

# The Great Renewal (this world reborn through the resurrection of Jesus Christ)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Christ is risen. He is risen. He is risen. On the first day of the week at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.

And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. When they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.

And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but he has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still with you in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.

And they remembered his words. And returning from the tomb, they told these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James.

And the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. But these words seemed to them like an idle tale. And they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb.

[ 1 : 11 ] Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves. And he went home marveling at what had happened. And we're going to be looking this morning in three sections and some of the great themes, the great significance of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the New Testament proclaims that to us.

But it's all here in seed form in the very first sermon of the New Testament, which is on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. And we're going to read from Acts chapter 2 at verse 22, page 910 in our Bibles.

Verse 22 down to 32. Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

So this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

God raised him up, loosing the pangs, the birth pangs literally, of death. Because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

[ 2 : 33 ] For David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh also will dwell in hope, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life.

You will make me full of gladness with your presence. Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Being there for a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

[ 3 : 51 ] Do keep your Bibles open there. I want to speak to you about the great renewal through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We've been thinking this Easter of the significance of the resurrection, as told by the New Testament's chief contributor, which is the theologian that we know by the name of Luke, who wrote

his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

On Good Friday, we saw that Luke is utterly clear that Easter is a great rescue, a rescue from the tragedy and the tyranny of sin, as the world is redeemed through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But of course, Luke's gospel doesn't end, does it, with the cross? As we read, it ends with the resurrection of Jesus. And what's utterly clear in Jesus' own explanation and in the preaching of all the apostles is that the great rescue of the cross leads to a great renewal.

Jesus is plain. His resurrection is the climax, is the fulfillment of everything the scriptures have pointed to from the beginning. His resurrection heralds the dawning of a new age, the new age of the spirit.

[ 5 : 12 ] It heralds indeed the rebirth of the whole cosmos, the whole creation. And that's why the apostles' gospel proclaimed from the day of Pentecost onwards is so focused on the resurrection and on the significance of it.

Because they understood that this whole world is reborn through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In his new birth from the dead, as the Son of God with power, it begins the great renewal of all things forever for everyone who belongs to him.

So I want us to look this morning at three things that the Bible tells us the resurrection of Jesus, brings to birth or brings to rebirth, if you like. And it's all alluded to in Peter's sermon here in Acts 2, but these themes go through the rest of the New Testament.

And I'll refer to some of those places this morning. The new birth through the resurrection of Jesus Christ of God's true Son, of God's true world, and of God's true family.

So first then, the Christ is reborn from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus heralds the birth of God's true and indestructible firstborn Son, no longer held prisoner by the power of sin and death ever again.

[ 6 : 43 ] Look at Acts 2, verse 24. God raised up Jesus, loosing the birth pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

You see, Peter is speaking of Jesus' resurrection as a birth, as the end of a painful labor. That word pangs literally is the word birth pangs.

In 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 3, it's translated as the labor pains of a pregnant woman. In Revelation 12, verse 2, a woman cries out in birth pains.

Same word. It's the word that Jesus used in Matthew 25, verse 8, where he's speaking about the turmoil of the last days as being the beginning of the birth pains.

Notice he says the beginning of the birth pains. We'll come back to that later. So let's be clear here. Peter is describing a birth. He's describing Jesus emerging from the tomb of death as being like emerging from the womb of death into life, because that womb of death could not hold him.

[ 7 : 52 ] He is reborn out of death and into glorious deathless life. This is a birth from the dead. Now the apostles echo that very language.

Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, says Paul in Colossians chapter 1. When John on Patmos receives his revelation in chapter 1 of Revelation, he says it comes from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness and firstborn of the dead.

Jesus' resurrection is the birth into glorious new creation life of God's firstborn son, a glorious human son.

Now notice verse 22. The one who was crucified was a man, Jesus of Nazareth. And this same man, verse 32, this very Jesus, God raised up and exalted.

And verse 36, made him both Lord and Christ. A human being, a man made in the image of God, now truly rules over this whole world as the king and heir of all creation, as God's glorious son.

[ 9 : 08 ] That's what Peter says. Who was God's firstborn son? Well, it was Adam, wasn't it? Adam, the son of God, as Luke tells us in chapter 3 of his gospel, his genealogy.

