The Resurrection of Christ

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

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THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST – Every saint's great "hope is in the resurrection of the dead!" (Acts 23:6-note). When Socrates lay dying, he was asked "Shall we live again," to which he replied "I hope so!" Ours is not a dead hope but "A LIVING HOPE" (1Pe 1:3-note), not a "hope so," but a "hope sure!" The Egyptian belief in a resurrection from the dead led them to call the mummy case the "chest of the living" and to place a scarab beetle in the corpse's heart. Why? Because they knew the scarab's larva buried itself in the earth and later emerged as a mature insect which to them symbolized "resurrection." Socrates and the Egyptians held a false hope, but Sir Walter Raleigh held fast to a sure hope which served as an anchor for his soul (Heb 6:19-note) and prompted him to write the following words in his Bible the night before he was beheaded: "From this earth, this grave, this dust, my God shall raise me up!" Hallelujah! Martha also believed in the hope of the resurrection, but Jesus moved her from the doctrinal to the personal when He declared "I AM the RESURRECTION and the LIFE. He who believes in Me will live even if he dies." (Jn 11:25-note) The resurrection is not an "IT" but an "I", but too often we stop at "IT." Jesus said "Because I live, you shall live also." (Jn 14:19-note) The resurrection of believers is guaranteed by Christ's own resurrection. We can rest assured that one day soon, He will "transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (Php 3:21-note). When we take our last breath and leave our loved ones, we can be comforted by the certainty that our grave is but a gateway to His glory (1Th 4:18, 13-17-note). For believers death is not a period, but only a comma! David believed this truth writing "I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake." (Ps 17:15-note, cf Ps 49:15-note) Job believed this truth declaring "Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God." (Job 19:26-note) Indeed, we shall SEE GOD! "Christ shall be the object of our eternal vision and we shall we never want any joy beyond that of seeing Him. Think not that this will be a narrow sphere for the mind to dwell in. It is but one Source of delight, but that Source is infinite. All His attributes shall be subjects for contemplation, and as He is infinite under each aspect, there is no fear of exhaustion. His works, His gifts, His love to us, and His glory in all His purposes, and in all His actions, these shall make an eternal theme which will be ever new." (Spurgeon) Therefore let us even now "since we have been RAISED UP WITH CHRIST (speaking of our present spiritual resurrection, Ro 6:4-note, Eph 2:6-note, Col 2:12-note), keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Let us set our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth, for we have died and our life is hidden with Christ in God and when Christ our life, is revealed, then we also will be revealed with Him in glory." (Col 3:1-4-note) "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." (1Jn 3:2-note) SELAH! (Pause and ponder and sing…) '**Up from the grave He arose**, With a mighty triumph o'er His foes, He arose a Victor from the dark domain, And He lives forever with His saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

As Spurgeon says "The RESURRECTION of Christ is a fact better attested than any event recorded in history!" (cf >500 eye witnesses 1Cor 15:6-note) "Christianity is in its very essence a RESURRECTION religion. The concept of the RESURRECTION lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed." (John Stott) "The RESURRECTION of Jesus is the Gibraltar of the Christian faith and the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism." (R A Torrey) Contrary to the opinion of the skeptics, the New Testament proclaims a Christ Who once was dead and is now alive, not a Christ Who was once alive and now is dead! J C Ryle rightly said that "in an age of abounding unbelief and skepticism, we shall find that the RESURRECTION of Christ will bear any weight that we can lay upon it." In the OT on the annual Day of Atonement, if the High Priest's offering was acceptable to God he emerged alive, but if it was unacceptable, he died behind the veil (read Heb 9:7NLT-note, Ex 28:35). The coming forth of our Great High Priest (Heb 4:14-note, Heb 9:11-note) after making His Atonement demonstrates clearly that His offering was acceptable to the Father. The Empty Tomb is the Father's "Amen" (2Cor 1:20KJV-note) to Son's cry of "It is finished (Paid in Full = Tetelestai)!" (Jn 19:30-note) "Everything antecedent in the incarnate life of our Lord moves towards the RESURRECTION and everything subsequent rests upon

it and is conditioned by it." (John Murray) Indeed, the "surpassing greatness of His POWER toward us who believe" is the same "RESURRECTION POWER" that brought Christ up from the grave (Eph 1:19-20) and is now operative within all those who belong to Christ (Ro 6:5, 8-12-note, cf Php 3:10-11-note). The same POWER that opened Christ's Tomb, now opens the door to abundant life (Jn 10:10b-note)! Are you experiencing abundant life? If not consider prayerfully singing this simple song to Him: **Jesus Be Jesus in Me**. No longer me, but Thee. Resurrection Power, fill me this hour, Jesus be Jesus in Me."

Spurgeon rightly says that "The whole system of Christianity rests upon the fact that "Christ is risen from the dead" (Mt 28:7, 2Ti 2:8-note) for, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain: you are still in your sins." (1Cor 15:14, 17-note) The Divinity of Christ finds its surest proof in His resurrection, since He was "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the RESURRECTION from the dead." (Ro 1:4-note) It would not be unreasonable to doubt his Deity if he had not risen. Again, our justification, that choice blessing of the covenant, is linked with Christ's triumphant victory over death and the grave; for He "was delivered up (handed over to sinful men to be crucified) for our transgressions, and was raised for (to secure, guarantee) our justification (act of free grace by which God pardons our sin and accepts us as righteous on account of the atonement of Christ)." (Ro 4:25-note) Indeed our very regeneration is connected with His RESURRECTION, for we are "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1Peter 1:3-note) And most certainly our ultimate RESURRECTION rests here, for, "if (as is the case) the Spirit of Him Who (the Father) raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He (Father) Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who indwells you." (Ro 8:11-note, cf Ezek 36:27-note) C S Lewis said "Jesus has forced open a door that had been locked since the death of the first man (Ro 5:21-note). He has met, fought and beaten the King of Death (1Cor 15:55, 57-note). Everything is different because He has done so." In the Revelation Jesus announced His victory declaring "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev 1:17-18-note) George Sweeting recalls that "In the early 1920's, Nikolai Bukharin was sent from Moscow to Kiev to address a vast anti-God rally. For an hour he ridiculed the Christian faith until it seemed as if the whole structure of belief was in ruins. Questions were invited. A priest of the Orthodox church rose and asked to speak. He faced the crowd and spoke the ancient cry of victory "CHRIST IS RISEN." Instantly the vast assembly rose to its feet, and the reply came back like a crash of breakers against a cliff, "HE IS RISEN INDEED!" And because He is risen we can sing -- "**I Know That My Redeemer Lives**! What joy the blest assurance gives! He lives, He lives, Who once was dead; He lives, my everlasting Head!" (Samuel Medley)

THE RESURRECTION IN THE OT – Jesus Christ's resurrection was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Abraham believed in the doctrine of the resurrection. As traveled to Mt Moriah to sacrifice his only begotten son, Isaac, he told the men with him to "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you." (Ge 22:5-note). How could he sacrifice Isaac and yet know they would both return? The writer of Hebrews explains that Abraham "considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received (Isaac) back as a type." (Heb 11:19-note, cf Ge 22:13-14-note) Jonah illustrated the doctrine of the resurrection. After Jonah's disobedience, "Jehovah appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights." (Jonah 1:17) Jesus used this OT story to illustrate His resurrection, explaining that "just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Mt 12:40) Isaiah foretold that the Resurrection of Christ would "swallow up death for all time." (Isa 25:8-note, 1Cor 15:54-note) Isaiah again alluded to the resurrection declaring "Your dead will live. Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy." (Isa 26:19-note). The prophet Daniel affirmed the resurrection of individual believers writing that "those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake to everlasting life." (Da 12:2-note) And so "we possess the prophetic word which is altogether reliable, to which we will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star (the Second Coming of Christ) rises in our hearts." (2Pe 1:19-note, Nu 24:17-note cf "The Bright Morning Star"-Rev 22:16-note – even some Jewish Rabbis called Messiah Bar-Kochva, Son of a Star.) And so let us sing - "Our Lord is risen from the dead, Our Jesus is gone up on high, The powers of hell are captive led, Dragged to the portals of the sky." Amen (Charles Wesley).

THE RESURRECTION IN THE NT - Jesus Himself taught that "it is written (in the OT), that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day." (Lk 24:46-note, cf Lk 20:37-38-note) Our Lord was referring to David's affirmation that "You (God) will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One (Messiah) to undergo decay." (Ps 16:10-note) Peter quotes David explaining that "he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses." (Acts 2:31-32-note, also quoted by Paul in Acts 13:35-note) Spurgeon wrote "Into the outer prison of the grave His body might go, but into the inner prison of corruption He could not enter. He Who in soul and body was pre-eminently God's "Holy One," was loosed from the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. This is noble encouragement to all the saints; die we must, but rise we shall, and though in our case we shall see corruption, yet we shall rise to everlasting life. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION is the cause, the earnest, the guarantee, and the emblem of the rising of all His people. Let us, therefore, go to our graves as to our beds, resting our flesh among the clods as they now do upon their couches." Christ's EMPTY tomb guarantees our FULL salvation. "We are more sure to arise our

of our graves than out of our beds" (Thomas Watson) "Since Jesus is mine, I'll not fear undressing, But gladly put off these garments of clay; To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing, Since Jesus to glory through death led the way."

Christ has risen from the dead and defeated death…

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58-note

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Play **GLORIOUS DAY**

Living He loved me, Dying He saved me,
Buried He carried, My sins far away!
Rising He justified, Freely forever.
One day He's coming. Oh glorious day! Oh glorious day!

One day the grave could hold Him no longer.
One day the stone rolled away from the door.
Then He arose over death He had conquered.
Now He's ascended , My Lord evermore.

Death could not hold Him.
The grave could not keep Him
From rising again.

Play **CHRIST IS RISEN**
Let no one caught in sin remain
Inside the lie of inward shame We fix our eyes upon the cross
And run to Him who showed great love
And bled for us
Freely You bled, for us

Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling over death by death
Come awake, come awake
Come and rise up from the grave

Christ is risen from the dead
We are one with Him again
Come awake, come awake
Come and rise up from the grave

Beneath the weight of all our sin
You bow to none but heaven's will
No scheme of hell, no scoffer's crown
No burden great can hold You down
In strength You reign
Forever let Your church proclaim

Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling over death by death
Come awake, come awake!
Come and rise up from the grave

Christ is risen from the dead
We are one with Him again
Come awake, come awake!
Come and rise up from the grave

Oh death! Where is your sting?

Oh hell! Where is your victory?
Oh Church! Come stand in the light
The glory of God has defeated the night
Oh death! Where is your sting?
Oh hell! Where is your victory?
Oh Church! Come stand in the light
Our God is not dead, He's alive, He's alive

Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling over death by death
Come awake, come awake
Come and rise up from the grave

Christ is risen from the dead
We are one with Him again
Come awake, come awake
Come and rise up from the grave

Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling over death by death
Come awake, come awake!
Come and rise up from the grave

Christ is risen from the dead
We are one with Him again
Come awake, come awake!
Come and rise up from the grave

Rise up from the grave

A SERMON ON THE RESURRECTION

Good morning and thank you for being with us on this glorious day.

Let's begin with a question, one might even say, one of the most important questions of the ages...

What is the basis for hope in the Christian Life?

TODAY WE ARE GOING TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION AS WE FINISH OUR STUDY ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK FOCUSING ON the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ)

My goal today: WITH THE ENABLEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IF YOU ARE A BELIEVER I WANT YOU TO WALK OUT TODAY HAVING FULL ASSURANCE OF YOUR HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION event and the power of God in your life for eternity. IF YOU ARE A SKEPTIC, I WANT YOU TO WALK OUT TODAY HAVING HEARD THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SINGLE GREATEST EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

The Bible has much to say about hope - Paul actually addresses this concern in the church in 1 Th 4:13-note

> “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.”

The apostle Peter, eyewitness to the Resurrected Christ, says in 1 Peter 1:3-note,

> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (FROM THIS PASSAGE WHY IS OUR HOPE LIVING? BECAUSE OF JESUS’ RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD)

For many of us, we (FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST) have a hope that is blessed (Titus 2:13 - looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus), “the hope of eternal life, which God, Who cannot lie, promised long ages ago” - Titus 1:2),

Now in case your sitting there thinking, yea but can I trust Scripture? Yes Christian Scripture has withstood 2000 yrs of critique, a true, reliable, and historical account of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who is no ordinary man, a man whose death and resurrection changed the course of history for the entire world, a man whose moral teachings echo into almost every known part of the world. A man who claimed divine origin and status, doing things reserved only for the divine. billions of people throughout history have testified to thier lives being dramatically changed for the better by loving Him, He is the reason we are here today. He is the reason some of you were invited, He is the blessed hope of the believer, Our hope is not a "hope so", it a sure hope, In Jn 11:25 Jesus says to Martha,

> "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Look at congregation)

ILLUSTRATION- There is a story relating that years ago in England, two men set out to disprove Christianity. One was a well-known English jurist and literary scholar named Lord Lyttleton. The other was Gilbert West. They agreed that if Christianity was to be discredited, two things were necessary: to disprove the Resurrection and to explain the conversion of Saul of Tarsus in a way that satisfied the skeptics. The two men divided these tasks between themselves, Littleton taking the problem of Saul and West agreeing to research the Resurrection. They invested over a year for their studies, then met together to compare notes. Each one was astonished to discover that the other had become a Christian. The evidence was too strong, the truth too undeniable. It still is.

> So whether the details of this illustration are exactly as stated, the principle is clear that an honest approach to examination of the evidence for and against the resurrection will leave one with little doubt that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a true, historical event. But such a glorious truth that Jesus has conquered death for all who believe in Him demands a response, the nature of which will determine a soul's eternal destiny! As Paul declared "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31-note)

Friends, in the following minutes I will give you TRUTH FROM GOD'S WORD to think about, to help you see that the RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD IS A TRUE EVENT THAT OCCURRED IN HISTORY), (THAT HIS RESURRECTION IMPACTS US TODAY), so that we may all agree that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is our blessed hope.

Let's pray – Today we are going to read from the Gospel of Mark starting in 16:1, let me give you some context

1. Women followers were watching
2. A Jewish follower of Jesus asked for the dead body of Jesus to give him a proper burial
3. The roman army captain confirmed that Jesus was dead, a corpse
4. Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus wrapped in linen in a new tomb we pick up in !

> Mark 15:40 There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 When He was in Galilee, they would follow Him and help Him. Many other women had come up with Him to Jerusalem. 42 When it was already evening, because it was preparation day (that is, the day before the Sabbath), 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin who was himself looking forward to the kingdom of God, came and boldly went in to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 44 Pilate was surprised that He was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him whether He had already died. 45 When he found out from the centurion, he gave the corpse to Joseph. 46 After he bought some fine linen, he took Him down and wrapped Him in the linen. Then he placed Him in a tomb cut out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. 47 Now Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were watching where He was placed.
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> Mark 16:1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so they could go and anoint Him. 2 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week (OUR SUNDAY), they went to the tomb at sunrise. 3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance to the tomb for us?" 4 Looking up, they observed that the stone—which was very large—had been rolled away. 5 When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; they were amazed and alarmed. 6 "Don't be alarmed," he told them. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been resurrected! He is not here! (LET'S READ THOSE WONDERFUL WORDS AGAIN! READ THEM WITH ME...JASON, YOU THEN READ THEM SLOWLY SO THEY CAN READ WITH YOU..."HE HAS BEEN RESURRECTED. HE IS NOT HERE!" WHY IS HE NOT THERE?. THEN SPEAK BOLDLY TO THE CHURCH "HE IS RISEN!" HOPEFULLY SOMEONE WILL RESPOND -- IF ONLY ONE OR TWO DO, OR THEY DO IT VERY QUIETLY, PROMPT THEM TO SAY "HE IS

> RISEN INDEED!") See the place where they put Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see Him there just as He told you.' " 8 So they went out and started running from the tomb, because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them. And they said nothing to anyone, since they were afraid.

IS THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST TRUE OR IS IT A HOAX PERPETRATED BY CHRISTIANS FOR THE PAST 2000 YEARS?)

Paul (IN 1 COR 15:17 UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES A RADICAL STATEMENT ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH STATING THAT "**IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."** -- if it is a hoax, then your faith is useless, we are still in our sin. Christianity is not a religion of death, but of life. If Jesus did not rise, then the cross means nothing.

Here are a few reasons why we can have complete confidence in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Empty tomb – there is still no better understanding of that empty tomb than THE FACT THAT Jesus was dead, a corpse, and that His body came to life again and He left the tomb, leaving it empty. Why do we believe the angel's declaration "He has been resurrected. He is not here!"? Why do we believe in THE empty tomb?

> THOUGHTS ON EMPTY TOMB - Consider the significance of the fact that NO ONE in first-century Judea disputed the empty tomb. FIRST CENTURY WITNESSES admitted the tomb was empty (WE'LL LOOK AT THAT MORE IN THE NEXT POINT). Second and more surprising, His enemies freely admitted that the tomb was empty, and they scrambled to fabricate an explanation for it. Never forget that both the Jews and the Romans—the enemies of Christ, the ones responsible for His death—never tried for one moment to dispute the empty tomb. They could not. They could have shut down the Christian movement in short order had they only produced Christ's body. But they could not, and they did not even try.

2. The appearances of Jesus to many – Remember that throughout history the testimony of eyewitnesses has been considered one of the most reliable pieces of evidence in a court of law. So let's look at a summary of witnesses that support the angel's words "He has been resurrected. He is not here."

In Acts 1:3-note Luke writes (and I am reading from the New Living Translation)...

> "During the forty days after His crucifixion, He appeared to the apostles from time to time and proved to them in many ways that He was actually alive."

Paul expands on Luke's description in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8-note which as an aside is probably the best *definition* of the Gospel in the Bible.

> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures , 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas (Explain "this is another name for Peter"), then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

Notice the phrase Paul repeated"according the scriptures" - first remember that the word "scriptures" in the NT virtually always refers to the OT scriptures - so what is Paul doing? Clearly he is making an appeal to the witness of fulfilled OT prophecies that centuries earlier had predicted Christ's death, burial and resurrection - we don't have time to study these prophecies now but can say that their fulfillment is evidence of Christ's resurrection - in other words, if we put the OT Scriptures on the witness stand so to speak they would speak tell us the truth about the resurrection of Christ) (See Old Testament Messianic Prophecies).

LET'S SUMMARIZE -

> Jesus appeared In his physical resurrected body to eyewitnesses - first to the women in mark 16, then to Peter, then to the disciples, (some of whom doubted until he showed them the wounds in his hands and side - He proved He was not a ghost or a spirit but had a physical body by eating and drinking with them. And He did these and other things not for just one day but for 40 days.

3. RADICAL CHANGE of LIFE IN THE APOSTLES - PAUL WAS AS ORTHODOX A JEWISH MAN AS ANYONE WRITING "(I WAS) circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. (Phil 3:5-7)

AND YET WHAT DID PAUL SAY ABOUT ALL HIS ORTHODOX JEWISH CREDENTIALS AFTER HE HAD MET THE RESURRECTED CHRIST? He said “I count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3:9)

THAT’S A RADICAL CHANGE.

AND ACTS 9:20-21 SUMMARIZES PAUL’S RADICAL CHANGE - HE SAW THE RISEN JESUS IN ACTS 9:3-6 (PROBABLY NEED TO READ THIS AS IT IS PAUL’S EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTED CHRIST)

> 3 As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; 4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” 5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, 6but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.”

AND WHAT WAS THE EFFECT OF PAUL’S ENCOUNTER WITH THE RISEN CHRIST?

> ACTS 9:20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” 21 All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, “Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?”)

SO in one moment PAUL was transformed BY A VISION OF THE RISEN CHRIST from the greatest enemy the early church into the greatest missionary the world has ever known.

Add to PAUL’S EXAMPLE, THE RADICAL CHANGE THAT OCCURRED IN ALL THE APOSTLES AFTER SEEING THE RESURRECTED CHRIST A MAN NAMED **PETER THE THRICE DENIER** OF CHRIST BECAME FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST AND WAS TRANSFORMED INTO **PETER THE PROCLAIMER** OF CHRIST’S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

Paul and peter were willing to die for their belief in the resurrected Dhrist. Extrabiblical evidence supports the fact that all 12 apostles died for the sake of the gospel.

Why?= The tomb is empty, and Jesus is alive. Buddha is still in his tomb. Confucius is still in his tomb. Mohammed is still in his tomb. But as the angel SAID “HE IS NOT HERE!” Why? Because HE IS RISEN!

LET’S SUMMARIZE THE EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION:

> 1) The empty tomb testifies to the truth of the resurrection of Christ
>
> 2) Many eyewitnesses including prophecies and people testify that Jesus is alive
>
> 3) Radically changed lives testify that Jesus is alive -- in fact every person in this room who has experienced a radically changed life is a living witness to the truth that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead and is alive.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THE RESURRECTION MAKE TO GOD THE FATHER?

> When Christ died on the cross he uttered some of the greatest words ever spoken ‘**It is finished**” (which means “paid in full” -- in ancient times this exact phrase would be written across a bill of sale when the bill was paid. We all had a bill - the wages of sin (Ro 6:23-note). Jesus paid our sin bill in full when he died on the cross in our place. His resurrection showed that god the father accepted the payment of his “precious blood, as of a Lamb unblemished and spotless.” (1 Peter 1:19-note). In other words the empty tomb is the father’s cry of “**Amen**” to the son’s cry of it is finished, paid in full! The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead indicates that the father is satisfied with the son’s payment! And that is good news for us who are in Christ!

What about me? What difference does THE TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION, MAKE IN MY LIFE?

The resurrection provides us with POWER - supernatural power, resurrection power - you may be thinking there is no way that kind of power would be available to me. Sure, it was there for Jesus to raise Him from the dead, but for me in my day to day life. No way! Let's see what the Bible says.

1) PAUL’S DESIRE FOR RESURRECTION POWER:

> Paul wanted to experience resurrection power declaring….
>
> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death (Phil 3:10)

Question: Do you desire the power of His resurrection in your life?

