

**A Declaration of Those Things Which Are
Most Surely Believed Among Us**
An Expository Study of the Gospel According to Luke
Chapter 24- **Luke 24:1-12**
351- Why Do You Seek the Living One
Among the Dead?- Part 1

June 11, 2017

Luke 24:1-12

1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing;

5 and as *the women* were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, *the men* said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead?"

6 "He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,

7 saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

8 And they remembered His words,

9 and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.

11 But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

To the Glory of God

Now I preach on the Resurrection every single year, at least once. And so, over the years, I have dealt with this subject in great detail. And you may want to get copies of those Sermons to see some things that I'm *not* going to deal with now.

But, let me begin by saying that the literal, physical, and bodily Resurrection of Jesus from the dead is not only a fact of history, it is the core Doctrine of Christianity. Without Jesus rising from the dead, we do not have "Christianity". We may have some type of "human philosophy" or "man-made religion", we may have some type of "therapeutic moralism", we may have some kind of "feel-good-pop-psychology", or even a modern rendition of "Aesop's Fables", but without the literal, physical, and bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ we do not have biblical Christianity.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the culmination of everything He said and everything He did in His earthly Ministry, and therefore, belief in it is *mandatory* for Salvation. Those who deny the Resurrection of Jesus are *not* saved. They are *not* born again. They are *not* Christians. They are *not* fellow believers and have *not* been forgiven of their sins. They are *not* going to Heaven.

The Apostle Paul was crystal clear about Salvation *requiring* firm and unshakable belief in the Resurrection when he said:

Romans 10:9-10

9 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;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

... and he was equally clear about belief in the Resurrection being attached to the forgiveness of sins when he said:

1 Corinthians 15:17b

... if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

So, let me tell you what this means. If Jesus did and said everything that the Bible says He did and said, *including* die on the Cross, and yet did not rise from the dead, we are still lost. All of the miracles, including the Virgin Birth, His sinless Life, His perfect Teaching, the fulfillment of all those Old Testament Prophecies, His Suffering and Death would have all been absolutely *worthless* if Jesus did not rise from the dead. That is how important this issue is.

Therefore, the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which is physically and medically and scientifically impossible, is an "Essential Doctrine of the Christian Church". It has been believed and taught and defended from the earliest days of Christianity. Therefore, it is Prime. Without the Resurrection we are all just wasting our time. And that is why all of the New Testament writers confirmed that Jesus rose from the dead. The Apostle Levi said:

Matthew 28:1-6

1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

4 The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

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

John Mark wrote:

Mark 16:1-7

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.

2 Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

4 Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

5 Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed.

6 And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, *here is* the place where they laid Him.

And besides the Passage that Brother Andy read to you that Dr. Luke wrote, the Apostle John said:

John 20:1-9

1 Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone *already* taken away from the tomb.

2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb.

4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;

5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; but he did not go in.

6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying *there*,

7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.

9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

And as we read the Epistles, we see that the Apostles also believed and faithfully taught that Jesus rose from the dead because Paul said:

2 Timothy 2:7-8

7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,

Peter said:

1 Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

... and the writer of Hebrews said in **Hebrews 13:20-21**:

**20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord,
21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

The belief in the physical and literal and bodily Resurrection of Jesus was central to the Christian Church from its very inception as indicated in the very first Sermon given at the very first Prayer Meeting by the Apostle Peter when he said:

The Acts 2:22-24

**22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know —
23 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.
24 "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.**

So, we, who are members of the Covenant of Peace Church, believe and teach that Jesus *literally, physically, and bodily* rose from the dead for one very important reason. None of us were physically present when Jesus rose from the dead, so none of us are eyewitnesses to this Event. But we believe the 66 Books of the Holy Bible to be the Word of God. And the Resurrection of Jesus is the clear and repeated and unmistakable proclamation of inspired, inerrant, and infallible Scripture. It is what the Bible says. So, regardless of how many people believe in the Resurrection or don't, regardless of how many people will

attempt to relegate the Resurrection to be an inconsequential belief, regardless of how much opposition to the Resurrection may come from many of the modern Theological Seminaries, and sadly, from many pulpits in the American Church, the Holy Bible declares the Resurrection to be factually true.

