

Theme: Easter celebrates the Great Reversal, when God overruled the wicked decision of humanity to reject and crucify Jesus, raising Him from the dead so that life has swallowed up death for all who trust in Him.

## I. Intro - Matrix and the Great Reversal

- A. There are so many parallels with Jesus - He does things no one else can, fights against evil, He is The One
- B. But Neo suddenly dies - and then is raised!
- C. Many stories are like this because they are echoes of THE STORY - Jesus' death and resurrection!

## II. Jesus the Powerful Messiah

### A. Jesus the Powerful Messiah

Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by **miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him**, as you yourselves know. Acts 2:22

1. Jesus had done miracles, wonders, and signs
  - a. He turned water into wine (John 2)
  - b. He cleansed God's house (John 2)
  - c. He healed a royal official's son with a word (John 4)
  - d. He healed a man lame for 38 years (John 5)
  - e. He walked on water and fed the multitude (John 6)
  - f. He gave sight to a man blind from birth (John 9)
  - g. He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11)
  - h. These are the 7 "signs" in John's Gospel
  - i. Jesus did many other miraculous things  
Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. John 21:25
  - j. The other Gospels record many other miracles

2. These were "signs" that Jesus is the Messiah  
Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man **accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs**, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. Acts 2:22
  - a. These are not just random miracles - they are signs
  - b. They are pointers to Jesus' identity as the Messiah
  - c. They are God's accreditation of Jesus' claims

### B. God has proven that Jesus is the Messiah

1. God has given proof of Jesus' identity
2. We do not believe despite the evidence - we believe because of the evidence.
3. People don't reject Jesus because of the evidence - they reject Jesus despite the evidence!
4. It takes blind faith to reject Jesus' claims to be the Messiah!
5. This is God's own estimation of the situation!

## III. The Messiah Rejected and Murdered!

### A. People blindly rejected Jesus and killed Him!

This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and **you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross**. Acts 2:23

1. What a bold statement by Peter - you did it!
2. You worked with wicked men to crucify Jesus!
3. Jews had to conspire with Romans to do this!
4. He is implicating both Jew and Gentile, ruler and commoner - everyone!

5. This is the point of Good Friday - we rejected Jesus and put Him to death!
6. This is the first unexpected reversal in the story!
7. Jesus had healed, fed, cared for, and forgiven - why would anyone want to reject Him?
8. Jesus was accredited by God the Father - surely the people of God will embrace Him!
9. Jesus had spoken of bringing in the Gentiles - surely they will gladly receive the 'Desired of the Nations'!
10. But out of blind jealousy, ambition, and hatred, they close their eyes and ears to God's testimony and conspire to kill Jesus!

#### B. The Sovereignty of God in the Death of Jesus

This man was **handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge**; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Acts 2:23

1. God was not taken by surprise by this!
2. Jesus had pointed out that the Old Testament had predicted the Messianic Suffering Servant would suffer and die  
He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. Mark 8:31
  - a. Jesus knew this would happen long before it did
  - b. It MUST happen - taught in the OT

3. But God was working in this Sovereignty to work redemption for us!  
This man was **handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge**; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Acts 2:23

- a. Not only foreknowledge - God's set purpose!
  - b. This is another reversal - God was working in this horrible act of injustice to defeat injustice, through these sinful men and their actions to defeat sin, through the death of Jesus to defeat death!
- C. The death of Christ was the first reversal in this great story, as against all expectations Jesus, who had clearly been proven to be the Messiah by God Himself, was rejected and put to death by humanity. Yet even in this unexpected reversal, God was working behind the scenes on His own reversal to bring good out of this horrible injustice.

## IV. The Great Reversal

- A. The Great, Ultimate Reversal - the Resurrection!
- But God raised him from the dead**, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Acts 2:24
1. 'But' - the Great Reversal!
  2. Evil men conspired to put Jesus to death - but God raised Him from the dead!
  3. God is overruling the unjust verdict of men who refused to admit Jesus' identity and embrace Him as King.

## B. Freed from the agony of death!

But God raised him from the dead, **freeing him from the agony of death**, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Acts 2:24

1. Death is the great enemy of humanity!
2. Most humans live in fear of death
3. The cords of death were around Jesus but they were loosed and He walked free!

The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. Psalm 18:4

- a. David (and others) saw death as wrapping cords around us
- b. The cords have been loosed and Jesus has walked free from death's grip!

## C. Christ, the Conqueror of Death!

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, **because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him**. Acts 2:24

1. This is because it was IMPOSSIBLE for death to hold Him!
2. Death had bit off more than it could chew!
3. The One Who is Life itself swallowed up death!
4. This is the Great Reversal - death has been conquered and swallowed up by Life!
5. Easter celebrates the Great Reversal, when God overruled the wicked decision of humanity to reject and crucify Jesus, raising Him from the dead so that life has swallowed up death for all who trust in Him.

## V. Applying the Word

### A. Have you believed the Gospel and submitted to Jesus?

1. Many embrace false religions and philosophies
2. Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, etc.
3. Utilitarianism, Marxism, secularism, civil religion
4. But none of these can conquer death - their tombs are with us!
5. But Jesus has conquered death - and offers eternal life to us!
6. Do not hesitate or wait - look to Him today!

### B. A call to boldly proclaim the Gospel

1. Believers should boldly proclaim the Gospel
2. We need to humbly but firmly be clear - God has given **proof** of the resurrection and Jesus' claims
3. We do NOT have blind faith - those rejecting Christ have blind faith against the evidence.
4. See After Hours and this week's blog
5. We can have humble yet bold confidence to proclaim the Gospel because Jesus is alive and ruling over all!
6. We live with resurrection power and are sent on mission to the world with resurrection power!

### C. The Table of Resurrection Life

1. Here we focus on Jesus' life and death
2. But we also focus on His resurrection and return!

3. This Table gives us a taste of the Age to come!
4. Here we get a foretaste of the eternal feast!
5. Come and receive strength from your Risen Lord!

## The Great Reversal

Acts 2:22-24

March 31, 2024

Communion

Philippians 3:10-11

Teaching keywords: Easter; resurrection; Gospel; salvation and deliverance; sovereignty of God

May you know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and attaining eternal life and the resurrection from the dead. You are the blessed children of the resurrection - go forth filled with resurrection power and be a blessing! Phil. 3:10-11

“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. <sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. <sup>24</sup> But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Acts 2:22-24