

Faith & Tradition

- **Why does some Scripture say God raised Jesus from the dead and other accounts say He rose from the dead?**

It is simply a matter of perspective. Saying God raised Jesus implies God is the actor, the one responsible for the Resurrection. Saying “He rose . . .” implies Jesus was the actor, he was responsible. Our belief in the Trinity informs us that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One God. So, in both cases, God was the actor responsible for the Resurrection (CCC 648).

CCC 648 Christ’s Resurrection is an object of faith in that it is a transcendent intervention of God himself in creation and history. In it the three divine persons act together as one, and manifest their own proper characteristics. The Father’s power “raised up” Christ his Son and by doing so perfectly introduced his Son’s humanity, including his body, into the Trinity. Jesus is conclusively revealed as “Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his Resurrection from the dead.” St. Paul insists on the manifestation of God’s power through the working of the Spirit who gave life to Jesus’ dead humanity and called it to the glorious state of Lordship.

CCC 649 As for the Son, he effects his own Resurrection by virtue of his divine power. Jesus announces that the Son of man will have to suffer much, die, and then rise. Elsewhere he affirms explicitly: “I lay down my life, that I may take it again.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” “We believe that Jesus died and rose again.”

- **Did Jesus really rise from the dead?**

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is both an historical event and a theological revelation. Most people accept historical facts (for example, the existence of President Lincoln or the Holocaust). St. Luke wrote an historical record of the Apostles journeys, actions, preaching, and miracles in his Acts of the Apostles. The same evangelist, St. Luke, first recorded the Gospel of Luke in which there are several accounts of the Risen Lord to many. St. Paul (whose pivotal experience of the Risen Lord caused Saul’s profound conversion) declared that if Christ did not rise from the dead, then our faith is in vain. “If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty [too] is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins.” (1 Cor. 13-17)

The most compelling physical evidence of the Resurrection is the radically transformed lives of Jesus' followers. After Jesus was crucified, his followers were discouraged and disheartened. So, they dispersed. Then, after a short time they abandoned their occupations, gathered back together, and fully committed themselves to spreading the "good news" that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who after dying on a cross, returned to life and was seen alive by all of them. They spent the rest of their lives proclaiming this, without anything to gain from a human perspective. They faced a life of hardship. They often went without food and slept exposed to the elements. They were ridiculed, beaten and imprisoned. They knew that torture and death would be their fate if they didn't stop preaching about Jesus Christ. But they couldn't stop. They all kept talking about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to anyone who would listen. Eventually, most of them were executed in torturous ways. However, all of them maintained to the very end that Jesus had risen from the dead.

- **How do I develop/maintain the faith the size of a mustard seed, when I am constantly under siege from worldly negative energy**

Pray, keep the Eucharist (JESUS) as the center of your life. Some Saints can help providing advice...

St John Paul II:

"For me, the mass constitutes the center of my life and my every day. Nothing means more to me, or gives me greater joy..."

"When you wonder about the mystery of yourself, look to Christ who gives you the meaning of life. When you wonder what it means to be a mature person, look to Christ who is the fullness of humanity. And when you wonder about your role in the future of the world...look to Christ. Only in Christ will you fulfill your potential...as a citizen of the world community."

St Teresa of Calcutta:

"Prayer is as necessary as the air, as the blood in our bodies, as anything to keep us alive - to keep us alive to the grace of God."

- **Why did Christ wait so long to send Christ if that was always his plan? Why did he not send Him right way after the fall?**

We as a people needed to understand the magnitude of our sin. We needed to understand our need for redemption and that we could never be as the serpent promised "like gods". In the fullness of time, Christ came to save us. It is God's perfect timing so that we could understand our need for a Savior

and turn to and serve the one and only true God. We had to recognize that we cannot save ourselves.

Galatians 4 3-6 - In the same way we also, when we were not of age, were enslaved to the elemental powers of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Ephesians 1:9-13: He has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth. In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, 12 so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ.

CCC 1: God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life

- **Does Christ "let" things happen to us to teach us a lesson?**

Yes, sometimes we are allowed to struggle so that we may grow in perfection ...

James 1: 2-4 - Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- **Why doesn't he allow us to feel his presence in a more human, tangible way?**

Jesus ascended that He might be more fully present through the Holy Spirit.

John 16: 7-8 - But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

8 And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and condemnation:

Jesus cannot be more present than in the Eucharist:

John 6: 56 - Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.

- **When we die are we at rest until Christ comes again, then we go to heaven? Or, are we in heaven awaiting Christ to come again and bring the last souls of earth?**

At the moment of death we will stand for the particular judgment, the next question is then, how have we lived? We will be judged at the moment of death in the particular judgment, and we will be judged on the last day in the general judgment.

Luke 23: 42-43 - Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

CCC 1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face: By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints ... and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, ... or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, ...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment—and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven—have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.(Benedict XII, Benedictus Deus (1336). LG 49).

- **Why didn't God save the human race right away after the fall of Adam and Eve? Why did redemption have to wait until Christ's sacrifice on the cross?**

We as a people needed to understand the magnitude of our sin. We needed to understand our need for redemption and that we could never be as the serpent promised "like gods". In the fullness of time, Christ came to save us.

It is God's perfect timing so that we could understand our need for a Savior and turn to and serve the one and only true God. We had to recognize that we cannot save ourselves.

Galatians 4 3-6 - In the same way we also, when we were not of age, were enslaved to the elemental powers of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Ephesians 1:9-13 - he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth. In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, 12 so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ.

CCC 1 God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life

- **What is the basis for all we know about the war in heaven when Satan rebelled? Is that mostly from Sacred Tradition?**

Not explicitly stated but referred to often as almost being understood from the beginning...

Luke 10:17-20 - The seventy [-two] returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning* from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power 'to tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven." ()

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but condemned them to the chains of Tartarus and handed them over to be kept

for judgment; (note: Tartarus: a term borrowed from Greek mythology to indicate the infernal regions.)

1 John 3:8 Whoever sins belongs to the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. Indeed, the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil.

John 8:44 You belong to your father the devil and you willingly carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

Job 1:8-12 - The Satan answered the LORD and said, "Is it for nothing that Job is God-fearing? 10 Have you not surrounded him and his family and all that he has with your protection? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his livestock are spread over the land. 11 But now put forth your hand and touch all that he has, and surely he will curse you to your face." 12 The LORD said to the Satan, "Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on him." So the Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

- **Purgatory: Why is it needed? Where did it come from?**

1 Cor 3:13-16 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

Matt 18:32-35 (Even though Forgiven and Saved, the debt sin must be paid) Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister † from your heart."

Luke 12:59 57 "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? Thus, when you go with your accuser before a magistrate, on the way make an effort to settle the case, † or you may be dragged before the judge, and

the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you in prison. I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.”

2 Tim 1:18 (Prayers for a believer, Onesiphorus, after death. Why, except to ask for God’s Mercy at the Purging of sin, would Paul pray for the dead for God’s mercy on the Day of his judgment? If there was no purging of sin (being made perfect in Love) why ask for mercy? May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly † searched for me and found me —may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well how much service he rendered in Ephesus.

1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

[1031](#) The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁶ The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.

[1032](#) This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin."⁶⁰⁹ From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.⁶¹⁰ The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.