

Week 11

Resurrection

Key Verses

I Corinthians 15:12-32 "Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is in vain. ¹⁵Moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If we have hoped in Christ only in this life, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰But the fact is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹For since by a man death came, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to our God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be abolished is death. ²⁷For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. ²⁸But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is clear that this excludes the Father who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

²⁹Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? ³⁰Why are we also in danger every hour? ³¹I affirm, brothers and sisters, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, that I die daily. ³²If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what good is it to me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE."

+ Introduction

As we continue our study through our faith's basic doctrines, we come to the essential doctrine of the resurrection. It is important for us to understand its importance, understand the evidence for it, understand how to respond to questions that others have, and allow this truth to impact our lives to more completely serve our Resurrected Lord.

+ Resurrection: Importance

The Resurrection is the central truth of the Christian faith. Was it to be removed, or to be proven false, Christianity's credibility would evaporate like the morning dew. Today people are willing to regard Jesus as a "good man" or a "great teacher," but a dividing line is drawn with the resurrection. The Baptist Faith and Message states,

"God's power raised Jesus from the dead. The Resurrection of Christ is the basis of our hope and the proof of Christ's victory over sin and death. Without the Resurrection, Jesus Christ is merely the victim of a human conspiracy that ended on the cross. Raised from the dead, Christ is revealed as both Savior and Lord. Christ's resurrection is absolutely essential to the Christian faith. Without the resurrection, there is no Christianity." ¹

William Lane Craig explains further:

"Without the belief in the resurrection, the Christian faith could not have come into being. The disciples would have remained crushed and defeated men. Even had they continued to remember Jesus as their beloved teacher, His crucifixion would have forever silenced any hopes of his being the messiah. The cross would have remained the sad and shameful end of His career. The origin of Christianity, therefore, hinges on the belief of the early disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead." ²

+ Resurrection: Questioned

If the resurrection is an essential doctrine to Christianity, it only makes sense that skeptics, and others opposed to Christ's work, would diligently try to deny that Christ was resurrected.

There are four basic theories used to question our Savior's Resurrection:

Theory 1: "The Eyewitnesses Hallucinated"

Response:

- It is very unlikely, if not impossible, for more than 500 people to have the same hallucination. Consider this passage:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-8 *For I handed down to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was*

buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;⁷ then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;⁸ and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

- Those who saw Jesus after His death did not expect to see Him and were surprised by His being there. Psychiatrists agree that hallucinations require expectation.

JOHN 20:11-18 *But Mary was standing outside the tomb, weeping; so as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb;¹² and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.¹³ And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they put Him."¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and yet she did not know that it was Jesus.¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Thinking that He was the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you put Him, and I will take Him away."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.*

Theory 2: "Jesus Did Not Die on the Cross"

Response:

- If Jesus did not die, the Roman soldiers would have failed in their duties. Jesus would have had to survive massive blood loss, torture, and a stab wound in His side and roll the stone away (which normally would take several men to accomplish).

JOHN 19:23-24 *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts: a part to each soldier, and the tunic also; but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece.²⁴ So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be." This happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: "THEY DIVIDED MY GARMENTS AMONG THEMSELVES, AND THEY CAST LOTS FOR MY CLOTHING." Therefore the soldiers did these things.*

- Witnesses say that when Jesus was stabbed in the side, water mixed with blood poured out, medically indicating that Jesus had already died.

JOHN 19:34-35 *Yet one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.*

- According to studies of first-century tombs, the tomb was likely sealed by a large, heavy stone that fit in a sloping track, which would have been impossible for a sole individual to move from the inside of the tomb. Archeologists have found stones from that time period that would have closed a tomb such as used for the burial of Jesus, and they were at minimum 4-5 feet in diameter and weighed several hundred pounds. ³

Theory 3: "Jesus' Body Was Stolen"

Response:

- The enemies of Jesus took several steps to prevent the disciples from stealing the body, such as sealing the stone and providing a guard of soldiers to watch the tomb.
- The soldiers at the tomb would not sleep for fear of death. ⁴
- During the crucifixion, the disciples were cowards who had abandoned Jesus. One disciple denied that he knew Jesus to a young servant girl. The disciples did not understand His purposes nor the importance of the Resurrection. These men did not dare to pass by the guard at the tomb, silently move the extremely large stone, rob the grave, and leave undetected.

Theory 4: "Everyone Went to the Wrong Tomb"

Response:

- The women observed where Jesus' body was laid only a few days earlier.
- After hearing the report from the women, Peter and John ran to the tomb without directions from the women. It is unlikely that Peter and John would have gone to the wrong tomb. (John 20:1-18)
- If Jesus' body were still in its correct tomb, His enemies could have produced the body immediately. Even if everyone went to the wrong tomb, Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the tomb, would have corrected them. ⁵

+ Resurrection: Evidence

Old Testament Testimonies

- **Testimony of Job**

JOB 19:25-27 *"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last, He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet, from my flesh I shall see God, Whom I, on my part, shall behold for myself, and whom my eyes will see, and not another."* (NASB)

- **Testimony of David**

PSALM 16:9-10 *"Therefore, my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."* (NASB)