And that is why the Resurrection is central to us *individually* as believers, and it is central to us *collectively* as members of this local Body, and it is central to us *universally* as being a part of the one, holy, universal, and apostolic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now as far as I am concerned, the only thing that really matters is what the Bible actually says. Everything else is a distant second. But even as I pray that I have firmly established that the Resurrection is wholly biblical, that is not the only tool that we have. Because as I told you last week, the Apostle's Creed was developed by the Church to be a summary statement of core and essential Truths that was *required* to be understood and memorized and recited by new converts during the public affirmation of their faith at the waters of baptism. There is evidence to suggest that at least *part* of the Apostle's Creed was in regular use as early as AD180. And so, collectively, hundreds of millions of believers from then till now have recited this portion of the Creed that says:

... On the third day He [Jesus] rose again ...

During the Council of Constanenopel, in AD381, the Christian Church re-visited the issue of the Resurrection and confirmed it to be entirely biblical, and re-issued another summary statement which has become known as "The Nicene Creed", and hundreds of millions of believers from all over the world for 1,658 years have recited this portion of that Creed:

... He [Jesus] was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate,
suffered, and was buried
the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures...

Now the very core of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century was a return to both the Sufficiency and Authority of sacred Scripture. The "Formal Cause" of the Reformation was the issue of just

who/or what had final Authority to “bind the conscience”. And, while the Romans responded with “Papal Infallibility”, those that God had raised up to rescue Christ’s Church developed another phrase that spoke to the primacy of Scripture. The Latin phrase “Sola Scriptura” is the fundamental Principle of all genuine believers and all genuine Churches. And that concept says that all Church Doctrine, all Teaching, all Counselling, all Rebuke, Correction, and Edification must come “from the Scriptures” and “from the Scriptures alone”.

As more and more man-made teaching that had been fabricated by the leaders of the visible Church came to light, the Reformers took it upon themselves to *re-examine* every single core Doctrine to make sure that what those who had a “protest” with Rome (the Protestants) believed and taught was purely biblical.

And the result of that effort was the development of a series of Catechisms and Confessions that began immediately after the Roman religious system excommunicated the Reformers back in the 16th Century and has lasted to this very day, in this very Church, with the very man who speaks to you this morning.

You need to know that I take time every single day to re-examine a portion of what we teach and what we say we believe in this Church to assure that it is biblical. And I spend time with God earnestly praying, as I tremble before Him, and I routinely beg God to help us to first *become* biblical, and then, secondly, to *remain* biblical. Because I know that unless the Lord builds the House, they labor in vain that build it.

I am convinced that for *anyone* to be “spiritual”, for *anyone* to be classified as “faithful”, for *anyone* to lay claim that they love God, for *anyone* to think that they are actually serving God, and for *any of us* to imagine that we are truly pleasing God means that we are constantly and consistently obeying the Words of Jude who said that we are to:

Jude 3b

... contend earnestly for the [Christian] faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Over the years, as the Reformers re-examined every single article of the Christian Faith, their understanding of Divine Truth became more clear. At first, they were no doubt still radically influenced by

what they had been taught their entire lives. But, God was faithful, so as they continued to relentlessly strive to be biblical, they made some very important changes. For example, in God's timing, those seeking to adhere to the concept of "Sola Scriptura" went from allowing the "heads of State", the King or Queen of the nation, to be a ruling Leaders in the Church to upholding the concept that there must be a clear *separation* between Church and State. And they went from baptizing infants, in order to compete with the Romans for votes, to baptizing only believers.

