

THE RESURRECTION

INTRODUCTION

- While considered by some to be a minor part of the life and ministry of Christ, understanding His resurrection is crucial to the life of the believer
- Definition: The central, defining doctrine and claim of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whom God brought forth from the dead. The resurrection of the dead refers to the promise based on the bodily resurrection of Jesus, that all believers will one day join Christ in the resurrection. Believers will be transformed, that is, renewed both morally and physically with “spiritual” bodies adapted for eternal life with God
- How important is the resurrection? → Romans 10:9-10 ~ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The Empty Tomb

Matthew 28:1-7

Mark 16:1-8

Luke 24:1-12

John 20:1-18

The Resurrection Appearances

To Mary Magdalene and the other Mary: **Matthew 28:9**

To the two on the Road to Emmaus: **Luke 24:13-35**

To the Eleven: **Luke 24:36-43**

To the Eleven including Thomas: **John 20:19-29**

To the 500, James, Paul: **1 Corinthians 15:4-8** ~ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

- Taken as a whole, the appearances are of such various character and to so many people under so many different circumstances that the proof of the resurrection of Christ is as solid as any historical fact that could be cited in the first century.

The Character of the Human Witnesses to the Resurrection

- It is clear from the Gospel accounts that the witnesses to the Resurrection of Christ were quite reluctant to believe their senses concerning this event.
- The disciples certainly would not have been fooled, as they knew Him well.
- They demanded tangible evidence to this fact (i.e. Thomas).
- They obviously were not expecting Jesus to rise from the dead, even though He had told them on numerous occasions.

The Dramatic Change in the Disciples After the Resurrection

- The disciples spent the rest of their lives proclaiming the message of the Resurrection, as cowards transformed into men of courage.
- They were willing to face arrest, imprisonment, beating, and horrible deaths, and not one of them ever denied the Lord and recanted of his belief that Christ had risen.

Acts 2:23-24 ~ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Acts 3:14-15 ~ But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.

Acts 4:10 ~ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.

Acts 5:30 ~ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.

Acts 10:39-40 ~ We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,

Acts 13:28-30 ~ And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead;

Acts 17:3 ~ explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.”

THE OPPOSITION TO THE RESURRECTION

Many false theories abound regarding the resurrection of Christ

The Evaporation Theory

- The view: The body disappeared by the normal process of disintegration; it just evaporated into gases.
- Answers:
 - Decay would have only begun in three days' time.
 - Such an assumption projects a miracle almost as great as the Resurrection itself.
 - It has to reject all of the evidence that He did rise.

The Wrong Tomb Theory

- The view: The women came in the early morning to a tomb which they thought was the one in which they had seen the Lord buried. They expected to find a closed tomb, but they found an open one; and a young man . . . guessing their errand, tried to tell them that they had made a mistake in the place. "He is not here," said he, "see the place where they laid him," and probably pointed to the next tomb. But the women were frightened at the detection of their errand, and fled . . ." (Kirsopp Lake, *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907, pp 250-253).
- Answers:
 - These women had carefully noted where the body of Jesus was interred less than 72 hours before (Matt. 27:61; Mk. 15:47; Lk. 23:55).
 - The women reported what had happened to the Disciples. Later Peter and John found the tomb empty. Did they also go to the wrong tomb?
 - Did the angel also make a mistake? Some would discard this argument because it builds upon another supernatural fact. If it was just a young man, why was he in a private garden at such an early hour? and why should his presence have frightened the women?
 - If the women went to the wrong tomb, then the Sanhedrin could have gone to the right tomb and produced a body (if Jesus did not rise). This would have shut the disciples up forever.
 - This was not a public cemetery, but private. There would be no other tomb there for such a mistake to be made.

The Swoon Theory

- The view: Christ never actually died on the cross, but only swooned. When buried, Christ was still alive. After several hours, He revived by the cool air of the tomb and departed.
- Answers:
 - Christ did die on the cross according to the judgment of the soldiers, Joseph and Nicodemus.
 - If this theory is true then Jesus in a weakened condition would have been able to slip out of the grave clothes which were tightly wrapped around him and stuck together with sticky aromatic spices, only to leave them in the shape of a body.
 - Christ in a weakened condition would not have been able to roll back the stone at the entrance of the tomb, a feat which would have taken several men, then stepped over sleeping soldiers (which we know they certainly would not have been) and escaped.
 - Roman soldiers would not have slept. A mistake like loosing a body they were guarding would have been punishable by death.
 - If Christ did not die at this time, then when did He die?
 - When the first fears of the disciples were dispelled, it was one of joy, boldness, and enthusiasm; we see none of those feelings of pity, sympathy with suffering, of desire to render help, that must have been called forth by the appearance of a person who had swooned away through weariness and agony, who was now in the first moments of recovery.

The Theory That the Disciples Stole the Body

- The view: This is what the religious leaders thought up in Matthew 28:11-15. The religious authorities paid the soldiers (bribed them) to tell this lie.
- Answers:
 - If such a thing were true, how do we know it really happened? No one saw it, the soldiers were asleep.