Adam who was made in God's image to rule the cosmos for God and for God's glory. But of course, Adam rebelled, didn't he? And God lost his image.

He lost his son because Adam brought the curse of death onto the whole of creation. It was an utter disaster. And yet the Bible, of course, is clear.

God did not abandon his world. He made a promise that at last it would be redeemed, it would be renewed by a new Adam, by a true man, by the seed of the woman who would at last reverse the curse and destroy the serpent, destroy that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, the enemy who brought death into this world.

And therefore, once again, man would reign forever as the true son of God, as the image of God on earth. God's purpose in creation will not be thwarted.

[ 10 : 25 ] And what Peter is saying here in Acts chapter 2 is that promise has now been fulfilled and we know it because Jesus has been raised from the dead, the Christ.

He is exalted as Lord and Christ, the King of the world, the true Son of God. If you look at verses 34 to 36 there, you'll see that Peter's quoting from the Psalms.

Psalms 110 is quoted explicitly in verse 34. And Psalm 2 is quoted implicitly in verse 36 with this mention of Lord and Christ.

He's referring to the enthroned Son of God of Psalm 2 who is made judge of all the world. There's no shadow of doubt at all about what the apostle is claiming.

Jesus' resurrection is the birth from the dead of God's true and indestructible firstborn Son, a new Adam, the new man, the new human who will rule this world forever.

[ 11 : 26 ] That's Peter's first sermon. In fact, if you look at Acts chapter 13 and Paul's first sermon, he says exactly the same thing. We bring you good news, he says. What God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us, their children, by raising Jesus just as it's written in the second Psalm.

You are my son. Today, I have begotten you. And that's the gospel, says Paul. That is the good news. At last, God has a true son in his true image.

Not subject any longer to the curse of death. He could not be held by death. Unlike all of Adam's offspring before him. Do you remember that genealogy in Genesis chapter 5 about Adam's family? Adam begat Seth and he died and his son and he died and his son and he died and he died and he died. They all died. But this descendant of Adam, this seed of the woman, death could not hold him. This is my beloved son, said the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism back in Luke chapter 3. Do you remember? And then we're given the whole genealogy all the way back from Jesus all the way back to Adam, the son of God.

[ 12 : 49 ] Do you remember? But here at last is the true Adam, the son of God with power over death. God raised him up loosing the pangs of death.

Death could not hold this man. And that, says Paul, is the good news of the gospel to tell. Because this heralds the great renewal.

Man is reborn as Christ is raised from the dead. Remember how Paul summarizes his whole gospel in the beginning of his letter to the Romans.

He says, the gospel promised beforehand in the scriptures concerning God's son. Descended from David according to the flesh.

Appointed to be the son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. That is the man Jesus appointed Lord and Christ.

[ 13 : 51 ] By his resurrection he is begotten as God's glorious son with power. Power over sin and death and ruler over all that God has made.

A new Adam at last. A new Adam living in praise and honor and glory in the image of God himself forever. And through this, you see, is the great renewal, is the rebirth of the new age.

The age of Adam has given way to the age of the new Adam, the Christ. The age of the flesh has given way to the new age of the spirit as the New Testament calls it.

Adam's age was the age of death. Death reigned through one man says Paul in Romans 5. But Christ's age is the age of life. Is the age of eternal life.

Christ being raised from the dead will never die again says Paul. Death no longer has dominion over him. He is the Son of God with power over death.

[ 14 : 59 ] Through his birth from the dead on Easter day, the birth pangs of death were loosed forever. It could not hold him. And the Christ is reborn.

A real man is reborn as the firstborn of a new age, as the age of the spirit of eternal life. And friends, do you see how important this bodily resurrection, bodily resurrection is?

People so often misunderstand this talk of the spirit and the flesh in the Bible. Sometimes they think the contrast is between something solid and bodily like the flesh and the spirit which is sort of wispy and ethereal.

And so they think of heaven, they think of a sort of afterlife as being a kind of shadowy, ghostly existence of disembodied spirits. That's the world of Hollywood films, ghosts and all that.

No! Nonsense! That is the exact reverse of the real truth of the Christian gospel. The exact reverse. It's the flesh life, it's mortality as we know it that is the shadow life.