2) PAUL DESCRIPTION OF RESURRECTION POWER:

LET'S LOOK AT ROMANS 6:3-5 PAUL BEGINS WITH A QUESTION…

> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into (IDENTIFIED WITH) Christ Jesus have been baptized into (IDENTIFIED WITH) His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life (MIGHT BE ENABLE TO LIVE A BRAND NEW QUALITY OF LIFE ONE WE WERE NEVER ABLE TO LIVE BEFORE). 5 For if we have become united with Him (in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.
>
> When we believed in Christ for salvation, in the mysterious divine working of redemption, we were crucified with Christ on the Cross (Gal 2:20), we were buried with Him and we were raised with Him to "newness of life" in the likeness of His life. In short, believers now have access to resurrection power, a power which is activated or enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Perhaps you are skeptical of everything I have said. Let me give you an example of a man who was skeptical. His name is Lee Strobel an investigative reporter and Yale trained lawyer who sought to disprove the resurrection of Christ. With a well trained legal mind, he called the same witnesses to the stand as we did today -

> (1) The witness of the empty tomb
>
> (2) The eyewitness of Biblical prophecies and Biblical people and
>
> (3) the irrefutable witness of radically transformed lives of Paul and Peter among many others.

And what was the result of Strobel's investigation? Did he disprove the resurrection of Christ? Like so many men and women before him who have looked honestly at the evidence for the resurrection, this once skeptical lawyer became a radical believer who chronicled his journey in the best selling book **THE CASE FOR CHRIST**, which has been released in as a major motion picture. (Perhaps you might consider taking a skeptical friend and having dessert and discussion afterwards?)

Recently, Lee Strobel spoke about our need for resurrection power explaining that

> "before I bowed the knee to Jesus as Lord and received the Spirit of God, I was so angry and mean that my 4yr old daughter when she heard me opening the door upon coming home from work, would gather up all her toys from the living room and go to her room and shut the door. This is heart-breaking. Yet, some months after my conversion, my daughter too at church makes the announcement that she too wants to follow Jesus, because she wants what has happened to daddy to happen to her. RESURRECTION POWER matters today. You and I can't break destructive patterns in our lives. We can't forgive freely. We can't defeat sin but He can, 1 John 4:4 "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

Question: Are you relying on your natural power or supernatural resurrection power to live the Christian life? The former will lead to frequent failure and frustration. The latter to victory over sin and an abundant life in Christ.

3) PAUL'S PRAYER FOR RESURRECTION POWER

Okay Pastor, so I desire this resurrection power and I believe it is available to me through the indwelling Holy Spirit. How? Prayer and the Word

Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus to practically experience this supernatural, resurrection power. It's a great prayer for us to pray for our spouses and each other. It's a prayer I want to pray for you, depending on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to make it real in your heart and your daily walk. Let's read it first and then I will close by praying it for every follower of Christ who desires resurrection power. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, but would like to experience God's resurrection power, then the way is open to you today, by placing your faith in the Risen Redeemer Who died in your place, paying the bill for your sin debt in full, so that you might experience His resurrection power and a be enabled to live a resurrection life now and forever in eternity.

So here is Paul's prayer for resurrection power…

> Ephesians 1:18-20-note I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope (absolute assurance) of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of HIS POWER toward us who believe. These are in accordance with

the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places

Short comment on power (dunamis**)** - The Greek word for power in simple terms means the power to accomplish supernaturally what you cannot possibly accomplish naturally! And so, it is the power to obey commands like "husbands **love** (present imperative - continually!) your wives like Christ loved the church." (Eph 5:25-note) Try to obey that one in your natural power! Or the command to forgive one another just like God has forgiven you! (Eph 4:32-note) Try that one relying on your natural power! You can see the point -- we all need this resurrection power to live a supernatural life!

Let's pray for a church filled with saints learning to daily rely on resurrection power so that the world will see that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead by looking at the supernatural lives of his followers.

Bow your heads with me

Christ Arose | Robert Lowry

Low in the grave He lay,
Jesus, my Savior,
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus, my Lord!

Refrain:
Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus, my Savior;
Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus, my Lord!

Death cannot keep his Prey,
Jesus, my Savior;
He tore the bars away,
Jesus, my Lord!

IMPORTANCE OF RESURRECTION
ROD MATTOON

NOTE: These are only an excerpt of Mattoon's notes from Chapter 16. By the Grace of God, I Am What I Am 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (page 252)

Ben Patterson shared the following story in the April 13, 2004 edition of Leadership Journal. It was entitled "Resurrection and Pandemonium." He records the events that took place in the jungles of East Asia. Imagine the mystery and delight of not just hearing, but seeing the story of Jesus for the first time, almost as an eyewitness. That's what happened to a tribe in the jungles of East Asia when missionaries showed them The Jesus Film.

Not only had these people never heard of Jesus, they had never seen a motion picture. Then, on one unforgettable evening, they saw it all, the Gospel in their own language, visible and real. Imagine again how it felt to see this good man, Jesus Christ, who healed the sick and was adored by children, held without a trial, beaten and scourged without mercy to a bloody pulp by jeering soldiers and mobs.

As they watched this, the people came unglued. They stood up and began to shout at the cruel men on the screen, demanding that this outrage stop. When nothing happened, they attacked the missionary running the projector. Perhaps he was responsible for this injustice!

The missionary was forced to stop the film and explain to these people that the story wasn't over yet. There was more to come. Consequently, they settled back onto the ground, holding their angry emotions in tenuous check. Needless to say, they were very upset.

Then came the Crucifixion, and again, the people could not hold back. They began to weep and wail with such loud grief that, once again, the film had to be stopped. The missionary again tried to calm them down, explaining that the story still wasn't over. There was more to come. So they composed themselves and sat down to see what happened next with intense attention. They were glued to the screen. It was clear they were very upset about what they were seeing.

Then came the Resurrection, and pandemonium broke out this time, but for a different reason. The gathering had spontaneously erupted into a party. The noise now was of jubilation, and it was absolutely deafening. The people were dancing and slapping each other on the back. Christ is risen! Christ is risen! He's alive! He's alive!

Again the missionary had to shut off the projector; this time he didn't tell them to calm down and wait for what was next. All that was supposed to happen — in the story and in their lives — was happening. They rejoiced in the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is a living Savior and trusted in Him! (SEE A RELATED STORY BELOW IN THE VIDEO) This is the reason the Macedonian Christians rejoiced in their trials. They had a living Savior living within them.

Beloved, rejoice! He lives in you, too, if you have put your faith in Him. You and I have a lot to be thankful for and shout about! He is risen! He is alive! Because He is alive and conquered death, He has proved that He has the power to change our lives and give to us eternal life.

The resurrection is the key focus of the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, making these 58 verses extremely valuable to the tenets of Christianity. Because the resurrection is so vital to our faith, it has come under the barrage of unbelief from skeptics, scoffers, and the like. Their attacks are like crashing waves of the sea that slap the face of majestic mountains, but to no avail. The mountains do not move and neither does the doctrine of the resurrection.

The Resurrection is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament. It is the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence of Christianity. It is our Rock of Gibraltar and the Waterloo of Infidelity, Liberalism, and Atheism. Men that have tried to disprove the resurrection have come to embrace it after studying the issue.

Dr. Phillips mentioned that years ago, two men, Lord Lyttleton and Gilbert West, both confirmed skeptics, met in England to lay plans to demolish Christianity, once and for all. These two men agreed that Christianity rested on two major premises — the resurrection of Christ and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. They felt that if they could undermine these two things, they thought, they could destroy the Christian religion.

Gilbert West undertook the task to disprove the Resurrection, and Lord Lyttleton agreed to take on the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. They agreed to separate for a period of time, pursue their studies, assemble their arguments, and meet again later to review their progress.

What happened is one of the romances of the faith. Both men were converted while looking for evidence to support their claims and both men wrote their books to prove the accuracy of the New Testament narrative. Gilbert West became the author of a book on the resurrection of Christ, a classic in its day, and Lord Lyttleton championed the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

The Resurrection is...

* the foundation of our faith,
* the focal point of our fervency,
* the focus of our faithfulness and flourishing growth,
* the fundamental fact of our fellowship with God and our future with Him,
* the footing of our fortitude and going forward for Christ,
* the fire in our hearts and fuel for our zeal.

If there was no Resurrection....

* the facts of the gospel would be false,
* our faith would be flimsy and floppy,
* our fear would be flourishing,
* our future would be foggy and floundering,
* our faithfulness would falter and fail,
* foolishness and futility would characterize the deaths of martyrs and missionaries who died for Christ in foreign lands. We, of all men, would be most miserable.

HERE IS A LINK TO A FILM THAT WILL BLOW YOUR MIND -- I SAW IT OVER 30 YEARS AGO ON A CASSETTE TAPE IN MY HOME IN AUSTIN WITH SOME OTHER CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN THE INCREDIBLE REACTION OF THE MOUK TRIBESMEN. (**It is only 24 minutes but you will not regret watching it!**)

> **Ee-Taow: The Mouk Story // Official Video by Ethnos360, founded in 1942 as New Tribes Mission**
>
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjRTBQcf-uc

Why I Preach the Literal Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Grave
1 Corinthians 15
Robert Morgan

It's wonderful to be back at the Grand Ole Opry House for the second year at Easter and I want to welcome all of you who are visiting us here at today. Where we meet doesn't matter. We're a family and we're a church. We can meet anywhere and we love each other and Christ is among us. If you're visiting with us today, we're glad to include you in our church family and as a gift of appreciation, we'd like to send you a copy of the book that has already been mentioned—The Case for Easter. We'll send it to you free and postage paid. The author, Lee Strobel, was an atheist and a skeptic, a graduate of Yale School of Law and a journalist for the Chicago Tribune. He scoffed at Christianity and regarded the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a fairy tale. But when his wife became a Christian, he decided to dig into the truth-claims of Christianity. He took two years and interviewed some of the greatest scholars and authorities on earth. He read and studied, and used his credentials as a legal affairs journalist to investigate the claims of Christ and the reliability of the historical evidence of the resurrection. The result? Today Lee Strobel is one of the leading Christian scholars in the nation and a powerful evangelist whose books are winning multitudes of people to the faith that he once tried to discredit.

This has happened over and over again. When I was in college, I went through a period in which I questioned my faith and wanted to know for sure that Christianity was really true. One of the books that helped me was Evidence That Demands A Verdict (ONLINE) by Josh McDowell. McDowell was cynical, a non-believer who scoffed at Christian truth until he met a group of students who had a peace and joy and contentment that he couldn't explain. When he asked one of the girls what made her different, she replied, "Jesus Christ." McDowell had a keen mind, and he knew that everything about Christianity hinged on the actual, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. So he mounted in intense and prolonged investigation into the historical reliability of the resurrection. He wanted to discredit Christianity. To his utter amazement, he discovered that he could not explain away the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a result, he became a Christian himself and one of the chief proponents of the faith he had once tried to destroy.

If I had time, I would tell you about Lew Wallace, who sought to discredit the resurrection and ended up becoming a Christian through his investigation, writing one of the greatest novels about the time of Christ, Ben Hur.

Albert L. Roper was a prominent Virginia attorney, a graduate of the University of Virginia and its law school, who eventually became mayor of the city of Norfolk. He once began a thorough legal investigation into the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, asking himself the question: "Can any intelligent person accept the Resurrection story?" After examining the evidence at length, he came away asking a different question: "Can any intelligent person deny the weight of this evidence?" He wrote a book entitled Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

One of the most interesting books in my library was written by a man who set out to disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was an English journalist named Frank Morison. He viewed Christianity with disfavor, deciding that if he could prove that Christ's resurrection was a mere myth, he could debunk all of Christianity. He poured over the evidence, absorbing all the information he could and marshaling all his arguments. Not only was he unable to disprove the resurrection, but he was compelled by the weight of the evidence to become a Christian himself. And his book became a powerful argument in favor of the Resurrection, entitled Who Moved the Stone?? Morison said that his book was "essentially a confession, the inner story of a man who originally set out to write one kind of book and found himself compelled by the sheer force of circumstances to write quite another."

What is this proof that is so convincing? Well, there is one passage in the Bible that summarizes and systematizes the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the first part of the chapter that we call the Resurrection Chapter in the Bible—1 Corinthians 15: (see commentary)

> Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

> For what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.
>
> 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? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 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. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

In this passage, the apostle Paul provides five pieces of evidence for the veracity of the literal resurrection of Christ from the Scripture.

The Theological Fit (1 Cor 15:1-3)

Paul begins here by showing us how the resurrection fits naturally and essentially into the overall message of the Gospel. It completes the Gospel and fits into the entire structure of biblical theology.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day….

The resurrection is so woven into the warp and woof of the biblical plan of salvation that the entire Bible is held together by it, and the entire plan of salvation depends on it. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ nothing in the Bible makes sense. Without the resurrection of Christ, the Gospel is a giant puzzle with the central piece missing. It is unresolved. It is incomplete. Frankly, it is worthless. It's like a frame that is missing the masterpiece. It's like a ring that is missing the diamond. But add the resurrection to the Gospel and we have the most cohesive and brilliant and logical system of philosophy and faith that the world has ever seen, one that satisfies both the mind and the heart.

Advance Predictions (1 Cor 15:3-4)

Second, the resurrection of Christ was predicted in advance. Look at the way the chapter begins: For what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures… The word "Scriptures" here indicates the Old Testament. I would like to read you a passage of Scripture written 700 years before Christ was born. It's from the prophet Isaiah and I'm reading it from Peterson's new paraphrase of the Bible:

He was beaten, He was tortured, but He didn't say a word.

> Like a lamb taken to be slaughtered and like a sheep being sheared,
> He took it all in silence. Justice miscarried, and He was led off…
> He died without a thought for His own welfare,
> beaten bloody for the sins of my people.
> They buried Him with the wicked,
> threw Him in a grave with a rich man,
> Even though He'd never hurt a soul
> or said one word that wasn't true.
> Still, it's what God had in mind all along,
> to crush Him with pain.
> The plan was that He give Himself as an offering for sin
> so that He'd see life come from it—life, life, and more life….

> Out of that terrible travail of soul, He'll see that it's worth it and be glad He did it.
> Through what He experienced, my Righteous One, my Servant,
> will make many "righteous ones," as he himself carries the burden of their sins.
> Therefore I'll reward him extravagantly—
> the best of everything, the highest honors…

If we had time I could show you other passages in the Old Testament, some of them pre-dating Isaiah. But I'd also like to point out that Jesus Himself predicted His death and resurrection. Now, none of us can even predict our death. I don't know if I'm going to die an hour from now, a week from now, a year from now, or fifty years from now. I don't have a single idea. But from the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection with great specificity. He told His enemies, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days." He said, "As Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and nights, so the Son of Man will be in the earth for three days." He told the disciples as they left Galilee the last time, "We're going up to Jerusalem, and I'm going to be crucified and three days later rise again."
Everything that happened was predicted in advance, according to the Scriptures.

The Eyewitnesses (1 Cor 15:5-8)

Third, we have eyewitness testimony. Look at verse 5-8. …and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all He appeared to me also,…

Following his resurrection, Jesus remained on earth for 40 days, appearing at least 10 times to various individuals and groups. The genuineness and history reliability of these accounts are well attested. Some people assume that Christ only appeared to His hardcore believers. That isn't true. First, all the disciples were skeptics; none imagined that He would rise from the dead. Second, Thomas was a vocal and determined doubter. Third, James, the Lord's half-brother, had ridiculed and rejected Christ (John 7:1-5). And fourth, Saul of Tarsus was the greatest enemy to His movement. All of these saw and were convinced and changed.

The Power of the Resurrection to Change Lives (1 Cor 15:8-11)

That leads to the fourth evidence presented in this passage—the power of the resurrection to change lives. Look at verses 8-11: Last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

No one has ever been able to explain how a bumbling, frightened, traumatized, scattered, divided group of broken men overnight became the most powerful, outspoken, united advocates for a selfless cause that the world has ever seen. No one has ever been able to explain how the most zealous opponent of Christianity was instantly transformed into the greatest missionary the world has ever known.

John Stott wrote: "Perhaps the transformation of the disciples of Jesus is the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection. It was the resurrection which transformed Peter's fear into courage, and James' doubt into faith. It was the resurrection which changed the Sabbath into Sunday and the Jewish remnant into the Christian Church. It was the resurrection which changed Saul the Pharisee into Paul the apostle, and turned his persecuting into preaching."

The Absence of Alternatives (1 Cor 15:12-20)

There is a final item mentioned in this passage—the absence of alternatives. Nothing else in all the world can provide the kind of hope that we have in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Notice these words in verse 13: If there is no resurrection of the dead, then…. And he goes on to present the dire consequences of living in a world that has no hope.

Paul says that if the resurrection isn't true, all we have left is despair. We are of all men most miserable. Our preaching is useless, our faith is in vain, and those who have died in Christ are lost. There is no other truth ever discovered by humanity by which we can be both logically consistent in our thinking and spiritually happy in our souls. Francis Schaeffer wrote in He is There and He is Not Silent: "There is no other sufficient philosophical answer. You can search through university philosophy, underground philosophy, filling station philosophy—it doesn't matter which—there is no other sufficient philosophical answer to existence." Only Christianity provides a comprehensive explanation for the reality of death and a satisfying answer for the problem of death; and only Christianity has authenticated its message by providing a leader who actually arose from the tomb.

The Bible says that Jesus Christ showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. Paul said, "Why should it seem incredible to you that God can raise the dead?" If He is the source and center of all reality, if He is the God for whom nothing is impossible, if He created

us from scratch to begin with—why should it seem incredible that God would raise the dead. Jesus is the Rock of our salvation, and on that Rock I stand.

Recently, I've been missing my father and mother a great deal. I've been homesick for them. I remember how my dad would sometimes set aside a whole day and spend it with me. I remember when he brought home an old, used bicycle for me and taught me to ride it. I remember the notes he'd send me when I was in college. I remember the wise advice he always gave me. And sometimes I still need that advice, but I can't call him anymore. I think of my mom and her housekeeping and her homemaking and her prayers and her Bible reading.

But I haven't seen the last of them, and they haven't seen the last of me. Christ rose from the dead and became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. His resurrection and life is the prototype and prophecy for me and you, if we know Christ as our Savior. Jesus said, "Because I live, you will live also." He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me shall live, even if he dies." And the Bible says, "So shall we ever be with the Lord."
Do you know Him as your Lord? How do you receive Him as Savior? Well, you do it in prayer. You say, "Lord, I believe that Jesus Christ died and rose again for me. I am willing here and now to turn my life over to you. I'm willing to follow Christ. I repent of my sins, and with Your help I will turn from my sins. I am going to follow Christ, starting today."

Will you pray that prayer? Will you receive Him as your Savior? Will you let this Easter Sunday be your day of new beginning and of new life?

The Last Adam and the New Creation

by J Vernon Mcgee

> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 ASV).

Many great men were given to the world in the first half of the twentieth century. There were inventors, tycoons, soldiers, statesmen, and scientists whose names will be recorded in history. One of them was Winston Churchill, the late prime minister of England, who was said to have resigned with the sad but significant statement, "I am now nearing the end of my journey." He surrendered, as the press expressed it, "to the weight of years." Time did what no dictator could do—removed him from his high office. Death, the greatest dictator of all, was standing in the shadows, preparing to knock at the door at the appointed hour.

It is highly significant and suggestive that we remember the death of another man who was more than a man, for the shadow of death did not lead to His resignation but to His resurrection. The shadow of death did not force Him to step down but to step up. We meet at Easter to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. He said that death was not the end of the journey, but rather the entrance into real life: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

There is certain to be a difference of opinion relative to such an important issue, but every Christian is bound to agree that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in the history of the world. It is of greater resident value to mankind than all else. It has a practical application to each one of us. Someone has said, "The hope of half a world was in that empty tomb." Let it be said also that the other half had an equally vital stake in the great demonstration of power within the confines of Joseph's tomb.

Every device has been used by the enemy to discredit the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All these explanations have the hollow ring of insincerity and counterfeit, from the very first excuse concocted by the chief priests and elders in bribing the soldiers into saying, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept" (Matthew 28:13). It is difficult to conceive of a Roman soldier reporting to his superior officer that he had slept on guard duty!

FACT

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an established fact which has historical evidence to sustain it. The evidence is available to any person who will examine and evaluate it. It can be taken into a scientific laboratory. It would be admissible in a court of law as evidence. There are creditable witnesses who have taken the witness stand. Christ showed Himself alive by "many infallible proofs."

There are two lines of evidence which are important. There is, first of all, the testimony of Christ Himself to the resurrection. This is often neglected and passed over. Very seldom is the Lord Jesus called to the witness stand, but He has a right to be heard in His own behalf. In a criminal case many men have gone to the witness stand in desperation as a last resort to save their lives. If they

are guilty, a clever lawyer will keep them off the witness stand. The Lord Jesus Christ wants to be heard. He gives His testimony eagerly, and He is a creditable witness. His enemies say that no man taught as He did. The Pharisees agreed that He was a teacher come from God. His enemies stated, “We know that thou art true.” He deserves to be heard.

Many times the Lord Jesus predicted His death and resurrection.

> Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Teacher, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth
> (Matthew 12:3, 8–40 ASV).

And again:

> From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up
> (Matthew 16:21 ASV).

Death was not the end of the journey; it was only one side of the door, but the other side of the door was resurrection.
He showed Himself alive after His resurrection. He is the faithful and true witness who says, “I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Revelation 1:18).

The second line of evidence for the resurrection of Christ is the testimony of Scripture. The statements here are abundant, but the following will suffice to show this type of evidence and the conclusive nature of it. There were many predictions concerning the resurrection in the Old Testament.

> And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself
> (Luke 24:24–27 ASV).

Peter states it in another way: “Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them” (1 Peter 1:11 ASV). Compare Psalm 16:9–10 with Acts 2:31.

In the New Testament the resurrection becomes the heart and hope of the gospel. All four gospels record the resurrection of Christ, although not all record the Sermon on the Mount or the Transfiguration or other great incidents. The resurrection was the center of the New Testament preaching. There is not a recorded sermon in the book of Acts that does not mention the resurrection. All writers of the New Testament make this central in all they present.

However, our point of emphasis is not the fact of the resurrection but the manner of it; not the statement about it but the significance of it; not the account of it but the accuracy of detail; not the history but the current value; not the record but the reality; not the proofs but the power. How can the resurrection be geared and meshed into our contemporary society?

THE BODILY RESURRECTION

There are three cogent considerations which make the resurrection of Jesus Christ meaningful for our time. These three give us a true perspective of the resurrection in our day when certain perversions of the resurrection are put forth.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a bodily resurrection. This is both primary and vital in a day when an attempt is made to spiritualize the resurrection. This sophistry reduces the resurrection to a meaningless platitude.