But, what they did not change was what they taught and believed about the Resurrection. From the "Augsburg Confession", which was written by Martin Luther in 1530, to the London Confession of Faith, written in 1689, the Protestants maintained that Jesus *physically, literally, and bodily* rose from the dead on the third day.

Now, in blatant disregard for everything I just said, there are some in the modern Church, who say that belief in the Resurrection is somehow *optional*, as though *some* Christians believe in it while *others*, who are equally saved, choose not to put any faith in a literal and physical Resurrection. And those who choose not to believe in the Resurrection *condescendingly* say that if believing in it somehow helps some, then by all means, they should embrace it. But, they go on to say that, for them, believing in the Resurrection is like believing in the Virgin Birth and Jesus' Deity and miracles, in general. They are quick to point out that, obviously, the people who lived back then and who wrote the Bible were uneducated barbarians, who were dazzled by magic tricks and thought that mental illness was demon possession. So, Resurrections to them are irrelevant and have no bearing on their Salvation.

Now I realize that this is the mind-set of many who are unsaved. And that is understandable. Lost people *do not* trust in the veracity of sacred Truth because they *can't*. But, I have absolutely no tolerance for those who lay claim to being saved who espouse such blasphemy. And I do not hold people like that to be my brothers and sisters in Christ, and I do not recognize the authority of those in leadership positions who reject the clear teaching of Scripture about the Resurrection. Rather, I call them to repentance.

I am deeply and profoundly offended at the cavalier attitude that permeates the modern Church about the issue of the Resurrection, as though we can take it or leave it. Many years ago, a man that I have an

enormous amount of respect for, CS Lewis, put forth a statement that basically said:

“If I live my life believing in Christ and in the Bible and I die and find out that it wasn’t true, then I would have lost nothing. But if you do not believe and die and find out it was true, you have lost everything.”

... and many people have used logic like that over the years. But I will tell you that I personally think that is one of the dumbest statements I have ever heard, and it uses the very worst logic that anyone could ever use as to why they trusted in Jesus Christ. And the Apostle Paul agrees with me because he said:

1 Corinthians 15:19

If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Christianity is the only religion in the world that says, “*It is all or nothing*”. Christianity *forces* you to put it all on the line. *Every* single Word of Scripture is true, or else I have no hope that *any* of them are true. Jesus was *exactly* Who He said He was, or I have no hope at all. The Resurrection of Jesus from the dead was real, or, above every other human on earth, believers are to be most pitied.

And so, before I baptize *anyone* and before I allow *anyone* to become a member of this Church, I always ask them two questions:

- ✓ Do you believe that Jesus is God Almighty in human flesh?
- ✓ Do you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead?

... because without those two elements, you’re not saved, and I don’t want to baptize lost people and I don’t want lost people to be members of the Church.

Now there are certain facts about the Resurrection that all of the Biblical writers affirm such as:

- ✓ Jesus rose from the dead on the First Day of the week, after the Sabbath was over.
- ✓ Jesus’ Resurrection was literal, physical, and bodily, *not* figurative, spiritual, or metaphysical.

- ✓ Jesus rose in the same Body in which He died.
- ✓ Jesus appeared to hundreds of people, many of whom were alive during the publication of the New Testament.
- ✓ Jesus appeared and disappeared *repeatedly* after His Resurrection.
- ✓ Jesus spoke to the disciples and taught them for 40 days after His Resurrection.

... so, *whatever else* you may believe about the Resurrection of Jesus, you *must* believe these things.

Now there were certain things that happened as a result of the Resurrection of Jesus that did *not* occur earlier, such as the birth of the Church and the propagation of the Gospel. But one of the most startling things that happened as a direct result of Jesus rising from the dead was that the weak, vacillating, unreliable disciples became the strong, steadfast, and dependable Apostles.

