

Jesus was convicted of blasphemy and insurrection. His sentence was death by crucifixion. He died as a result of the conviction for these crimes. But there was a deeper law, the law of God. It required that those who sin must die ([Romans 6:23](#) “For **the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”). This punishment was given by God to Adam and Eve because they ate of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil ([Genesis 2:16&17](#); [Genesis 3:6](#)). As a result of their sin, they were first cast out of the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3:24](#)), and separated from fellowship with God. Jesus paid the debt owed by sinners.

How was Jesus vindicated?

If we look at a few of the many prophecies about Jesus’ sacrifice for the sins of humanity, we will gain a deeper understanding of how Jesus’ resurrection vindicated Him from all guilt of any sin.

Isaiah wrote of a “Suffering Servant” of God who would suffer for the sins of God’s people:

[Isaiah 53:8](#) “By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, **stricken for the transgression of my people?**”

We are now able to recognize that Jesus suffered for the sins of God’s people when He paid the price of believers’ sins by dying on the cross. Before Christ came, however, those who read these words would have only known that God had a plan to take the guilt of His people and transfer that guilt to the suffering servant who would suffer for the sins of God’s people.

What is most helpful for our understanding the theme of the vindication of Jesus is the prophecy that the Suffering Servant would be vindicated by being returned to life after dying.

[Isaiah 53:10](#) “Yet **it was the will of the Lord to crush him**; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, **he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days**; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.”

Not only would the suffering servant take the punishment for the sins of God’s people on himself. He would be crushed, or destroyed, or in other words, die. Yet, somehow this deceased person would miraculously “see his offspring” and God would “prolong his days.” This is a very clear prediction of the resurrection.

If the idea of vindication still seems like a stretch, take note that a word that can be translated as “vindicates” is found in the passage below:

[Isaiah 50:6–8](#) “**I gave my back to those who strike**, and **my cheeks to those who pull out the beard**; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. **But the Lord God helps me**; therefore, I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and **I know that I shall not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near.** Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.”

The suffering servant would be beaten down but “the Lord God” would help him. He would not be put to shame. He would be vindicated. That sounds like the kind of vindication Jesus received when He rose from the dead.

In the life of Jesus, this prophecy was fulfilled by His resurrection.

[1 Timothy 3:16](#) “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, **vindicated by the Spirit**, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

Jesus was God “in the flesh.” When Jesus had breath in His lungs, after having been dead, He was “vindicated by the Spirit.” This could be understood in several different ways but can’t be questioned is that after Jesus rose from the dead He had breath in His lungs. In Greek the word for breath and spirit is the same word. Just by Jesus breathing He could be said to be “vindicated by the Spirit.” Of course, Paul could also mean that the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, raised the human body of Jesus Christ came to life as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul is saying still more. Angels saw that Jesus rose from the dead. They know that He was vindicated. Jesus was innocent of every charge made against Him. The fact that the penalty for His crime was reversed vindicated Him.

The truth of Jesus resurrection has been declared to people in all of the nations of the world. Those who have heard of Jesus resurrection know that Jesus was innocent of the charge of blasphemy. When He claimed to be God, He was actually God in human flesh. Not only did Jesus not commit the sin of blasphemy, everything Jesus said about Himself was the truth. His resurrection proved that He was not only innocent but completely truthful and totally in the right. He did nothing wrong.

Jesus' ascension into Heaven also vindicated Him. He ascended into heaven. Surely, if God the Father was not pleased with Jesus, then Jesus would not have been allowed to return to Heaven.

Those in Christ Are Vindicated

Why do we need to be vindicated?

Earlier we looked at why Jesus died when He hung on the cross. He died like any other sinful human being would die. But because He had not sinned ([Hebrews 4:15](#); [2 Peter 2:22](#)) he was vindicated because He did nothing to deserve the punishment of death. God the Father didn't forgive Jesus because Jesus didn't need to be forgiven. Jesus was vindicated because He never sinned and did nothing to deserve the punishment for sin.

On the other hand, every other human being has sinned and deserves the punishment of death as the penalty for their sin ([Romans 6:23](#) "For the **wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.")

I am repeating now what I wrote earlier: This punishment was given by God to Adam and Eve because they ate of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil ([Genesis 2:16&17](#); [Genesis 3:6](#)). As a result of their sin, they were first cast out of the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3:24](#)), and separated from fellowship with God.

Every human being needs vindication, or they will be sentenced to eternal death, or eternal separation from God and His grace.

How can we be vindicated?

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ believers join Jesus in His death and resurrection.

[Romans 6:3-4](#) "Do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death**? We were **buried therefore with him by baptism into death**, in order that, just as **Christ was raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life**."

As Christ died, we die. As Christ was resurrected to a new life, believers are resurrected to a new life.

