



# Was Jesus Raised from the Dead?

RESURRECTION SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2021

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# Buried in a Borrowed Tomb

- ▶ Some might ask why it matters. Some might think it is a given that Jesus was raised from the dead. Others may think it doesn't matter either way – maybe His body is still in the grave, maybe not. So what does the Bible say about the resurrection of Christ from the dead.
- ▶ The Scriptures are clear. Jesus Christ died for the sins of His people. He acted as their substitute. And after He died He was buried temporarily in a borrowed tomb (Matt 27:57-61). He was buried in haste for the sun was setting and the Sabbath day was about to begin. Those who loved Jesus were planning to come back after the Sabbath and prepare the body for a proper burial, but this could not be done with the Sabbath approaching, so they waited, and laid His body in this tomb, on loan from Joseph of Arimathea.
- ▶ Day one was the day of the crucifixion. Day two was the Sabbath day. Day three was Sunday, the first day of the week, and by the time they arrived at the tomb to prepare the body for final burial, He was not there! The stone was rolled away, angels were present, the guards had fainted and fled, and Jesus was not there. On the third day, just as He promised, He had risen from the dead (Mark 9:31)

# Necessary for Salvation

- ▶ So was His body moved? Was it stolen? Was it taken away by the disciples so that they could pretend He was alive and create a new religion? Or had Jesus not really died on the cross, only swooned, fainted, and passed out? All of these lies have been perpetuated through the ages as the devil himself knows the danger of the truth of the resurrection. You see, the cross may have bruised Jesus' heel, but it also bruised Satan's head – meaning it was a death blow for both. But Jesus did not stay dead and the devil only has dying forever to look forward to in the lake of fire!
- ▶ Before we explain what happened and how important the doctrine of the resurrection is we have to make one note, a note above all else. The doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is so important that it is an essential element of the gospel message! When you trust Christ, you must be believing in a living Jesus, a Christ who has conquered death. Romans 10:9-10 states clearly: “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

# Necessary for Salvation

- ▶ The resurrection is central to the gospel. Why? Because if Jesus had only died for our sin and not been raised then we would have no hope of salvation. It is not enough that Jesus took the penalty for our sin upon Himself. If He had only taken our sin away, we would still die one day. And then where would we be? You see, by being raised from the dead, Jesus not only took away our sin, He also gave us life! He overcame death for us. He died and lived again so that we too, though we may die, will live again with Him.
- ▶ If we have no sin, but also have no life, that gets us nowhere. But if we have no sin, with death conquered, that gives us heaven!

# Combating Heresy

- ▶ Since we see that the Bible makes belief in the resurrection a necessary element of the gospel, we need to understand that all these other views about what happened to Jesus after He died are heresy. That is, to say that Jesus was not raised from the dead is to proclaim a powerless gospel, another gospel (Gal 1:6-9). So let's answer the heretics and see what really happened to Jesus on that third day. Here are a few of the lies that have been told about the resurrection:
- ▶ 1. The Swoon Theory.
- ▶ This is the idea that Jesus did not die on the cross. He merely swooned. They thought He was dead because He was so near death, but through all the blood and gore and the darkness and earthquakes and all that happened that day they just missed that He was still barely breathing when they took Him off the cross.

# Combating Heresy

- ▶ This idea is really just idiotic. It discounts the facts that the Romans were efficient executioners. They crucified thousands upon thousands of people. It was their most brutal form of execution. They were professional killers and knew when a man was dead. They broke legs to be sure, they pierced bodies through to the heart with a spear to check. The torture of crucifixion was so horrible that many victims died before ever being nailed to a cross. The Biblical testimony is clear. Jesus “gave up His Spirit”, He “breathed His last”, He died on the cross (Luke 23:46). And the Romans in charge of the crucifixion verified He was dead by piercing His heart with a spear. Had He not already been dead, this alone would have killed Him. But the spear did not kill Jesus, neither did the scourging, or the cross. He had already given up His life willingly into the Hands of the Father.

# Combating Heresy

- ▶ 2. The Stolen Body Theory.
- ▶ This idea was fueled by the Jewish authorities after the guards fled from before the angels who opened the tomb to reveal that Jesus was not there. They paid the guards and told them to explain that while they slept His disciples came and stole the body. Imagine trained Roman guards, posted at a sealed tomb, told to expect trouble by the third day because of the prophecy of the resurrection, falling asleep while a few disciples rolled that huge stone away and took the body. The stone in front of the tomb would be a huge round rock that would have to be rolled uphill in a groove to remove it from the entrance. It was a concern even as the women were coming to prepare the body. “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?”, they asked one another on the way.
- ▶ Further to believe the Body was stolen and buried elsewhere is to believe in a massive conspiracy. Why? Because hundreds of people claimed to have seen Jesus after He was raised from the dead. In order to make this conspiracy work, Mary and Mary Magdalene, the Apostles including Paul, five hundred people on one occasion, and many others all had to lie (John 20:14-16, 26-29; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:6, 8; Acts 9:3-17).