One group of doubters applies the word resurrection to the soul. Another group of scoffers waters it down to no more than the influence of Jesus, tying it up in the same area of thought as the influence of Shakespeare upon contemporary literature. Naturally this destroys even the thought of the personality of Christ being carried beyond death. This is unbelief in its boldest form.

While there are those who express doubt, the Scriptures are clear on this great truth. The word in Scripture which is translated as resurrection is the Greek word anastasis, which simply means to “stand up.” It refers to the body and cannot refer to the soul. It is the body that dies and it is the body that is raised up. The soul does not die; therefore it is never raised up. Those who scoff have never successfully explained how a spirit stands up and in what respect it is different when it lies down.
The entire consensus of thinking outside of conservative Christian circles spiritualizes the resurrection.

Life magazine carried a lead article on the resurrection, and the content was a repetition of the ancient heresy of spiritualizing the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A Unitarian preacher in Chicago announced for his Easter subject this amazing title, “Spring Is Here.” In Chicago spring is quite an event, but it is not quite appropriate as a subject in dealing with the resurrection of Jesus Christ!
In California, where spring does not make such an impact, a liberal preacher came up with this engaging subject for Easter, “Easter Is a Time for Flowers.” For several years now I have watched the announcements of subjects by liberal preachers, and it would be amusing if it were not so tragic. This might well be labeled Operation Evasion, an attempt to evade the hard fact and crucial truth of the bodily resurrection of Christ.

Even today many of our illustrations of resurrection fall short. An egg, a bulb, or a dormant plant do not represent a resurrection, for there is a germ of life resident in all of these.
Christ’s body was a dead body—there was no life in it. The body was raised up. “He was buried” is the clear and succinct statement of Scripture. This means a body was buried, and no body was more dead than His. It was a crucified body, and when the enemies had done with it, Scripture says He was marred more than any man. That body had been scourged, punished, and crucified; a spear had been thrust into it. There was no life in it.

Kind friends took the body down from the cross and embalmed it. When He did appear to His disciples, He said, “A spirit does not have flesh and bones such as ye see me have.” The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a bodily resurrection. This is an important consideration today.

NOT RESTORATION

The second consideration which should come to your attention is one that is most important and likewise neglected. His resurrection was not a restoration to this life; it is unique and unparalleled in the history of the world. The Bible records only one resurrection. Someone will say, “But what about Lazarus? What about the son of the widow of Nain? What about the little girl who was raised from the dead?” My friend, none of these were resurrections; all were restorations to this life. They were resuscitations.

Medical science has on record the case of a man whose heart stopped beating for five minutes, and I understand there are cases of even a longer cessation, after which the patients have been restored to life. I noticed an article recently that wanted to call that resurrection, but it is not in the biblical sense. May I impress upon you the fact that Christ did not return to this life; He was not wakening out of sleep; He did not come back from the dead; He did not put back on His old garments. Rather, He went through to the other side of death. He came out of the grave in a new, glorified body. That is something that is completely unique. He knocked both ends out of the grave. Christ made a thoroughfare of death; He went straight through and came out on the other side. That is exactly what Paul is talking about in 1 Timothy 6:16: “Who only [speaking now of Christ] hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”

A NEW CREATION

When Christ came forth from the dead, He came forth in a body, but a glorified body. Thus He introduced a new order. He began a new creation; He entered a new realm which had never been entered before. It was a new creation; it was the beginning of the church, if you please.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event ever to take place on the earth. It is more stupendous than the creation of Adam in the Garden of Eden. When Christ came back from the dead, He began a new creation. And now we read: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). It is amazing how little has been made of this creation born in His resurrection.

The scarcity of writing on this subject is appalling. We can pick up any good book dealing with theology and find that virtually the whole volume is given to the death of Christ, but rarely ever more than fifteen pages are given to His resurrection. There are very few hymns that are written on the resurrection compared to the large number written about the cross.

Why has there been this neglect of dealing with the resurrection of Christ? The answer is obvious: it is because there has not been an emphasis on the fact that He came back into a new order, to begin a new creation. And that creation, beloved, is the church. In Colossians Paul makes one of the most important statements in the Word of God; I am of the opinion that there is nothing to compare with it anywhere. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13).

That is tremendous! You and I are born into the family of Adam, and because of the entrance of sin in the family, drudgery, doubts, darkness, defeat, and death have come to us. These all came through Adam—“In Adam all die.”

As you look around you, all the folk whom you see, as well as yourself, are dying, for all are in Adam, and “in Adam all die.” But thank God that the Lord Jesus Christ came down to this earth and entered into the human family, went to the cross and died for our

sins, was put in the grave, and on the third day came out in a glorified body in the newness of life. Thus He is able to take you and me out of the kingdom of darkness and sin where we are lost and lead us into His kingdom. He is the last Adam and is forming a new creation by His resurrection from the dead.

NEWNESS OF LIFE

When you come to Jesus Christ, it is as if you come from behind the iron curtain of death, for that is what it is. We were dead in trespasses and sin, and when we come to Him, He brings life. Oh, we know that if the Lord tarries, our bodies will have to go down into the grave. But, thank God, just as His body was raised, so shall ours be raised!

In Galatians 6:15 we read this startling language: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature [creation].” Paul is saying that religion is not something that you rub on the outside; it is something that produces a new creation on the inside because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We have another verse that is very important, found in 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Now that does not mean that a few little habits have been dropped off and we have acquired new habits. What he is saying here in the phrase “old things have passed away” is that the old relationship to Adam, the old relationship to the flesh, has passed away, and now we have become new. All things are new. Now we are joined to Christ, and the language is, “if any man be in Christ [the living Christ, the resurrected Christ, the One whom we can trust today as Savior], he is [made] a new creation.”

Therefore, Paul could say to the Colossians: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1).

Then he could say further: “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Colossians 3:9, 10).

My friend, Easter is not a time for a new spring outfit; it is the time for a new life. It is not just new clothes; it is a new creation. It is not for putting something on the outside; it is having something real on the inside.

Beloved, do not become religious! Get through to Jesus Christ, the living Savior. That is the thing that is essential today. Do not just join a church, go through a ceremony, and adopt a few pious platitudes—that is but to rub religion on the surface. Get through to the living Christ! It is very important to get through to Him. The New Testament opens on that note. Notice the opening words: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.” (Matthew 1:1). As you read that, you will naturally note that it is an unusual expression for the New Testament: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.” You will not find it again even though you read through the whole of the New Testament.
Then in going back as far into the Old Testament as the Pentateuch, you will not find it in Deuteronomy or Numbers or Leviticus or Exodus. But in Genesis, the fifth chapter, we find the opening words, “This is the book of the generations of Adam.” Therefore, we have two books: the book of the generations of Adam and the book of the generation of Jesus Christ.

Every person is in the line of Adam, and “in Adam all die.” Sin has come into the human family. But, my friend, there is another book, the Lamb’s Book of Life. The New Testament opens with the book of the generation of Jesus and closes with the Lamb’s Book of Life.

The important thing is that you got into the book of Adam by birth; you get into the Lamb’s Book of Life by new birth, by trusting the resurrected Christ as your Savior. Is your name in the Lamb’s Book of Life?

ILLUSTRATIONS AND DEVOTIONALS RELATED TO THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

OUR DAILY BREAD DEVOTIONALS - related to the resurrection

- 1 Corinthians 15 Thoughts of Heaven
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Rescued
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 It's Not Manmade
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 He Paid the Toll
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 Empty Proof
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 Still New

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Not A Myth
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Proof Positive
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Our Image Problem
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Would Or Did?
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Resurrection And Life
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-13 The Love of God
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-19 Fact Not Fable
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-19 Fact Not Fable - 2
- 1 Corinthians 15:3 King of Our Lives
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 A Dead Man Cannot Save
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 An Instructed Faith
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 The Cross Speaks
- 1 Corinthians 15:4-6 The Real Deal
- 1 Corinthians 15:9 Responsibility
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 The Resurrection
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 Saving Ourselves
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 Fear or Faith
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 A Sure Hope
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-26 Where Will Death Lead
- 1 Corinthians 15:17 Faith Rooted in History
- 1 Corinthians 15:19 Living for Eternity
- 1 Corinthians 15:20 The Triumph of Hope
- 1 Corinthians 15:20 Empty Explanations
- 1 Corinthians 15:22 The Transaction
- 1 Corinthians 15:22 Your Flight Is Confirmed
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 Sunrise Hope
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 The Death of Death
- 1 Corinthians 15:34 Ants and Elephant Seals
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 What Cancer Can't Do?
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 Lifelong but Temporary
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 Dirty Windows
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 Frozen Heads
- 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 Raised in Glory
- 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 New Bodies
- 1 Corinthians 15:42-53 The Planting
- 1 Corinthians 15:43 The Butterfly
- 1 Corinthians 15:43 The Adam Legacy
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-52 The Upside Of Dying
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 When the End is a Beginning
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 In His Presence
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 A New Edition
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 Waiting on Death Row
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 The End
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-56 For Whom the Bell Tolls
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 Keep Talking About Jesus
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 Pain No More
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 Scared to Death
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 A Mystery Solved
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 Not in Vain
- 1 Corinthians 15:53-57 Dying To Live
- 1 Corinthians 15:55 Three Certainties
- 1 Corinthians 15:55 “Dead Is Dead”
- 1 Corinthians 15:55 -57 What Will Happen?
- 1 Corinthians 15:56 The Sting
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 The Defeat of Death
- 1 Corinthians 15:57 Christ Our Champion
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Behind the Building

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Driven By Gratitude
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Never A Quitter
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 Stand Firm

Selected Our Daily Bread Devotionals from preceding list

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When Christians die,
they have just begun to live.

Yes, Christ the Lord is risen,
Has come forth from the grave;
He breaks the chains of death for you
And now has power to save. —Woodruff

The resurrection is the foundation of our faith.

The resurrection assures
what Calvary secures.

The Resurrection

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 | Bible in a Year: 1 Samuel 19-21; Luke 11:29-54

> [Jesus] was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. —Romans 4:25

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the keystone of the arch of salvation. Remove it and the whole structure of the plan of salvation crumbles in the dust.

The good news of the gospel is that Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3), and that He rose again (v.4). The resurrection of Christ is the proof that His death atoned for sin.

The wages of one single sin is death. One sin brought the curse of death upon all mankind (Rom. 5:12-15). If Jesus had paid for all the sins of mankind except one, He could not have risen, for one sin would have been enough to keep Him in the tomb.

When Jesus arose, it was proof that He had completely met redemption's price. When He cried, "It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30), the work was fully done. God was satisfied and then proved the completeness of the work by raising Christ from the dead.

This victory should not only be commemorated on a special day each year but on the first day of every week—even every day! Because Christ did not remain in the tomb but conquered death by rising again, we can live in the joy of the full salvation provided by a risen, living, coming Redeemer.

What has that empty sepulcher to say to you and me?
It tells us that the Savior's death has set His people free;
He died, our sins upon Him laid;
He rose, because the debt was paid.
—Reich

The resurrection assures what Calvary secures.

By M.R. DeHaan

Not A Myth

July 29, 2012

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 | Bible in a Year: Isaiah 7-9

> After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present,

but some have fallen asleep. —1 Corinthians 15:6

I'm fascinated with history, so I eagerly watched a television special on England's great King Arthur. A theme surfaced as each historian acknowledged that there were no eyewitness accounts nor historical evidence to support the story of King Arthur, his knights, and their Round Table. Repeatedly, the story was referred to as "legend" or "mythology." It appears that the story is merely a legend woven together over centuries from fragments of other stories.

The good news of the gospel, however, is not rooted in mythology or legend but in verified fact, and it's the greatest story ever told. Paul wrote that the most important event in human history—the resurrection of Jesus Christ—is supported by actual eyewitnesses. While listing disciples who had seen the risen Christ, Paul punctuated the list of eyewitnesses by writing, "After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:6). At the time of Paul's writing, many of those witnesses were still alive and available for questioning.

The resurrection of Christ is not a myth. It is the factual pivot-point of history.

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
—Lowry

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best attested fact of ancient history. —Arnold

By Bill Crowder

FACT, NOT FABLE

"If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!"-- 1 Corinthians 15:17

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Without it we have no hope for this life nor the life to come. That's why it is important to recognize that our belief in Christ's resurrection is not based on some religious feeling, nor on unfounded rumor, but on historical fact with solid evidence to support it. In the early part of this century, a group of lawyers met in England to discuss the biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection. They wanted to see if enough information was available to make a case that would hold up in a court of law. They concluded that Christ's resurrection was one of the most well-established facts of history! In his book "Countdown," G. B. Hardy offers thought- provoking questions about the resurrection: "There are but two essential requirements: (1) Has anyone cheated death and proved it? (2) Is it available to me? Here is the complete record: Confucius' tomb -- occupied. Buddha's tomb -- occupied. Muhammad's tomb -- occupied. Jesus' tomb -- empty! Argue as you will, there is no point in following a loser." Historical evidence and countless changed lives testify that the resurrection of Jesus is a fact, not a fable! Have you put your hope in the risen Christ?-- David C. Egner

Christ's resurrection is a factor in salvation
because it is a fact of history.

Fear Or Faith?

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Jesus Christ . . . has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. —2 Timothy 1:10

You may have never heard the name of Sir Isaiah Berlin. When he died in 1997, Arthur Schlesinger eulogized him in Newsweek as "very likely the most sparkling man of the 20th century." Born in Latvia, Berlin eventually became an Oxford professor and was noted for his extraordinary academic achievements. He was admired by people from every level of society.

Ironically, in that same issue of Newsweek Sir Isaiah was quoted as saying, "I'm afraid of dying, for it could be painful. But I find death a nuisance. I object to it . . . . I'm terribly curious. I'd like to live forever."

In candidly expressing his feelings about death, that famous thinker admitted he was no different from ordinary people. All his learning could not free him from our common abhorrence. Like all of us, he was held in bondage by the fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15).

Simple faith in Jesus Christ can do for us what great learning cannot. When we believe in Him and His death-conquering resurrection, the dread of death vanishes. We can be certain about heaven because our Savior guarantees us eternal life (Jn. 11:25-

26). Because He lives, we who trust in Him will live forever in the joy and glory of His fellowship! (Jn. 14:19).

So when my latest breath
Shall rend the veil in twain,
By death I shall escape from death
And life eternal gain.
—Montgomery

Only the fear of God can remove the fear of death.

By Vernon Grounds

A Sure Hope

April 11, 2004

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

> Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. —1 Corinthians 15:20

Konrad Adenauer, former chancellor of West Germany, said, “If Jesus Christ is alive, then there is hope for the world. If not, I don’t see the slightest glimmer of hope on the horizon.” Then he added, “I believe Christ’s resurrection to be one of the best-attested facts of history.”

Christ’s resurrection and ours go together. So reasoned the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. And if Christ didn’t rise from the grave, what’s left? Empty preaching (v.14), false witnesses (v.15), a futile faith (v.17), unforgiven sins (v.17), no life after death (v.18), and hopelessness (v.19).

But Christ did rise from the grave. Paul asserted the proof for the resurrection in verses 1 through 11, listing many credible witnesses who saw the risen Lord: Peter (v.5), 500 people (v.6), all the apostles (v.7), and Paul himself (v.8).

When the Greek philosopher Socrates lay dying, his friends asked, “Shall we live again?” He could only say, “I hope so.” In contrast, the night before author and explorer Sir Walter Raleigh was beheaded, he wrote in his Bible, “From this earth, this grave, this dust, my God shall raise me up.”

If we trust in Christ as our Savior, we won’t say, “I hope so” about our own resurrection. Jesus’ resurrection gives us a sure hope.

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord the Judge shall come
And take His servants up
To their eternal home.
—Wesley

Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of our own.

By Dennis J. DeHaan

Where Will Death Lead?

November 26, 2005

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-26 | Bible in a Year: Ezekiel 27-29; 1 Peter 3

> The sting of death is sin....But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. —1 Corinthians 15:56-57

In AD 410, the Germanic barbarians known as the Goths sacked the city of Rome. During the invasion, many Christians were put to death in hideous and cruel ways.

In the midst of this tragedy, the great theologian Augustine (354-430) wrote his classic The City of God. His reflections, now nearly 16 centuries old, are still fresh today.

Augustine wrote, “The end of life puts the longest life on a par with the shortest . . . . Death becomes evil only by the retribution

which follows it. They, then, who are destined to die need not inquire about what death they are to die, but into what place death will usher them."

For those who trust Jesus Christ, death is not a sheriff dragging us off to court, but a servant ushering us into the presence of a loving Lord. The apostle Paul understood this. He looked at life and death from Christ's perspective. Since he knew where death would take him, he could boldly declare, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Every Christian can have that same courage. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we who place our faith in Him can look at death not as a period but a comma that precedes a glorious eternity with our Lord.

We never have seen, nor heard, nor imagined
The wonderful future the Lord has prepared
For those who will love and trust and receive Him—
This glorious truth He has plainly declared.
—Hess

Death is not a period—it's only a comma.

By Haddon W. Robinson

Faith Rooted In History

February 17, 1997

Read: John 20:19-29 | Bible in a Year: Leviticus 21-22; Matthew 28

If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile. —1 Corinthians 15:17

Oliver Stone produced a movie about former US President John F. Kennedy. He fudged on the facts and then defended his actions by saying that what was really important was the story's "mythic sense"—or his interpretation of the facts. Historical accuracy didn't matter.

Some religious leaders of the first century apparently used a similar tactic in recounting the resurrection of Jesus. Influenced by pagan religions that minimized the reality of the physical world, they claimed that Jesus rose in a spiritual sense, not bodily.

To the apostle Paul, this idea was heresy. He wrote to the Corinthians about the importance of accurate historical evidence. He reminded them that Jesus had appeared to Peter, to the other apostles, to James, and to more than 500 others at the same time (1 Cor. 15:5-8). Most of those eyewitnesses were still alive and could testify that Jesus' resurrection body was as real as the one He had before He died, though it possessed new powers.

Historical accuracy is crucial to the truthfulness of the Christian faith. The literal bodily resurrection supports Jesus' deity, the sufficiency of His atoning death, and the hope of eternal life. Faith in Jesus is a faith in the Truth, the Truth that is rooted in history.

Our history is marked by the filling of books
With what we have thought, said, and done;
But one book, the Bible, reveals the true way—
It tells of the Savior, God's Son.
—JDB

To know Christ is to know the truth.

By Herbert Vander Lugt

The Triumph Of Hope

April 17, 1995

Read: Job 14:1-22 | Bible in a Year: 2 Samuel 1-2; Luke 14:1-24

Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. —1 Corinthians 15:20

A little over a month before he died, the famous atheist Jean-Paul Sartre declared that he so strongly resisted feelings of despair that he would say to himself, "I know I shall die in hope." Then, in profound sadness, he would add, "But hope needs a foundation."

The patriarch Job had a foundation—his faith in God. When he was suffering and feeling that death would come soon, he experienced mixed feelings—dread, despair, and hope. There were times when it seemed as if God was his enemy. Yet he kept believing that the Lord does right and loves His people. In the end, hope triumphed over despair!

During the past 45 years, I have ministered to the spiritual needs of scores of dying people. I've observed that many genuine believers experience the same mixture of feelings Job had. They dread dying. Death is an unwelcome intruder to those who must face it in youth or during their prime years. Yet even in these situations, those who live close to Christ receive grace to die in hope.

We who believe in Jesus base our hope on one of history's best documented events—His resurrection. Moreover, when we "trust and obey," our confidence in Him grows, and hope triumphs over dread and despair.

The Christian's hope is in the Lord,
He rests secure in His sure word;
And when he's tempted to despair,
He'll choose to trust God's love and care.
—DJD

To live without god means to die without hope.

By Herbert Vander Lugt

Empty Explanations

March 31, 1997

Read: Matthew 27:62-28:15 | Bible in a Year: Judges 11-12; Luke 6:1-26

> Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. —1 Corinthians 15:20

No element in the Easter story is more troubling to unbelievers than the report that the followers of Jesus found the tomb empty that Sunday morning.

Some simply deny it, saying that the women and others went to the wrong tomb. Others think that Jesus was not quite dead when He was buried, and somehow He revived and got out of the tomb—even though the Roman soldiers had declared Him dead (Jn. 19:33), an eyewitness saw blood and water flow from the pierced body (v.34), and His body had been wrapped tightly with strips of linen containing 100 pounds of spices (v.39).

In the first century, even Christ's enemies agreed that He had died and the tomb was empty. They bribed the guards to say that the disciples stole His body (Mt. 28:11-15).

Jesus rose from the grave in a real body, and that means everything to us. When a Christian friend or loved one dies, we can be confident that we will meet again. The body may turn to dust, but God will not forget it. It will be transformed into a body perfectly designed for heaven (1 Cor. 15:35-50). This is not wishful thinking. It is an expectation based on solid evidence.

Thank You, Lord, for the empty tomb of Jesus.

Crown Him the Lord of life,
Who triumphed o'er the grave,
Who rose victorious to the strife
For those He came to save.
—Thring

The empty tomb is the foundation of our faith.

By Herbert Vander Lugt

Your Flight Is Confirmed

July 31, 2013

Read: Romans 3:21-26 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 54-56; Romans 3

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. —1 Corinthians 15:22

A heavy thunderstorm delayed our flight to Frankfurt, causing us to miss our connecting flight. We were told that we had been confirmed on another flight the next evening. But when we arrived at the gate, we were told that we were on standby. The flight was full.

When I learned this, I wondered if this was mere miscommunication or if this was how they dealt with missed flights. If passengers had been told up front that they were only on standby, they would have been unhappy. Perhaps they saved the truth until later.

Thankfully, God doesn't work that way. He clearly tells us everything we need to know to get to heaven. The Bible declares that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). God gave us the full picture of our sin nature from Genesis 3 so that He could give us His full and complete solution.

God's solution in Romans 3:24 is that we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." God sent His own sinless Son to die for our sins. His sacrifice on the cross provided us forgiveness. All we need to do is receive that free gift through faith. I'm so glad God told us the truth up front! He hasn't left us to find our own way.

Thank You, Almighty God, that You don't hide the truth from us. You showed us how completely sin has affected our lives in order to reinforce just how much Jesus Christ has delivered us from.

Christ's work makes us safe; God's Word makes us sure.

By C. P. Hia

Sunrise Hope

March 31, 2001

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 | Bible in a Year: Judges 11-12; Luke 6:1-26

Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. —Mark 16:2

Think of what it would be like if we went to bed some night knowing that the sun would not rise again the next morning. Think of the coldness, the unending darkness, the inescapable fingers of death that would gradually move across the earth. Plants would wither, flowers would wilt, trees would die, and all of life would perish for lack of sunlight.

