from the Father to do the Father's will. *"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." (John 6:38). Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me." (John 8:42); "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "...before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:58)*

Jesus claimed power to forgive sins and to heal. *"But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."* So he said to the paralyzed man, *"Get up, take your mat and go home."* (Matthew 9:6)

"For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God's goodness into us!" (II Corinthians 5:21) Jesus claimed to have power to give eternal life.

"How earnestly I tell you this—anyone who believes in me already has eternal life! (John 6:47) Jesus claimed to have authority to judge all men.

Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. *"And the Father leaves all judgment of sin to his Son". (John 5:22).*

Jesus' claim about Himself is one evidence that Jesus was truly the Son of God. A further evidence for Jesus' divine Sonship is seen in Jesus' sinless and perfect character. Jesus' friends, who knew Him so well in all circumstances, asserted that He was without sin. *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."* (1 Peter 2:22); *"God made him who*

Jesus' enemies even had to acknowledge that Jesus was innocent and just in Matthew 27: 11, 24. Judas said, *"I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood."* But they said, *"What is that to us? See thou to it; So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it."*

The conclusive evidence that shows the truth of Jesus' claim to divine Sonship is found in the fact of the Resurrection. "The resurrection was God's ratification of Christ's amazing claims to Sonship."

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

"Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins." But Jesus' blood had to be pure—sinless—for His blood to be a perfect sacrifice for sin. The resurrection proved that Jesus was righteous—that His blood was pure!

The Resurrection proved the reason for Christ's death. Satan thought he had his greatest victory when Jesus was crucified on the cross. What Satan did not realize was that death was only a prelude to the resurrection. Christ's death (followed by the Resurrection), actually signed Satan's death warrant and resulted in Satan's conclusive defeat and mankind's conclusive victory.

One cannot experience God's salvation without believing in the Resurrection. He, who truly believes the Resurrection, also believes in the claims and the character of

Jesus Christ. Such belief is not merely a mental assent but a life commitment to the Person of Christ. True belief in the Resurrection means total commitment to Christ. *"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)

A mere memory of Christ and an attempt to merely imitate the character of Christ would not sufficiently give motivation or strength to live the Christian life. To live the Christian life, one needs more than ethics or philosophy; one needs an indwelling supernatural power. That needed power is made available through the indwelling Christ—the resurrected contemporary Christ. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

TIME FOR PERSONAIZED PRAYER!

"O God, your Word (Bible) declares throughout the epistles (letters) of the New Testament that Christ not only died to redeem me, but that he arose from the grave to make it possible for me to be 'raised from the horrible death of my sins'! Without you, I am 'dead in trespasses and sins',

in bondage to the 'lusts of my flesh', without hope in this world or in the world to come (eternity)! With Christ within me, I am truly transformed, and I have a new life, a new hope, a new strength to live without the pleasures and passions of this sinful (corrupt) world! I want to live a truly victorious life!

Thank you for your gift of resurrected life that you have given to me—as described in Your Word: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way." (Ephesians 1:18-23)

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

It is my prayer that the very power that raised Christ from the dead may be the power that God exercises in Your life—to daily transform You!

3.

"CAN I CONCLUDE THAT THE
RESURRECTION IS HISTORICALLY
RELIABLE?"

Christianity is not unreasonable; it is just beyond reason. That is to say, Christianity is a rationally based religion and can stand the tests of a rational examination, but, after a rational examination of it is made, there is much about Christianity that has not been touched. Even after one understands all the intellectual ingredients of Christianity, a 'leap of faith' still must be made to truly 'know' Christianity.

Let us look at the first phrase — 'Christianity is not unreasonable.' Peter exhorted Christians to "...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15)

In a day when cults are growing rapidly through the propagation of their emotionally based message, Christians need to proclaim their rationally based message. Cults too speak much about the necessity of 'faith', but the 'faith' they proclaim is

based on a subjective illusion. The 'faith' which the Christian proclaims is a reasonable faith—a faith that is based upon the objective historical fact of the Resurrection. 'Faith' based upon anything less is an illusion, and does not pass the scrutiny of reason.

