

# The Risen Christ

By

D. L. Stephens

# THE RISEN CHRIST

## Paul

In ancient Rome the place where the prisoners were held was called "*carcer*" for prison, or "*publica vincula*," for state bond.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally an accused person might be detained to await trial, but usually the ones merely awaiting trial were encouraged to go into voluntary exile. More frequently the prisons served as holding places for those who were condemned to die.

The Mamertine Prison, otherwise known as the Tullianum, was located on the east side of the Capitoline Hill, adjacent to the Roman Forum, and near the Arch of Septimius Severus, and below the church of San Giuseppe dei Falegnami. The prison consisted of two vaulted chambers, one above the other. The lower chamber is often referred to as the "Tullianum" as it is thought that the room was originally constructed to be a water cistern.<sup>2</sup>

Legend has it that the Apostle Paul was imprisoned at Mamertine, and was later executed at Aquas Salvias. Eusebius wrote that he was beheaded at the command of Nero in AD 67.<sup>3</sup> The date is in question because,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unrv.com/government/Roman-prisons.php>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.rome-tour.co.uk/mamertine\\_prison.htm](http://www.rome-tour.co.uk/mamertine_prison.htm)

<sup>3</sup> *Eusebius, The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, pp. 104-5. Eusebius provides no date, but only states that Nero ordered his execution. He says that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that the execution is confirmed by the fact that the cemeteries there are called by the names Peter and Paul, and further confirmed by a churchman named Gaius who tells where the remains of the apostles were buried.

According to later reports, in A.D. 65 Paul of Tarsus was imprisoned in Rome, beheaded, and then buried in the family tomb of a devout Roman noblewoman, Matrona Lucilla.<sup>4</sup>

The year of the apostle's death may be in question, but the loneliness of the final days of his missionary journey are not. Paul the Apostle ended his missionary journeys at Rome as a prisoner. Clouds and darkness gathered about him. In a circular dungeon, just back of the Capitoline Hill, and alongside the Roman Forum he awaited his death, his "departure" as he called it.

The church, still in its infancy, had fallen upon perilous times. False teachers were attacking the central teachings of the gospel: the Incarnation, the death on the cross, and the Resurrection. "... Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me..." he said. "Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me."<sup>5</sup> Thus, defections had reduced the number of companions of this lonely apostle.

But in the face of this apparent defeat, does he ask for pity from the one he calls his "son" in the faith? No. To Timothy he gives an exhortation to faithfulness. And such an exhortation it is, coming as it did under such deplorable circumstances that it must underline forever the great strength of the truths upon which Christianity stands.

The temptations Timothy faced were numerous. Many good men had fallen victim to them. The false teachers of that day spoke with a great show of learning, and with words that were hard to ignore. Besides that,

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[http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/12/061211-saint-paul\\_2.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/12/061211-saint-paul_2.html)

<sup>5</sup> 2 Timothy 4:10-11.

they said, "... Only the dull of mind could depend on the ideas preached by Paul." From all appearances, the apostle had lost his struggle. To them his imprisonment was full proof of his failure. Not only that but the sword of persecution had been drawn. For the ones who followed Paul, death followed them. It seemed that the whole body of work that Paul had undertaken would collapse under the persecution. But Paul does not for a moment lose courage. Not for himself, and not for his followers. To Timothy Paul says,

2 Timothy 2:1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Further on the apostle pointed out to Timothy—and to us as well—the source and the citadel of his own strength. He says,

2 Timothy 2:7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. 8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel..."<sup>6</sup>

## **Remember**

Jesus once said to his apostles a thing that applies broadly to the church,

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<sup>6</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. 1995. LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

**John 15:18** “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. 19 “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20 “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Many of the Lord’s enemies not only did not keep His word but they also put Him to death. They did the same to most of the apostles. Why should the faithful church fare differently?

In an interview of Gayle Sayers by Terry Bowden on ESPN the two talked about Gayle Sayer’s friendship with Brian Piccolo. Sayers and Piccolo were running backs with the NFL Chicago Bears football team, and both were great. Some may remember that Brian Piccolo died of cancer at the age of 29 at the height of his NFL career. Sayers, and many others were strongly affected by Piccolo’s death. Gayle Sayer’s wrote a book entitled, “*I Am Third*,” in which he told about the competition, friendship and encouragement he received from Brian Piccolo. As he remembered Piccolo and the years with the Chicago Bears, and the tragic death of his friend, Gayle Sayers said, “If there is a lesson in the death of Brian Piccolo it is this: life is short. Better get your priorities in order.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> ESPN, Saturday, December 2, 2001.