But praise God, the sun does rise every day. Its warm, life-giving light floods the earth. The "death" of a sunset each day is followed by the "resurrection" of a sunrise the next day—and our hope is renewed. Every morning the rays of the sun remind us that the long night of sin and darkness will give way to eternal day in heaven.

Even more sure than the rising of the morning sun is the certainty of our resurrection in Jesus Christ. The dark night of death came upon Him, and His lifeless body was laid in the tomb. But He arose! And in His resurrection is the promise of our own resurrection to life. The apostle Paul declared, "Even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

The next time you see the sun rise and watch its rays brighten the morning sky, let hope fill your heart. It is a reminder of your own sure resurrection!

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord the Judge shall come
And take His servants up
To their eternal home.
—Wesley

Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of our own.

By David C. Egner

The Death Of Death

October 25, 2001

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 | Bible in a Year: Jeremiah 6-8; 1 Timothy 5

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. —1 Corinthians 15:26

When I was about 8 years old, I tried to deny the reality of death. It happened at my grandmother's funeral. Seeing her lifeless body in the casket, I recall thinking, If that should ever happen to me, I'll just get up and walk away.

I am now almost 70, and I look at death differently. I've officiated at many funerals. I've said farewell to both of my parents, all of my aunts and uncles, and many friends. I can no longer deny the harsh reality of death. It rips apart life's closest bonds, leaves hearts broken, ushers in loneliness, and opens floodgates of tears. Using pleasant-sounding words and calling funeral services "celebrations" do not change that.

There is a greater reality, though, that can give us the will to go on living with hope. Jesus Christ broke the power of death. He did "get up and walk away" from the grave. And one day this "last enemy," as Paul called it, will be destroyed forever (1 Corinthians 15:26). He said it like this: "'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vv.54-57).

Praise God! The death of death is sure!

Oh, death of Christ—the death of fear!
The death of condemnation!
Oh, life! His gift to trusting souls—
Eternal, free salvation!
—F. Hess

Because of Christ's empty tomb, we can be full of hope.

By Dennis J. DeHaan

New Bodies

November 17, 2007

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 | Bible in a Year: Ezekiel 5-7; Hebrews 12

> Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross. —Hebrews 12:2

In 1728, a young Ben Franklin composed his own tombstone epitaph:

The body of B. Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents worn out, and stript of its lettering and gilding, lies here, food for worms. Yet the work shall not be lost; for it will as he believ'd appear once more, in a new & more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by the Author.

In this epitaph, the wry wit of Franklin, the colonial Renaissance man, rings true to the biblical view of resurrection. The bodies we now possess are prone to aging, physical decline, and ultimately death. But the resurrection of Jesus Christ holds within it the promise of a new supernatural body raised in glory. The apostle Paul tells us, "The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power" (1 Cor. 15:42-43).

As life takes its course in the aging process, we have the hope of a new body that will far outshine the original. Despite our aches and pains, our destiny belongs safely in the hands of "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

New bodies will be ours someday
According to God's grand design,
Forever with the Lord to reign—
Praise God for the promise divine!
—Hess

In the twinkling of an eye . . . we shall be changed. —The Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:52)

By Dennis Fisher

The Butterfly

April 13, 2002

Read: John 5:25-29 | Bible in a Year: 1 Samuel 22-24; Luke 12:1-31

It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. —1 Corinthians 15:43

Outside my study window a beautiful monarch butterfly rested on a flower blossom. It fanned its wings slowly with exquisite grace. That stately monarch was once a repulsive green worm, feeding on milkweed leaves. Then it built a coffin for itself and hung from a twig. In time it emerged, transformed into a beautiful creature—that butterfly outside my study window.

The life cycle of the butterfly occurs in four stages: the egg, the larva, the chrysalis, and the adult. It begins with an egg—the seed of the butterfly, which hatches into an ugly worm. But that is not its destiny. The worm must “die” to give birth to the butterfly.

I see in the caterpillar a picture of sinful human beings who need the transformation of a spiritual new birth (John 3:3). The butterfly, released from its tomb in the chrysalis, illustrates the transformation that will occur when Jesus returns and changes our earthly bodies into glorious bodies fit for life in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

So, the next time you see a butterfly, remember the change that Christ made in you when you put your faith in Him—then look forward with joy to the day of resurrection when your transformation will be complete! —M. R. De Haan, M.D.

When through the portals of Glory I've passed,
I shall be changed to His image at last;
I shall be like Him in beauty to shine,
Ever to live in His presence divine.
—Brooks

Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of our own.

By M.R. DeHaan

VICTORY OVER SIN

John Sobieski, the seventeenth-century king of Poland, defeated the invading Turks near Vienna in 1683. He described his victory by rewording Caesar: "I came, I saw, God conquered." The resurrection shows God doing what human beings could never do. Like Caesar, many declare, "I conquered," thereby drawing their own winner's circle. But when it comes to raising the dead, human beings finish last. When God ripped the death mask from Jesus' face, He not only revealed His triumphant Son, He also exposed and deposed Satan, sin, and death. In conquering death, He assured our future glory; in mastering Satan and sin, He secured the possibility of victorious living. Knowing that humanity's death warrant would stand until time stopped, Paul sought here-and-now resurrection power (Philippians 3:10). He wanted to live God's good life despite sin's handicap. Paul did not expect perfection; but he believed that if God knew all about dying, surely He must know all about living. Real life had to be the life Jesus lived on earth, and the Holy Spirit could create that again in human beings (Romans 8:11). We have won wars, lined the streets to watch victory parades, and celebrated our supposed invincibleness. Yet singing the winner's song does not fill the emptiness inside. Sometimes we turn from the heroes of the hour and see the true Conqueror making His way through the crowd, and we fall at His feet.

Victory Over Death!
Read:John 5:24-30

The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth. — John 5:28-29

An ancient painting I saw recently made a deep impression on me. Its title, Anastasis, means “resurrection,” and it depicts the triumph of Christ’s victory over death in a stunning way. The Lord Jesus, newly emerged from the tomb, is pulling Adam and Eve out of their coffins to eternal life. What is so amazing about this artwork is the way it shows how spiritual and physical death, the result of the fall, were dramatically reversed by the risen Christ.

Prior to His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus predicted a future day when He will call believers into a new and glorified existence: “The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth” (John 5:28-29).

Because of Christ’s victory over death, the grave is not final. We naturally will feel sorrow and grief when those we love die and we are separated from them in this life. But the believer does not grieve as one who has no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). The witness of Jesus’ resurrection is that all Christians will one day be taken from their graves to be clothed with glorified resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-44). And so “we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17). — Dennis Fisher

Dear Lord, thank You for sacrificing Your life for our sins so that we might live. We’re thankful that because You died and rose again, we can have assurance that one day we’ll be with You in a place of no more death.

Because Christ is alive, we too shall live.

Hebrews 2:14-15 THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

At the southern tip of Africa, a cape jutting out into the ocean once caused sailors great anxiety. Many who attempted to sail around it were lost in the swirling seas. Because adverse weather conditions so often prevailed there, the region was named the Cape of Storms. A Portuguese captain determined to find a safe route through those treacherous waters so his countrymen could reach Cathay and the riches of the East Indies in safety. He succeeded, and the area was renamed the Cape of Good Hope.

We all face a great storm called death. But our Lord has already traveled through it safely and has provided a way for us to do the same. By His crucifixion and resurrection, Christ abolished eternal death for every believer and has permanently established our fellowship with Him in heaven. Although this "last enemy," physical death, can touch us temporarily, its brief control over our earthly body will end at the resurrection. The sting of death has been removed!

Now all who know Christ as Savior can face life's final voyage with confidence. Even though the sea may be rough, we will experience no terror as we pass through the "cape of good hope" and into heaven's harbor. The Master Helmsman Himself has assured our safe passage. - H G Bosch

Think of just crossing a river,
Stepping out safe on that shore,
Sadness and suffering over,
Dwelling with Christ evermore!
Anon

Christ has charted a safe course through the dark waters of death.

Hebrews 9:27 A Sure Thing

A man who was suffering from poor health decided to move to a warmer climate. Wanting to make sure he would choose the area best suited to his needs, he visited several locations. While in Arizona, he asked, "What's the average temperature?" "What about the humidity?" "How many days of sunshine are there?" When he asked, "What's the death rate?" he received this answer: "Same as where you come from, friend—one death for every birth."

In spite of medical progress in prolonging life and improving its quality, the death rate remains unchanged. "It is appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27), because "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23) and "the wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23).

It is therefore essential to live with the right perspective—that death follows life, and that after death comes the judgment. Everyone who trusts Christ for salvation will come forth from the grave "to the resurrection of life," but everyone who rejects Him will "come forth . . . to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29). For unbelievers, death seals their doom. But for believers, death leads to glory.

Wise is the person who faces up to the certainty of death. And wiser still is the one who prepares for it.— Richard De Haan

As sure as setting of the sun
In evening's western sky,
This life's brief day will soon be done
And we will have to die.
—D. De Haan

Dying is the last page of time and the first page of eternity

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O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? —1 Corinthians 15:55

Do you ever think about your inevitable death? Or are you like the influential theater tycoon Bernard Jacobs, who said, “Of all the things in the world I think least about, it’s what happens after you die. Dead is dead.”

Is that what happens when we exhale our last breath and our brain cells stop functioning? When our life has come to an end, are we totally extinguished like a flame of a candle plunged into water? That’s a common belief. But it isn’t what the Bible teaches. Hebrews 9:27 declares that it is appointed for us “to die once, but after this the judgment.”

If we have received Jesus as Savior from our sins, we need not fear facing Him. We will enter into blessed fellowship with God for all eternity, for we will be “absent from the body and . . . present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8).

Jesus taught His disciples, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

Jesus’ message in the Word of God gives hope when we face our own death or the death of someone we love. He promises that we will enter our heavenly home and be with Him forever. We can count on His word.

“I go to prepare a place for you . . .
That where I am there you may be,”
Our death is not the end of life—
Beyond, with Christ, eternity!
—Hess

Jesus’ resurrection spelled the death of Death.

Who Is This Man?
Read: Matthew 27:32-44

Our Lord . . . was . . . declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection from the dead. — Romans 1:3-4

When Kelly Steinhaus visited Harvard Square to ask college students what they thought of Jesus, the answers were respectful of Him. One said He was “a person who took care of people.” Another said, “He sounds like a cool guy.” Others rejected Him outright: “He was just a guy. I don’t think He was the Savior.” And, “I do not accept any faith system that says, ‘I am the only way to God.’ ” Some people thoughtfully question who Jesus is and some reject Him.

As Jesus faced death 2,000 years ago, many people mocked the idea that He was anyone special. “They put up over His head the accusation written against Him: ‘THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS’ ” (Matt. 27:37). Those who said, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself!” (v.40) were doubting His power. The religious people even said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save” (v.42).

In His death, Jesus may have seemed powerless. But when we read the whole story, we see that He gave His life willingly. He proved Himself to be the Son of God and limitless in power as He burst forth from the tomb. Grasp the value of His death and behold the power of His resurrection. He’s the Savior of the world! — Dave Branon

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o’er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
— Lowry

Jesus’ resurrection spelled the death of death.

Easter Every Day
Read: Hebrews 10:11-18

He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. — Matthew 28:6

Afriend of mine, who is a preschool teacher, overheard an animated conversation among her students. Little Maria threw out the question: “Who loves God?” All of them responded, “I do! I do! I do!” Billy said, “I love Jesus.” Kelly protested, “But He died.” Billy said, “Yeah, but every Easter He rises from the dead!”

Obviously, young Billy’s understanding of the meaning of Easter is still developing. We know that Jesus died once for all (Rom. 6:10; Heb. 10:12) and, of course, rose from the dead once. Three days after paying the penalty of our sins on the cross, the sinless Jesus conquered death by rising from the grave and breaking the power of sin. It was this final sacrifice of blood that opened the only way for us to have a relationship with God now and a home with Him forevermore.

“Christ died for our sins, . . . He was buried, and . . . He rose again the third day” (1 Cor. 15:3-4). He has promised that He is preparing a place for us (John 14:1-4), and He will someday return. One day we will be with our risen Savior.

That’s why every year at Eastertime—in fact, every day of the year—we have reason to celebrate the resurrection of our Savior. “I

will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 34:1). — Cindy Hess Kasper

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;
Buried, He carried my sins far away;
Rising, He justified freely forever:
One day He's coming—O glorious day! — Chapman

Christ's resurrection is cause for our celebration.

Is There Hope?

"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said." — Matthew 28:6

I sat quietly at the graveside of my father, waiting for the private family burial of my mother to begin. The funeral director carried the urn that held her ashes. My heart felt numb and my head was in a fog. How can I handle losing them both within just 3 months? In my grief I felt loss and loneliness and a little hopeless facing a future without them.

Then the pastor read about another graveside. On the first day of the week, early in the morning, women went to Jesus' tomb, carrying spices for His body (Matt. 28:1; Luke 24:1). There they were startled to find an open and empty tomb—and an angel. "Do not be afraid," he said to them (Matt. 28:5). They didn't need to be afraid of the empty tomb or of the angel, because he had good news for them.

Hope stirred when I heard the next words: "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said" (v.6). Because Jesus had come back to life, death had been conquered! Jesus reminded His followers just a few days before His death: "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).

Even though we grieve at the loss of our loved ones, we find hope through the resurrection of Jesus and His promise that there is life after death. — Anne Cetas

> Thank You, Lord, for comfort and hope. What would we do without You? Your death and resurrection provide all we need for this life and the next.
>
> Because He lives, we live.

Acts 2:24 Attempting The Impossible By Herbert Vander Lugt

Read: Matthew 27:62-28:8

God raised up [Jesus], having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. —Acts 2:24
It was the day after Jesus was crucified. His body lay in a tomb. But the chief priests and Pharisees who had engineered His crucifixion had the uneasy feeling that this might not be the end of the Jesus story. So they went to Pilate and told him that Jesus' disciples might steal His body to try to convince the people that He had fulfilled His prediction to rise from the grave. Pilate responded, "You have a guard; go your way, make [the tomb] as secure as you know how" (Matthew 27:65).

A guard was posted and the tomb was secured with an official Roman seal (v.66). The religious and political leaders did their very best to make sure that the body of Jesus remained in the tomb, but they were attempting the impossible. Death could not hold the sinless Son of God in its grasp, and on the third day He rose just as He said He would (20:19; 27:63; 28:1-8).

After the resurrection, the chief priests bribed the soldiers and told them to spread a ridiculous story about the disciples stealing the body (28:11-14). Still today skeptics offer one fanciful theory after another, attempting to disprove the resurrection of Jesus. In spite of their efforts to cast doubt on the historical record, the truth is that Jesus came out of the tomb.

We serve a living Savior!

I serve a risen Savior,
He's in the world today;
I know that He is living,
Whatever men may say.
—Ackley

Jesus arose despite His foes.

JOYOUS CELEBRATION

Joe Carter's dramatic ninth-inning home run touched off a time of joyous celebration for the Toronto Blue Jay players and fans. It turned out to be the final game of the 1993 World Series. The winners were ecstatic. Watching the game on television, I was captivated by the enthusiasm that marked the victory celebration, both on the field and in the clubhouse. I thought, why don't we see that kind of spontaneity in our worship of God?

The Lord must have delighted in His people as they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. Israelites by the thousands laughed and talked with one another as they trekked to Jerusalem. There they made booths from tree branches and camped out for 7 days. They presented gifts in the temple as a thanksgiving offering, and they did it with joy and singing (Dt. 16:13-15; Neh. 8:17).

First-century Christians carried this spirit into their observance of the Lord's Day. Historians tell us that those joyous meetings gave pagan persecutors an excuse to accuse believers of drunkenness. They were enthusiastic because they kept fresh in their minds the fact that every Sunday was a commemoration of Christ's resurrection. Let's make this a day of joyous celebration!- Herbert Vander Lugt (Our Daily Bread)

What a God we have to worship!
What a Son we have to praise!
What a future lies before us --
Everlasting love-filled days!
-- Maynard

Christ's resurrection is cause for our celebration.

The Planting

September 6, 2007

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:42-53 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 148-150; 1 Corinthians 15:29-58

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. —1 Corinthians 15:51

An 8-year-old boy, who was learning in school about the way plants grow, was intrigued when told how a tiny seed that germinates in the ground could later burst through the soil as a plant.

During that same time, he and his family attended the funeral of a family member. At the service, the pastor talked about the final resurrection of our bodies.

Several days later as the family traveled past the cemetery, the boy remarked, “That’s where they plant people.” Seeds planted in the ground and bodies buried at death had connected in his young mind.

The apostle Paul used this same illustration of planting seed to describe death, burial, and resurrection to the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 15). He said that even though the body of the believer in Christ is buried in the ground, it will one day be raised to new life (v.42). Our natural body is weak, but our spiritual body will be free from sickness, decline, and death (vv.43-44). Our new body will be glorified, endowed with power, and like Jesus’ resurrection body.

We look forward to that day when the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ are raised, and “we shall be changed” (v.52). As we anticipate that day, let’s spread the good news of our victory over death through Jesus (vv.56-57).

Our Savior’s life for us was given
That we might one day bloom in heaven,
Our mortal bodies changed to be
Like His through all eternity!
—Spicer

Christ’s resurrection guarantees our own.

By Anne Cetas

Not In Vain

August 14, 2001

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 89-90; Romans 14

Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. —1 Corinthians 15:58

In September of 2000, I attended the 100th-anniversary celebration of a small Bible college in Ohio. When the school began in 1900 with a handful of students and very little money, few observers thought it would last. A year after the doors opened, the founder died during a typhoid epidemic, and the school's prospects appeared dim.

A century later, some people wondered if the founder would have been surprised to find the school thriving. Whether or not he thought the institution would last for 100 years, everyone attending the celebration agreed that he expected the results to last forever. He knew that his work for God was of eternal value.

That's an assurance you and I can share as we live for the Lord. At the conclusion of a stirring passage on immortality and our victory in Christ over death, Paul concluded by saying, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Because our labor for Christ is never worthless or futile, we can find encouragement to keep honoring and serving Him in all that we do. J. B. Phillips summed it up well when he said, "Nothing you do for Him is ever lost or ever wasted."

Service done in Jesus' name
Lasts for all eternity,
For God's Spirit does the work,
Using folks like you and me.
—D. De Haan

Work done for God endures long after the worker dies.

By David C. McCasland

Infallible Proofs By M.R. De Haan

He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs. —Acts 1:3

The Bible says that Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). This is more than a historic statement made by Luke. It is a challenge to all the critics who would deny the literalness of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke made the amazing and startling statement that Jesus was alive, He was seen by a great multitude of people, and His resurrection was confirmed by a great number of convincing proofs.

Today, nearly 2,000 years later, no other doctrine of the Scriptures has been more persistently attacked than the bodily resurrection of our Lord. And no wonder, for it is the keystone in the great arch of all Christian doctrine.

With the resurrection of Jesus, the whole structure of Christian doctrine stands or falls. If the resurrection could be disproved, Christianity would crumble in the dust and have less credence than the wildest myths of ancient Greece and Rome.

The devil knows this, and so his earliest and most frequent attack on the truth of Christ is against His bodily resurrection. The credibility of our Christian faith rests on the "many infallible proofs" that Jesus is alive.

Christ is the life, the empty tomb
Proclaims His conquering arm;
And those who put their trust in Him
Nor death nor hell shall harm.
—Anon.

Because Christ is alive, we need not fear death.
You Can Believe It

Acts 26:8 Resurrection

Resurrection is not an incredible, irrational idea. We can see illustrations of resurrection all around us in nature. For example, Egyptian garden peas that had been buried for 3,000 years were brought out and planted on June 4, 1844. Within a few days they had germinated and broken the ground. Buried for 3,000 years—then resurrected. That's amazing!

Why then should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead? That was the surprised question of Paul to King Agrippa (Acts 26:8). If God could take some dust and breathe life into it to create a man (Gen. 2:7), why would anyone think it incredible for this same God to raise someone from the dead?

Yes, it is most credible that Jesus would arise. It would be incredible if after the miraculous life He lived He had remained in the grave. Hallelujah! Christ arose! —M. R. De Haan.

ONLY A LIVING SAVIOR COULD RESCUE A DYING WORLD.

Acts 1:1-11 Devotional By Mart De Haan

He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs. —Acts 1:3

In 1957, Lieutenant David Steeves walked out of California's Sierra Nevada Mountains 54 days after his Air Force trainer jet had disappeared. He told an unbelievable tale of how he had lived in a snowy wilderness after parachuting from his disabled plane. By the time he showed up alive, he had already been declared officially dead. When further search failed to turn up the wreckage, a hoax was suspected and Steeves was forced to resign under a cloud of doubt. More than 20 years later, however, his story was confirmed when a troop of Boy Scouts discovered the wreckage of his plane.

Another "survival story" from centuries ago is still controversial. A man by the name of Jesus Christ walked out of the Judean wilderness making claims a lot of people found difficult to believe. He was later executed and pronounced dead. But 3 days later He showed up alive. And there have been skeptics ever since.

But consider the facts of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. His integrity is well-founded. Prophets foretold His coming. Miracles supported His deity. Eyewitnesses verified His resurrection. And today the Holy Spirit confirms to anyone who is seeking to know the truth that Jesus is alive.

Yes, you can believe it! Do you?

I know that Jesus lives today,
No matter what the skeptics say;
The evidence that we must weigh
Says, "Jesus is alive!"
—Sper

The resurrection of Jesus is a fact of history that demands a response of faith.

Acts 2:14,22-39 Unreasonable Omission
By Herbert Vander Lugt

This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. —Acts 2:32.

The feature article in the December 1999 issue of Life magazine presented a generally accurate picture of the first 2,000 years of Christianity. It portrayed Jesus and His ministry favorably, acknowledged the phenomenal growth of the apostolic church, and dated the Gospels as written between AD 60 and 85. But the article never mentioned the resurrection of Jesus, without which there would have been no Christianity.

If the apostles had not been convinced that Jesus rose from the dead, they would not have been transformed from a band of cowards into bold witnesses willing to suffer and die for the message they proclaimed.

An unbeliever once admitted to me that something must have happened to convince the apostles that Jesus had conquered death. But the man was so committed to the idea that a resurrection from the dead is impossible that he refused to accept it.

That response, though, is illogical. The apostle Paul asked people who had a similar attitude, "Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?" (Acts 26:8). Why indeed! Believing the gospel is a reasonable step of faith. It is a hearty "Amen!" to Peter's triumphant declaration, "This Jesus God raised up, of which we are all witnesses!"