The fact of the Resurrection is what makes Christianity uniquely a reliable and reasonable religion. Deny the resurrection and one denies Christianity. Establish the fact of the resurrection and one establishes Christianity. How does one authenticate Christianity? Both by experience and by reason, but experience that is not based on reason is an illusion. Christian experience must go beyond reason, but it must first go through the tests of reason. Otherwise, a Christian's experience is no more valid than the experience of a cultist who is living a life of illusion.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

A. WOMEN WENT TO THE WRONG SEPULCHER. When these women came in the early morning, they came with a businesslike concern to anoint the body and were determined to complete their tasks. If they had gone to

the wrong place the first time, they would not have given up until they had found the right tomb.

B. SWOON THEORY. It is inconceivable to believe that if Jesus fainted, he would be able to survive for thirty-six hours in a stone sepulcher without warmth or food, after He had experienced the pains of trial, mockery, flogging, and crucifixion. How could a weakling, whose body was racked by pain, be able to move a large boulder and that without disturbing the Roman?

C. Thieves Stole The Body. There is no evidence for this. How could thieves have escaped the attention of the guards to move the stone? Why would thieves have wanted the body in the first place, and why would they leave the clothes undisturbed?

D. DISCIPLES REMOVED THE BODY. The disciples preached about the resurrection and were willing even to suffer for preaching it. It is not at all likely that a group of men would suffer for a cause that they well knew was not genuine.

E. ROMAN OR JEWISH AUTHORITIES TOOK THE BODY. Some argue that to avoid trickery the authorities took Jesus' body into safe

custody. Again, this is incredible! Further, many actually saw the Lord after the crucifixion and resurrection.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also." (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

TIME FOR PERSONAIZED PRAYER!

"O God, you created a world of 'regularity' and 'predictability'; and therefore we humans have adopted the term 'natural law' to define these regularities within the small human compass of our understanding. Usually, O God, it is obvious that you work in your world through these so-called 'natural laws' - and most of the time your

work is so constant (and yet amazing) that we humans verily recognize your divine involvement on the 'stage of human events and history'.

You work in our human bodies constantly! You allow our human brain (an amazing creation) to be the instrument for remarkable and creative thoughts. The sun rises and sets daily, and we humans think nothing about it. We harvest crops for food, and 'take this for granted'! We breathe air into our lungs, and 'pay no attention' to this phenomenal physical process—for several decades! Yes, we acknowledge that most of our lives are lived in the environment of 'natural law'.

However, logically-speaking, why should it be impossible for you—the God who created all things—to 'interject' occasional happenings (events) into the world that, from human understanding, seem 'miraculous'? When the so-called supernatural event (virgin birth and resurrection) fulfill a divine purpose? We serve a miraculous God!

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

It is either on the basis of our belief or our denial of the Resurrection of Jesus that we are driven either to a life of hope or to a life of despair.

4.

*"IN MY SIN-RENT WORLD, CAN I
EXPECT JUSTICE FINALLY TO
BE VINDICATED?"*

If Christ had not been raised from the dead, then your faith in God's justice is in vain! Do you believe that 'though the wrong seems often so very strong, God is Ruler yet'? Do you believe that ultimately all evil will be punished and that all good will be rewarded? Do you believe that this is a Moral Universe, that there is a Moral God who shall finally 'balance the books', redressing evil, and rewarding righteousness?

If there is no resurrection, then your desires for justice to be rendered, in the affairs of men, are all in vain! If there is no resurrection, then there is:

NO hope that evil men will be brought to justice; No confidence that evil will be destroyed; No trust that Satan will be vanquished; No trust that righteous men will ultimately be recognized and rewarded.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The evil forces of men went unchallenged; the lives of sinful men went unchecked for the first day and the second day following Christ's death. However, on the third day—on Easter Sunday Morning, the evil of men, the lives of wicked men were exposed for what they really were. The truth of God and the justice of God were made manifest!

Jesus arose from the dead, showing that the truth of God is stronger than the sinful lives of men, and the justice of God is stronger than the injustice of men!