As a group, the twelve men that Jesus Personally chose to be Apostles, were probably the single most *unqualified* men on earth to do what Jesus wanted them to do. If *anyone* should have failed in their mission, it should have been the Apostles. But they did *not* fail. They succeeded greater than anyone of them could have possibly imagined. And one of the greatest testimonies as to how wondrously God used these men is the fact that this Church is honestly striving to teach and believe the very same Doctrine that these men received from God and wrote down 2,000 years ago.

*What these men were commanded to do was not *hard*, it was humanly *impossible*. And the fact that we even have a Church today proves that they were truly uniquely called and uniquely empowered to carry out the Office of Apostle. They were, to a man, the most unlikely candidates to carry out the amazing tasks that only Apostles could do, such as:

- ✓ Receive the final, full, and completed Revelation of God directly from Heaven.
- ✓ Be moved long by God the Holy Spirit to in-errantly pen down that Revelation into 27 Books that we now call The New Testament.

- ✓ Confirm that this Revelation was from God by performing signs and wonders and miracles, and through various gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ Correctly interpret the writings of the 39 Old Testament Books.

But all of that took place *after* the Resurrection. *Before* the Resurrection, these men were the most up-one-day-and-down- the-next group the world had ever seen. They were all over the map theologically, and right before Jesus' Resurrection, they didn't even know if they were saved. But, once the Resurrection occurred, these same men became the most stable, strong, reliable, and steadfast men on earth. And to a man, even under extreme persecution, torture, and death, these men never altered from their confession, they had seen the Lord after His Death, they had physically touched Him, they had listened to Him speak, and they had watched Him ascend into Heaven.

Now, many people think that the concept of a Resurrection in connection with God is a New Covenant reality. But actually, the saints of the Old Covenant believed in a Resurrection. For example, in **Genesis 22**, which is not very far into the Bible, we have the account of Abraham *almost* sacrificing his son. As you read that account, what you come away with is that, as far as Abraham was concerned, he was *absolutely* going to sacrifice Isaac, but God sovereignly intervened and provided the needed sacrifice in a ram. Now, that is all that Moses wrote. God did not reveal to Moses about Abraham's motives here. But look at what the writer of **Hebrews** said about this in **Hebrews 11:17-19**:

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

18 *it was he* to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED."

19 He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

Here, the writer of this Epistle teaches that the reason that Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his own son was considered to be pleasing to God and was "by faith" was because:

He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

Now remember, Isaac was the son in whom God Himself had promised that Abraham's line would run. So, Isaac was the gift that God gave Abraham and Sarah at an old age. Isaac was the child of Promise. And now God tells Abraham to sacrifice him? And the writer of **Hebrews** tells us that the reason Abraham was going to do this was because he believed in a physical Resurrection.

So, not only did Abraham believe in a Resurrection, but he also believed that the Resurrection would re-unite the dead body to the immortal soul that had been separated by death. And that means that Abraham did not believe, as so many do today, that the afterlife is some sort of mystical or ethereal or non-corporeal new life. Biblical Resurrection has to be life from the dead, because Isaac would then have to pass on his genes to the next generation and the next generation and so on, or the Promise of God would have been invalid.

In other words, by the 22nd Chapter of **Genesis**, there was already some sort of notion of a physical Resurrection and its possibility under the mighty Hand of God that was grasped by Abraham right at the beginning of the Covenant Promises to the messianic people.

And then, there is a very famous passage in **Job** that many people quote but hardly ever examine. **Job 19:25-27** says:

25 "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

26 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

Look closely again at verse 26, where Job said:

Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God

So, Job did not believe that after his skin has been destroyed and after his body has rotted in the grave that he would see God in some spirit-to-spirit fashion. No, Job believed that after his skin is destroyed in the ground by death:

... Yet from my flesh I shall see God

... and the use of the word “yet” indicates that he absolutely believed that his skin would rot in the ground by death, but that even though that was true, he would also see God “**from my flesh**”. So, Job believed in a physical Resurrection.