Christ's resurrection is rejected by some,
That He rose from the dead is denied;
Yet Jesus still pleads and asks sinners to come
And believe that for them He has died.
—Fitzhugh

The empty tomb is the foundation on which our faith is built.

Acts 2:14-36 Truth That Transforms
By Vernon C. Grounds

Read: John 21:14-17

Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. —John 21:14

Truth is truth even if it doesn't seem to affect our lives directly. But the truth that God gives us in the Bible not only opens heaven's door for us, it also changes our lives.

Ron Sider, a leading evangelical advocate for the poor, tells about a conversation he had with German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg. As they were discussing the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the theologian emphatically declared, "The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: It is a very unusual event, and second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live."

That's a challenging statement. If we really believe Jesus rose again, that belief mandates a change of life. Peter's life was turned upside-down after he saw the resurrected Christ. Once an impetuous fisherman-disciple who denied even knowing Christ after His arrest, he became a bold witness for Him (John 18:17,25,27; Acts 2:14-36).

Has belief in Jesus' resurrection changed your life? Are your goals and priorities different than they were? Are you kinder, more patient, more forgiving? Ask God what He wants to do in you, and then cooperate with Him in that change.

We want to do great things, O Lord,
To glorify Your name;
When You transform us by Your power,
We'll never be the same.
—Sper

The power that God used to raise Jesus from the dead is the same power at work in you.

Acts 26:1-8 Incredible?
By M.R. De Haan

Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead. —Acts 26:8

If Jesus did not rise from the dead and there is no future day of resurrection for us, then life loses all its meaning. If this life is all there is—just a few years of alternate crying and laughing (mostly crying) and then darkness—with Paul we can say, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

Resurrection, however, is not an incredible, irrational idea. We can see illustrations of resurrection all around us in nature. For example, Egyptian garden peas that had been buried for 3,000 years were brought out and planted on June 4, 1844. Within a few days they had germinated and broken the ground. Buried for 3,000 years—then resurrected. That's amazing!

Why then should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead? That was the surprised question of Paul to King Agrippa (Acts 26:8). If God could take some dust and breathe life into it to create a man (Gen. 2:7), why would anyone think it incredible for this same God to raise someone from the dead?

Yes, it is most credible that Jesus would arise. It would be incredible if after the miraculous life He lived He had remained in the grave. Hallelujah! Christ arose! —M. R. De Haan, M.D. (founder of RBC Ministries)

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
—Lowry

Only a living Savior could rescue a dying world.

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1 CORINTHIANS 15:20 But now Christ is risen from the dead.

Konrad Adenauer, former chancellor of West Germany, once told evangelist Billy Graham, "If Jesus Christ is alive, then there is hope for the world. If not, I don't see the slightest glimmer of hope on the horizon." Then he added, "I believe Christ's resurrection to be one of the best-attested facts of history"

Christ's resurrection and ours go together. Establish one, and the other is sure.

When Socrates lay dying, his friends asked, "Shall we live again?" He could only say "I hope so." In contrast, the night before Sir Walter Raleigh was beheaded, he wrote in his Bible, "From this earth, this grave, this dust, my God shall raise me up."

We who trust Christ don't have to say "I hope so." Jesus' resurrection gives us a sure hope for our coming resurrection. —D. J. D.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most well-established events in history. Paul cited as irrefutable evidence the more than 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after He arose, most of whom were still alive when the apostle wrote to the Corinthians. Just as certain is the fact that Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary fully paid the penalty for the sin of all mankind, so that everyone who trusts Him as Savior receives forgiveness. And it is Christ's resurrection that guarantees this. If just one sin had not been atoned for, Jesus would not have come out of the tomb. In his book The Resurrection of Jesus the Christ, Fred John Meldau underscores the significance of Jesus' resurrection by describing Israel's annual Day of Atonement ritual. Meldau writes, "If [the High Priest] offered correctly, he came forth in due time; but . . . if he failed to offer correctly, he died there behind the veil. In like manner, the coming forth of Jesus the Christ, in His resurrection, after His atonement for our sins on the cross, shows that His offering was accepted. The empty tomb is God's `Amen' to Christ's It is finished.- -R. W D.

CHRIST'S EMPTY TOMB GUARANTEES OUR FULL SALVATION.

"CELEBRATING" THE RESURRECTION

If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above Colossians 3:1

One Monday morning, following an Easter Sunday, I picked up a newspaper and saw this headline: Entire World Celebrates the Risen Christ. On the same page a number of smaller head-lines appeared, and some of them read as follows: "Trouble in Vietnam." "Blacks and Whites Clash in Chicago." "Egypt Issues Ultimatum to Israel." There were also others equally discouraging. As I saw this, I thought, how ironic! The major head-line declares: Entire World Celebrates the Risen Christ, and then the balance of the page tells how men and nations go on disregarding the blessings and grace which Christ by His death and resurrection provides. What a way to "celebrate the risen Christ!" Of course, the headline meant by "celebrate" the fact that millions had flocked to churches all over the world in a ritualistic and traditional manner; yet, that's just what is wrong with the world today. There are great numbers who go through the motions of religion, claiming to honor the risen Christ, and yet they don't really believe in Him, either in the significance of His death or in the literalness of His resurrection. It all becomes a mockery. As a result, the world is slipping even farther on its way to judgment.

But let's make this even more practical. Do you really believe that Christ arose from the dead? It will make a difference in how you act, what you say, and where you go. That's why Paul says in Colossians 3:1, 2, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

The best way for true believers to "celebrate" the resurrection is to realize that we not only have died with Christ, but also have risen with Him, and that therefore — now that we are living with Him— it is only natural that we should live for Him.

Yes, I'm saved, but do I know Him
In His resurrection power?
Does some brightness of His glory
Fill me every day and hour?
— I. G. Hallan

So let the resurrected Christ live in you that your life will be a rebuke to sin wherever you go!

D L MOODY - Thank God for the Resurrection!

At the battle of Inkerman a soldier was just able to crawl to his tent after he was struck down. When found, he was lying upon his face, his open Bible before him, his hand glued fast to the page by his life-blood which covered it. It is said that when his hand was lifted, the letters of the printed page were clearly traced upon it, and with the ever-living promise in and on his hand, they laid him in a soldier's grave. The words were—

"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."
I want a religion that can comfort even in death, that can unite me with my loved ones. Oh, what gloom and darkness would settle upon this world if it were not for the glorious doctrine of the resurrection! Thank God, the glorious morning will soon break. For a little while God asks us to be on the watch-tower, faithful to Him and waiting for the summons. Soon our Lord will come to receive His own, whether they be living or dead.

Henry Morris - Witnesses of the Resurrection

"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22).

The most important event since the creation itself was the resurrection of Christ, and it was vital that the witness of His chosen apostles focus especially on this great event. They must believe with confidence in His bodily resurrection, having been with Him throughout His ministry, heard His predictions of the resurrection, then seen the infallible proofs thereof, especially the empty tomb and His post-resurrection appearances. Both the original 11 and Matthias, chosen to replace Judas, satisfied these requirements.

Then after the coming of God's Holy Spirit at Pentecost, "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection... and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). The resurrection proved that Christ was the Creator and Savior, for only the Creator of life could defeat death.

Paul also saw the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, and thus he also could be an apostle. "Am I not an apostle?... Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" he could say (1 Cor. 9:1). Only those who had seen the risen Lord and been specifically chosen by Him could be true apostles, for they must be credible witnesses of His resurrection.

That they were! Peter could say, "We are witnesses of all things which he did... whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up" (Acts 10:39-40). Paul could say "God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them... who are his witnesses" (Acts 13:30-31).

Yes, the apostles were true witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and multitudes have received eternal salvation because they were! (Days to Remember)

Resurrections

1. The resurrection of Christ as the “firstfruits.” “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits…” (1 Cor. 15:22–23)
2. The resurrection of the church saints at the rapture. “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 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 so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16–17).
3. The resurrection of the tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4) and of the Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19) at the second coming of Christ. This glorious return will close the tribulation and mark the beginning of the millennial kingdom.
4. The resurrection of the unsaved dead at the conclusion of the millennial age (Rev. 20:5, 11–14).

Radio Bible Class

10,000 SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS

Promise of a Resurrection

Some have argued that the doctrine of a bodily resurrection was unknown to the Israelites of the Old Testament. In fact, this denial was a cardinal doctrine of the sect of the Sadducees at the time of Christ (Matthew 22:23).

Our text, however, makes it clear that this promise has always been known to the people of God. Long before Isaiah’s time, Job had said: “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And…in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25, 26). After the time of Isaiah, the promise was still known. “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). Such promises were not referring to some vague “immortality of the soul,” as taught in pagan religions, but to resurrection of the body!

First, however, the Creator must become man, die for the sins of the world, and defeat death by His own bodily resurrection. In our text, in fact, Christ is saying that Old Testament believers would be raised “together with my dead body.” This was literally fulfilled when “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” (Matthew 27:52, 53). Then, when Jesus first ascended to heaven (John 20:17), He led those who had been in “captivity” in the grave with Him into heaven (Ephesians 4:8). All who have trusted Christ in the Christian era will likewise be raised from the dead when He comes again. He has defeated death and has promised, “because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). HMM

Days of Praise, January 29, 1999

Accounts of People Raised from the Dead

1. Elijah raised the son of the Zarephath widow from the dead (1 Kings 17:17–22).
2. Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman from the dead (2 Kings 4:32–35).
3. A man was raised from the dead when his body touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:20, 21).
4. Many saints rose from the dead at the resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 27:50–53).
5. Jesus rose from the dead (Matt. 28:5–8; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:5, 6).
6. Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain from the dead (Luke 7:11–15).
7. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Luke 8:41, 42, 49–55).
8. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1–44).
9. Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36–41).
10. Eutychus was raised from the dead by Paul (Acts 20:9, 10).

J. L. Meredith, Meredith's Big Book of Bible Lists, (Inspirational Press, NY; 1980), p. 115

Raised from the Dead

Resurrection means to be raised from the dead (John 5:28, 29). The word is used in different contexts in the Bible. Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 11:43). This is a resurrection, but it is not part of the resurrection that occurs when we receive our new bodies when Christ returns (1 Thess. 4:13–18), on the last day (John 6:39–44) when the last trumpet is blown (1 Cor. 15:51–55). Lazarus died again. The resurrection of Jesus is promissory in that as we know He was raised, so we will be raised also. In that context, Jesus is the only one who has received a resurrected body. That is why He is called the first-fruit from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20–23). We will receive our bodies either at the rapture or when Jesus returns to earth.

The resurrected body is not subject to death or sin. We know very little about it except what was was manifested by Jesus after His resurrection; namely, that He was able to move about as He desired—in and out of rooms without the use of doors. Other than that, the rest is conjecture. (See 1 Cor. 15).

Source unknown

A Transformed Body

The raising and transformation of a person who has died. Resuscitation means the bringing back of people to this life after they have left it, for example, the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–15) or of Lazarus (John 11). Resurrection is more than that. Jesus rose on the third day after he died, but his new body was transformed. It was not subject to the limitations of his former earthly life (Luke 24:16, 31; John 20:19). Jesus' resurrection, following his atoning death, is central to the Christian faith (1 Cor. 15:14–19). Believers, too, will be resurrected (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:42–57).

The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Editor, (Harold Shaw Publ., Wheaton , IL; 1984), p. 356

Funeral of Brezhnev

As Vice President, George Bush represented the U.S. at the funeral of former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. Bush was deeply moved by a silent protest carried out by Brezhnev's widow. She stood motionless by the coffin until seconds before it was closed. Then, just as the soldiers touched the lid, Brezhnev's wife performed an act of great courage and hope, a gesture that must surely rank as one of the most profound acts of civil disobedience ever committed: She reached down and made the sign of the cross on her husband's chest. There in the citadel of secular, atheistic power, the wife of the man who had run it all hoped that her husband was wrong. She hoped that there was another life, and that that life was best represented by Jesus who died on the cross, and that the same Jesus might yet have mercy on her husband.

Gary Thomas, in Christianity Today, October 3, 1994, p. 26

A Sign for Unbelievers

Well over three hundred verses are concerned with the subject of Jesus' resurrection in the New Testament. We are told that this event is a sign for unbelievers (Matt. 12:38–40); cf. John 20:24–29) as well as the answer for the believer's doubt (Luke 24:38–43). It serves as the guarantee that Jesus' teachings are true (Acts 2:22–24; 1 Cor. 15:12–20) and is the center of the gospel itself (Rom. 4:24–25, 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:1–4). Further, the resurrection is the impetus for evangelism (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 10:39–43), the key indication of the believer's daily power to live the Christian life (Rom. 6:4–14, 8:9–11; Phil. 3:10) and the reason for the total commitment of our lives (Rom. 7:4; 1 Cor. 15:57–58). The resurrection even addresses the fear of death (John 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:54–58; cf. Heb. 2:14–15) and is related to the second coming of Jesus (Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7). Lastly, this event is a model of the Christian's resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2; 1 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thess. 4:13–18) and provides a foretaste of heaven for the believer (Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Peter 1:3–5). For a popular treatment that addresses these and other aspects, see Gary R. Habermas, The Centrality of the Resurrection, forthcoming. Immortality, the Other Side of Death, G.R. Habermas, J. P. Moreland (borrow) , Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992, p. 245.

Resources

- Immortality, the Other Side of Death, G.R. Habermas, J. P. Moreland (borrow) Nelson, 1992, pp. 54ff

- Evidence That Demands A Verdict (ONLINE) p. 183.

Resurrections

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2. The resurrection of the church saints at the rapture. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 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 so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16–17).

3. The resurrection of the tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4) and of the Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19) at the second coming of Christ. This glorious return will close the tribulation and mark the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

4. The resurrection of the unsaved dead at the conclusion of the millennial age (Rev. 20:5, 11–14).

Radio Bible Class

Why We Believe Jesus Rose from the Dead

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, the Christian faith is a foolish fantasy. However, if the resurrection of Christ did occur, it confirms His life, message, and atoning work. It is the basis of our hope of life beyond the grave.

Christ is alive, and the evidence is overwhelming. Here are some of the reasons we can be so sure.

1. Jesus predicted His resurrection (Matt. 16:21; Mark 9:9–10; John 2:18–22).

2. The Old Testament prophesied it (Psalm 16:10; compare Acts 2:25–31; 13:33–37).

3. The tomb was empty and the graveclothes vacant. if those who opposed Christ wished to silence His disciples, all they had to do was produce a body, but they could not (John 20:3–9).

4. Many people saw the resurrected Christ. They looked on His face, touched Him, heard His voice, and saw Him eat (Matt. 28:16–20; Luke 24:13–39; John 20:11–29; John 21:1–9; Acts 1:6–11; 1 Cor. 15:3–8).

5. The lives of the disciples were revolutionized. Though they fled and even denied Christ at the time of His arrest, they later feared no one in their proclamation of the risen Christ (Matt. 26:56, 69–75).

6. The resurrection was the central message of the early church. The church grew with an unwavering conviction that Christ had risen and was the Lord of the church (Acts 4:33; 5:30–32; Rom. 5:21).

7. Men and women today testify that the power of the risen Christ has transformed their lives. We know that Jesus is alive not only because of the historical and biblical evidence but also because He has miraculously touched our lives.

Kurt E. DeHaan

Resurrection Events

Order of the Events of the Resurrection

1. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome start for the tomb, Lk. 23:55–24:1
2. They find the stone rolled away, Lk. 24:2–9
3. Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples, Jn. 20:1–2
4. Mary, the mother of James, draws near and sees the angel, Mt. 28:1–2
5. She goes back to meet the other women following with spices
6. Meanwhile Peter and John arrive, look in and depart, Jn. 20:3–10
7. Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees two angels, then Jesus, Jn. 20:11–18
8. The risen Christ bids her tell the disciples, Jn. 20:17–18
9. Mary (mother of James) meanwhile returns with the women, Lk. 24:1–4
10. They return and see the two angels, Lk. 24:5; Mk. 16:5
11. They also hear the angel's message, Mt. 28:6–8
12. On their way to find the disciples, they are met by the risen Christ, Mt. 28:9–10

Post-resurrection Appearances

1. To Mary Magdalene Jn. 20:14–18; Mk. 16:9
2. To the women returning from the tomb Mt. 28:8–10
3. To Peter later in the day Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5
4. To the disciples going to Emmaus in the evening Lk. 24:13–31
5. To the apostles (except Thomas) Lk. 24:36–45; Jn. 20:19-24
6. To the apostles a week later (Thomas present) Jn. 20:24–29
7. In Galilee to the seven by the Lake of Tiberias Jn. 21:1–23
8. In Galilee on a mountain to the apostles and 500 believers 1 Cor. 15:6
9. At Jerusalem and Bethany again to James 1 Cor. 15:7
10. At Olivet and the ascension Acts 1:3–12
11. To Paul near Damascus Acts 9:3–6; 1 Cor. 15:8

12. To Stephen outside Jerusalem Acts 7:55
13. To Paul in the temple Acts 22:17–21; 23:11
14. To John on Patmos Rev. 1:10–19

The New Unger's Bible Handbook, Merrill F. Unger, Revised by Gary N. Larson, Moody Press, Chicago, 1984, pp. 397-398.

The Resurrection Gives Proof

1. He is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4)
2. Salvation is completed and His sacrifice accepted (Rom. 4:24–5)
3. Believers can live holy lives (Rom. 6:4)
4. We have an intercessor in glory (Rom. 8:34)
5. He is Lord (Rom. 14:9)
6. He will one day come to judge (Acts 17:31)
7. The dead will one day be raised (John 5:24–9)

From the Book of 750 Bible and Gospel Studies, 1909, George W Noble, Chicago

Resurrection of Christ Was…

1. Attributed to the Father Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12
2. Attributed to the Son John 10:18; Luke 24:6–7
3. Attributed to the Spirit 1 Peter 3:18; Rom. 8:11

From the Book of 750 Bible and Gospel Studies, 1909, George W Noble, Chicago

Resurrection of Christ Is…

1. The seal of a finished work Acts 13:29–3-
2. The sign of a glorious triumph Heb. 2:14; Eph. 4:8
3. The pledge of a coming resurrection 1 Cor. 15:20–22
4. The certainty of a future judgment Acts 17:31

From the Book of 750 Bible and Gospel Studies, 1909, George W Noble, Chicago

The Empty Tomb

Little Philip, born with Down's syndrome, attended a third-grade Sunday School class with several eight-year-old boys and girls. Typical of that age, the children did not readily accept Philip with his differences, according to an article in leadership magazine. But because of a creative teacher, they began to care about Philip and accept him as part of the group, though not fully.

The Sunday after Easter the teacher brought Leggs pantyhose containers, the kind that look like large eggs. Each receiving one, the children were told to go outside on that lovely spring day, find some symbol for new life, and put it in the egg-like container. Back in the classroom, they would share their new-life symbols, opening the containers one by one in surprise fashion. After running about the church property in wild confusion, the students returned to the classroom and placed the containers on the table.

Surrounded by the children, the teacher began to open them one by one. After each one, whether a flower, butterfly, or leaf, the class would ooh and ahh. Then one was opened, revealing nothing inside. The children exclaimed, That's stupid. That's not fair. Somebody didn't do their assignment."

Philip spoke up, "That's mine."

"Philip, you don't ever do things right!" the student retorted. "There's nothing there!"

I did so do it," Philip insisted. "I did do it. It's empty. The tomb was empty!"

Silence followed. From then on Philip became a full member of the class. He died not long afterward from an infection most normal children would have shrugged off. At the funeral this class of eight-year-olds marched up to the altar not with flowers, but with their Sunday school teacher, each to lay on it an empty pantyhose egg.

Source unknown

The Day of Resurrection

The day of resurrection?
Earth, tell it out abroad;
The Passover of gladness,
The Passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
From this world to the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over
With hymns of victory.
Now let the heavens be joyful,
Let earth her song begin;
Let the round world keep triumph,

And all that is therein.
Let all things seen and unseen
Their notes in gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord hath risen,
Our Joy that hath no end.
John of Damascus

No Resurrection—No Hope

"All who believe in Christ have hope in Him; all who believe in Him as Redeemer hope for redemption and salvation by Him; but if there be no resurrection, their hope in Him must be limited to this life. And if all their hopes in Christ lie within the compass of this life, they are in a much worse condition than the rest of humanity, especially at that time and under those conditions in which the apostles wrote, for then they were hated and persecuted by all people.

"Preachers and believers therefore have a hard lot if in this life only they have hope in Christ. Better to be anything than a Christian under these terms! It is a gross absurdity in a Christian to admit the supposition of no resurrection or future state. It would leave no hope beyond this world, and would frequently make his condition the worst in the world.

"Indeed, the Christian is by his religion crucified to this world, and taught to live upon the hope of another. Carnal pleasures are tasteless to him in a great degree, and spiritual and heavenly pleasures are those which he pants after. How sad is his case indeed, if he must be dead to worldly pleasures and yet never hope for any better!"

- Matthew Henry
Source unknown

Death

Death and darkness, get you packing,
Nothing now to man is lacking,
All your triumphs now are ended,
And what Adam marred, is mended.
- Henry Vaughan
Source unknown

Benjamin Franklin's Epitaph

In one of his lighter moments, Benjamin Franklin penned his own epitaph. He didn't profess to be a born-again Christian, but it seems he must have been influenced by Paul's teaching of the resurrection of the body. Here's what he wrote:

The Body of B. Franklin, Printer
Like the Cover of an old Book
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its Lettering and Guilding,
Lies here, Food for Worms,
But the Work shall not be wholly lost:
For it will, as he believ'd,
Appear once more
In a new & more perfect Edition,
Corrected and amended by the Author.
Source unknown

LARRY MOYER - LET'S TALK ABOUT SHOW ME HOW TO ILLUSTRATE EVANGELISTIC SERMONS

RESURRECTION

♦ When Nap Clark in Starkville, Mississippi, preached his wife's funeral, they had been married six years. He knew she had cancer when he married her. Following the service, someone said to him, "You must be a great man." He said, "No, I'm not. But I have a great Savior." —Source unknown

Note: Don't rely upon non-Christians who are not indwelt by the Spirit to make the proper application. Instead, come out of the illustration saying, "Why could He say that? What did Nap Clark mean by a great Savior? Nap knew he would see her again in the presence of the King. Christ's resurrection guaranteed his wife's resurrection."

