

## The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

### **Introductory Statements on Resurrection**

The central, defining doctrine and claim of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whom God brought forth from the dead. The resurrection of the dead refers to the promise based on the bodily resurrection of Jesus, that all believers will one day join Christ in the resurrection. Believers will be transformed, that is, renewed both morally and physically with “spiritual” bodies adapted for eternal life with God.<sup>1</sup>

That Jesus Christ died and afterward rose from the dead is both the central doctrine of Christian theology and the major fact in a defense of its teachings.<sup>2</sup>

### **Twelve Undisputed Historical Facts about the Resurrection**

- (1) Jesus died by crucifixion (he was nailed to a cross);
- (2) Jesus was buried in a tomb;
- (3) The disciples were discouraged and fearful for their lives after Jesus’ death;
- (4) Jesus’ tomb was found empty soon after his burial;
- (5) The disciples had experiences that they believed were actual appearances of the risen Jesus;
- (6) Due to these experiences the disciples were willing to die for their belief in his resurrection;
- (7) The proclamation of the resurrection took place very early (not legendary);
- (8) The disciples’ public testimony and preaching of the resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified;
- (9) Their preaching centered on the death and resurrection of Jesus;
- (10) Sunday was the day they gathered for worship;
- (11) James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, was converted when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus;
- (12) Just a few years later, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) became a Christian believer due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.

See *The Risen Jesus & Future Hope* by Gary Habermas, pp. 9-10.

### **Summary Points on Resurrection**

1. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-54; John 20:1-21:25).
2. The Book of Acts is an account of the preaching of Jesus’ Resurrection and the continued power of the gospel (see Acts 2:22-36).
3. Paul speaks of the centrality of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 (see verses 1-8).

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley, Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 102.

<sup>2</sup> Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 938.

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4. The Resurrection was not simply a coming back from the dead (as with Lazarus; see John 11:1-44), but was the “first fruits” (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23) of eternal life.
5. The Resurrection was physical. Jesus Christ had a resurrected physical body (see Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:30; John 20:20, 27; John 21:12-13; Luke 24:39).
6. The spirit of antichrist denies the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 John 4:1-6).
7. Paul states that if Jesus did not literally rise from the dead (1 Corinthians 15):
  - a. Preaching is useless (verse 14).
  - b. Faith is useless (verse 14).
  - c. Christianity is false (verse 15).
  - d. We are still in sin (verse 17).
  - e. We have no hope (verses 18-19).
8. Other Important Doctrinal Points about Resurrection:
  - a. The Resurrection insures our regeneration (1 Peter 1:3).
  - b. The Resurrection insures our justification (Romans 4:25).
  - c. The Resurrection insures that we will receive resurrection bodies ourselves (1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14).

### **Discussion Questions**

1. A resurrected body is perfect, no longer subject to weakness, aging, or death. How does this encourage you personally?
2. Why should the Resurrection of Jesus Christ cause us excitement?
3. How does the Resurrection of Jesus Christ affect your personal life?
4. Read and comment on Philippians 3:10-11.
5. Read and comment on Ephesians 1:19-20 and 3:20.