Think about why Jesus died on the cross. It was so you would not perish altogether. Think about the death of the Apostle Paul and why he did it—he did it so you could hear the message of the cross. And then remember what Gayle Sayers said: “Life is short. Better get your priorities in order.”

## **Remember Jesus Christ**

The name "Jesus" signifies “savior.” The name of "Christ" signifies “anointed.” The Jews anointed their priests during their inauguration to office. They also anointed their kings. In the New Testament, the name "Christ" is equivalent to “Messiah,” the name given to the long promised prophet and king. The Jewish people had been taught by their scriptures and their rabbis to expect the Christ. The use of this name, as applied to the Lord, always has reference to the promises of the prophets. The name of Jesus is the proper name of the Lord, and that of Christ is added to identify him with the promised Messiah.

In order to remember Jesus Christ, the Lord left us a simple monument, one that informs on the simplicity and efficacy of the gospel.

In Luke’s gospel we read,

Luke 22:19 And having taken some bread, when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

This monument has survived nearly two thousand years. This is the monument that causes us to remember his words and his death each Lord's Day.

Therefore, remember Jesus Christ.

## Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead

In Acts, Chapter 25, Luke tells us about Paul's appearance before King Agrippa and the Roman governor, Festus,

**Acts 25:13** Now when several days had elapsed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and paid their respects to Festus. 14 While they were spending many days there, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man who was left as a prisoner by Felix; 15 and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. 16 "I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges. 17 "So after they had assembled here, I did not delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought before me. 18 "When the accusers stood up, they *began* bringing charges against him not of such crimes as I was expecting, 19 but they *simply* had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive.<sup>8</sup>

It is certainly true that the Jews had some "points of disagreement" with Paul about their religion. It is also

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<sup>8</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. 1995 (Ac 25:13–19). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

true that the Jews had some points of disagreement with the Jesus whom Festus thought to be dead. And those points of disagreement were not trivial. They involved perceptions about the truth, and issues about behavior. It was a result of these disagreements that the Jews rejected Jesus' counsel and disputed with Him about His teaching.

The disputes and conflicts between Jesus and his opponents recalls a story told by a historian of an eastern tribe that was so bothered by the blazing heat of the sun, that it became their custom, each morning, when the sun rose, to unite themselves together in hurling curses at the great light. Little did they understand that it was the light of the sun that kept them alive.

So it was with the Jews of the First Century and their opposition to Jesus and His teaching. It is true of many of the opponents Jesus even today.

One of the most astonishing features of the ministry of Jesus is mentioned in John, Chapter 1, where the Apostle says of Jesus,

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him.

It is incredible that the one who made the world, who had gone to such great lengths to save his own people, would come to his own people, and be rejected. Not rejected only by the Jews, but by the theocratic chiefs, by the assembled Sanhedrin, and by the very populace to whom Pilate appealed to save his life.

It was Stephen in his defense before the Jews who said,

Acts 7:51 You men who are stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the holy spirit; you are doing just as



your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the righteous one, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.

Isaiah says concerning the Messiah,

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; he has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him. Nor appearance that we should be attracted to him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face. He was despised, and we did not esteem him.

And in the words of the song,

"Tell of the years of his labor, tell of the sorrow he bore; he was despised and afflicted, homeless, rejected and poor."<sup>9</sup>

But even though he was rejected by the Jews, deserted by his own disciples, condemned and crucified by the gentiles, God, His Father, did not forget him. On that historic first day of the week, when Peter and the other disciples huddled in fear, and the women prepared spices to mourn his death, they came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away.

Mark 16:5 "And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a

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<sup>9</sup> Ellis Crum, Ed., *Sacred Selections for the Church*, Sacred Selections, Indiana, 1960, 278.

white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; he is not here ..."

He has risen!

Paul said concerning Jesus in his letter to the Romans,

Romans 1:1 Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared with power to be the son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord ..."

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead...