Now even though the **Book of Job** was written many hundreds of years after he died, nevertheless, Job actually lived during the days of Abraham. And we need to remember that neither Job nor Abraham had any written Books containing the Word and Will of God. There was no written Revelation of God at that time. So, Abraham never read **Genesis** and Job never read **Job**. And yet, both of them understood several important aspects about what happens to believers after they die:

- ✓ They believed they would live again with God.
- ✓ They believed in a physical Resurrection.
- ✓ They believed that the Resurrection involved a physical body.

... and it is that firm belief in a Resurrection that compelled Abraham to be willing to kill his son, and that compelled Job to say:

...I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another...

And this tells me that both of these Old Testament saints believed in a personal Resurrection that contained a physical body. And they believed in it so strongly that they both acted on it!

Later on, as the Revelation of God began to flow to Mankind, holy men were moved along by God the Holy Spirit to pen down passages that use “resurrection language”, but which in the first instance are not talking about physical resurrection, but about the restoration of the people of God after they have been swept away into captivity. The most famous one of these is **Ezekiel 37:1-14**, where the Prophet has this vision of the valley of dry bones and from this we see a perfect picture of two things:

1. Human inability to delight in God absent a sovereign Move of God.
2. The Power of the preached Word.

... and in the vision the bones are connected, but they are still not alive. The bones are connected and flesh covers them, but they are still not alive until the Spirit of God comes upon them and they stand up as a mighty army in the valley of what was dried bones, but now is full of life.

Now the *context* of **Ezekiel 37** has to do with the restoration of the Jews back to Israel after they have been banished by God Himself in the Exile. But even though it is talking about "restoration", the imagery that the Prophet used is of a "Resurrection". In other words, those that say that the Old Testament saints didn't know anything about a Resurrection overlook the fact that, even though **Ezekiel 37** is not *explicitly* talking about a Resurrection, the imagery that is used to talk about the return from exile is "Resurrection Language", which shows that the category is already there in Ezekiel's mind and in the minds of the people.

And the same is also true in **Isaiah 24–27**, and to some extent in chapter 56, as well. Chapters **Isaiah 24–27** are sometimes called the "Apocalypse of Isaiah" because it contains a lot of apocalyptic imagery. And in that context, in **Isaiah 26:18&19**, we read:

18 We were pregnant, we writhed *in labor*, We gave birth, as it seems, *only* to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, Nor were inhabitants of the world born.

19 Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew *is as* the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Now I realize that the context here again is talking about the Jews returning from exile. Yet God chose to use terms that had to do with a Resurrection from the dead with bodies rising from their grave. And then, there are certain miracles in the Old Testament like the Resurrection from the dead and the Shunamite widow's son in **2 Kings 4:8-37**. So, even though Resurrection is not common in the Old Testament, we must understand that the foundation to believe in it was clearly there.

And then, when you come to the New Testament, Jesus Himself raises a small number of people from the dead, the son of the widow of Nain in **Luke 7**. And then there is Lazarus in **Luke 11**. And, in *that* case, God gives us additional information about Resurrection because Lazarus has been in the grave for four days, so his body has already begun to decay. And that shows that you can't confuse a Resurrection from the dead with someone who has gone into heart fibrillation and is not really dead. There was a physical decomposition that had already taken place in Lazarus. So, in his case, not only did life enter back into Lazarus, but a restoration of his flesh also occurred.

And that is the context in which Martha confessed her orthodox faith in Jesus, when she said:

John 11:21b-22

21 ... Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.

So, Martha somehow understood, not only did Jesus have the Power to heal her brother who had been sick, but that even though her brother was dead, Jesus had the ability to raise him back up. And so, Jesus told her what she already knew:

John 11:23b

... Your brother will rise again.

And Martha's response shows that she did have belief in a physical Resurrection:

John 11:24b

... I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

But then, Jesus told her something about the Resurrection that she didn't seem to know:

John 11:25b-26

25 ... I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?

