

Foundations Course

10.RESURRECTION What makes everything valid.

“...if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

1 Corinthians 14:15-18

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is what gives the work of the cross its power. Jesus came to conquer sin, sickness and death. He could only have power over death by being raised again to life.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were active in the resurrection of Christ:

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| <i>Acts 2:32</i> | <i>“God has raised this Jesus to life.”</i> |
| <i>John 10:17-18</i> | <i>“...I lay down my life – only to take it up again.”</i> |
| <i>Romans 8:11</i> | <i>“...the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead...”</i> |

The resurrection is God’s declaration that he has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for human sin.

The Resurrection foretold

Acts 13:30-37 alludes to prophecies in the Old Testament about the resurrection of Christ.

Psalm 2:7; 16:10

Jesus foretold his own resurrection:

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| <i>Mark 9:31</i> | <i>“...after three days he (the Son of Man) will rise.”</i> |
| <i>Matthew 26:32</i> | <i>“But after I have risen I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”</i> |
| <i>John 2:19</i> | <i>“Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.” (Referring to his body, verse 21)</i> |

The Resurrection doubted

There have been many attempts by unbelievers to undermine the Biblical accounts of the resurrection of Christ. It is the most documented fact in the Gospels and often confirmed in the Epistles. Some of the theories are:

- The disciples stole the body. However, neither friends nor enemies could produce it, and later some of the disciples died defending Christ's resurrection.
- The authorities removed the body. Then why didn't they produce it when there was talk of a resurrection?
- The women went to the wrong tomb. But that means that the body was available for inspection in the right tomb.
- The disciples were hallucinating. Claims the disciples so wanted to see Jesus that they imagined his resurrection. However, in fact they were slow to believe when they did see him. *Luke 24:11; John 20:25*

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead'." *Luke 16:31*

The Resurrection witnessed

Jesus appeared:

- First to Mary Magdalene *Mark 16:9*
- To the women who told the disciples *Matthew 28:9*
- To Peter *Luke 24:34*
- To two disciples on the road to Emmaus *Luke 24:16-24*
- To ten disciples, Thomas absent *John 20:19-24*
- To eleven disciples, Thomas present *John 20:25-28*
- To eleven disciples in Galilee *Matthew 28:16-17*
- To seven disciples in Galilee *John 21:1-24*
- To over 500 brethren *1 Corinthians 15:6*
- To James *1 Corinthians 15:7*
- To disciples at Bethany *Luke 24:49-50*

These witnesses saw his body, ate and drank with him, and saw the wounds in his hands, feet and side. *John 20:27; Luke 24:37-39*

The Resurrection proven

Besides the testimonies of the witnesses there are other evidences of this miracle. Following are just a few:

- The empty tomb
- The Roman seal
- The rolled-away stone
- The missing body
- The transformed disciples
- The Lord's Day

See Appendix for more details on each of these.

Jesus' resurrection body

- Jesus' resurrection body was a different body and yet still similar in many ways to his earthly body.
- It was not limited. He could pass through walls, appear at will in a room.
- Some of the disciples did not recognise him immediately, yet other characteristics were recognisable, such as the nail marks, his voice.
- It was not a phantom body. People touched, saw, heard Jesus and ate with him. It was a body of flesh and bone (not flesh and blood). Luke 24:39
- Memory was intact. Jesus continued teaching, he met them in Galilee where he had promised.
- It was an incorruptible body, a spiritual body.

Resurrection of mankind

Both the just and unjust will be raised before the final judgement.

"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." John 5:28-29

"...I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked." Acts 24:15

The resurrection of the unrighteous enables God to enforce his final judgement upon them. *Matthew 10:28*. There is no description in scripture of the kind of body the "wicked dead" receive.

At the resurrection the righteous in Christ will receive a body like his.

"...will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." Philippians 3:21

This body will be:

- of flesh and bones
- spiritual
- redeemed
- glorious
- incorruptible
- heavenly

Read the whole of *1 Corinthians, chapter 15*, to gain insight into many aspects of resurrection.

Resurrection affects our living

“Dead friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”

1 John 3:2,3

The anticipation of the resurrection should encourage us to:

- Live in peace and be careful about our conduct *2 Peter 3:14*
- Put the past behind us and press onward *Philippians 3:13,14*
- Comfort and build one another up *1 Thessalonians 5:9-11*

*“Praise be to the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
In his great mercy he has given us new birth
into a living hope through the resurrection
of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade –
kept in heaven for you...”*

1 Peter 1:3,4

APPENDIX

The Empty Tomb

Matthew 27:57-60; 28:11-15; Mark 15:42-45; Luke 23:50-53; John 19:38-41

Jesus' body was actually placed in Joseph's tomb in a garden after being wrapped in spices. When his friends came to the tomb on the first day of the week, it was empty. The disciples were as surprised as anyone. Such would not be the case if any of them had stolen the body, as the soldiers were bribed to say. Only the resurrection explains the empty tomb.

The Roman Seal

Matthew 27:62-66

The tomb was sealed with the official Roman seal, thus making the body of Jesus Roman property. For anyone to touch or attempt to break the seal of Rome and to steal the body of Jesus was to come under the danger of death. None dare tamper with the seal of Rome. The seal was a very important sign of ownership in all nations of antiquity. It was the Angel of the Lord who broke the seal on the tomb and rolled the stone away, not some fearful disciples.

The Rolled-away Stone

Matthew 28:2

The tomb was closed by a stone door. Even the women, in their innocence, when they went to wrap the body in more spices, wondered who would roll away the stone. However, when they arrived at the garden tomb, the stone had already been rolled away. The stone was rolled away, not to let the risen Lord out, but to let the disciples in. The rolled away stone was another resurrection evidence.

The Missing Body

Numbers 19:11-22; Acts 2:24-32

As far as the body of Jesus was concerned, there are several things worthy of consideration. The disciples were Jews and very much bound to the Laws of God, moral, civil and ceremonial. One of the ceremonial laws concerned the touching of dead bodies or bones. Any who did so were ceremonially defiled. The disciples would have had to fulfil the ceremonial laws for handling the dead body of Jesus.

But far greater than this was the disappearance of the body of Jesus. The disciples were fearful of all the events relative to the crucifixion. How could they muster up enough courage to break the sealed tomb, overpower the Temple Guard, and then steal the mangled body of Jesus? What would they do with the body if they did steal it but bury it in some other place? The disciples themselves were amazed at the disappearance of the body of Jesus. They themselves did not understand nor yet believe His prophesied resurrection. His body was not stolen by the disciples but raised by God from the dead and neither friends nor foes could produce it. The body of Jesus was preserved incorruptible by the power of God. All other human bodies are corrupted in death.

The Transformed Disciples

Added to all the previous evidences we have the amazing transformation of the fearful disciples to bold and courageous men. The Book of Acts reveals that the resurrection of Jesus was the foundation and centre of every sermon preached in Acts. His death and His resurrection were like two sides of the one coin and became the foundation of the Gospel.

The Lord's Day

Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10; Matthew 28:1-2

Another evidence of the resurrection is the Lord's Day, celebrated since the early Church as the day of the resurrection. No Jew would change the Sabbath Day and make the first day of the week the day of special worship. It was the resurrection of Christ that changed the calendar for the whole world.