## **Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David.**

Matthew tells of the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem,

Matthew 21:4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "Say to the daughter of Zion,

'Behold your King is coming to you,

Gentle, and mounted on a donkey,

Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' "

6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats. 8 Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others

were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. 9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David;

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord;

Hosanna in the highest!”<sup>10</sup>

Matthew noted that they **shouted** the words of Psalm 118:26, **Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.** To Him they shouted, **Hosanna to the Son of David.** “Hosanna” is from the Hebrew *hōšī‘âh nā’*, “Save (us), we pray,” taken from Psalm 118:25. It came to be a note of praise as well as petition.

While the crowd may not have fully understood the significance of this event, they acknowledged that this One is the promised Seed of David who had come to grant them salvation. Both their actions and words bestowed honor on this One coming into the city, at last presenting Himself publicly as their King.<sup>11</sup>

The Son of David in whom the hope of Israel is fulfilled is the Saviour who turns aside sorrow and heals sicknesses.<sup>12</sup> In His earthly way Jesus has come to Israel as the Son of David in whom the promises of Scripture

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<sup>10</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update.* 1995 (Mt 21:9). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

<sup>11</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Mt 21:9). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>12</sup> Vol. 8: *Theological dictionary of the New Testament.* 1964- (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (486). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

are fulfilled. But the community that confesses Him knows that He who has worked as the Son of David on earth is also the Lord (*Kurios*) and Son of God (Matthew 22:41–46) to whom all power is given both in heaven and on earth, 28:18.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Davidic Sonship of Jesus in the Revelation of John.**

Christ is twice called “the root David”<sup>14</sup> in Revelation at 5:5 and 22:16. He is the shoot which has sprung forth from the race of David (cf. Is. 11:1, 10), the Messianic Ruler who holds the key of David in His hands, 3:7. This picture is taken from Is. 22:22, but it is used in a new sense. What is meant is no longer the key to David’s palace. It is the key to the door of the Messianic banqueting hall. As the eschatological scion of the house of David Christ holds in His hands the key with which He opens up the way to salvation. By the transfer of OT and Jewish titles to the crucified, risen and ascended Christ it is emphasized that the promises of God are fulfilled in Him.<sup>15</sup>

God did not abandon him. And it is like Peter said concerning him on the Day of Pentecost,

Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (486).

<sup>14</sup> ἡ ῥίζα Δαβίδ. The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition, Interlinear with Morphology, UBS4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (487)..

plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

And a few verses farther,

Acts 2:32 “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

Therefore, remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead – vindicated.

### **Therefore...**

In the 17th Century a young girl named Maria Durant lived in the south of France. She was attractive and intelligent, and life beckoned joyously to her. She was also a devout Christian and unashamed to speak out for her Lord. Soon the persecution in that area became so severe that her testimony was no longer tolerated. She refused to be silent, however. As a result she was imprisoned. For 38 years, while life with its pleasures passed her by, she maintained a shining testimony. For her there would be no joy of marriage; no family. Her valiant stand for the truth was costly, but rather than yield to pressure and renounce her Lord, she stood firm. The years of privation slowly sapped her strength—physical strength. She died a martyr's death. She resisted unto blood.

On this score the writer of Hebrews said,

**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and

perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. **4** You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;<sup>16</sup>

Paul, indeed, suffered for Christ and for the church. He resisted to the point of shedding blood. He wrote to the Corinthians about his opponents, saying,

2 Corinthians 11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. **23** Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. **24** Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. **26** *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; **27** *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. 1995 (Heb 12:1–4). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, *New American Standard Bible*.

Indeed, Paul suffered for the Lord and for the gospel. In the end he gave his life. Yet through all this he lamented not his loss of earthly fame or comfort. His focus was clearly upon the risen Christ. He said to the Philippians,

**Philippians 3:7** But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

There is a monument at Gettysburg, placed there in honor of a lad who did no more for his regiment than carry the colors. But the monument remembers for us the day when the boy and his flag were isolated from the regiment following a charge. The regiment withdrew to a line the commanding officer decided would be safe. But the color-bearer, and a few others, refused to retreat. These held their ground. So the major sent a message to the lad. The message said, "Bring the colors back to the regiment." But the lad replied, "Bring the regiment back to the colors."

There is a moral in that incident worth remembering. Especially for us. When the false teachers are saying that the gospel should be brought up to date to accord with modern times, we should reply that modern times ought to be revised to accord with the gospel. The

gospel is the same yesterday and today. It is not subject to revision. Fear not the objections and contradictions of the opponents of Christ. If the church could be seen as the regiment, then the color bearers are saying,

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead,  
descendent of David, according to the gospel.