... in other words, the Resurrection is a Person, Jesus Christ, and not merely an event that will happen in the future. And Martha's response to that radical theology was somewhat tame, when she said:

John 11:27b

... Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even He who comes into the world.*

Now this is not exactly what Jesus asked her, but evidently, even though she may not have completely grasped the fact that Jesus Himself is the Resurrection, Martha fell back on what she knew to be true and what had saved her soul:

... I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God ...

But notice that Jesus went way beyond asking her if she believed in a physical Resurrection at some point in the future. Obviously, she did. The Lord pressed Martha to grasp a far deeper Truth about the Resurrection that she had not contemplated before,

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.

... and then Jesus put Martha on the spot by asking her:

Do you believe this?

.. and Martha's response to that question prompted her to just walk off and leave Jesus standing in the road, and go into her house and tell her sister Mary:

John 11:28b

... The Teacher is here and is calling for you.

But Jesus never asked Martha to go get Mary. Jesus asked Martha is she believed that He was the Resurrection and the Life, and that if anyone believed in Him they would never die. And, instead of answering Him, Martha just walked off and told Mary that Jesus

wanted her. So, was Martha simply overwhelmed by what Jesus told her? Maybe. Or, maybe she thought that Mary would be more able to answer a question like that than she was. But, in any case, the statement by Jesus that He Himself is the Resurrection and the Life went unanswered.

What is clear to us now is that Jesus is in the very Center of everything. So, it is not true to suggest that there is a Resurrection on the last day apart from Jesus. There isn't. Jesus is the One Who makes Resurrection possible, and outside of Him there is no Resurrection. And that Truth is finally demonstrated in the spectacular display of His Own Resurrection.

So, those souls who refused to repent and put their trust in Jesus will, nevertheless, be raised by Jesus to be re-united with an immortal body to suffer the unquenchable torment of the Lake of Fire forever. While those souls who were gifted by God to repent and empowered by God to believe will be raised by Jesus to be re-united with a glorious body to spend all of Eternity in God's Presence marveling at His Grace.

So, in *some* sense, the Resurrection of Jesus is like the other resurrections in the Bible in that the dead will live again. But, in another, more important sense, the Resurrection of Jesus is unique and stands alone and is unlike anyone else. And because the Resurrection of Jesus is unique, Lazarus was *not* the ultimate prototype of Resurrection. And neither was the Shunamite's son.

Because when Jesus came back from the dead, there was a connection between His Old Body, that is, His pre-death Body, and His Resurrection Body. In other words, Jesus was raised in the very *same* Body that He died in. And the marks of the wounds of His incredible Suffering and Death are still there. So, in *addition* to the marks that every crucified person had on his body, like nail prints in the hands and feet, Jesus also had the highly unusual Mark of a spear thrust up under His Rib Cage to pierce His Side. So, the resurrected Body of Jesus that the disciples see contains those unique Marks. And that is one of the main points that the Apostle John was making in **John 20**.

And this tells us something about Jesus that is *not* true about us. Our souls have been forgiven and redeemed, but our bodies are still under the Curse of Adam. And so, our souls will go to Heaven, and in the Resurrection our souls will be united with anew glorious body. But

our flesh can't make the trip because our flesh is still sinful and will die and decay in the ground.

But Jesus never sinned in His Flesh. And, in His Flesh, Jesus perfectly obeyed His Father. He was in perfect submission to His Father. He was perfectly led by God the Holy Spirit, without flaw or weakness. And, in His Flesh, Jesus only did the Will of God. And so, His Flesh was not cursed. And so, even though Jesus died, to pay for the sins of all of God's elect, Jesus' Body did not decay in the ground but was Resurrected with His immortal Soul.