[16:14] It's a mere pre-life if you like. It's the spirit life that is the reality, that's the solid substantial reality of life in all its fullness, of life as God meant it to be.

That's what Jesus says to us. C.S. Lewis was absolutely right wasn't he when he used the language of shadowlands. This world is the shadowlands. It's the new world, the new creation. There's the full and glorious reality. That's precisely what Paul tells the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 15. With the resurrection of the dead, he says, what is sown, that is our mortal bodies, that's what's perishable.

It's raised imperishable. It's sown in dishonor. It's raised in glory. It's sown in weakness. It's raised in power. It's sown a natural body.

It's raised a spiritual body. You see, the earthly natural body gives way to the heavenly spiritual body and that is a transformation from perishable to imperishable, from powerless to powerful, from dishonor to glory, from pale shadow to solid reality, from pale black and white to bright fulsome technicolor.

[17:37] And that's exactly what we see in the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection body. Well, hang on a second, you say, is that really right?

Surely when we read Luke 24 and the other gospels, surely we see Jesus appearing and disappearing. We see him walking through doors, walking through walls. Surely that's ghost-like, that's spirit-like.

Surely that means he's got less of a body than before. No, that's wrong. Read the text. Luke is absolutely clear. Jesus' body is solid. They touch him.

They put their hands into his very wounds. He eats. He has a meal with him of fish and chips. Well, at least he has fish. If you'd have been in Glasgow, he'd have definitely got fish and chips.

But Jesus is solid. That's the whole point of the resurrection story. Well, you might say, well, how can he pass through doors and walls and things like that?

[18:42] Well, not because his body is less real and solid than before, but because it's more real and more solid. How can you and I walk through air because we're more solid, more dense than air?

How can you wade through water and swim because you're more dense than the water? And you see, the risen Jesus body, the true human body, is more real and more solid and more lasting and more substantial than anything in this world.

Anything in this passing world, like doors or the stone walls of tombs. Jesus is reborn as the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead.

He's reborn into a new and solid and lasting and wonderful indestructible humanity. And that's real humanity as God purposed it to be.

Man who will never die again because he's no longer just from the earth, a man of dust. He's the second man, says Paul. He's the man from heaven. He's made not now just of mere dust, but he is made of the divine.

[19:57] He's born of the Spirit. He's born from above. And so the everlasting life of God himself, the life-giving Spirit, flows in him and indeed flows from him.

Paul says, as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Do you see how wonderful this bodily resurrection of Jesus really is? It's not just that it assures us that the great redeeming work of the cross is done and accomplished as Jesus is justified, vindicated before the world as God raises him to life in triumphant victory.

It does assure us of that, but it also shows us what God's goal for real human life has always been from the very beginning. It shows us what true humanity really is like.

Deathless life. Solid life. Real life. That's life in all its fullness that Jesus talks of. Life like Jesus and life with Jesus.

[21:14] All because Christ is reborn from the dead and God has at last a true and indestructible firstborn human son no longer held by the power of sin and death.

The Christ is reborn from the dead. Do take up your Bibles again and turn again to Acts chapter 2. The risen conquering son of God reveals God's goal for human life in his rebirth through resurrection from the dead.

But more than that because he reveals God's goal for the whole world. The creation is reborn from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus heralds the birth of God's true and indestructible world.

A world no longer held prisoner to the power of sin and death. Look at verse 16 there in Acts chapter 2 where Peter begins his Pentecost sermon and he says this, that is the events that are before them, this is what the prophet Joel was talking about when he spoke of the pouring out of God's spirit on all flesh in the last days.

[ 22 : 37 ] Days of wonder in heaven and earth he says in verse 19. Days that will culminate verse 20 in the great day of the Lord. That's the prophet's language for the coming day of judgment.

The revelation of God's righteousness when God will judge and punish all wrong and when he will set all things right in ultimate renewal through recreation.

And it was a day of new birth. A new birth through great judgment just like in the days of Noah when the old world was destroyed and the new world was born out of the womb of that dying world.

And the prophets use exactly that kind of language of resurrection through rebirth many many times. This is Isaiah for example. He will swallow up in that day death forever and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.

your dead shall live their bodies shall rise you who dwell in the dust awake and shout and sing for joy for your due is a due of light and the earth will listen the earth will give birth to the dead.

