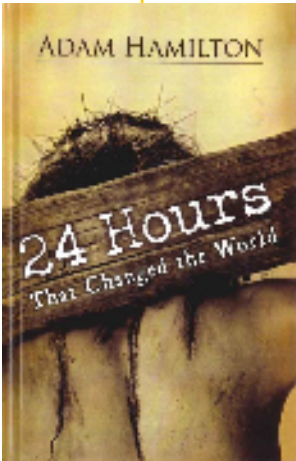


Christ the Victor

On Your Own!



Chapter 7

Opening Prayer

O sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things.
His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.
The LORD has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. (Psalm 98:1-3)

Video Discussion

- Recall some of the sites you have seen these last few weeks: Gethsemane, the pit beneath Caiaphas' house, the whipping post, the stone pavement, the Stone of Unc-tion, the Garden Tomb. How has seeing these sites and objects informed your understanding of what Jesus means for you? for the world?
- Consider the stark contrast between Lenin's tomb in Moscow (a body encased in glass) and Christ's tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (a small piece of stone encased in glass). What does that say to you about the human condition and the power of God?
- In John's Gospel, the risen Christ appears in a garden and is mistaken for a gardener. If we are called to participate with Jesus, the Gardener, in restoring and bringing healing to the original garden of our world, what might that look like in your life?

Book Study & Discussion # 1

The Easter chronology varies slightly in the four Gospel accounts; but one thing is clear: The idea that Jesus had been raised from the dead was considered unbelievable. In Mark (16:1-8), the women learned Jesus had been raised; but they were filled with terror and were afraid to tell anyone. In Matthew (28:16-17), even after the disciples saw him on the mountain in Galilee, "some doubted." In Luke (24:8-11), Mary and the others told the disciples Jesus had been raised; "but these words seemed to them an idle

tale, and they did not believe them." According to Luke (24:12), Peter ran to the tomb; but, while "amazed," it is not clear whether he understood what had happened. In John's account (20:2-9), Peter and John ran to the tomb; but though "they saw the linen wrappings lying there," they still did not understand. Then there is "doubting Thomas," who missed the first resurrection appearance of Jesus to the disciples. Thomas told them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of

the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

How grateful I am for the Gospels and their willingness to record that even the disciples struggled with doubt when it came to the Resurrection (page 122).

- The Gospel writers acknowledged that even those who saw the empty tomb struggled to understand Jesus' resurrection. What part has doubt played in your beliefs about the Resurrection?

Scripture

Mark 16:1-6

Book Study & Discussion # 2

The last of the theories of the Atonement we will consider in this book . . . is often referred to as “Christus Victor”—Christ the Victor. This view . . . holds that the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ must be taken together as a powerful word from God announcing God’s victory over the powers of evil and over the sin that alienates us from God. They are God’s triumph over death, which we, by faith, share. . . .

In Jesus, God entered the boxing arena where evil seems to have the upper hand. He took the worst blows of the enemy, being subject to the powers that conspired to destroy him. He was beaten, abused, and eventually knocked out. But just when the match seemed lost, Jesus arose; and in his resurrection he dealt a finishing blow to the forces of evil, sin, and death. Christ became the Victor. With his victory all human kind was offered

the opportunity to join forces with him; to be set free from the power of evil, sin, and death; and to live lives of hope, freedom, and love (pages 126–127).

- What metaphor would you use to describe Christ’s victory over sin and death? What meaning could the *Christus Victor* theory of the Atonement have in your life?

Closing Prayer

“Where, O death, is your victory?”

Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

Bible Study & Discussion

ACTS 9:1-18

- The Bible describes how Paul himself had an encounter with the resurrected Christ, an encounter that completely transformed him. In what ways would you say your experience with the risen Christ has changed you?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

- In these verses, Paul powerfully and succinctly proclaims the gospel of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Summarize what you understand Paul to be saying and how that message grounds your own faith in Jesus.

1 PETER 3:18-20

- Consider the idea that Jesus sought out those most alienated from God, even in the realm of the dead. How might this idea contribute to your understanding of Jesus’ mission in the world?