Through Jesus' resurrection believers are vindicated despite their sins.

[Romans 4:25](#) "who was delivered up for our trespasses and **raised for our justification**."

How does the vindication of believers work? Believers die with Christ. And, they join Christ in His resurrection ([Romans 6:3-4](#) "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.")

How can a person who believes in Christ be vindicated? They die to their old life without Christ. They rise again to new life in Jesus Christ. Only by joining Christ in His death and resurrection can a believer be vindicated, made not only innocent but right with God. Through Jesus' Christ's resurrection a new Creation is sparked into existence. When a person believes in Jesus Christ they are "born again" ([John 3:3](#)), and become a part of this new creation ([2Corinthians 5:17](#)).

Life after Vindication Is Best

Here and now: How does vindication transform the life of a believer?

A person who believes in Jesus Christ is part of the new creation ("Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation** [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." This is because those who believe in Jesus Christ are one with Him, they are said to be in Christ ([John 17:21-23](#)).

Eventually, when Jesus returns, all those who are in Christ will receive a body like His. In the meantime, in the here and now, believers are given a new heart. We see this in prophecies of the Old Testament:

The Psalmist wrote:

[Psalm 51:10](#) “**Create in me a clean heart**, O God, and **renew a right spirit within me.**”

Ezekiel the prophet was given more detail about how this would come through Jesus Christ:

[Ezekiel 18:30-32](#) ““Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. **Repent and turn from all your transgressions**, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and **make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!** Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.””

In the present time believers have a new heart and a new spirit. They have a desire to live as Jesus lived. They want to do what is right. They will still sin, but bit by bit they will draw closer and closer to Jesus.

Jesus paid for the sins of others and justified them.

[1 Corinthians 6:20](#) “for **you were bought with a price**. So **glorify God in your body.**”

After being transformed by Jesus Christ the believer should look to “glorify God.” But notice that Paul calls believers to “glorify God in your body.”

How can a believer “glorify God in their body?” Paul has more to say about this in [Romans 12:1&2](#).

[Romans 12:1-2](#) “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is **your spiritual worship**. Do **not** be **conformed to this world**, but be **transformed by the renewal** of your mind, that by **testing** you may **discern** what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Believers will struggle with sin in the present world because they still have their old bodies. Jesus will be with them every step of the way ([Matthew 28:20](#)). But that will all change when Jesus appears in His glory. I like to think of it as walking with Jesus. Take a look at the following verses and picture Jesus walking along with you:

[Ephesians 2:10](#) “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

[Colossians 2:6](#) “Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,”

[2 Thessalonians 3:6](#) “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.”

[1 John 1:7](#) “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

In the age to come: How will vindication transform the life of a believer?

Jesus was raised from the dead His resurrection body was the first step in God’s new creation. Paul calls Jesus’ resurrection body “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)). The firstfruits were the first vegetables or fruits to be harvested in the new growing season. Jesus’ resurrection body is the first fruit of the harvest in the new creation. After the firstfruits, other fruits follow. Those fruits that will follow are those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Paul explains:

1 Corinthians 15:22-26 “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

Those who are in Christ will become like Christ.

Because we know what is coming, we can delight in being vindicated through Jesus Christ.

This is the same story again: Same beginning, created innocent but chose the way of sin. Same Savior: Jesus. Same ending: Jesus is coming again.

The same story can be told over and over and every time we learn that the story is always new because it renews our hearts, souls, and minds in Christ Jesus. The story grants the gift of life itself. This is the story of God’s gift of life to us who will receive it. Receive it and receive life itself.

Isaiah 53:6–10

D L S W T Q M N D G O N E
A S T R A Y O A O R V Q V
W W R M K G U S L A I D T
A S I L E N T L I V I N G
Y H C G N L H A K E N O T
M E K E D I U F S Y I P J
A E E N J K O F L S Q P P
D P N E U E P L A H U R E
E L O R D V E I U E I E O
C J N A G E N C G A T S P
L L B T M R E T H R Y S L
A A W I E Y D E T E G E E
M N C O N S I D E R E D V
B D C N T B C W R S D D A

All we **like sheep** have **gone astray**; we have turned—**every** one—to his own way; and the **LORD** has **laid** on him the **iniquity** of us all. He was **oppressed**, and he was **afflicted**, yet he **opened** not his **mouth**; **like a lamb** that is led to the **slaughter**, and **like a sheep** that before its **shearers** is **silent**, so he **opened** not his **mouth**. By **oppression** and **judgment** he was **taken away**; and as for his **generation**, who **considered** that he was cut off out of the **land** of the **living**, **stricken** for the transgression of my **people**? And they **made** his **grave** with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his **mouth**. Yet it was the will of the **LORD** to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the **LORD** shall prosper in his hand.

([ESV](#))