

## Jesus Christ: The First Begotten from the Dead

Scripture Reading: Psalm 2:1-12

We are used to Jesus Christ being called “*the only begotten of the Father*” / “*the only begotten Son of God*” (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; I John 4:9). This describes His incarnation. When Christ became a man (I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 10:5), he was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). He was made of a woman, made under the law (Galatians 4:4) A child was born. A son was given (Isaiah 9:6).

We may not be as familiar with the expression “*first begotten / first born from the dead.*” This describes Christ’s resurrection from the dead. There were three people that Christ raised from the dead (Lazarus – John 11:17-44, the son of the widow of Nain – Luke 7:11-17, the daughter of Jairus – Luke 8:40-56). They were brought back to life and continued to live in their original bodies – bodies that would eventually die again (*see special note at the end*). Jesus Christ is called “*the first begotten from the dead*” because he rose with a different kind of body – a glorious, eternal body that would never die (Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 6:9; Revelation 1:18).

Let’s glean from the references that describe Jesus Christ: The First Begotten from the Dead:

### **Psalm 2:7 cp. Acts 13:33**

Psalm 2:1-9 is describing the rebellion of Gentiles and Jews against God and His Son / His Anointed (Christ). The Father mocks this rebellion of men. Though they crucified the Son of God, He has been raised from the dead and has become Lord and judge of all nations. The expression, “... *You are my Son, Today I have begotten you.*” (Psalm 2:7), is a reference to Christ being raised from the dead. This is made clear by the teaching of Paul in Acts 13:26-33. **Christ was begotten from the dead, fulfilling the prophetic promises, and providing us salvation.**

Note: Psalm 2:10-12 is a gospel call for all people throughout the whole world to repent, believe, and trust in the Son of God. See Acts 17:30-31; Philippians 2:6-11.

### **Romans 8:29**

Romans 8:28-39 is a wonderful text that describes the security of those who have trusted in Christ. Not only does Christ provide an unbreakable bond between us and the love of God, He also is leading us into conformity to Himself. In Romans 8:29 we read, “*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” **When Christ was raised from the dead, He not only secured our salvation from the penalty of our sin, He secured our sanctification** (to be set apart from the world for holy purposes; to become holy – like Christ). We are also being saved from the deceptive power of sin.

## **Acts 26:22-23; Colossians 1:18**

Christ, being the first to rise from the dead and to have an immortal human body, is able to continue to minister to the world for all of time (Matthew 28:18-20). No other religious leader has ever done this! When we preach the gospel, we are not just talking about the memory of a dead teacher. **We are working with our risen Savior, who lives within us. His Spirit is at work in the world now and forever** (John 14:18; Galatians 2:20; John 5:25-27; Romans 15:18). **He has preeminence (first place) in the universe and in the church** (Colossians 1:16-19).

## **I Corinthians 15:20-28**

In I Corinthians 15:20-23, the word *“firstfruits”* describes an early harvest, which is a sampling of a greater harvest to come. Christ is the firstfruits, regarding the resurrection. When we receive our resurrection bodies, we will be the larger harvest.

Please note in I Corinthians 15:22 that all who are in Adam’s race are spiritually dead and subject to physical death and eternal separation from God. At the same time, those who by faith have received Christ and are in His grace have eternal life. They shall never be separated from God. See John 3:16,36; Romans 5:12-19; 8:31-39; II Corinthians 5:17-21; I John 5:12.

I Corinthians 15:24-28 tells us that, with the harvest in, Christ will proceed to put down all rule, all authority, all power, and all enemies – including death. Christ will submit His kingdom to the Father. We will all be united with the Triune God in person. So, shall we ever be with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:9-11; John 14:1-6). **Our risen, victorious Savior will give us never-ending, face-to-face fellowship with the Triune God.**

## **Revelation 1:5-6**

Christ, as the first begotten from the dead, has established us in His kingdom by washing us in His own blood and making us a royal priesthood unto the Father (cp. I Peter 2:9-10). **The risen, victorious Christ has given us a privileged and honorable ministry** (II Corinthians 5:18-20).

## **Conclusion:**

Christ’s resurrection not only guarantees the forgiveness of our sins (Romans 4:24-25), but also provides a fulfilling life now, with the prospect of eternal rewards in the future (I Corinthians 15:50-59; Revelation 14:13; 22:12).

Special note: Matthew 27:50-53 tells that when Christ died on the cross the graves were opened. It was **after Christ’s resurrection** that certain saints arose, came out of the graves, and went into Jerusalem to appear before many. There is no data to prove what happened after that. If they had recently died and their bodies had not deteriorated, then they could have had their original bodies continue living until they died again. We would expect more to be said about them if that were the case. It is possible that this is a foretaste of the glorious bodies that would not die. This would require that they only appear for a while and then be taken up to heaven, to be with Christ (Ephesians 4:8). We cannot explain anything more because nothing more is said. Enjoy the mystery!