Oftentimes in this present life, wrong goes unpunished and right goes unrewarded. In this life, it sometimes seems that the balance is tipped in favor of the wrong.

One is tempted to ask with the Psalmist, "How long shall the wicked triumph?" (Psalms 94:3) When Jesus was crucified, it seemed that evil was triumphant and justice was mocked, but God's resurrection of Jesus vindicated God's righteousness and justice.

The resurrection is proof that ultimately, righteousness will be rewarded and evil will be punished.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Dearest Lord, when I see the wicked around me seeming to prosper—plenty of money, expensive homes and modern vehicles and elaborate vacations, and respected positions in their work and in high-society clubs—I sometimes ask questions!

Why are the righteous ones are often rather poor, unrewarded, and unrecognized while the wicked ones (often with financial wealth) unpunished? I wonder where 'justice' is! I (and some godly persons I know) have been the 'target' for unjust treatment (criticism, judgmentalism, outright lies, slander, gossip, deceit, plots, rejection, scorn, sneers, subtle hatred, and so much more)!

Again, I wonder, where is justice? These evil persons seem to get by with so much, and they know how to avoid their accountability and proper punishments! They break all the laws of God and many of the laws of the 'land' - while they 'hurt' me and

my kids - (through 'divorce' or other types of rejection)! I have taken the 'high road', and I have tried (with God's help) to cultivate a 'forgiving spirit' towards those who have inflicted great damage on me (and my kids).

But, I have waited for God to 'move' - to vindicate justice! And I am still waiting! I must learn to be 'patient', not only with my wrong doers, but also with God Himself! God is longsuffering, waiting for the 'evil ones' to repent—instead of being severely perished! But, in God's own 'right time', His Holy justice will be vindicated!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

*No evil can be hidden from God's all-seeing eye! One's sins in secret will be eventually 'shouted from the house top'! The Just God says, **"Be Sure Your Sin Will Be Revealed and Known!"***

5.

*"CAN I FIND LASTING CHANGE IN MY
INNER NATURE?"*

*The resurrection is the only foundation
of hope for a New and Transformed life.*

*Do You Ever Long To Be Different? To
be controlled, serene, loving, contributive,
winsome, faithful, growing, and confident.*

*Do you ever wish that you could start
life all over again? Do you ever wish that
your secret past would no longer haunt
you?*

*How you have wished that your guilt
could be resolved and that your future
could be bright with hope and cheer!*

*The power that raised Christ from the
dead is the same power that is available to
transform lives and to change society to-
day.*

*When resurrection power has touched
individuals or society, things have
changed. Do you have habits, desires, atti-
tudes, actions, and relationships that need
to be changed?*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

What needs most in life to be changed—self-centered human nature—takes a power greater than the greatest of human powers and abilities. No psychiatrist, priest, or scientist can permanently change human nature from greed to compassion, from hate to love, from self-centeredness to humility, from perversion to purity! What power then is available to change human nature? The power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that is available to transform human nature!

The Christ, who defied the power of death and left the tomb empty, is the same Christ whose power is able to accomplish the humanly impossible—to change a bad man into a good man! However, without the resurrection of Jesus, man's moral transformation is impossible, for human transformation is dependent upon no lesser power than the power of the resurrection.

Paul makes it clear in I Corinthians 15:4 - 8: "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, and 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 Christ had not been raised, then one's faith is useless and futile, and Christians are still in their sins! If there is no resurrection, then there is no power to transform people's lives, and without moral transformation (spiritual conversion) people who die are lost eternally!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O loving and saving Lord, I understand now that if Christ had not been raised from the dead, then my faith in the possibility of establishing a personal relationship with God is futile. Without the shedding of Jesus' blood, there is no remission for sins, but the shedding of Jesus' blood is not, in itself, the basis for man's remission of sins. Jesus' blood (the sacrifice of his life) was only effective if his blood was sinless. The resurrection proved Christ's righteousness, and it also proved that Jesus' sinless blood

alone has the power to cleanse away my sins and to reconcile me (an unholy person) to the holy God. Without the resurrection of Jesus, man would be alienated forever from God, lost and condemned in his sins! He would not be able to enter into the 'holy of holies' - into the inner sanctuary of God's intimate presence to enjoy sweet communion. Thank you, God, for the powerful, life-transforming resurrection!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved that Jesus' blood was more than the mere blood of man. His blood was the blood of the Innocent One. Because His blood was shed once-and-for-all for the unholy race of humanity, each person, who places his personal trust in Christ, gains personal access to the Father!