- Depression and cowardice of the disciples would argue against this. No small group of fishermen would attempt this against Roman soldiers guarding a tomb.
- Even if the soldiers were asleep, the moving of a large stone covering a tomb would have awoken them.
- The disciples had no reason for taking the body which had been honorably buried. Such a removal could only have dishonored it after it had received a great honor from Joseph of Arimathea.
- The disciples did not realize the truth of the Resurrection at this time and therefore would not have been seeking to make it come true.
- The disciples were men of honor and could not have foisted a lie upon people.

The Theory That the Soldiers Stole the Body

- The view: The soldiers, for some reason, removed the body.
- Answers:
 - There is no evidence for this.
 - They would not have attempted it, this meant death for them.
 - It does not explain the grave clothes, left there unmoved and intact.

The Theory That Joseph Moved the Body to a Different Tomb

- The view: Joseph thought it was unfitting for someone who had been crucified to remain in his ancestral tomb. Joseph was the only one with authority to do this, and so did it during the night, or early in the morning.
- Answers:
 - The grave clothes were still intact.
 - There is no evidence of this view.
 - It is almost impossible to conceive that Joseph would have gone to all the trouble to honor Jesus in burial, then to dishonor the very one whom he sought to honor. Jerusalem had just sought and fulfilled its desire to kill Jesus. Joseph took great risk to get Jesus' body and bury it.
 - The soldiers were guarding the tomb...they would not have let Joseph steal it. They would have been punished for making an exception in letting Joseph move the body.
 - Joseph was an honorable man (Mk. 15:43; Lk. 23:50). If he had moved the body, he would have been compelled to tell the disciples so, especially when he saw them beaten, imprisoned, and put to death.

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

- All Three members of the Trinity were involved in the resurrection.

John 10:18 ~ I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up...--Christ

Galatians 1:1 ~ through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead. --the Father

Romans 8:11 ~ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you...--the Spirit

THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION

It Was the Same Body

- The resurrected body of Christ was His same body...the tomb was empty!

Matthew 28:6 ~ He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

It Was a Real Body

- The resurrected body of Christ was not an apparition or a spirit appearing to have a body; it was a real body

Matthew 28:9 ~ And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.

Luke 24:15 ~ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them.

Luke 24:30 ~ When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them.

Luke 24:39 ~ See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

Luke 24:41-43 ~ While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them.

John 20:20, 27 ~ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord....Then He *said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

John 21:12-13 ~ Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples ventured to question Him, “Who are You?” knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise.

- “These examples indicate that there was a considerable degree of continuity between the physical appearance of Jesus before his death and after his resurrection” ~ Grudem, 609

It Was a Glorified Body

- “Yet Jesus did not look exactly as he had before he died, for in addition to the initial amazement of the disciples at what they apparently thought could not happen, there was probably sufficient difference in his physical appearance for Jesus not to be immediately recognized. Perhaps that difference in appearance was simply the difference between a man who had lived a life of suffering, hardship, and grief, and one whose body was restored to its full youthful appearance of perfect health” ~ Grudem, 609

- The two disciples on the Road to Emmaus did not recognize him

Luke 24:16, 31 ~ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him...Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

- Mary Magdalene did not immediately recognize him

John 20:14-16 ~ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and *said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher).

- He vanished in an instant

Luke 24:31 ~ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

- He appeared in an instant

Luke 24:36 ~ While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst.

John 20:19 ~ So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and *said to them, “Peace be with you.”

John 20:26 ~ After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus *came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”

- Read 1 Cor 15:35-49 for a description of the glorified body
 - An illustration from nature (vs. 36-38)
 - A description of the resurrection body (vs. 39-42a)
 - Contrasts between the earthly and resurrection body (vs. 42b-44)
 - A reminder of Christ’s resurrection (vs. 45-49)
- 1 Cor 15:50-53 describe how the resurrection body comes at the Rapture

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection Makes the New Birth a Reality

1 Peter 1:3 ~ God... has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Ephesians 2:5-6 ~ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Colossians 3:1 ~ Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

- “Here he explicitly connects Jesus’ resurrection with our regeneration or new birth. When Jesus rose from the dead he had a new quality of life, a resurrection life in a human body and human spirit that were perfectly suited for fellowship and obedience to God forever. In his resurrection, Jesus earned for us a new life like his” ~ Grudem, 614

The Resurrection Makes Salvation a Reality

Romans 4:25 ~ He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and raised because of our justification.

Romans 10:10 ~ if you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you shall be saved...

1 Corinthians 15:17 ~ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

The Resurrection Grants Power to Believers

Ephesians 1:19-20 ~ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

The Resurrection Guarantees a Believer's Future Resurrection

- Christ is the “first fruits” of the harvest indicating that a future harvest (our resurrection bodies) awaits believers
- “Paul uses a metaphor from agriculture to indicate that we will be like Christ . Just as the ‘first fruits’ or the first taste of the ripening crop show what the rest of the harvest will be like for that crop, so Christ as the ‘first fruits’ shows what our resurrection bodies will be like when, in God’s final ‘harvest,’ he raises us from the dead, and brings us into his presence” ~ Grudem, 615

1 Corinthians 15:20 ~ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

1 Corinthians 6:14 ~ Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.

2 Corinthians 4:14 ~ knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

Philippians 3:20 ~ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

The Resurrection Gives us Hope that Death and Sin are Destroyed

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 ~ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE 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

The Resurrection Motivates Faithfulness

1 Corinthians 15:58 ~ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

The Resurrection Is the Basis for our Sanctification

Romans 6:4-13 ~ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God