[ 23 : 46 ] Isn't that striking? Listen to the very end of the book of Isaiah all about the new heavens and the new earth the place where death no longer reigns and the prophet says no more shall there be an infant who lives but a few days and an old man who doesn't fill out all his days.

Don't you long for that world? Especially if you've had to bury an infant that lived but a few days. If you had to watch a parent or a spouse maybe succumbing to some illness or cancer that's caused them to die way way beyond way earlier than their allotted span?

Don't you think the grieving families across Belgium and Brussels this week long for that world?

Don't all of us long for a world where there be no grieving, no horror of the darkness of death?

Well, says the prophet, that day is coming, the birth of a world where no more will there be any alien intrusion of death or darkness at all, forever.

They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountains, says the Lord. At last, dust will be the serpent's food, that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan.

[ 25 : 15 ] He'll be crushed forever underfoot in the dust, just as God promised. and therefore the whole creation will be reborn forever.

Listen to the language Isaiah uses. God says, shall I bring all this to the point of birth and not cause to bring forth? Shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?

No. All that God has promised will certainly come to the pass, he says. He will give birth to a new heavens and a new earth which will remain forever and ever.

Read Isaiah chapter 65 and 66 later on and see for yourself. And Peter says on the day of Pentecost, that is what this is all about, that you're seeing.

Verse 32, this Jesus God has raised up and of that we are all witnesses. And that means that all of these great promises have begun to be fulfilled.

[ 26 : 22 ] the rebirth into resurrection glory for the Christ is the beginning of the rebirth into resurrection glory for the whole of this creation.

Do you see why the bodily historical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely central to everything for the Christian faith, for everything for the future of this universe?

It's the guarantee, it's the only guarantee that ultimately all the wrong, all the injustice, all the sin and evil in this world will be put right.

That one day there will be real and permanent justice in this world. What a great comfort that is in this dark world, is it not?

What a great comfort to all who have suffered terribly and been wronged by other people's ill or wickedness or evil. What a great comfort to all of us.

[ 27 : 26 ] Because of Easter, we can trust that God will right all wrongs in this world one day, that he will make all things right and he will make all things new. What a comfort to all of us who live in this world under the curse, this world of death and decay.

With every passing year, our bodies remind us of that fact, don't they? And Jesus' resurrection spells the beginning of the great rebirth of this whole created order.

The beginning, notice. That's what Jesus himself says. You can look it up later in Matthew chapter 24 where he's telling his followers that there will be great times of upheaval in this world all through what he calls the last days, the days that begun with his coming and will only end with his coming again in glory.

And he says these travails, these days of toil are but the beginning of the birth pangs. Same words exactly as Peter uses here.

Pangs of distress and trouble and hardship for Christ's people. Terrible times as Paul calls them. But times, says Jesus, through which the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed to the ends of this earth, to every nation, before only then the end will come.

[ 28 : 52 ] Only then will the whole creation burst forth from this womb of death in a glorious rebirth and renewal of everlasting life and peace. Paul puts it this way in Romans chapter 8.

Do you remember? the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God, that is, in their new and everlasting bodily life.

Not just the son of God, but the sons of God. For the creation, he says, was subject to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay.

and it will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

And not only the creation, says Paul, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit, that is, the spirit of the already resurrected son of God. We groan inwardly, he says, as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons.

[ 30 : 05 ] For the resurrection of our bodies. You see, only when all God's children are revealed, are reborn, in our resurrection glory, as true sons of God, never to die again, only then will this whole creation itself be reborn.

Only when we receive our adoption, our full sonship, the full redemption of our bodies in our resurrection. resurrection. Why must the whole creation wait for our resurrection, for its renewal? Why does the whole world need the resurrection of redeemed human beings? God does not want an empty new creation, empty of people.

That's the tragic folly, isn't it, of some environmentalists, some extreme environmentalists, who would be quite happy to see mankind wiped out to save nature, mother earth. No, no, no.

God has made this whole cosmos to be the theater in which he displays his majestic glory and he displays his majestic glory in the creation, in man, in those that he is bringing to rebirth and renewal in the image of his glorious son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 31 : 40 ] And the new creation will be filled with the image of God, in the people that he has redeemed and resurrected through the Lord Jesus Christ.