New Testament Testimonies

- **Testimony of Jesus**

JOHN 14:19-20 *"After a little while, the world no longer is going to see Me, but you are going to see Me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I in you."* (NASB)

JOHN 20:26-28 *"Eight days later His disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be to you." Then He said to Thomas, "Place your finger here, and see My hands; and take your hand and put it into My side; and do not continue in disbelief, but be a believer." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"* (NASB)

- **Testimony of Angels**

MATTHEW 28:5-7 *"And the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him; behold, I have told you."* (NASB)

- **Testimony of Eyewitnesses**

I CORINTHIANS 15:5-8 *"He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters 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."* (NASB)

- **Testimony of Peter**

1. **Peter spoke with Cornelius:** "They killed Him by hanging Him on a tree, but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen" Acts 10:40 (NASB)
2. **On Pentecost**, 50 days after the Resurrection of Jesus, Peter addressed the crowd and specifically pointed out:
 - Everyone there knew that Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God by miracles and signs. (Acts 2:22)

- Everyone there knew that Jesus was crucified and that His death was by God's set purpose. (Acts 2:23)
- Everyone there knew that David spoke about the Resurrection of Jesus nearly 1000 years before. (Acts 2:24-31)
- Everyone there was a witness to the fact that Jesus was raised to life. ⁶ (Acts 2:32)
- **Testimony of Paul**

ACTS 17:31-32 ... because He has set a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all people by raising Him from the dead." Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to scoff, but others said, "We shall hear from you again concerning this. (NASB)

+ Resurrection: Impact

Impact on What We Believe

Instances of people being brought back from the dead in both the Old and New Testaments are strictly speaking, not a resurrection in the word's formal sense. Those brought back to life by Elijah, Elisha, and Jesus fit into the category of resuscitations. Their bodies were still subject to weakness, disease, and eventual death. Jesus Himself does not fit into this category because He had undergone the transformation described in I Corinthians 15:52 and had "put on immortality."

Jesus' Resurrection body is linked to His earthly body in several aspects:

1. People recognized Him – John 20:20
2. His body retained His crucifixion wounds – John 20:25-29
3. He had the ability to eat – Luke 24:40-43; Acts 10:41
4. He had flesh and bones – Luke 24:38-39

Jesus' Resurrection body was also different in several ways:

1. He could enter a room without opening a door.
2. He could appear and disappear at will.
3. His body was glorified – Revelation 1:12-16

Jesus' Resurrection allows men and women the opportunity to join Him in heaven one day.

I CORINTHIANS 15:20-22 "But the fact is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man death came, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."

Jesus' Resurrection Impacts Us Because...

1. It Ensures Our Regeneration
 - We are *"born anew to a living hope"* – I Peter 1:3
 - We are *"raised up with Him"* – Ephesians 2:5-6
 - We *"may know Him"* – Philippians 3:10
 - We can see the *"immeasurable greatness of His power"* – Ephesians 1:19-20
2. It Ensures Our Justification

ROMANS 4:25 *"He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."*
3. It Ensures We Will Receive Perfect Resurrection Bodies
 - By His power, God raised the Lord from the dead and He will raise us also.
 - The connection between Christ's Resurrection and our own is eloquently and meticulously described by Paul in I Corinthians 15:12-58. Christ is the *"first fruits"* and we are the final harvest. Our bodies will be *"incorruptible"* and *"raised in glory."*

Impact on What We Do

1. **Jesus' Resurrection** confirms that life continues after death and that all humans will live forever in heaven, or in hell.
2. **Jesus' Resurrection** further validates God's Word and motivates us to live a Godly life here on earth.
3. **Jesus' Resurrection** gives us the motivation to share the Good News of the Gospel with family, friends, and the world.
4. **Jesus' Resurrection** gives us confidence in Jesus' statement *"and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world."*

+ Conclusion

We are to live with the joy of knowing that Christ was resurrected, fulfilling prophecy, and confirming that He truly is the Son of God. His death and Resurrection conquered sin and death and has provided us the opportunity to live with Him forever. We are challenged to live a life that is pleasing to Jesus, the One who paid a tremendous price for our sin and is now preparing a place for us in heaven while living with us each day here on earth.

Alfred Ackley was living in California in the 1930's as a pastor and songwriter. In 1933 in his study, Ackley re-read the Resurrection account from Mark's Gospel in the Bible, and soon the words began to pour from him. A few minutes later, he put music to the words, and answered the question, "Why should I worship a dead Jew?" ⁷

He Lives!

I serve a risen Savior
He's in the world today.
I know that He is living,
Whatever men may say.
I see His hand of mercy;
I hear His voice of cheer;
And just the time I need Him
He's always near.

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

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¹ Baptist Faith and Message, 2007, p.46

² Craig, William Lane. "Knowing the Truth about the Resurrection", Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1988. Rev. Ed. of "The Son Rises". Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1981.

³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/what-did-jesus-tomb-look-like-interview/>

⁴ <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/scholarly-writings/historical-jesus/the-guard-at-the-tomb/>

⁵ Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Time Lines, Copyright 2005 p. 98.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-he-lives>. We know it as the hymn, "He Lives."