

BASIC BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

6. JESUS CHRIST: His Resurrection

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:12-22;
John 2:19-21

The **RESURRECTION** of Jesus Christ makes Christianity unique, for **only JESUS** among all religious leaders who ever lived and died rose again from the dead. The RESURRECTION of JESUS CHRIST confirms all the other doctrines of the Christian faith. On the other hand, if the RESURRECTION can be disproved, then all the doctrines of the Christian faith lose their credibility, our faith is useless, our preaching false, and we are yet in our sins.

CHRIST FORETOLD HIS OWN RESURRECTION

In our last lesson we saw that our Lord's mission in coming to earth was to offer His life as a sacrifice for sin. **Whenever He spoke of His death, He also foretold His resurrection** on the third day. He did this at the very beginning of His ministry (John 2:19-21). Once He compared His death and resurrection with Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish (Matthew 12:40). After Peter's "Great Confession", our Lord spoke in detail of His death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). Similarly, He referred to these events at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:9,23; Mark 9:9,10,31). As He approached Jerusalem, our Lord again predicted His resurrection (Matthew 20:19).

If these predictions had not come true and Christ had perished in the grave, then all His teachings would have been perished with Him.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: FACT or FICTION?

So crucial is this question of Christ's resurrection that the whole **Christian Church stands or falls with it**. Let us therefore examine the facts, and be quite clear in our minds that the resurrection is based on "**many infallible proofs**" (Acts 1:3).

The fact of the resurrection may be decisively established by seven documented and sequential events.

1. **FIRST DAY: JESUS DIED AND WAS BURIED**

It seems almost unnecessary to have to make out a case for our Lord's physical demise. Nevertheless, to dispel the "swoon theory" and any such foolish talk, let us establish clearly the fact of His death.

The eye witness record leaves no room for doubt. The soldiers, whose business it was to ensure that crucified persons had actually expired before allowing their bodies to be taken down, found that Jesus was already dead, so there was no need to break His legs.

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water (John 19:33,34).

Next, the burial of our Lord by two secret disciples, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus. They took the body and wound it in linen clothes with about one hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes after the Jewish tradition. Then they laid Him in a new sepulchre in a nearby garden (John 19:38-42). This was Good Friday night.

2. **SECOND DAY: HIS TOMB WAS SEALED AND GUARDED**

On Saturday, the day after the burial, the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate the Governor, requesting that the tomb of Jesus “be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples came by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead ...” (Matthew 27:64).

The necessary permission having been granted, they went and sealed the entrance with a stone and set a guard outside the sepulchre (Matthew 27:66).

So while our Lord's embalmed body lay in linen bands inside the tomb, armed guards watched on the outside. This was Saturday.

3. **THIRD DAY: THE TOMB WAS EMPTY**

In the Gospels we have four independent accounts of the happenings on Sunday morning “the third day”. When certain women arrived at the break of dawn at the tomb with sweet spices intending to anoint our Lord's body, they were taken aback to find the great stone rolled away and the body gone! The linen wrapping of the body and napkin of the head were lying undisturbed on the stone slab where the body had been. Certain of the disciples who came later were witnesses to the same things.

4. **THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANGELS**

The guards stationed by the priests and Pharisees to keep watch over the tomb were nowhere to be seen, but inside the tomb were two angels who announced the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead with the words: “**Why seek ye the living among the dead?** He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:5, 6, 7).

5. **THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS**

The Gospels record ten **separate appearances** of our risen Lord to the disciples and other **chosen witnesses**”. (Namely to Mary Magdalene, to the women returning from the sepulchre, to Peter, to two disciples on the Emmaus road, to the ten in the upper room on the first Easter evening, to the eleven at the same place a week later, to more than 500 brethren at one time, to James, to several disciples by the Sea of Galilee, and to the assembled believers on the Mount of Olives at the Ascension.)

In all these instances, Jesus appeared **bodily** and impressed this fact on the disciples (Luke 24: 39,40; John 20:27). That there was substance to His body was beyond doubt.