His bride made pure at last, he'll call us home. The Christ is reborn from the dead through his resurrection. The creation is being brought to rebirth and complete renewal forever by his resurrection.

But more than that, the New Testament tells us that through the resurrection of Jesus, the church is reborn from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus heralds the birth of God's true and indestructible family, a people who are no longer held prisoner to the power of sin and death.

Christ is the firstborn from the dead and he doesn't rise to inhabit an empty world, a world denuded of human beings. No. That's why it's so wrong, isn't it, to think of heaven as some sort of place of eternal quiet and solitude.

I think people often think of heaven like that. It's like desert island discs. You're there all on your own in peace and quiet with your favorite book and your favorite music and no one else to annoy you forever and ever.

[ 33 : 14 ] I mean, you can understand why that's attractive, isn't it? Especially if you've got young kids who are driving you nuts. Especially if you've got all your in-laws and out-laws for Easter weekend and you're beginning to feel like peace-perfect pieces with loved ones far away and all of that sort of thing.

But that is so far away from the idea that the New Testament paints for us of God's new creation, God's new heaven and earth. Think right back to the beginning.

Think back to the first Adam. God made man not to be alone. That's why he made man male and female, to multiply, to fill this world. And Paul says, doesn't he, in Romans chapter 8, that Jesus

was raised to life in order that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. The new Adam ushers in an age of resurrection. And renewal for his whole earthly family. For the loved ones that he came to save and to redeem. And that he delights to have around him in his presence forever and ever in his new world.

And again, that's what Paul says to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15. As by man, the first Adam, came death. By a man, Christ, has also come the resurrection from the dead.

[ 34 : 34 ] For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But, notice this is important, each in his own order, says Paul.

Christ, the firstfruits, and then, at his coming, all those who belong to Christ. See, Jesus is the firstborn of many brothers who will also be reborn as children of the resurrection age, as sons of God, just like him.

That's the language Jesus himself uses in Luke 20 when he talks about the resurrection. He talks about those who are sons of God, sons of the resurrection, along with him. He's the firstfruits, he's the firstborn son.

He's the first to enter the life of the spiritual age of glory as a true human being. And it's he who inaugurates that age for his whole church.

And that's what Peter means here in verse 33 of Acts 2 where he says that the exalted Christ received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit. He received himself that promise.

[ 35 : 43 ] And then he pours out the Spirit upon all his church that they too might be reborn to share his everlasting indestructible life.

It's Jesus resurrection that means new birth from the dead for everyone in Christ's church. It's Jesus resurrection that gives us sure and certain hope of our rebirth by resurrection when he comes.

I'd like you just to turn with me to 1 Peter, to Peter's letter that he wrote some years after this great sermon in Pentecost. 1 Peter chapter 1 I think it's page, what page is it?

I don't know the page. You'll have to find it yourself. It's near the end of the Bible after James. No, it is page 1014.

I do know the page. Peter's writing some years later, he's writing to persecuted struggling believers all around the area that we now know as Turkey. They'd probably been chucked out of other parts of the Roman Empire.

[ 36 : 56 ] They were in great struggles, facing great trials. If you read the letter, it was a tough, tough time for these Christians. But listen to what he says to encourage them, to strengthen them.

1 Peter 1 verse 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being kept, guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

See what he's saying and why the resurrection is so absolutely central? Jesus' resurrection wasn't just a new birth for him into the glory of eternal life.

It's a new birth for us, says Peter, into a certain hope of an inheritance that can never fade away, that can never be lost. It's a living hope, he says, not a vague dead wish.

It's something certain. Look at the words, imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for us by God himself. In verse 5, we are being kept by God's power for the revelation of that at the last time when Jesus returns.

[ 38 : 28 ] And Peter says we have that pledge, that certainty right now because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Though we'll only have our new bodies like Jesus, as verse 7 says, when he returns at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

You see, we have new birth now through Jesus' resurrection and we will have new bodies then at Jesus' return. That is the Christian hope. That's the gospel of Christ.

For Jesus, you see, his resurrection was the end of the birth pangs. And he arose, his body renewed, he was redeemed, he was fully adopted as the son of God with power, as the first born son of the new resurrection order and the new resurrection age.