As He was raised from the dead, Jesus did things that He never did before. For example, He just suddenly appeared in a locked room and spoke to the disciples. But then, He just vanished. He didn't stay. And this tells us that after His Resurrection, Jesus existed in some sort of other dimension. And, exactly what all that means, we don't know. But we do know that in that resurrected state, Jesus had a physical Body because He told Thomas:

John 20:27

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.

... and Dr. Luke gave us this amazing account in **Luke 24:36-43**

36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you."

37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.

38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

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."

40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

41 While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;

43 and He took it and ate *it* before them.

But our flesh has *always* been a problem and *will always* be a problem. When we were lost, our unconverted soul united with our fallen nature and our cursed flesh to produce sin on top of sin, rebellion on top of rebellion, and blasphemy on top of blasphemy. And that is why Moses wrote this in **Genesis 6:5**:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

So, before we were saved, when we were lost and fallen, our condition was that we were:

All evil- all the time

There was no capacity for "Good" in us at all. None. Ever. So, what it means to be "fallen" is *not* that everyone is as bad as they could be. No, there is *always* room for us to "be" worse and to "do" worse things. What it means to be "lost" and "fallen" is that there was absolutely *nothing* in us that would ever allow us to love God or the things of God. *Nothing* is inside of lost people that we could capitalize on or lean on or depend on or trust in or use that would, in any way, allow us to ever "choose" God or "decide" for God or even "love" or "want" God. So, as far as God and the things of God are concerned, lost and fallen people are:

Stone, cold dead

And, in that state, we *normally naturally* love "sin" and "self". And so, all of our choices are predicated on those fallen and sinful "loves". The amazing miracle of the New Birth is that God sovereignly *removes* that fallen nature from us and *replaces* it with a nature that *normally and naturally* loves God and the things of God. And so our souls are redeemed and we have a new divine nature, but our flesh remains fallen and unconverted.

And so, even now, our problems with sin, as saved people, lie in our unconverted flesh periodically uniting with the pagan world system and the devil in warring against our saved souls. It is not true, as some claim that we have two "natures" inside of us that are constant

struggle. The Bible doesn't teach that. We have *either* a fallen nature *or* one that has been born again and is after the Divine. And so, a human is either born from above or he is yet in his sins. He has either experienced the miracle of the new birth or he hasn't. And if he has been born again, his nature has been radically transformed until it is no longer the same. And this is what the Apostle Paul was speaking about when he said:

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

... so, in the Resurrection, our redeemed souls will be re-united with a new and glorious body that has never known sin. And that means that it is *not* our ultimate hope to simply be with Christ in an immaterial existence, but to have resurrected, glorified bodies.

So, we have to know that there is a lot of emphasis on the demonstration of Who Jesus really is, the promised One of God, the eternal Son of God, and the One Who is Lord of all. And all that emphasis is grounded in the historical witness of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The cumulative evidence that this New Testament of ours, which speaks so powerfully and frequently of the Resurrection of Christ, is true, is *not* the result of hallucination or some conspiracy by early Christians. The cumulative evidence is very, very strong indeed.

Those early Christians were prepared to die for what they had seen. And their constant confession was:

The Acts 4:20

... we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.

... and the result was that they considered it to be a privilege to not only suffer for this Christ Who suffered so much for them, but to die as well. That is not the actions of people who talked themselves into it. All the records show how slow and low they were to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

But they eventually came to see that if Jesus has indeed risen from the dead, then He is approved by God. He is vindicated by God. His Death was not to pay for His Own sin, or else He would be dead.

No, He paid for the sins of others. And His Sacrifice was so acceptable in God's Own Plan that the vindication is demonstrated in a literal, physical, and bodily Resurrection. And that establishes Jesus now as the reigning Lord.

So, today, *because* of the Resurrection, all of God's Sovereignty is mediated through Jesus Christ. Everyone who desires Forgiveness and Salvation must come to Jesus. Because there is Salvation in no other. There is no other Name under Heaven by which we may be saved.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.