♦ Jesus has three basic credentials: (1) the impact of His life, through His miracles and teachings, upon history; (2) fulfilled prophecy in His life; (3) His resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ and Christianity stand or fall together.—Used by permission. Josh

McDowell, The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Thomas Nelson Publishers, p. 203, www.josh.org

♦ When Christ arose from the dead, He put an exclamation point behind Calvary! If Christ hadn't risen, you are still in your sin. —R. Larry Moyer

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: What God did through His Son is illustrated well by something that happened in the California Sierra Mountains years ago.

Evidence has been found to confirm a survival story that had been doubted for years. In 1957, Lieutenant David Steeves walked out of the California Sierras fifty-four days after his air force trainer jet had disappeared. He related an unbelievable tale of how he had lived in a snowy wilderness after parachuting from his disabled plane. By the time he showed up alive, he had already been declared officially dead by the air force. When further search failed to turn up the wreckage, a hoax was suspected, and Steeves was forced to resign under a cloud of doubt. His original story, however, has now been confirmed. A troop of Boy Scouts found the wreckage of his plane—more than twenty years later. —Our Daily Bread, 1980

POSSIBLE EXIT: God did not wait twenty-three years. Instead He waited three days. He then took His Son, stood Him before others, and through His Word stands Him before you and says, "Will you believe?"

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: Any serious thinker recognizes the fact that in order for Jesus Christ to have supernaturally risen from the grave, He had to be God. Time magazine published an article written by a man named Pinchas Lapide, who, although he does not accept Jesus as the Messiah, thinks it's a possibility that He arose from the grave. Someone responded to his article in a letter to the editor:

Pinchas Lapide's logic escapes me. He believes it is a possibility that Jesus was resurrected by God. At the same time he does not accept Jesus as the Messiah. But Jesus said that He was the Messiah. Why would God resurrect a liar!—Eva Zaleckas from Skillman, NJ, Time, Letter to the Editor, June 4, 1979

POSSIBLE EXIT: Stop and think about it. If Jesus Christ was resurrected supernaturally, He must be God.

Note: You may disagree with this logic and say, "God could resurrect a liar if He wanted to. God can do anything." But don't miss the point that apparently Time magazine thought the letter had enough merit to print it.

♦ Konrad Adenauer, former chancellor of West Germany, once told evangelist Billy Graham, "If Jesus Christ is alive, then there is hope for the world. If not, I don't see the slightest glimmer of hope on the horizon." Then he added, "I believe Christ's resurrection to be one of the best-attested facts of history."—Our Daily Bread, 1992

♦ No tabloid will ever print the startling news that the mummified body of Jesus of Nazareth has been discovered in [the Old City of] Jerusalem.—Peter Marshall

♦ Professor Edwin Selwyn, in his work, The Approach to Christianity, said, "The fact that Christ rose from the dead on the third day in full continuity of body and soul, and passed into a mode of new relationships with those who knew Him on earth—that fact seems as secure as historical evidence can make it." —Bill Bright, Revolution Now

♦ Some people on the street were asked by the reporter what epitaph they intended to use on their graves. One lady chose "Here today, here tomorrow," which she says is simple and true.—Leslie B. Flynn, What Easter Should Do for You

♦ A conversation between a Christian missionary and a Muslim illustrates a point. The Muslim wanted to impress the missionary with what he considered to be the superiority of Islam. So he said, "When we go to Mecca, we at least find a coffin, but when you Christians go to Jerusalem, your Mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave." To this the believer replied, "That is just the difference. Mohammed is dead and in his coffin. And all other systems of religion and philosophy are in their coffins. But Christ is risen, and all power in heaven and on earth is given to Him! He is alive forevermore!" —Our Daily Bread, 1985

♦ A world leader once asked Billy Graham, "Do you believe in the resurrection?" He answered, "Yes, and if I didn't I'd have no gospel to preach." The leader answered, "I know of no other hope for mankind."—Konrad Adenauer, former German Chancellor, to Billy Graham,

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: Years ago, before there was a cure for diphtheria, it took the lives of many children.

I read about a family who lost three children to diphtheria in the same week. Only a three-year-old girl escaped the disease. On the following Easter morning, the father, mother, and child attended church. Because the father was the Sunday school superintendent, he led the session when all the classes met together. As he read the Easter message from the Bible, many were weeping, but the father and mother remained calm and serene. When Sunday school was over a fifteen-year-old boy was walking home with his father. "The superintendent and his wife must really believe the Easter story," said the boy. His father answered, "All Christians do."

"Not the way they do!" replied the young man.
—Our Daily Bread, 1994

POSSIBLE EXIT: The resurrection is not just a truth; it is a life-changing truth.

♦ The resurrection is the Father's "Amen" to the Sons "It is finished." —Our Daily Bread, 1997

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: The resurrection is not just an aspect of Christian belief; it is the reason the church of Jesus Christ exists.

To try to explain [the church] without reference to the resurrection is as hopeless as trying to explain Roman history without reference to Julius Caesar. —Dr. Daniel Fuller, Easter Faith and History

POSSIBLE EXIT: Without Caesar, there would be no Roman history as we know it. Without the resurrected Christ, there would be no church.

♦ Some people have not wanted to believe the biblical account of the resurrection, so they offer various theories to explain the empty tomb. One of these is the fraud theory, which claims someone stole the body of Jesus to make it appear that He rose from the dead.

The answer to the fraud theory lies in the fact that Pilate posted Roman guards at the tomb. We read in Matthew 28 that the Jewish leaders bribed these guards to say someone stole the body while they slept. If the guards were asleep, how could they be sure of what happened? An even stronger argument against the fraud theory is the martyrdom suffered by the disciples for their faith in Christ. People do not die for the sake of a fraud.
Another false explanation of the empty tomb is the swoon theory, which claims Jesus never really died. He supposedly lost consciousness on the cross and was put in the tomb. Later He "came to" and escaped.
Answers to the swoon theory are many. The gospel accounts report terrible wounds suffered by Jesus (John 19:30-37). A spear was thrust into his side by a Roman soldier. Also, there is this question: how could a man with nail wounds in his hands and feet and a spear wound in his side move a heavy stone and walk away?
Another false explanation of the empty tomb is the ghost theory, which maintains the disciples imagined they saw Jesus in some kind of vision. This theory holds that the disciples wanted Jesus to be alive so much that they produced a subjective image of Him in their mind's eye.
The disciples, however, were not the "vision-seeing type" and they were certainly not in the "vision-seeing-mood" following the resurrection. They did not expect the resurrection: they scattered in haste and unbelief and hid away in fear of the authorities. Furthermore, when Jesus appeared to the Eleven in the upper room (Luke 24:36-43), He ate with them and invited them to touch Him to find out that He had flesh and bones.
Unbelieving people may argue their pet theories on the resurrection, but the plain statement of facts in the Bible still remains. No one has disproved the biblical account. The only explanation for the empty tomb is the resurrection of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.—Fritz Ridenour, Tell It Like It Is (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1976). Used by permission.

♦ It may be said that the historical evidence for the resurrection is stronger than for any other miracle anywhere narrated.—William Lyon Phelps, Human Nature and the Gospel

♦ The angel rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb, not to let the living Lord out, but to let the unconvinced outsiders in. —Donald Grey Barnhouse

♦ If you think that the resurrection of Christ was a hoax and that someone was just trying to cover up the fact that His body was stolen, do yourself a favor and read Loving God by Charles Colson. He explains that twelve of the most powerful men in the United States could not keep the lie together about Watergate for even three weeks. If the resurrection were a lie, no one could have prevented the truth from getting out. —R. Larry Moyer

♦ Jesus Christ answered His critics at the resurrection. They could no longer say, "If you [are] the Son of God,..." (As Satan did in the wilderness and the soldiers did at the cross.) He was who He claimed to be. The resurrection established that as fact!

High atop Mount Coronado overlooking Rio de Janeiro stands a huge statue of Jesus Christ. The stone monument has stood for nearly sixty years, but now it's beginning to crumble. According to Veja, a Sao Paulo newsmagazine, "The greatest risk is that a piece of the statue may fall on some tourist. Two million people a year visit Christ the Redeemer."
As Brazilians look for ways to save the statue, perhaps it would be appropriate to point out an important truth about Christ. Even if the statue were to fall, the real Jesus still stands. —Our Daily Bread, 1990

♦ In a joking manner during a discussion on the resurrection of Christ, a Muslim student, studying in Uruguay, said to me, "You poor Christians, you don't know where you're going!" "We go to the tomb of our master and we have his body... you go to the tomb of your master and it's..."

I noticed his bewilderment and remarked, "Go ahead, say it! It's empty!" —Used by permission. Josh McDowell, The Resurrection Factor, p. 97, Here's Life Publishers, www.josh.org

♦POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: The resurrection of Christ is not just good news about Christ; it is great news for all those who know Christ. His victory is also ours.

British writer Guy King told of standing on a railroad station platform, waiting for a train from London. Another train pulled into the station from the opposite direction, and the members of a soccer team got out. The players were returning from a game in another city. News had not reached home as to the outcome of the game, so those awaiting the team didn't know if they had won or lost. A small boy wiggled his way through the crowd and asked one of the players the score. As soon as he heard it, he ran excitedly up and down the platform shouting, "We won! We won!" That youngster was brimming with joy because he identified himself with the players. In one sense, their victory was his victory. —Our Daily Bread, 1987

POSSIBLE EXIT: The resurrection of Christ allows everyone who knows Him to be excited.

♦ Surprisingly, I couldn't refute Christianity because I couldn't explain away one crucial event in history—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. —Used by permission. Josh McDowell, The Resurrection Factor, p. 8, Here's Life Publishers, www.josh.org

♦ A British agnostic laid out the challenge a few years ago when he said, "Let's not discuss the other miracles. Let's discuss the resurrection. If the resurrection is true the other miracles are easily explained. If the resurrection is not true, the other miracles do not matter." —Haddon Robinson

♦ Oxford University was well acquainted with evaluating evidence to determine historical fact. After carefully sifting the historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ, this great scholar said, "I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proven by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

John Copley, a professor at Cambridge University, who rose to the highest office in the judgeship in England and was recognized as one of the greatest legal minds in British history, has said, "I know pretty well what evidence is, and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never been broken down yet."
Lord Darling, who was another chief justice of England, said, "No intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring a verdict that the resurrection story is true."
I have a friend who graduated first in his university class, a brilliant thinker. Somebody once asked him why he embraced Christianity. My friend replied, "For the simple reason that I cannot refute the resurrection."
I wish everyone would try to refute the resurrection of Christ because that would mean that each would conduct his own investigation. I think of some skeptics in history who started out to disprove the resurrection but when confronted with the evidence came to faith in Christ.
One was Professor Simon Greenleaf. He was professor of law and head of the law department at Harvard University, one of the finest universities in the United States. He had written a book, The Principles of Legal Evidence, and three of his students challenged Professor Greenleaf to take his book and apply it to the resurrection of Christ and investigate the reliability of the evidence of Jesus rising from the dead. Professor Greenleaf accepted their challenge. After his study he said, "There's no better documented historical evidence than that for the resurrection of Christ." And he added, "I am convinced that you can convince any jury in England or America that Christ rose from the dead."
I think of two others who were professors at Oxford University. One was Lord Lyttleton and the other was Dr. Gilbert West. They wanted to destroy the "myth" of Christianity. They knew that they must disprove first the resurrection of Christ and, second, the changed lives of the disciples. Dr. West intended to show the fallacy of the resurrection, and Lord Lyttleton was to explain away the radical conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who had tried to destroy first-century Christians. One year later both men had become Christians. In the book that they wrote about their investigation of the evidence for the resurrection, they stated, "Reject not until you have investigated." —John Maisel, Is Jesus God? Used by permission.

♦ The resurrection could not have been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all concerned. —Paul Althaus, Die Wahrheit des kirchlichen Osterglaubens

♦ Mentioned no less than 108 times, the resurrection of Christ is the crowning miracle of the New Testament. —Source unknown

♦ Dr. William Ryan Phelps of Yale University has always said, "The test question for the life of Christ is the resurrection." —John Maisel, Is Jesus God? Used by permission.

♦ Historian Philip Schaff, who wrote The History of the Christian Churchy said, "The definitive test question to Christianity is the

resurrection. It is either the greatest miracle or the greatest delusion which history records." —John Maisel, Is Jesus God? Used by permission.
Note: Observe that the above two illustrations come from the same source. Reading is your biggest source of illustrations, and books or articles can render multiple illustrations.

♦ A little boy stood at a show window of a large department store looking at a famous painting of Jesus, which was on display. As the little boy was gazing intently upon the picture, which was familiar to him as he had seen it many times in his Sunday school material, a man came up and stood beside him. That man too began to look at the picture. Noticing him, the little fellow opened up the conversation by saying, "That's Jesus, who came into the world a long time ago to die for us." The man merely said, "Is that so?" That was all that was needed to start the little fellow off on the entire story. He began to tell the familiar story of Jesus' birth. He told about the manger, the shepherds, the wise men, the star, and the angels, then the little fellow told about the trip into Egypt to escape Herod. He omitted none of the details. Then he launched into a description of the ministry of Jesus, which included His parables and miracles. He concluded the narrative by telling of the Lord's arrest, of the unfair trial, and of the crucifixion. The little boy had been well taught in Sunday school and had given accurately all the story up to that point. After describing the death and burial of Jesus he ceased, and both the man and boy stood gazing in silence at the picture. The man turned and walked away thoughtfully. After he had gone a little distance he heard the cry of the little boy behind him. "Hey, mister, wait a minute!" The man stopped as the little fellow came running up breathlessly and exclaimed. "Hey mister! I forgot the most important part about the story of Jesus. He rose from the dead!"—J. Vernon McGee, The Empty Tomb, Proof of Life After Death

♦ Talleyrand, that statesman of France who had been a bishop as a churchman but had denied it all..., was a man of intelligence. One day a French philosopher who tried to start a new religion came to him for advice. "My religion is going slow. What am I to do?" Talleyrand replied, "It is a difficult thing to start a new religion. So difficult that I hardly know what to advise. Still, there is one thing that will insure success. Get yourself crucified and rise again on the third day." —J. Vernon McGee, The Empty Tomb, Proof of Life After Death

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: If there would have been no resurrection, I would not be standing in front of you today. There would be nothing good to tell you. All the news I'd have for you would be of defeat, not victory.

When I was in my late twenties, I went to Winchester, England, famous for its college and its cathedral. The keeper of the cathedral used to show people around the cathedral. He had been there for many, many years, and he loved to tell the story of how the news of the Battle of Waterloo came to England. There were no telegrams in those days, but everyone knew that Wellington was facing Napoleon in a great battle. A sailing ship sent news to the signalman on top of Winchester Cathedral. He signaled to another man on a hill, and thus news of the battle was relayed by hand semaphore, from station to station to London and all across England. When the ship came in, the signalman on board semaphored the first word—"Wellington." The next word was "defeated," and then the fog came down and the ship could not be seen. "Wellington defeated" went across England, and there was great gloom all over the countryside. After two or three hours the fog lifted and the signal came through "Wellington defeated the enemy." Then all England rejoiced.
There was that day when they put the body of Christ in the tomb. Men might have said, "Everything is ended. All is gone, sin has conquered, man is defeated, wrong has triumphed." But then three days later the fog lifted, Christ rose from the dead, the enemy was defeated. —Donald Grey Barnhouse

POSSIBLE EXIT: The news is not "Christ defeated." The news is "Christ defeated the enemy."

♦ Thomas Arnold, longtime headmaster of Rugby, author of a famous three-volume history of Rome, and appointed to the Chair of Modern History of Oxford, found the evidence highly impressive. "I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort to the understanding of a fair inquirer than that Christ died and rose again from the dead.—Haddon Robinson

☺ A minister in Darby, Pennsylvania, tells this one: The four-year-old son of an undertaker was puzzled one Easter morning when he heard about the resurrection. "Do you mean," he asked, "that Jesus really rose up from the dead?" "Oh, yes," the teacher said. The boy shook his head. "I know my daddy didn't take care of him after he died," the boy said. "His never get up again!" —quoted in Faith, Hope, and Hilarity: The Child's Eye View of Religion by Dick Van Dyke

♦ Professor J. N. D. Anderson writes of the testimony of the appearances [of Jesus]: The most drastic way of dismissing the evidence would be to say that these stories were mere fabrications, that they were pure lies. But so far as I know, not a single critic today would take such an attitude. In fact, it would really be an impossible position. Think of the number of witnesses, men and women who gave the world the highest ethical teaching it has ever known, and who even on the testimony of their enemies lived it out in their lives. Think of the physiological absurdity of picturing a little band of defeated cowards cowering in an upper room one day and a few days later transformed into a company that no persecution could silence—and then attempting to attribute this

dramatic change to nothing more convincing than a miserable fabrication they were trying to foist upon the world. That simply wouldn't make sense. —James A. Scudder, Your Secret to Spiritual Success

♦ Alger Hiss, a State Department employee, was convicted of Communistic connections on the sole testimony of one, Whitaker Chambers. The defendant was charged with conveying secret documents to a foreign power. If true, this was an act of betrayal of country that was despicable. Therefore, the evidence was considered carefully and seriously. The defense sought to discredit the witness whose testimony was the basis of decision. The court was convinced that the witness was reliable and gave credence to his story when the facts appeared to corroborate his statements.—J. Vernon McGee, The Empty Tomb, Proof of Life After Death
Note: The smoother the transition, the more meaningful it will be. Here, a smooth transition would be, "The witnesses to the resurrection must be deemed reliable when the facts behind the empty tomb corroborate their statements."

♦ The evidence points unmistakably to the fact that on the third day Jesus rose. This was the conclusion to which a former Chief Justice of England, Lord Darling, came. At a private dinner party the talk turned to the truth of Christianity, and particularly to a certain book dealing with the resurrection. Placing his fingertips together, assuming a judicial attitude, and speaking with a quiet emphasis that was extraordinarily impressive, he said, "We, as Christians, are asked to take a very great deal on trust; the teachings, for example, and the miracles of Jesus. If we had to take all on trust, I, for one, should be skeptical. The crux of the problem of whether Jesus was, or was not, what He proclaimed Himself to be, must surely depend upon the truth or otherwise of the resurrection. On that greatest point we are not merely asked to have faith. In its favor as living truth there exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true." —Used by permission. Josh McDowell, The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, p. 219, Thomas Nelson Publishers, www.josh.org.

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: Do you know what makes the resurrection of Christ exciting? For those who know Him, you will carry your infirmities to the grave but not beyond it. Joni Eareckson Tada was paralyzed in a diving accident at age seventeen.

In an article she told about saying to her assistant one day, "File this, Francie, and make copies of this letter, would you? And, oh, yes, would you please pull out the sofa bed one more time?" Her paralysis blocks her body from feeling pain, and the only way she knows something is wrong is when her temperature and blood pressure begin to rise. She intuitively senses something is wrong. Oftentimes it's because she has unknowingly punctured her body or has rubbed against something and suffered a bruise or laceration. Sometimes she has to ask her assistant to undress her and examine her body to see what's wrong.
In the article Joni said she was in the midst of one of these episodes—they happen three or four times a month—and looked up to the ceiling and said aloud, "I want to quit this. Where do I go to resign from this stupid paralysis?"
As Francie was leaving the office that day she ducked out the door, then stuck her head back in and said, "I bet you can't wait for the resurrection."
Joni wrote, "My eyes dampened again, but this time they were tears of relief and hope. I squeezed back my tears and dreamed what I've dreamed of a thousand times—the promise of the resurrection. A flood of other hopeful promises filled my mind. When we see him we shall be like him... The perishable shall put on the imperishable... The corruptible, that which is incorruptible... That which is sown in weakness will be raised in power... He has given us an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. I opened my eyes and said out loud with a smile, 'Come quickly, Lord Jesus'" —David Jeremiah, The Things That Matter

POSSIBLE EXIT: Christ's resurrection guarantees that for those who have trusted Christ, your infirmities are only temporary. One day you will not only be alive; you will be alive and completely healthy.

☺ A man goes on vacation to the Holy Land with his wife and mother-in-law. Halfway through their trip, the mother-in-law dies. So the man goes to an undertaker, who explains that they can ship the body home, but it'll cost $5,000. Or they can bury her in the Holy Land for $150.

The son-in-law decides to ship her home.
"Are you sure?" asks the undertaker. "That's an awfully big expense. And I can assure you we do a very nice burial here."
The son-in-law explained, "Two thousand years ago they buried a person here, and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance." —Internet humor

♦ What does everyone ask for to confirm anything? One word says it all: evidence. We want fingerprints, blood samples, DNA, eyewitnesses, or anything else that will answer our questions about what happened. The resurrection is not without major evidence. One piece of evidence is a major prophecy of the Old Testament, which aligns perfectly with Christ and rules out any impostors. All one needs is the objectivity and integrity to examine the evidence and let it speak for itself. —R. Larry Moyer

♦ Philip Schaff, in his History of the Christian Church, makes this statement: "The Christian church rests on the resurrection of its founder. Without this fact the church could never have been born, or if born, it would soon have died a natural death. The miracle of the resurrection and the existence of Christianity are so closely connected that they must stand or fall together." —J. Vernon

♦ We have an answer from heaven. Along with those visiting Lenin's tomb in the Red Square before those Kremlin walls, I lined up and finally made my way to the tomb. On the right side, on the lower side, and on the left side, you look into the dead and silent face of Nicholi Lenin. He died in 1924 at the age of fifty-four. His death came as a shock to the Communist world. When he died, the Grand Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Russia gave the announcement to the world, and I quote it verbatim. The Grand Presidium said, "No man has ever wrought as Lenin. He was the greatest teacher of all time. He was the greatest leader among men. He was the author of a new social order. He was the savior of the world." But he is dead! As I walked on this side and that side and the other side, I turned over in my mind that pronouncement of the Supreme Soviet, "He was the greatest teacher, the greatest leader, the author of a new social order. He was the savior of the world." But he is dead. Look at him. He is still and silent in death. Unknown to the Grand Presidium, unknown to the Supreme Soviet that sits in the Kremlin, they spelled their ultimate defeat in the very tense of the word that they used. "He WAS the greatest teacher." But he is dead. "He WAS the greatest leader." Dead. "He WAS the author of a new social order." Dead. "He WAS the savior of the world." He is dead. Look at him.

