

## Easter 2008

You probably do not know the name Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin. During his day he was as powerful a man as there was on earth. A Russian Communist leader he took part in the Bolshevik Revolution 1917, was editor of the Soviet newspaper Pravda (which by the way means truth), and was a full member of the Politburo. His works on economics and political science are still read today. There is a story told about a journey he took from Moscow to Kiev in 1930 to address a huge assembly on the subject of atheism. Addressing the crowd he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity hurling insult, argument, and proof against it.

An hour later he was finished. He looked out at what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of men's faith. "Are there any questions?" Bukharin demanded. Deafening silence filled the auditorium but then one man approached the platform and mounted the lectern standing near the communist leader. He surveyed the crowd first to the left then to the right. Finally he shouted the ancient greeting known well in the Russian Orthodox Church: "CHRIST IS RISEN!" En masse the crowd arose as one man and the response came crashing like the sound of thunder: "HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

I say to you this morning: CHRIST IS RISEN! (congregational response should be: HE IS RISEN INDEED!). I am convinced! I have faith that Christ was dead and he was buried. That He rose from the dead and will come again in glory.

The Soviet Union was built upon a foundational belief in Atheism. And though it was a superpower of incredible military might, it stood for less than a hundred years. It used it's might to attempt to deconstruct the Church, and eliminate the faith of it's citizens. But it could not stand against the confession of faith, of simple, seemingly powerless individuals who believed.

Today is Easter, the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Faith in the Resurrection has endured over 2000 years, and has prevailed under every form of government, in every conceivable culture and language.

The Resurrection is the central event of the Christian faith.

Even Paul said, *"If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable."* **1Corinthians 15:17-19**

The Resurrection is central to Christianity, because it is the literal resurrection that proves the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

- A. Read Matthew 28 – the story
- B. **Mark 16:19,20**, *"So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*
  - a. **Jesus rose from the dead to rise to the throne**
  - b. Throne = authority, rule, dominion -- LORDSHIP
- C. Jesus is Lord
  - a. Lord of Life

- i. **John 11:25, 26**, *"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*
  - ii. Which proves He is...
- b. Lord over death
  - i. **Romans 6:9**, *"Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. **Death no longer has dominion over Him.**"*
  - ii. which proves He is...
- c. Lord over Sin
  - i. **Because: Romans 6:23**, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
  - ii. In order to defeat death He must first have defeated sin.
  - iii. **Romans 6:4-6**, *"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should **no longer be slaves of sin.**"*
  - iv. Which proves He is
- d. Lord over Satan
  - i. **1 John 3:8**, *"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*
  - ii. **Hebrews 2:14, 15**, *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*
  - iii. Which proves He is...
- e. Lord over the Earth
  - i. **John 12:31-33**, *"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." 33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die.*
  - ii. Three times in John the devil is called the ruler of this world
  - iii. **Eph. 1:19-23**, *"according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put **all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things** to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*
  - iv. Which proves He is ...
- f. Lord over the heavens, the universe, everything
  - i. Which brings us back to...

- ii. **Matthew 28:18**, *“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*
- g. Which brings us to the only question that really matters:
  - i. **Is He Lord over YOU?**

D. **Matthew 28:17**, *“When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.”*

Two Responses to encountering Jesus:

- a. Worshiped
  - i. The proper response
  - ii. What they saw was met with faith, they believed, and it produced in them worship
  - iii. Will you respond with worship?
- b. Doubted
  - i. Even now, after all they had seen and heard
  - ii. Even being eye witnesses of His resurrection
  - iii. Even seeing a miracle, even the resurrection, is not enough
  - iv. It must be met with faith
  - v. Don't say that you can't believe because you haven't seen proof
  - vi. Even the most dramatic proof will not necessarily lead to faith
  - vii. “doubted” = “waivered”
    - 1. only other time it is used in the N.T. is, when Peter is walking on the water and he looks down and sees the turbulent water and begins to sink. **Matt. 14:31**, *“And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”*
  - viii. Are you wavering?
    - 1. G.K. Chesterton, the famous philosopher, commenting on the absurdity of Atheism states that “the universe has one origin and one aim, it therefore has one author”
    - 2. It is only when we are in line with this singular purpose of the Universe that life makes sense
    - 3. That purpose is Christ**
    - 4. He is our “all in all”
    - 5. **Colossians 1:16-18**, *“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

E. Application

- a. We've “seen” through the Scriptures that Jesus is Lord over, life, death, sin, Satan, the world and the Universe.
- b. And we've seen that there are two responses: worship or doubt.
- c. To experience the benefit of His Lordship, we must combine what we have seen and heard, with faith – personal belief and trust.
- d. We must choose to engage our faith and worship the risen Lord!
- e. Mark Morris team will lead us in worship...