

Truths About Jesus' Resurrection¹

The entire structure of Christianity stands or falls with one historical event—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If that event happened, then it verifies that Jesus is whom he claimed to be. It proves that he is the Son of God. It proves that the Gospel is true. The church exists because of Jesus' resurrection.

On the other hand, if the resurrection did not happen, then Christianity is a fraud. The teachings of Jesus mean nothing if he did not rise from the dead.

On Resurrection Day—Easter Sunday—it is our great privilege to declare and affirm that Jesus rose from the dead. “He is risen; he is risen indeed.”

And it's our obligation as Christians to understand what Jesus accomplished at his resurrection. We obviously have to believe/affirm the resurrection, but we also should know what it means, what it signifies, why it is important.

If you were in a conversation with an unbeliever, and you said that Jesus rose from the dead, and the unbeliever said, “So what?” how would you respond? Would you be able to tell the unbeliever why the resurrection is important? Or would you have to admit, “I know that it happened, but I don't know why it's important”?

All Christians must believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and all Christians should also understand the importance of it. We should understand what happened when Jesus rose again. That's why it's important that we review and remind ourselves about what happened and why it's so important.

Let's notice several biblical truths about Jesus' resurrection.

¹ Some of this is from *Emmaus Journal* Volume 7 (Vol. 7, Page 195). Emmaus Bible College.

I. Jesus' resurrection was a Trinitarian act.

By that I mean that all three Persons of the Trinity were involved in Jesus' resurrection.

A. God did it.

Acts 2:32 This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

The NT lays special emphasis on the work of the Father in the resurrection.

Acts 2:24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Acts 13:30 But God raised him from the dead:

Romans 6:4 ... Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,...

B. Jesus did it.

Jn 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Jn 10:17-18 ... I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

C. The Holy Spirit did it.

1Pe 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Trans: Who raised Jesus from the dead? The entire Trinity was involved in the resurrection of Jesus.

II. Jesus' resurrection marks the culmination of Christ's ministry as Messiah.

Rom 1:4 [*Jesus was*] declared [*to be*] the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

- A. The verb "declared [to be]" means to appoint, constitute, or install.
- B. What did the rez declare/appoint/install Jesus to be? "The son of God with power." This doesn't mean that he wasn't the Son of God before the rez, but it suggests that the rez demonstrated this truth very powerfully.

Peter made a similar statement in Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

- C. The title "Son of God" is used in two ways:
 - 1. It is used of Christ's *eternal* Sonship. The 2nd Person of the Trinity has always been the Son of God in this sense. He has always been of the same nature as God the Father.
 - 2. It is used of His *official or Messianic* Sonship. As the human son of David, Jesus is given the royal title, Son of God. In this second sense, "Son of God" describes His office as Messiah.
- D. The resurrection confirms or declares that Jesus is the Son of God. The resurrection validates Jesus claim to this position/office. Jesus made the claim repeatedly, and the resurrection proves that it was true.

Trans: Christ, who was always God's Son by virtue of His deity, is in His resurrected, glorified humanity appointed the Messianic Son of God.

III. Jesus' resurrection confirms His teaching.

A. Jesus had said many radical things during his earthly ministry.

1. He said that God was his Father, and that He had come down out of heaven and spoken the words the Father had given Him (John 3:13, 34; 14:10);
2. He said that whoever would believe in Him would have eternal life and that whoever did not believe in Him would be eternally condemned (John 3:16, 18, 36);
3. He said that He was going to "prepare a place" for His people and then return to get them (John 14:3);
4. He said that He would raise the dead and be the judge of all mankind (John 5:25–29).
5. He even said, "I and the Father are one." He said, "Unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins."

Jesus' resurrection is a validation of all these claims. Anyone can make claims like that, but only one person was resurrected to show that his claims were true and valid.

B. The angel at the tomb said to the women, "He has risen, just as He said" (Matt. 28:6). Jesus had told His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, suffer and die, "and be raised up on the third day" (Matt. 16:21). So Jesus had taught and foretold his own resurrection.

1. If it did not happen, then it discredits everything he taught.
2. If it did happen, then it validates everything he taught.

We can't appreciate the teachings of Jesus and at the same time deny his resurrection.

IV. Jesus' resurrection is the basis of justification for believers.

- A. "Justification" is one of these theological words that we sometimes misunderstand. Justification is the act of God (Rom 8:33) whereby He declares a sinner to be legally righteous on account of the righteousness of Christ (Rom 3:20-28, 5:18-19).
- B. Justification is a way of describing salvation. Salvation makes the believer legally just/righteous in his standing before God. We are "justified by faith" (Rom 5:1).
- C. What does that have to do with the resurrection? Paul tells us that Jesus "was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). Jesus' resurrection is the evidence that death has been defeated and sins have been forgiven (1 Cor. 15:4-58).

