

THE KNOW SERIES

Who, What, When, Where, Why, How of the Christian Experience

LESSON # 21

RESURRECTION: Cornerstone of Christianity



OBJECTIVE: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith. But what actually happened in 33 AD? Did Jesus really rise from the dead? Or does some alternate theory best explain what is known about that important year? This article will look at the evidences for the resurrection and evaluate alternate theories.

Christ Has in Fact Risen!

So what actually happened in 33 AD? There is only one theory which avoids all of the pitfalls mentioned above. It is the theory that has been around since the beginning of Christianity. In fact, it is what founded the Christian faith.

Former skeptic Josh McDowell explains:

After investigating the major alternative theories proposed, only one conclusion takes into account all the facts and does not adjust them to preconceived notions. It is the conclusion that CHRIST HAS IN FACT RISEN – a supernatural act of God in history (McDowell, *Resurrection*, p.102).

Ramifications:

This conclusion has profound ramifications. The resurrection is a Divine vindication of the words and actions of Jesus. Jesus said that the purpose of His crucifixion would be "... to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28).

At the Last Supper, Jesus "... took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matt 26:27f).

Just before He died on the cross, Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). What had been finished was all that is needed for the forgiveness of sin and attainment of eternal



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salvation. Jesus' resurrection three days later demonstrated that God had in fact accepted Jesus' death as the all-sufficient sacrifice (Rom 4:25; Heb 2:17; 9:24-28; 10:14).

Romans 4:25

²⁵ *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

Hebrews 2:17

¹⁷ *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴ *For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.* ²⁵ *Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.* ²⁶ *Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.* ²⁷ *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,* ²⁸ *so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

Hebrews 10:14

¹⁴ *because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-21 The Resurrection

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. ²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.



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(I) RESURRECTION: THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL (vss. 12 -21)

- A) Our salvation hinges on the truth of the Gospel
- B) There is no salvation if Christ is not raised
 - 1) If He is raised He will raise us with Him
- C) Cumulative Testimony of the witnesses is overwhelming
 - 1) They saw Him after His Death
 - 2) Seeing Him revolutionized the rest of their lives
- D) Evidence of their changed minds and changed character
- E) Willingness to die for the fact of the resurrection
 - 1) They had already publicly quit, so they would not be trying to save face
- F) Seen by Over 500 (Mathew 28:10)
 - 1) Certainly 500 could not be deluded
- G) If there is no resurrection then apostles are liars (vs 15)
 - 1) Most ethical system of belief worldwide was propagated by deceitful men?? Hardly!
- H) If there is no resurrection:
 - 1) Apostolic Preaching is Meaningless
 - a) We should all go home now
 - b) More people in church than sporting events today or this week
 - 2) Response to Gospel is empty and meaningless
 - 3) If there is no resurrection Jesus is unable to save
 - 4) Jesus is still dead
 - 5) The dead in Christ are forever lost then
 - 6) The whole Christian life is a meaningless joke!



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a) If there is no life after death, why bother?

b) If there is no life after death, why suffer?

7) Not only would the apostles be liars, but us too

I) Truth is important

1) Christianity is true

2) The sacrifice of truth and absolutes has serious consequences

3) Facts are important

a) It is not just subjective experience

4) It's hard to go the distance when you're building on false beliefs

J) The Most Persuasive “sign” that Jesus was who He said He was is the resurrection

K) Having said that Christianity is based on truth, it is nevertheless experienced individually

(II) THE RESURRECTION: THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL (vss 18 -19)

A) Much of modern Christianity is centered around this life

B) We should be looking forward to the blessed hope

1) This is how everybody has always lived

2) The only thing that makes sense out of loss/suffering

3) Read Revelation 22

4) All creation groans and waits



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God promises:
"... 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
(Romans 10:9).

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