On one occasion He ate. However, He had a **supernatural body**. He was able to pass through physical barriers freely and without obstruction: grave clothes and closed doors were no hindrance to His movement. He could appear and disappear instantly (Luke 24: 31,36)

From the Gospel accounts and from the Apostle Paul's epistles, we conclude that the resurrection body of Jesus was a supernatural “**glorified**” **body**, whose body will be ours at our future resurrection” (Philippians 3:20).

In His glorified resurrection body, Jesus ascended to Heaven. In the same body, **He will return to earth one day**.

6. **THE DISCIPLES WERE TRANSFORMED**

Whereas the crucifixion of Jesus left the disciples in a state of fear and grief, His appearances effected an instantaneous, profound and permanent change. Cowardice gave place to courage which endured through the ensuing years till the hour of martyrdom. The fearless band of Galileans went everywhere, against all opposition proclaiming the Gospel of the risen Lord. Their reward was hardship, persecution, imprisonment, every form of suffering, exile and death.

Their preaching was attended with great power and success. Masses were won to the cause of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and Judea, and throughout the Mediterranean world. Such an outbreak of power could never have been possible if Jesus had perished in the grave.

7. **THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S DAY**

It is significant to note that our Lord's appearances, wherever the day was mentioned were on the first day of the week. The day of worship for the **New Testament Church** then became the first instead of the Old Testament seventh day. This day has come to be named “**The Lord's Day**” and was also the day on which our Lord **appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos**. From all available records, then, we find the Christian Church observing **Sunday as the day of worship and rest** (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1,19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

From the foregoing accounts, we have the full assurance that our Lord not only died according to the Scriptures, but He also rose again from the dead to become Head of the Church.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION FOR CHRISTIANS

1. **BECAUSE JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD** it confirms the truthfulness and trustworthiness of all His teachings:
 - a. that His **shed blood is efficacious** for the remissions of sins.
 - b. that He was not only the Son of Man but also the **Son of God**.
 - c. that whosoever believes on Him has **everlasting life**.
 - d. that He had **gone ahead to prepare a place** for those who believe.

- e. that at His return **believers shall also receive a resurrection body like His.**
 - f. that He will **return to judge the world.**
2. **BECAUSE JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD** we know that He has overcome sin and death and hell, and through Him we who believe have the same victory. The believer therefore need not fear death, for we know that “to be absent from the body” is to be “present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We also know that the risen Christ is the firstfruits of them that slept i.e. He is the pioneer of a great band of believers who will be raised from the dead. In that day, all believers, dead or alive, shall receive a new and glorious incorruptible body - when Jesus returns.

What a glorious and blessed hope!

3. **BECAUSE JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD** He has power to enable us to live for Him, in newness of life. Believers are “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11).
4. **BECAUSE JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD** we can trust Him when He said that He would **return again to take all rule and authority** and power on this earth and **establish His righteous reign**. In that day, all evil and injustice on earth shall be subdued under Him. Then shall **God's Kingdom be established** among men for ever and ever, and

ALL BECAUSE JESUS LIVES!

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

6. JESUS CHRIST: HIS RESURRECTION

Multiple choice: Underline the correct answer

1. If Christ is not risen, Christians
 - (a) are still dead in their sins
 - (b) have eternal life
 - (c) have nothing to fear

2. Christ spoke of his death and
 - (a) never thought He would rise again
 - (b) also predicted His resurrection
 - (c) planned a way of escape

3. The priests and Pharisees
 - (a) stole the body of Jesus
 - (b) set a watch on the grave
 - (c) mourned for Jesus

4. When the women came to the tomb on Sunday morning
 - (a) the grave was tightly sealed
 - (b) they found an empty tomb
 - (c) the guards were at the tomb

5. The angels in the sepulchre said
 - (a) You have come to the wrong grave
 - (b) Jesus has gone to Heaven
 - (c) He is not here but is risen

Fill in the blanks (one letter for each space)

6. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared at least ___ times.
7. When He rose from the dead, He had a supernatural, glorious _____.
8. When we see Him we shall be like _____.
9. If we believe in Him we need not _____ death.
10. One day our Lord shall return to _____ as King of kings and Lord of lords.