But his resurrection, says Peter, begins our birth process and our birth pangs. That's why Paul says we groan inwardly as we await eagerly our adoption as sons, our resurrection, the redemption of our bodies.

But just as Jesus' birth pangs of death were broken and death could not hold him. So also, says Peter, it will be for us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[ 39 : 53 ] Ours is a certain hope, it's a living hope. Shall I bring to the point of birth and not bring forth, says the Lord? Never.

Never. He who began a good work in you, will bring it to completion at the day of Christ, says Paul to the Philippians.

If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8 verse 11. That is our sure and certain hope because Jesus really did rise from the dead bodily.

That is what Peter can say to struggling believers, to suffering Christians here in verse 6. It is not just a matter of struggling through, it is not just a matter of bearing up. What does he say? In the midst of this we can rejoice despite all manner of grievous trials in the present time.

[ 41 : 07 ] Why? Because we know that the certain historical fact of Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead, witnessed by Peter, witnessed by hundreds of others, just as skeptical as Peter was himself that first day, that that fact transforms all our present suffering and transforms our whole thought of our coming death, transforms it into the gateway to an inheritance, says Peter, that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, being kept for us by God and will be revealed to us as a glorious resurrection life of our own at his coming.

resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed this whole world forever and it changes the personal world of everyone who comes to know and understand the gospel of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because we know that whatever suffering we may be facing now, whatever we may go through in the future, no matter how hard it is, how bitter, how agonizing and prolonged the pangs of suffering and death may be.

And friends, the truth is in this life those pangs are deep and painful and agonizing for many of us, are they not? Some people struggle with physical disabilities and disabilities and illnesses and physical burdens all the way through their lives.

Many struggle with great psychological burdens through great tracts of their lives, sexual struggles, emotional struggles, family pains, so many things that will stalk us until life's bitter ends, pangs of death.

[ 43 : 05 ] But you see, no matter how grievous these pangs of death may be, we know that they are also birth pangs and by them, though they often will be bitter, agonizing, painful contractions, by them, Peter says, by God's grace, verse 9 here, we are obtaining the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls God's because Jesus has been born again in his resurrection from the dead, and we are born again to a living hope through his resurrection from the dead, and that is the Easter message.

It's about the rebirth into glorious everlasting life of the Christ, God's firstborn son, the firstborn from the dead, and through him is the firstborn of many brothers.

It's about the rebirth into glory of a church, of God's true family, to inherit the glorious rebirth of this whole creation, a new world, where he will dwell forever among his people as he has purposed to do.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the great rebirth, it's the great renewal of all things, in this creation, loosing the birth pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. It's interesting, isn't it, that I guess, certainly in our culture, and even in the church, Christmas seems to be a much bigger celebration than Easter. People focus so greatly on the earthly birth of the Lord Jesus Christ as a baby in Bethlehem.

[ 45 : 02 ] And that's not wrong. But you know, the New Testament, the apostles make so much more of his second birth, of his birth from the dead through his glorious resurrection to life as the firstborn from the dead, which leads the way for everyone who will be through him sons and daughters of God, sons and daughters of the resurrection.

It would be odd this morning to end with singing a Christmas carol, but I was tempted because Charles Wesley and his great Christmas carol understood about the second birth.

Listen, hail the heaven-born prince of peace, hail the son of righteousness, life and light to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings, born that man no more may die, born to raise the sons of

earth, born to give us second birth.

Easter is the promise of that great renewal that is coming when this whole world will be reborn through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

And friends, because that is so, even reserved Scots have to sing hallelujah, at least on this Easter day.

[ 46 : 40 ] Hallelujah. The Lord Christ is risen. Let's pray. Our gracious God, our loving Father, how we marvel that in the triumph of your Son, our great Savior, we see the one in whose image we are being redeemed.

We see in his life, the life that you have created, life in all its fullness, which life is to know you through Jesus Christ, your Son.

O forgive us, Lord, when our horizons are so small and we fail to see the greatness and the grandeur and the glory of the marvelous gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so fill our hearts, we pray, this Easter day, this day of resurrection with sure and certain hope and with joy in the great rebirth that is ours through him, the firstborn from the dead, our great Savior and Lord in whose name we pray.

Amen.