6.

*"WHEN I FEEL WEAK, WHAT IS MY
SOURCE OF POWER?"*

If Christ had not been raised from the dead, then your faith in God's power is in vain! If Christ would not have been raised from the dead, then it would be true to say that death is stronger than life, evil is stronger than righteousness, Satan is stronger than God is! Satan claimed victory when he saw Jesus hang His head in death on the cross.

However, Satan was crushed three days later when he looked into an empty tomb and knew that Jesus was to ascend to the right hand of His Father's Kingly throne! The demons' cries of triumph on Calvary's Friday suddenly turned into cries of terror on Easter Morning! Christ disarmed the power of Satan!

"Death cannot keep his prey, Jesus my Savior! He tore the bars away, Jesus, my Lord!

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!"*

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

The Greatest Weapon Of Satan Has Always Been Death. When Christ arose from the dead, Jesus captured Satan's chief weapon! The resurrection is what makes Jesus the conquering King and Satan the defeated foe!

The broken seal on Jesus' tomb on Easter Sunday becomes Satan's seal of death! God has already appointed Satan's day of execution and God has told what will be Satan's final destiny! "And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Revelations 20:10)

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, your power for me to live an abundant Christian life is exhaustless! You are able to do in me all that you intend for me, able to give me peace in place of my turmoil, able to give me comfort in place of my deep sorrow. Able to give me wisdom in

place of my folly; able to give me discernment in place of my shallow understanding; able to give me abounding joy in place of my debilitating sadness.

Able to give me clear guidance in place of my wayward wanderings; able to give me growing confidence in place of my nagging fears. Able to give me genuine humility in place of my destructive pride; able to give me tender compassion in place of my tough justice, able to give me active love in place of my passive indifference, able to give me outgoing projects in place of my ingrown preoccupations. Able to give me silent meditation in place of my boisterous noise, able to give me Biblical hope in place of my worldly despair, able to give me holy motives in place of my ulterior motives, able to give me Spirit-attuned ears in place of my secular-attuned ears. Able to give me a tender heart of love in place of my hardened heart of sin.

God, because of Your power that raised Christ from the dead, I have available to me that same exhaustless power—to give me new life, and to enable me progressively to live a Christ-oriented life! Thank You!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can imagine! Resurrection power is available to you TODAY!

*Booklet Titles Of
"Effective Christian Living" Series.*

<i>No.</i>	<i>Titles</i>
<i>1.</i>	<i>The Power Of Prayer!</i>
<i>2.</i>	<i>The Cross Of Jesus!</i>
<i>3.</i>	<i>The Christ Of Easter!</i>
<i>4.</i>	<i>Preparing For Death!</i>
<i>5.</i>	<i>Christian Witness To Others!</i>
<i>6.</i>	<i>Life In The Church!</i>
<i>7.</i>	<i>God For All Holidays!</i>
<i>8.</i>	<i>The Spirit Filled Life!</i>
<i>9.</i>	<i>Personal Significance!</i>
<i>10.</i>	<i>Our Eternal Home - Heaven!</i>
<i>11.</i>	<i>Cultivating Christ like Character!</i>
<i>12.</i>	<i>Confronting Life's Complexities!</i>
<i>13.</i>	<i>Living The Christian Life!</i>
<i>14.</i>	<i>Conquering The Enemies Within!</i>
<i>15.</i>	<i>God's Plan Of Salvation!</i>
<i>16.</i>	<i>The Christ Of Christmas!</i>
<i>17.</i>	<i>Coping With Life's Hardships!</i>