

The resurrection of Jesus is not only important as a historical fact but also as a historical message. Here was a message of triumph and victory! The message of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a transforming truth. The resurrection of Jesus is one of the preeminent truths of the gospel. The gospel is good news. It is not merely good advice. The gospel is the story of something that happened. That something is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The message of the resurrection of Jesus was the keynote of the early apostolic preaching. In his memorable sermon to the Jews on the day of Pentecost Peter proclaims Jesus of Nazareth "whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." (Acts 2:24) Peter further points out that the resurrection of Jesus was predicted by David centuries before in the sixteenth Psalm. After citing this Psalm and stating its significance regarding the resurrection of the Messiah, Peter says, "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." (Acts 2:32) So Peter demonstrates very clearly that Jesus was the Messiah by virtue of the resurrection from the dead. The Messiahship of Jesus had been vindicated by the resurrection. The fact that God had raised Jesus from the dead justified belief in the supernatural claims which Jesus had made during "the days of His flesh." Peter truly shows the necessity of the death and resurrection of Jesus to be the basis of the forgiveness of sins. The resurrection was also essential in demonstrating the atoning value of Christ's death and instrumental as well in effecting His exaltation to the right hand of God. Over and over again Peter stresses the message of Jesus "whom God raised from the dead." (Acts 3:15; 4:10) Such stress was given to this message that it led the Sadducees to persecute the apostles "because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resur-