Because of the death of Christ, the guilty offender is acquitted, and Jesus' resurrection is the proof that God has been satisfied.

1 Pet 1:3 *[we have a living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*

Quote: Christ's resurrection "is God's 'Amen' to Christ's 'It is finished.' Looking at the cross we see justification completed; looking at the open tomb we see it accepted."²

² S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., Studies in Romans, Part 14: The Faith of Abraham (Rom. 4:1825), *BBB* (Oct. 26, 1980): 5.

V. Jesus' resurrection guarantees the believer's future resurrection.

- A. Jesus is "the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). Just as the first sheaf of grain was a guarantee or sample of the harvest to follow, so Christ's resurrection is a guarantee and sample of the multitude to be raised on the last day.

"Because Christ has been raised from the dead, the resurrection of...those who are in Christ...is assured."³

- B. When will this future resurrection happen?

1 Thes 4:16-17 *the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And **the dead in Christ will rise first.** 17 Then we who are **alive and remain shall be caught up together** with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

1. If we die before the Lord's return, we'll also be resurrected at the 2nd Coming.
2. If we are "alive and remain" until the 2nd Coming, we will assume a glorified body when we meet the Lord in the air.

- C. What about unbelievers? Just before the Great White Throne judgment, at the end of time, all the unsaved dead will be resurrected to face judgment.

Daniel 12:2 *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

³ C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

VI. Jesus' resurrection is a pledge of future judgment.

Acts 10:40–42 God raised up [Jesus] on the third day, and showed Him openly, ... And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

Acts 17:30–31 ... God ... now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

- A. Acts 17 is a record of Paul's great message to the Greek philosophers at Mars Hill in Athens. He concluded his message with a call to his listeners to repent in order to avoid God's judgment. God had been merciful to those who had not heard the Gospel, but now that they had heard it, the proper response was repentance of sin and faith in Jesus.
- B. God commands all men everywhere to repent, i.e., turn away from sin and to embrace the true knowledge of God proclaimed in the Gospel.

Quote: Paul warned his hearers that they were now accountable for this new revelation and would face God on His "fixed" judgment day. On that day the appointed judge would be none other than the "Man," Jesus Christ. Proof that such a judgment day is coming, says Paul, was provided by God when He raised "Him from the dead."⁴

⁴ Cf. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*.

At the end of Acts 17, we find various responses to Paul's message about Jesus' resurrection.

Acts 17:32 – *“When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked.”* Mockery, ridicule, and unbelief is a normal response to the Gospel message.

“Other said, ‘We will hear thee again on this matter.’” – Some people will show interest. They'd like to talk about it, to discuss it. They are open to the possibility.

Acts 17:34 – *“some men joined him and believed.”* – We can be confident that, when we present the Gospel message, some will believe. Maybe not many; maybe just a small number. But God will use his word to convict of sin and to draw people to himself. And it's our great privilege and responsibility to proclaim this message.

How have you responded to this message? With mockery, with some interest, or with belief?

VII. Jesus' resurrection gives us power to overcome sin.

Romans 6:11–13 *reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as **being alive from the dead**, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

- A. In Romans 6, After a long discussion of the value of Jesus' death and resurrection, Paul tells his readers to “reckon” themselves also to be dead to sin and alive to God.
- B. Believers are united with Christ in both his death and resurrection. The “old man” has been crucified, and we should no longer serve sin.

Galatians 2:20

- C. We died with Christ and we also live with him.
- D. The result? We present ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead and instruments of righteousness.

Rom 6:4 ... just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- E. I.e., the resurrection of Christ, and our union with him in his resurrection, enables us to avoid sin and live righteously. We have to “reckon” or consider ourselves to be dead to sin and alive with Christ.

Every Christian should be able to answer the “so what?” question. We should certainly believe in Jesus’ resurrection and affirm it publicly. But we should also be able to explain why it’s so important for the Christian faith.

Everything hinges on the resurrection of Christ. And it’s our great and glorious privilege on this day especially to affirm the truth that Jesus rose from the dead.

- ✓ It’s because of Jesus’ resurrection that we believe that he is whom he claimed to be—the Son of God.
- ✓ It’s because of Jesus’ resurrection that we believe what he taught.
- ✓ It’s because of Jesus’ resurrection that we have salvation and the hope of heaven.
- ✓ It’s because of Jesus’ resurrection that Jesus will come again in glory and in great judgment.
- ✓ It’s because of Jesus’ resurrection that we ourselves will be resurrected.
- ✓ It’s because of Jesus’ resurrection that we have the power to overcome sin and live righteously.

The entire Christian faith—both what we believe and how we behave—rests on one historical event: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And it’s our great privilege today to affirm in the strongest of terms, “Jesus is risen, he is risen indeed.”