

'Is The Resurrection Real?'



Day 1

Sermon Sentence: Since the Resurrection gives us hope over death, we also find hope over every trial we face that is lesser than death.

Before we delve into a discussion about the validity of Jesus' resurrection, we need to start with His death by crucifixion. Only by understanding this cruel method of execution can we also understand how implausible some of the counter arguments against the resurrection truly are.

Method of capital punishment among the Persians, Seleucids, Jews, Carthaginians, and Romans from about the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD. The condemned man was usually whipped and forced to drag the crossbeam to where the upright was standing. His hands were tied or nailed to the crossbeam, which was attached to the upright 9–12 ft (2.5–3.5 m) above the ground, and his feet bound or nailed to the upright. Death was by heart failure or asphyxiation. Political or religious agitators and those without civil rights were crucified. Its overwhelming association today is with Jesus. Crucifixion was abolished by Constantine I in AD 337 after his conversion to Christianity.

(<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/crucifixion>)

Matthew 27:26-54, Mark 15:15-39, Luke 23:25-47 & John 19:1-30

Each of the four Gospels record the crucifixion of Jesus and each of the Gospels give the same basic account for the crucifixion. However, in reading all four of them we get the full view of the story in more detail.

- 1.) **What is the purpose of the flogging prior to the crucifixion?**
- 2.) **Why are all the movies and images of Jesus carrying His entire cross inaccurate?**
- 3.) **Besides the death of the criminal, what are some other reasons this method of execution was used?**
- 4.) **How long was Jesus on the cross?**
- 5.) **What are the two primary causes of death from crucifixion?**
- 6.) **After some time on the cross why did they break the legs of the condemned? Why is this an important fact in relation to the prophecies concerning Jesus' death?**

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The entombment of Jesus

Some important observations about Jesus' entombment.

- He was wrapped in a burial cloth. (Matthew 15:46) Use of this cloth was similar to mummification practices. (John 11:44)
- His body was prepared with spices as per Jewish burial customs. (John 19:40)
- His body was placed in the tomb and the tomb closed in by a large stone which was then sealed to ensure it could not be tampered with and placed under Roman guard.

The Resurrection

Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-9 & John 20:1-18

We see the women returning to finish the body preparations which were started before the Sabbath day and the scriptures clearly state this was the first day of the week. (Luke 24:1)

A synopsis of the Gospels gives us these details concerning the resurrection.

- An angel was present to roll back the stone and incapacitate the guards.
- Angels were attending to things inside the tomb.
- Jesus was not in the tomb.
- The burial shroud and cloth had been removed.
- Jesus was present outside the tomb.

1.) When reading the 4 accounts of the resurrection we see different viewpoints, can you reconcile them?

2.) Why was it such a concern to the Roman guards that the body was missing? What would have been the penalty if they had let the tomb get broken into?

3.) How did the Jewish leadership try to deal with the missing body and claim of resurrection?

4.) Why did Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him? (John 20:17) compare to (John 20:27)

5.) Did Jesus ascend twice? Why was it important for Jesus to return to the Father at this time? (Hebrews 9:12, 22-26)

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Proof of resurrection

So now we know more about how He died, how He was buried and then the resurrection itself but how do we answer questions about why we believe the resurrection of Jesus is a real event? The reason this event is so hotly contested by skeptics and other false religions is because it is key to proving all of Christianity false.

Some would claim that Jesus' death was faked but evidence found in the account of the crucifixion can safely rule out the "swoon theory". Jesus was beaten, flogged, pierced and crucified for approx 6 hours. The evidence that He had died was apparent in the fact that the Roman soldier did not even bother to break His legs like the other two crucified with Him. In addition He was stabbed with a spear into His side.

Here are some commonly held ideas as proof of Christ's resurrection.

- Jesus was seen in bodily form by Mary, the 11 remaining Disciples and 500 people at one time.
- Jesus' did not remain hidden, he traveled around and met many in different locations who testified separately to their encounters with Him post crucifixion.
- Jesus' body was sealed in a tomb under Roman guard at the behest of the Jews so that it would be impossible for someone to steal his body and claim He was resurrected. His body was gone in spite of all this extraordinary precaution.
- The Jews felt compelled to pay off the guards and create a cover story.
- Human nature. If people are knowingly following a fraud then they are not willing to die for a lie but if they have been touched by an incredible truth that surpassed in importance everything in the world then they will die for it.
 - All but one of the disciples went on to martyrdom for their faith.
- Conversion of Paul. Saul hated Christianity, only an encounter with Jesus could change this.
- Convincing of doubting Thomas

Ponder these, they continue with day 4.

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Proof of resurrection cont.

- Fulfilled prophecy. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection were fulfilled precisely according to the writings of OT prophets.
- Lack of motivation for fabrication. This was a controversial, hated teaching likely to get one killed, not a power or money making scheme.
- Irrelevant details not related to the big picture illustrate the authenticity of the story.
- Variance of small details from different points of view also illustrates authenticity and a lack of collaboration on the story.
- Harmony of the core details of the resurrection.
- Great amount of details concerning locations, names, timing, leaders, kings, etc. This is not the case with myths which are usually shrouded in obscurity.
- Everything done publicly including the resurrection (birth, ministry, miracles, death and resurrection) and spread by many witnesses as opposed to all other false religions starting with one man privately receiving knowledge "from God" and then one person tells many.
- External evidence such as, preservation of documents, archeology, extra-biblical sources and survival of the belief in the most hostile environments.
- Finally the power displayed in the Word through changed lives definitely illustrates a truth!

1.) Can you think of any other historical event that even compares to the resurrection of Jesus?

2.) Of course this is not a complete list, can you think of other proofs?

3.) If questioned, could you present a case to defend the resurrection?

4.) Where is the Christian left without it?

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Day 5

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Why is the resurrection so important to a Christian?

1 Corinthians 15:14

Christ's death, burial and resurrection is the Gospel message! Without Christ rising from the dead, then there is just death and no promise of life.

1 Corinthians 15:19-20

Christ is risen! Because of this fact we have great hope in Jesus, and that belief not only conquers everything in this world but conquers the grave as well! The whole point of God sending His son was for Him to conquer all things through His sinless life and provide the perfect sacrifice for all time for the remission of sins.

John 3:17

This is not the expectation that the Jews had of their Messiah. He was to be a conquering king, not a suffering servant! This is one of the main reasons they rejected Him and could not understand His teachings! The Jews are awaiting their conquering King and indeed they shall find Him, because that is the role He will play when He returns the second time.

John 16:33

- 1.) Have you ever considered that the great hope that we have through Jesus is more than eternal life?**
- 2.) How does Jesus' sinless life, death and resurrection mean that He has conquered all things?**
- 3.) How does Jesus' resurrection give us great hope in things of our lives now?**
- 4.) In times of worldly trials how do you react?**
- 5.) Can you explain to the unbeliever the importance of the resurrection in the Christian faith?**