# Combating Heresy

- ▶ 3. The Hallucination Theory.
- ▶ This idea is based on the premise that those who thought they saw Jesus were hallucinating. They all saw the same thing at the same time. This is easily debunked even if we ignore the Biblical evidence. Hallucinations are not group activities. They are individual occurrences induced usually by drugs or by deprivation from sleep or food and water. All of these people mentioned already saw, talked to, touched, and ate with Jesus on many different occasions in different settings.



# Combating Heresy

- ▶ 4. The Resuscitation Theory.
- ▶ This interesting take on things suggests that Jesus passed out on the cross, was mistaken for dead. He was so near death, but just like a patient shocked back to life after his heart stops on the operating table, Jesus was somehow resuscitated and never actually died. And then, after having not slept for days, endured the beating, the blood loss, hanging on a cross for 6 hours, having His heart pierced by a spear, and having been wrapped up and put in a tomb – somehow Jesus had the strength to get up, roll away the stone from the inside of the tomb, break the seal, and then fight off the Roman guards standing watch. Please. Reality TV and Professional Wrestling are more believable.

# Eyewitness Reports

- ▶ These theories require blind faith, but the truth of Scripture informs our faith with the reports of eye witnesses. The idea that God raised Jesus up from the dead is fundamental and foundational to our faith. So how do we KNOW Jesus was raised from the dead? The proof, recorded for us in the Bible, includes these facts:
- ▶ 1. The tomb was empty – Luke 24:2-3
- ▶ 2. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene – John 20:11-16
- ▶ 3. Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus – Luke 24:13-27
- ▶ 4. Jesus appeared to 10 of the 11 remaining disciples – John 20:19-24
- ▶ 5. Jesus appeared to the 11 all together – John 20:26
- ▶ 6. Jesus appeared to 500 people at one time together and others – 1 Cor 15:5-8
- ▶ 7. People ate with Him and touched Him, proving He was not a ghost or hallucination – Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 21:1-14
- ▶ 8. Jesus appeared later to Paul and to John – 1 Cor 9:1; Acts 26:14-18; Rev 1:12-13

# The Ramifications of the Resurrection

- ▶ So what happens to our faith if there is no resurrection? What if we fall for a lie and deny that Jesus was raised from the dead? What are the consequences and ramifications of the doctrine of the resurrection?
- ▶ First we strip the gospel message of truth, for Paul declares that the gospel includes the resurrection. See 1 Cor 15:1-8: Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

# The Ramifications of the Resurrection

- ▶ Secondly, if Christ is not alive from the dead then our faith is vain, our preaching empty and useless, and those who have died have perished with no hope. See 1 Cor 15:14-18: And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

# The Ramifications of the Resurrection

- ▶ Thirdly, if there is no resurrection, what is the point of suffering for Christ? And let's be clear, the disciples who in fear fled and abandoned Jesus when He was arrested in the Garden, denied Him while He was on trial, and hid for fear of their lives in the Upper Room, after seeing Jesus became bold, turned the world upside down with their preaching of "this Jesus whom God raised up", and most became martyrs for their faith in loving obedience to the risen Christ. The power of the resurrection transformed them and the world. See 1 Cor 15:30-32: And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

# The Ramifications of the Resurrection

- ▶ Fourth, we have no hope of heaven without the resurrection, for just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so we too will be raised from the dead when He returns. See 1 Cor 15:50-53: Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

# The Ramifications of the Resurrection

- ▶ And last, God by raising Jesus from the dead declared His sacrifice sufficient to pay the penalty of our sin. God was satisfied, and as Jesus conquered death now we have the hope of eternal life. See 1 Cor 15:57-58: But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.
- ▶ This we declare, just as Jesus came and lived a sinless life, just as He died on the cross as our substitute, just as His body was laid in a borrowed tomb, so too is it true that He was raised from the dead. This is our hope. We know by this that sin and death have been defeated, our faith is not in vain, we have the hope of eternal life, and we know that Jesus meant what He said when He declared from the cross, "It is finished." The price for redemption has been paid in full and we have been reconciled to God through His death and resurrection!
- ▶ Jesus is alive. He is our Hope. He is coming back. Do you believe this?