But with what glory and with what triumph does the Christian stand in this dark world, raise his voice, and lift his face toward heaven and say, "Christ is alive!" He was raised from the dead! There is no tomb before any wall that you can visit and say, "There Christ is buried." Why not? Because He is alive and He reigns in heaven, and someday He shall reign in earth. He is, He is, He is! He IS the greatest teacher of all time. He IS the greatest leader among men. He IS the author of a new social order. He IS the Savior of the world. He IS our coming, reigning King.

—W. A. Criswell

Note: As a historical illustration, this one is powerful. Lenin was the man who turned Russia into a Communist country. Here, all you need to do is use the words the Grand Presidium used in announcing Lenin's death to the world, "He was the..., he was the..., he was the..., he was the...," then use the illustration the same way W. A. Criswell did to say, "But that's the problem, He was the..., He was the..., He was the..., He was the..., Christ is the..., and He still is today, He is..., and He still is today." Review all four with the conclusion, "He still is today."

♦ I agonized and wept with a friend of mine who very suddenly lost his wife. Humanly speaking, her death could have been prevented. Medical personnel never warned her of the side effects of an infection-preventing drug and the need to discontinue taking it if she experienced those side effects. My friends words, however, were, "Jesus was raised. Jesus is alive. And so is my wife." —R. Larry Moyer

Note: In using a story like this one, you have to read it and not tell it in order to get the full force of Habermas's comments. However, think of non-Christians. Remove any parts of the story that are unnecessary to keep the reading as short as possible. Also remove parts they could not identify with. For example, in this story, the fourth and sixth paragraphs could be removed, and it would make the story stronger.

♦ What can bring a child of the scientific age to accept the historicity of the resurrection? To begin with, he might examine the evidence. Ambrose Flemming, winner of the Faraday Medal and former professor at the University of London, suggested this when he wrote, "Study at your leisure the records in the four gospels of these events and you will see nothing in the certainly ascertained facts or principles of science that forbids belief in this miracle. If that study is pursued with what eminent lawyers have called 'willing mind' it will engender deep assurance that the Christian church is not founded on fiction... but on historical and actual events." —Haddon Robinson

♦ Dr. Carl F. Henry, one of America's leading contemporary theologians, said of Jesus, "He planted the only durable rumor of hope amid the widespread despair of a hopeless world."—Source unknown

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: You might be wondering why the resurrection is so important Here's the way one person expressed it.

Theologian Gerald O'Collins put it this way: "In a profound sense, Christianity without the resurrection is not simply Christianity without its final chapter. It is not Christianity at all."—Lee Strobel, The Case for Christ

POSSIBLE EXIT: If there was no resurrection, I would not be speaking to you today. I'd have nothing to tell you.

♦ Everyone knows that there are only two inevitabilities in life: death and taxes. The supreme question today, it seems, is not so much what you believe about Easter, but whether or not you have filed your income tax return. At least that is what many think. And so in this week before the IRS filing deadline, it is surely appropriate to consider the more inevitable of those two—not taxes, but death. For resurrection had no meaning if you do not view it against the background of death. —Ray Stedman, sermon on John 11:25-26, "The Answer to Death"

Note: There is no need to quote Ray Stedman. Use his thought to provide your own thinking particularly when Easter falls just before income tax filing deadline.

♦ John G. Paton, a nineteenth-century missionary to the South Seas, met opposition while leaving his home in Scotland and going to

preach to the cannibalistic peoples of the New Hebrides Island. A well-meaning church member moaned to him, "The cannibals, the cannibals! You will be eaten by the cannibals!" Without hesitation, he replied, "I confess to you that if I can live and die serving my Lord Jesus Christ, it makes no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms; for in that great day of resurrection, my body will rise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer!" —Michael P. Andrus, First Evangelical Free Church of St. Louis County, Missouri

♦ The resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely the best attested fact in ancient history. —Howard Bushnell in H. A. Ironside's 1 Corinthians

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: What is the best evidence you can have in court? Its an eyewitness. There were many eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ. Here is one statement

If I brought the evidence for the resurrection into court, Jesus Christ would be found guilty of having risen from the dead. —J. N. D. Anderson

POSSIBLE EXIT: A person can look at the evidence and say, "I trust Christ" Or "I reject Christ." That person cannot honestly and objectively say, "It never happened."

♦ It would be terrible to wake up on Sunday morning and not be able to shout, "He is risen," but it would be more terrible to get up and not want to.—Source unknown

♦ Ten of the followers of Jesus died violent deaths rather than deny what they had witnessed. —Haddon Robinson

♦ The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a subject of momentous impact. It is either the grandest event since time was or the greatest deception ever foisted on a credulous world. Even Strauss, an opponent of the faith, recognized its significance and spoke of it as a "burning question."—R. D. Johnston, Resurrection: Myth or Miracle?
Note: Illustrations are sometimes more helpful for information's sake or to help state something in different words than they are for illustrative value. This is one example.

♦ It was Dr. Howard Kelly of Johns Hopkins University who said, "What does the resurrection mean to me? A clear hope vested in my risen Savior, which I could not have, had Christ never risen from the dead." —J. Vernon McGee, The Empty Tomb, Proof of Life After Death Gospel Light, 1968

♦ I readily believe those witnesses who get their throats cut.—Blaise Pascal quoted by J. Vernon McGee in The Empty Tomb

♦ Ten Reasons to Believe Jesus Rose from the Dead

1. A public execution assured His death. As Jesus stood before Pilate, religious leaders accused Him of claiming to be king. The crowd demanded His death. On a hill outside Jerusalem, he was crucified between two criminals (Matt. 27:32-50).
2. A high official secured the gravesite. Because Jesus had predicted He would rise in three days, Pilate ordered the official seal of Rome to be put on the tomb. To enforce the order, Roman soldiers stood guard (Matt. 27:62-66).
3. In spite of the guards, the grave was found empty. On the morning after the Sabbath, the huge stone across the entrance to the tomb had been moved, and Jesus' body was gone (Matt. 28:5-10).
4. Many people claimed to have seen Him alive. The apostle Paul wrote that the resurrected Christ had been seen by Peter, the twelve apostles, more than five hundred people, James, and Paul himself (1 Cor. 15:5-8).
5. His apostles were dramatically changed. When Jesus was arrested, the apostles ran for their lives. But they went through a dramatic change. Within a few weeks, they were standing boldly before the ones who had crucified their leader (Acts 4:1-12).
6. Witnesses were willing to die for their claims. Few would die for what they know to be a lie. Jesus' disciples died for their claims to have seen Him alive and well during the forty days following His resurrection.
7. Jewish believers changed their day of worship. The Sabbath day of rest and worship had been basic to the Jewish way of life. Yet Jewish followers of Christ began worshiping with Gentile believers on the first day of the week, the day He rose from the dead (1 Cor. 16:2).
8. Although Jesus' resurrection was not expected, it had been predicted. The disciples expected Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel. Their minds were so fixed on the coming of a messianic political kingdom that they didn't anticipate His establishment of a spiritual kingdom through His death (Isa. 53:10).
9. Christs resurrection was a fitting climax to a miraculous life. It's appropriate that a life characterized by miracles would conclude with the miracle of resurrection (John 21:25).
10. It fits the experience of those who trust Him. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead also gives new life to us (Rom. 8:11).—Campus Journal, Radio Bible Class, April 1994

♦ Hopelessness means being on the wrong side of Easter. —Harold E. Kohn, quoted in Christian Clippings, February 1988

♦ The blood of Christ is the price of redemption. The resurrection is the proof of it. —Source unknown

♦ POSSIBLE ENTRANCE: If you were to attempt to destroy Christianity, where would you start? Billy Graham, as one of the most respected preachers in America, said,

If I were an enemy of Christianity, I'd aim right at the resurrection, because that's the heart of Christianity.—Billy Graham in Time, April 10, 1995

POSSIBLE EXIT: Do you know what's interesting? No one has ever been able to disprove the resurrection.

♦ C. S. Lewis [was] a literary genius, a scholar in Medieval and Renaissance literature and a former professor at Cambridge University in England. He had a very strong bias against Christianity and believed Christians to be totally wrong. After evaluating the evidence for Christianity, his knowledge of literary criticism forced him to treat the gospel record as a trustworthy account. He called himself "the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." —David Bishop, Christian Truth and Its Defense for U.S. Marines, 1997

GEORGE SWEETING - Resurrection

In the early 1920s, Nikolai Bukharin was sent from Moscow to Kiev to address a vast anti-God rally. For an hour he abused and ridiculed the Christian faith until it seemed as if the whole structure of belief was in ruins. Questions were invited. A priest of the Orthodox church rose and asked leave to speak. He faced the people and gave them the ancient Easter greeting, "Christ is risen." Instantly the whole vast assembly rose to its feet, and the reply came back like a crash of breakers against the cliff, "He is risen indeed."
G. S.

Germany's Count Bismarck is said to have remarked, "Without the hope of eternal life, this life is not worth the effort of getting dressed in the morning." There is a great deal of truth in that statement. "For what is your life?" asks James, "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).
Job knew something of the brevity and futility of life. "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle," he said, "and are spent without hope" (Job 7:6). "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:1-2).
Isaiah wrote, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth" (Isaiah 40:6-7).
Yes, this life is brief and full of sorrows. And if our existence ends with the grave, what is the use? That is what Paul meant when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:19, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." But the hope that Jesus gives goes beyond the grave, and His resurrection is the proof of it.
Paul goes on to say, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (v. 20). He is the firstfruits. The harvest is yet to come. All who put their trust in Him will be a part of that great harvest of souls that will rise from the dead.
G. S.

In Glendale, California, at Forest Lawn Cemetery hundreds of people each year stand before two huge paintings. One pictures the crucifixion of Christ. The other depicts His resurrection. In the second painting the artist has pictured an empty tomb with an angel near the entrance. In the foreground stands the figure of the risen Christ. But the striking feature of that huge canvas is a vast throng of people, back in the misty background, stretching into the distance and out of sight, suggesting the multitude who will be raised from the dead because Jesus first died and rose for them.
G. S.

The Result of the Resurrection
1. It guarantees the deity of the Lord Jesus. He is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).
2. It is essential to our justification. (See Rom. 4:25; 8:34.) Because Jesus rose from the dead all who believe in Him are justified "from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).
3. It makes possible the forgiveness of sins. (See 1 Cor. 15:17.)
4. It makes certain a final judgment "because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he bath ordained; whereof he bath given assurance unto all men, in that he bath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).
5. It furnishes every believer with a deathless hope. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). As He rose from the dead and liveth forever, so will the bodies of believers be raised from the tomb. This is the unshakable confidence of the saints.
HAROLD LINDSELL and CHARLES WOODBRIDGE

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.
MARTIN LUTHER

GEORGE NOBLE - RESURRECTION

WORLD A GRAVE.—The grave is a bulwark cast up between time and Eternity. Our eye may not pierce it. Below works corruption, and the form which once contained a beloved spirit is crumbling into earth. We also are following after. Soon our dust will rest there too; the dust of our children and of our children's children will soon be added. Generations bloom and generations fade; those who enter upon the surface of the earth are sinking again below it. The world is nothing more than one single, great grave. As it swing's around the sun in its accustomed orbit, like a true mother it carries the dust of her child in her bosom!

PALERMO VAULT.—Madame de Gasparin visited a great vault at Palermo, where thousands of skeletons, in every variety of position, were seen. There were the mingled bones and the nameless dust, an indistinguishable mass! She took a handful of the dust, gazed upon it, and was filled with doubt of the possibility of the resurrection of the dead. She hastened back into the daylight, when she suddenly saw the symbol I.N.R.I.; and a voice echoed in her heart, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" She responded. "Yea, verily, Thou wilt do it;" and from that day forth never doubted the doctrine of the resurrection.

SNOW-COVERED SOLDIERS.—An army chaplain tells of having bivouacked with his brigade upon an open field, each soldier wrapped in his blanket, but with nothing over him but the cold, cloudy sky. On arising next morning, all over that field were little mounds like new-made graves, each covered with a drapery of snow, which had fallen two or three inches deep during the night, and covered every sleeping soldier, as if in the winding-sheet of death. While he was gazing upon the strange spectacle, here and there a man began to stir, rise, shake himself, and stand forth in momentary amazement at the sight. It was a symbol of the resurrection.

EMBLEMS OF THE RESURRECTION.— God has filled all Nature with continual emblems of this doctrine. What is night but the death of day? What is morning but its resurrection from the shades of darkness? We see the insect-tribe give their evidence—sometimes crawling, as a worm, then lying in apparent torpor; then bursting the shell, and, with wings of beauty and activity, skimming the atmosphere.
RETAIN IDENTITY.—As, when different seeds are cast into the ground together, each produces its proper herb; so the bodies of men, though mingled in the dust, shall each receive its own identity in the resurrection.

NO GRAVE HIDDEN.—Alaric, the King of the Goths, had a curious grave. He had besieged, and levied an enormous tribute upon Rome, and was proceeding to Sicily, when he died suddenly. It is related that his victorious army caused their captives to turn aside the course of the river Busentinus, to make his grave in the bed of the river; and then, when they had buried him in it, and restored the waters to their former channel, they slew upon the spot all who had been engaged in the work, that none might tell the secret to the Romans.

MONICA'S CONFIDENCE.—When friends of Monica, mother of Augustine, expressed their wonder that she did not fear to leave her body so far from her country, she said: "Nothing is far from God, and I do not fear that He will not know where to find me at the resurrection."

JIM WILSON - ILLUSTRATIONS

RESURRECTION
A new survey conducted by the Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University found most Americans do not believe they will experience a resurrection of their bodies when they die. Only 36 percent of adults surveyed said "yes" when asked, "Do you believe that, after you die, your physical body will be resurrected someday?" Fifty-four percent said they did not believe, and 10 percent were undecided.
Two major creeds of the Christian faith, the Nicene Creed and the Apostle's Creed, which were meant to unify Christian teaching, state a belief in the future resurrection of the physical body. Previous surveys found evidence Americans do hold to other elements of these creeds. A survey in 2003 found 63 percent were "absolutely certain" Jesus died and physically rose from the dead.
—http://www.shns.com/shns/g_index2.cfm?action=detail&pk=RESURRECTION-04-05-06. Submitted by Jim Sandell.

1 Corinthians 15:19-21 (CEV) "If our hope in Christ is good only for this life, we are worse off than anyone else. [20] But Christ has been raised to life! And he makes us certain that others will also be raised to life. [21] Just as we will die because of Adam, we will be raised to life because of Christ."

RESURRECTION
In the motion picture, "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe", King Aslan the Lion has been brutally killed by the White Witch. Leaving his body on the stone table, the witch goes out to war with the followers of Aslan. Lucy and Susan are dejectedly mourning the loss of the great king. Turning to walk away, the ground shakes and they hear the sound of stone cracking. The girls turn and see Aslan's body is gone.
Wondering what has happened, the girls are amazed as Aslan appears at the top of the hill, with the morning sun rising behind him. Susan and Lucy run to him, but can't believe what they are seeing. Susan asks, "But we saw the knife..."
Her question is cut short by Aslan's response. He explains the Evil Witch did not understand the true meaning of sacrifice. Aslan proclaims, "When a willing victim who has committed no treachery is killed in a traitor's stead, the stone table will crack and even death itself will turn backwards."
—"The Chronicles of Narnia, The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe", Scene 20 Aslan's Resurrection 1:52:38—1:54:50.

Romans 4:25 (GW) "Jesus, our Lord, was handed over to death because of our failures and was brought back to life so that we could receive God's approval."

RESURRECTION
A documentary produced by Oscar-wining director James Cameron claims that an ancient tomb discovered in a suburb of Jerusalem contained ancient caskets used to store bones that may have contained the bones of Jesus and his family. Cameron says if true, the implications of his find are huge. He suggests that contrary to Christian beliefs, Jesus was married and had a family. The fact that Jesus had an ossuary contradicts the major tenet of the Christian faith that Jesus was resurrected and ascended to heaven.
Attallah Hana, A Greek orthodox clergyman in Jerusalem says, "The historical, religious, and archaeological evidence show that the place where Jesus was buried is the Church of the Resurrection. He added the documentary "contradicts the religious principles and the historic and spiritual principles that we hold tightly to." Stephen Pfann, a biblical scholar from the University of the Holy land in Jerusalem agrees saying, "I don't think that Christians are going to buy into this. But skeptics, in general, would like to see something that pokes holes into the story that so many people hold dear." Pfann says Cameron's theories are not plausible.
Despite the controversy, Cameron says he is not a theologian, nor an archaeologist. He added, "I'm a documentary film maker."
—http://uspolitics.tribe.net/thread/e3b1ef54-ca7d-47f7-8997-94d1b4e4bad4. Submitted by Jim Sandell.

1 Corinthians 15:14 (CEV) "And if Christ wasn't raised to life, our message is worthless, and so is your faith."

Excursus
The Order of Resurrections

There are several resurrection “events” which transpire in history, each of which falls into one of two categories. All but the last resurrection event make up the **FIRST RESURRECTION. The point is that you want to participate in the FIRST RESURRECTION! The SECOND RESURRECTION is at the Great While Throne where all will be thrown into the Lake of Fire**

- Click here for more explanation of this table from Tony Garland
- The two Resurrections - "First" and "Second" - charted out.
- See timing of resurrections

Order	Which	Timing	Who	Description	Scriptures
1	**First**	The Third Day	Jesus Christ	The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”	Mt. 28:1-7; Mk 16:1-11; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-18; 1 Cor. 15:20
2	**First**	Shortly after Christ’s Resurrection.	A Few OT Saints	At the earthquake attending the crucifixion, graves were opened. Shortly after the resurrection of Christ, these saints were raised	Mt. 27:50-53
3	**First**	Before the Tribulation.	Church	The resurrection of Church-age believers at the Rapture.	Jn 14:3; 1Th. 4:13-18; 1Cor. 15:50-53

4	**First**	Middle of the Tribulation	Two Witnesses	God's two witnesses will be raised after being killed by The Beast.	Rev. 11:11-12
5	**First**	After Jacob's Trouble or Great Tribulation	OT Saints	Old Testament saints will be resurrected to enter the Millennial Kingdom	Da 12:1- 2 Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:13-14
6	**First**	Beginning of Millennial Kingdom.	Tribulation Martyrs	The Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected so that they can rule and reign with Christ.	Rev. 20:4-6
7	**Second**	End of Millennial Kingdom	Unbelieving Dead	At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, the final resurrection will consist of all of the unbelieving, wicked dead. They will be found guilty at the Great White Throne Judgment and cast into the Lake of Fire.	Rev. 20:11-15

A Transformed Body

The raising and transformation of a person who has died. Resuscitation means the bringing back of people to this life after they have left it, for example, the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–15) or of Lazarus (John 11). Resurrection is more than that. Jesus rose on the third day after he died, but his new body was transformed. It was not subject to the limitations of his former earthly life (Luke 24:16, 31; John 20:19). Jesus' resurrection, following his atoning death, is central to the Christian faith (1 Cor. 15:14–19). Believers, too, will be resurrected (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:42–57).

The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Editor, (Harold Shaw Publ., Wheaton , IL; 1984), p. 356 (10,000 Sermon Illustrations)

Adrian Rogers - What If There had Been No Easter?

It's an unthinkable question: What if there had been no Easter? What if death had conquered and Jesus Christ stayed in the tomb?

Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

There are six tragic things that would be true if Christ is still in that grave.

1. Preaching Would Be Profitless

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain."

If Christ is still in the grave, you're wasting your time; I'm wasting mine. Preaching would be profitless, vain and empty.

"This is the gospel, that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried and rose again the third day…" (1 Cor 15:4).

Without that, there is no gospel to preach.

2. Faith Would Be Foolish

Faith is no better than its object. Why put faith in a dead Messiah? A dead man can't save anyone. Our faith in Jesus Christ is worthless if He is still in the grave.

But He is shown to be "the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). Confucius died; he's dead. Buddha died; he's dead. Mohammad died; he's dead. Jesus Christ is alive. But if He's still in the grave, faith is foolish.

3. The Disciples Are Deceivers

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God… (1 Cor 15:15)

Paul is not saying "We're mistaken." It's one thing to be mistaken; it's another to be a false witness. Paul asserts, "If Jesus Christ is still in the grave, then we're telling a lie."

Were the disciples liars? If so, why would they lie? The disciples openly exclaimed, “Listen, we have seen Him! We have touched Him!” And they died as martyrs: tortured, persecuted, burned at the stake, torn apart by lions. Hypocrites and martyrs are not made of the same stuff. People tell lies to get out of trouble, not into trouble. Few will die for what they know is a lie.

Was Peter a con man, John the apostle a crook? Was Paul a known perjurer? If Christ is still in the grave, the disciples would be deceivers.

4. Sin Would Be Sovereign
“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” (1 Cor 15:17)

You have no hope of forgiveness apart from the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. If He is in the grave, then God did not accept the sacrifice of Calvary.

How do we know that Jesus Christ is not just a religious fanatic with a martyr complex who happened to get crucified? How do we know God accepted the sacrifice of Calvary? The resurrection. No resurrection, no Savior. No Savior, no forgiveness. His death without His resurrection cannot save anybody.

5. Death Has Dominion
“Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (1 Cor 15:18)

Do you have a loved one who has died? If Jesus Christ be not raised, then they’ve perished. It is over. Life is nothing but a cruel joke. All we can look forward to is the downward spiral to the grave. No! Something as glorious as human life has more meaning than that. Those fallen asleep in Christ have not perished. The Lord Jesus Christ grappled with the iron bars of death and is victorious. Death does not have dominion! Christ arose!

6. The Future Is Fearful
“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” (1 Cor 15:19)

Without the resurrection, we’re just poor, deluded fools, of all people most miserable. A wise man once said, “If Jesus Christ is still in that grave, nothing really matters. But if Jesus Christ came out of that grave, nothing but that really matters.”

A Hope Steadfast and Sure
Jesus Christ took the sting out of sin, the dread out of death, the gloom out of the grave, and gave us a hope that is steadfast and sure. Preaching is profitable, faith is feasible, the disciples are dependable, sin has been subdued, death has been defeated, and the future is fabulous…for we know where we’re headed! (Love Worth Finding)

Adrian Rogers - The Day Death Died

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.... For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.
1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 25-26

One day, a mother and her two children were in the park having a wonderful time. They were enjoying the outdoors until a big bumblebee landed on little Brother and then stung him! He began to cry and scream like any child would as the wound on his arm became swollen. The bee was still buzzing around, and his little sister was petrified. The mother comforted her daughter by saying, "Darling, wait a minute." As she was wiping Brother's tears away, she said, "Look down here on your brother's arm." Right in the middle of that swelling was the bumblebee's stinger. "You see that, Sweetheart? That bee can buzz and fight you, but he can't hurt you. You see, he can only sting once and he has left his stinger in your brother."

While death is a decided fact, Death is also a defeated foe. We are able to laugh in the face of Death if we know the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to tell you, friend, Death may buzz around you and frighten you, but our elder brother, the Lord Jesus, bears that sting. Jesus took the sting out of Death, and He has given us a hope that is steadfast and sure.

Jesus told Death that he couldn't keep Him. You see — Jesus willingly and vicariously laid down His life. The wages of sin is death, but Jesus was not a sinner and did not have to die. Jesus willingly, voluntarily, vicariously laid down His life.

Death thought he had a victory. Old King Death laid his icy, bony hands on the Lord Jesus Christ and shackled Him with the bonds of death. Jesus lay cold, stiff, and stark in that tomb. Old King Death possibly clapped his bony hands, shrieked a hoarse laugh and declared, "I have Him! He's mine. I am going to keep Him." But after three days, the Lord Jesus stirred, and He majestically rose from His resting place. Jesus did more than survive death. He defeated and decimated death in that tomb.

He got up from that stone slab. He turned around and folded the napkin that covered His face. There was no hurry. He was in complete control. I love that part — when the disciples entered the tomb, they found that folded napkin placed over His face.

There was that cruel king of terrors, Death, sitting upon the throne. But this time Death had a terrified look on his face because no one had done this before. Jesus began to walk toward him. Jesus reached up and pulled him from the throne and cast him to the floor. Death cowered in the corner of that tomb that had become his dungeon. Jesus put His heel on the neck of Death and reached down and pulled the sting out of Death. Jesus put the crown upon His own head and walked out of that tomb a risen, living, victorious Savior. Hallelujah!

One of these days there's going to come a shout from the lips of the Lord Jesus when He returns. And that shout will go into the tombs of those who have named Him as Lord and Savior. We're going to hear the shout that Lazarus heard. Our Lord is going to step down from His majestic throne in glory, and I believe the shout will be: "Come forth, come forth." The voice of the Savior will roll through the length and breadth of Satan's ruined empire and bring it crashing down.

At the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, the seas will heave and give up the dead which are in them; the winding sheets of the deserts will give up the dead that are in them; the battlefields of this world will give up the dead that are in them and the graveyards will, perhaps, look like plowed fields as the Lord Jesus shouts, "Come forth."

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:55 (Love Worth Finding)

Adrian Rogers - In the Twinkling of an Eye

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Someone has said that the average person blinks somewhere between 10,000 to 20,000 times a day. In one of those times, Jesus could return! That is an awesome thought.

In the twinkling of an eye, Jesus is going to step from His throne in glory at the right hand of the Father in heaven and make His way back to this earth. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Christians refer to being caught up as the rapture. The Greek word for this is harpagδsometha and it means a catching away. The picture of this coming promise reminds me of a metal scrapyard near my childhood home. Now, what does a scrap yard and the rapture have in common? Well, let me illustrate.

In that scrap yard, there was a great magnet on a crane that would pick up metal. If you swung that magnet across the ground, not every piece of metal would rise — only that which was made of iron. Why is that? Because the iron has the same nature as the magnet.

In the same way, if you have the same nature as Jesus Christ, then when He comes again, you're going up whether you're beneath the ground or on top of the ground. Simply said, if you've been heaven-born you will be heaven-bound. That sounds fantastic, but what assurance do I have this will happen?

The Saving Work Of Our Lord
The second coming of Jesus Christ is necessary to fulfill the purpose of God. The incarnation without the coronation would be like height without depth and east without west. And our salvation without our glorification is no salvation at all. His resurrection is the pledge of our resurrection.

The Sure Word Of Our Lord
There are all kinds of prophets and psychics who think they know what's going to happen in the future, but they don't know. The devil himself doesn't know. Only God knows the future. Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). The key is He is coming — and the Word of God promises that.

How can you tell that it is close?
Jesus said, "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:38-39).

Life will be going along as usual and then suddenly, Jesus is going to come. That's the reason Jesus said, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

Why is He coming again?
First of all, it is a rescue. Before God allows the great tribulation, He is going to take His church out. Before God declares war on this world, He's going to call his nationals home.

Second, it is for a reunion. All believers are going to be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. And the songwriter says we'll sing and shout and dance about, the Lamb will dry our tears — we'll have a grand homecoming week the first ten thousand years.

And then it will be reception. Jesus is coming to receive us to Himself. Jesus said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). (Love Worth Finding)

Vance Havner - "It" or "Him"?
I am the resurrection and the life. John 11:25.
Martha believed in the resurrection, but Jesus moved her from the doctrinal to the personal: "I am the resurrection." The resurrection is not an "It"—"I am the resurrection." We stop too often with "It." We get an idea, a theory, a doctrine in our heads, but we do not get Him in our hearts. We go in for sanctification, the victorious life, the second coming, and we believe and preach them with a vengeance, but we do not find our hearts warmed—we have "It," not Him. We seek this blessing and that, we join this group and that, we think, "Now I have found it," but all that is true and all that we need is in Him. We can even major on prayer and faith and not get through to Him. We can search the Scriptures and not come to Him that we might have life.
There is no life in any It, however good. He is our life In Him all things—including all the "Its"—consist (Day by Day)

Paul's Confession - Vance Havner
But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers. Acts 24:14.
In his matchless defense before Felix Paul is not ashamed to belong to the sect of the Nazarenes. He declares his position. He asserts revelation behind him: "Believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." He anticipates the resurrection ahead of him: "And have hope toward God... that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." He takes responsibility upon him: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience Void of offense toward God and toward men."
It is possible to be very orthodox about revelation and the resurrection and yet to assume little responsibility for the way we live today. Paul lived today with that day always in mind. Faith in revelation past and hope in the resurrection to come should show up in godly exercise now (Day by Day)

Report or Reality? - Vance Havner
But him they saw not. Luke 24:24.
The Emmaus disciples had the testimony of the women, the angels and other disciples, but, like these other disciples, they had not seen the risen Lord Himself to know Him. Something had happened. Jesus was not in the grave. But they had not seen Him.
There is a lot of talk about the ressurection that gets no farther than that. Something happened. The grave is empty. But there is lacking the vibrant witness, "We have seen the Lord!"
Much is said about the return of Christ that lacks the warmth of His person. We discuss the program of events, what is going to happen, "but him we see not."
That goes for all the great truths about Him. We tell what others have said. We discuss the matter. But Him we see not. Our eyes are holden. A few minutes later these Emmaus disciples were not like the same persons. They had a glowing testimony, and as they related it He appeared again! **His resurrection was no longer a Report but a Reality!**(Day by Day)

The Best Is yet to Be - Vance Havner
So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption. I Corinthians 15:42.
Aches and pains remind us that the bodies we got from old Adam are disintegrating. Some of them look very unsightly before they are laid away, and often we are acutely aware that "it is sown in corruption." But the Christian anticipates a new body "like unto his glorious body" as part of his salvation. Everything we have by the first Adam is marred and spoiled and subject to decay. But when we become sons of God by faith in the last Adam we are assured a new body incorruptible, beyond the reach of sin, disease, and death. This removes the sense of futility such as torments the aging man without hope in Christ. The best is yet to be! Lovely landscapes may wither, but a new earth looms ahead. Strong bodies may fail, but they only make way for new ones infinitely stronger. Loved ones go, but all who are in Christ are headed for a better reunion. "Christians never meet for the last time."
Cheer up, my brother! This body may never die, for Jesus may come first. But at worst it is only sown in corruption for an incorruptible harvest. We can't lose!

Resurrection - Vance Havner
The Emmaus disciples trudged along a lonely road in sadness. It was the third day since His crucifixion and, since it was, they should have been singing instead of sighing for He had promised to rise on that very day!

Martha believed in the resurrection, but Jesus moved her from the doctrinal to the personal: "I am the resurrection." The resurrection is not an "It"—"I am the resurrection." We stop too often with "It."

"Intending After Easter" - Vance Havner

Luke tells us that Herod put Peter in prison "intending after Easter" (see Acts 12:4) to bring him forth publicly. Easter here means Passover but the phrase intending after Easter intrigues many Bible readers and has been a text for many discourses. Easter is a heathenish word, all tangled up as it is with Ishtar, the pagan goddess. We are stuck with the word as we are with so much of the trappings of the world in the worship of the church. The best we can do is to take advantage of the occasion to preach the Resurrection.

The Resurrection was a one-time event of all history. It is an annual on the church calendar. It is a weekly observance, for every Lord's Day is Resurrection Day. Every day is Resurrection Day for the Christian because he lives by the life of the risen Christ. The tragedy is that what should be an experience has become a performance. One feels like asking the Easter crowds at church: "What do you intend to do after Easter?" What difference will the Resurrection make in the way you live? How much does it matter to you that "up from the grave He arose?"

Well, how much difference does it make? Paul tells us in the great Resurrection Chapter, the fifteenth of First Corinthians; If Christ did not rise, our preaching is in vain. It is an exercise in futility. Let the preachers turn to something else; they have nothing to tell us. Our faith is also vain. Christianity is based on superstition and hallucination. We who preach it are false witnesses, impostors, peddling a lie. We are still sinners, just as lost as ever, without exception, without excuse, and without escape. The dead have perished. We shall never see our loved ones again; they are gone forever. We have no hope for the future. We are of all men most miserable, death ends everything. What a difference the Resurrection makes! He did rise and we who believe are crucified, dead, and risen with Him.

How much difference should that make in us? We should wake up: "Awake to righteousness and sin not..." (verse 34). We are known by and affected by the company we keep. Paul warned the Corinthian Christians against the contamination of their vile and corrupt city. If we run with that crowd, we shall be infected with their disease. When did we ever need that warning as much as today!

We should walk in newness of life. That is the significance of baptism. Most church members show no evidence of a new life. They love what they always loved, go where they always went, do as they always did. If one is what he has always been, he is not a Christian, for a Christian is a new creature.

We should work. The great Resurrection Chapter closes with the admonition to abound in the work of the Lord. That means more than mere "church work." It means seven days a week. We are all in full-time Christian service, not part-time but full-time and overtime, for if we do only our duty we are unprofitable servants.

Wake, walk, work... that is how much difference the Resurrection ought to make. To do all three ought to be our intention after Easter! (Hope Thou in God)

THE TENT AND THE BUILDING - Vance Havner

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 Corinthians 5:1.

I awake each morning to find myself still in this old body in this old world. But shortly I put off this old tent and then await my new home, my new resurrection body. Paul longed for that new garment, his "Easter outfit." He does not have the resurrection body yet and there is much about the intermediate state of the spirits now absent from the body and present with the Lord that we do not understand, but the soul does not sleep. Paul was not anticipating sleep, but to be with Christ which is far better. (All the Days)

PRESENT IN THE BODY - Vance Havner

Whether present or absent.... 2 Corinthians 5:9.

This morning I enter another day in this old body on this old earth before Jesus comes or I go. That world of spirit awaits me where I shall await the resurrection and a new outfit unless my Lord comes before I die. Paul speaks of being absent from the body and present with the Lord. But being present in the body does not mean being absent from the Lord, for He lives in all who believe, and these bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. I am so glad we may know Him in these present bodies, know Him when, as spirits, we are present with Him and know Him eternally when that resurrection morning breaks. And I am glad that present in the body does not mean being absent from the Lord! (All the Days)

Thoughts at a Grave - Vance Havner

"When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still." John 11:6

Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. You would have expected him to hurry to Bethany. There is a love that tarries until we grumble: "If you had been here... this wouldn't have happened."

Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She believed in the doctrine of the resurrection. But Jesus immediately made it a personal thing: "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:24, 25). So many of us have our theology straight but we need to see him who gathers up all doctrine in himself, by whom it all consists. Then theology becomes doxology!

"Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (11:40). Yes, but we still insist on seeing

first, we are such slaves to sense. Are you standing by the grave of the impossible in your life, the thing that just simply can't be done... and yet there he stands, saying, "Believe, and you shall see."
But he also said, "Take ye away the stone," and you, like Martha, have objected: "It would create too great a stench in my home, in my church, among the neighbors." You don't dare remove the thing that hinders. So he does no mighty works for you because of your unbelief.
"Said I not...?" "Whatever he says to you, do it." And the impossible shall be done. (Consider Jesus)

Resurrection Quotations

- **Complete Gathered Gold - John Blanchard (Recommended)**

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Death died when Christ rose.
Anon.

The best news the world ever had came from a graveyard.
Anon.

The angel rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb, not to let the living Lord out but to let the unconvinced outsiders in.
Donald Grey Barnhouse

The resurrection of Christ is our receipted bill.
Donald Grey Bamhouse

The stone at the tomb of Jesus was a pebble to the Rock of Ages inside.
Fred Beck

The Easter story ends not with a funeral but with a festival.
John Blanchard

The resurrection of Jesus demands not our applause but our allegiance, not our compliments but our capitulation.
John Blanchard

The resurrection of Christ is the Amen of all his promises.
John Boys

The resurrection of Christ is the commencement of his reign.
John Calvin

The resurrection of Christ is the most important article of our faith.
John Calvin

If the historical evidence makes it reasonable to believe Jesus rose from the dead, then it is illegitimate to suppress this evidence because all other men have always remained in their graves.
William Lane Craig

The New Testament preaches a Christ who was dead and is alive, not a Christ who was alive and is dead.
James Denney

The resurrection is the first and last and dominating element in the Christian consciousness of the New Testament.
James Denney

At the resurrection, Christ's real self, including his divine nature and his immaterial human nature, were joined to a new, immortal, incorruptible body for ever.
Robert G. Gromacki

The resurrection of Christ, as the evidence of the sacrifice of his death being accepted, and of the validity of all his claims, is a much more decisive proof of the security of all who trust in him than his death could be.
Charles Hodge

If Christ be not risen, the dreadful consequence is not that death ends life, but that we are still in our sins.
G. A. Studdert Kennedy

Jesus has forced open a door that had been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because he has done so.
C. S. Lewis

The man in Christ rose again, not only the God.
C. S. Lewis

Easter is to our faith what water is to the ocean, what stone is to the mountain, what blood is to the body.
Raymond Linquist

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.
Martin Luther

I know that my Redeemer lives!
What joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my everlasting Head!
Samuel Medley

The same power that brought Christ back from the dead is operative within those who are Christ's. The resurrection is an ongoing thing.
Leon Morris

Everything antecedent in the incarnate life of our Lord moves towards the resurrection and everything subsequent rests upon it and is conditioned by it.
John Murray

The empty tomb of Christ has been the cradle of the church.
W. Robertson Nicoll

The victim of Calvary is now … loose and at large.
J. I. Packer

The Christian church has the resurrection written all over it.
E. G. Robinson

In an age of abounding unbelief and scepticism, we shall find that the resurrection of Christ will bear any weight that we can lay upon it.
J. C. Ryle

The resurrection is a fact better attested than any event recorded in any history, whether ancient or modern.
C. H. Spurgeon

Christianity is essentially a religion of resurrection.
James S. Stewart

This is no appendix to the faith. This is the faith. He is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!
James S. Stewart

Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion. The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed.
John R. W. Stott

Before Christ's resurrection, it was twilight; it is sunrise now.
Augustus H. Strong

Christ's resurrection is not only the best proof of immortality, but we have no certain evidence of immortality without it.
Augustus H. Strong

The resurrection of Jesus is the Gibraltar of the Christian faith and the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism.

R. A. Torrey

The account of the life of Jesus Christ is the only biography known to man that does not end with death and burial—the only record of human life that joyfully hastens on to the next chapter after the last!
A. W. Tozer

The moral obligation of the resurrection of Christ is the missionary obligation, the responsibility and the privilege of carrying the message and telling the story, of praying and interceding, and of being involved personally and financially in the cause of this great commission.
A. W. Tozer

The resurrection morning was only the beginning of a great, grand and vast outreach that has never ended and will not end until our Lord Jesus Christ comes back again.
A. W. Tozer

The resurrection of Christ and the fact of the empty tomb are not part of the world's complex and continuing mythologies. This is not a Santa Claus tale—it is history and it is reality.
A. W Tozer

Never was there as great an imposture put upon the world as Christianity, if Christ be yet in the grave.
John Trapp

Christ did not rise from the dead as a private person, but as the public Head of the church.
Thomas Watson

The resurrection of Jesus is something to shout about. It is an explosive event whose fall-out affects the whole human race.
Douglas Webster

Our Lord is risen from the dead,
Our Jesus is gone up on high.
The powers of hell are captive led,
Dragged to the portals of the sky.
Charles Wesley

Taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no single historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ.
Brooke Foss Westcott

The Gospels cannot explain the resurrection; it is the resurrection which alone explains the Gospels.
John S. Whale

The resurrection is the proof of our reconciliation.
Geoffrey B. Wilson

The resurrection is not only the Good News, it is the best news imaginable. —Ray C. Stedman

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RESURRECTION OF CHRISTIANS

Our friends bring us to the grace and leave us there, but God will not.
Anon.

Bless God that there is in us resurrection life, and that there awaits us a resurrection.
J. J. Bonar

Christians out-die pagans and the resurrection of Christ is the reason.
T. R. Glover

This world is a great sculptor's shop. We are the statutes and there is a rumour going around that some of us are some day going to come to life.
C. S. Lewis

God fits our souls here to possess a glorious body after; and he will fit the body for a glorious soul.
Richard Sibbes

Our bodies shall be like Christ's glorious body, not equal to it.
Richard Sibbes

At the close of every obituary of his believing children God adds the word 'henceforth!'
A. W. Tozer

The resurrection and the judgement will demonstrate before all worlds who won and who lost. We can wait.
A. W. Tozer

We are more sure to arise out of our graves than out of our beds.
Thomas Watson

Reading: Acts 4:5-12

> Let it be known to all of you...
> that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—
> whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead.
> Acts 4:10

Thousands crammed into St. Paul's Cathedral Sunday after Sunday to hear Henry Parry Liddon (1829-90) preach on his great theme—the risen Savior. Had we been among the crowds, here's what we'd have heard:
The Resurrection is proof that the Christian faith is true. It is the certificate of our Lord's mission from heaven. He laid this stress on His coming Resurrection on two occasions especially: in His saying about the destruction and rebuilding of the temple, and in His saying about the sign of the Prophet Jonah.
His words came in effect to this: "You doubt whether I have any right to teach you, and to proclaim Myself as I do. Very well; wait a short while, and an event will take place which will prove that your misgivings or doubts are unwarranted. I shall be put to death, and then I shall rise from the dead on the third day. This will be a countersign of My mission from heaven: if it does not take place, reject; if it does, believe Me." The first preachers of Christianity understood this. The Resurrection was the proof to which they constantly pointed. "Jesus and the Resurrection" was the popular name for the Gospel as taught by St. Paul. The Resurrection was the truth which filled the early Church with its first converts. The Resurrection was the decisive proof that Christianity was from God.

Kent Hughes - Aging and decay can be disheartening, and especially so for those without hope of resurrection and transformation. The Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day gave voice to remarkable expressions of despair. The Greek poet Aeschylus declared, "there is death once and for all and there is no resurrection." The Roman Marcus Aurelius held that at death all that is left is "dust, ashes, bones and stench." Very contemporary expressions, are they not? Sir Frederic K. Catherwood, Christian businessman and onetime chairman of the European Parliament, once sat at lunch with one of Britain's greatest scientists, at that time president of The Royal Society of Britain, and the two discussed the Bible and Christianity. The aged scientist remained firm in his unbelief. Catherwood writes:

> Only three or four years later, a few months before his death, I saw the same man in the library of our club, a gaunt, gloomy, silent figure, hunched over the fire, staring into nothing, face to face with oblivion. When I left the club some time later, he was standing in the rain without a coat. I offered him a lift; he told me not to bother. He had come to the end, and nothing seemed to matter any more.

6000 PLUS ILLUSTRATIONS FOR COMMUNICATING BIBLICAL TRUTHS - Jeff Carroll

Resurrection
A Dog Named Lazarus
In Artesia, New Mexico, Mary Bratcher accidentally ran over her own pet dog Browny. The family tearfully buried the mixed-breed dog in a field near their ranch home. The family's young son, Toby, age 3, refused to accept that his pet was dead. Browny's mother refused to accept it also. The mother dog dug Browny out of the ground and the following day the family returned from a trip to discover Browny caked with mud and dried blood on their porch. Browny, barely breathing, was rushed to a veterinarian. Browny will recover. Browny has lost an eye, has a broken shoulder and has a new name: Lazarus.

See: John 11:1-44

On a Morning Like This

> In the sky
> The song of the skylark
> Greets the dawn

In the fields wet with dew
The scent of the violets
Fills the air
On such a lovely morning as this
Surely on such a lovely morning
as this Lord Jesus
Came forth
From the tomb.

See: Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24

It's a Fact

[T]here really is no story about the Resurrection in the New Testament. Except in the most fragmentary way, it is not described at all. There is no poetry about it. Instead, it is simply proclaimed as a fact. Christ is risen! In fact, the very existence of the New Testament itself proclaims it. Unless something very real indeed took place on that strange, confused morning, there would be no New Testament, no Church, no Christianity.

See: Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24

Unbelief Cannot Deter the Resurrection

In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave on which were placed huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel clasps. It belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet strangely, she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it could not reach her. On the marker were inscribed these words: "This burial place must never be opened." In time, a seed, covered over by the stones, began to grow. Slowly it pushed its way through the soil and out from beneath them. As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel clasps were wrenched from their sockets. A tiny seed had become a tree that had pushed aside the stones.

The dynamic life force contained in that little seed is a faint reflection of the tremendous power of God's creative word that someday will call to life the bodies of all who are in their graves. He will also bring back every person drowned at sea, cremated, or destroyed in some other way. This is no problem to the One who made something out of nothing when He spoke the universe into existence. Unbelief cannot deter the resurrection. But faith in the risen Christ opens the door to blessings that His resurrection guarantees—a glorious new spiritual body and a home in heaven. In new bodies we will be reunited with saved loved ones to live with Jesus throughout all eternity.

See: John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

History's Watershed

The resurrection cannot be tamed or tethered by any utilitarian test. It is a vast watershed in history, or it is nothing. It cannot be tested for truth; it is the test of lesser truths. No light can be thrown on it; its own light blinds the investigator. It does not compel belief; it resists it. But once accepted as fact, it tells more about the universe, about history, and about man's state and fate than all the mountains of other facts in the human accumulation.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:12; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 3:21

Analogies of Nature

Look at the unattractive insect that lies upon the blade of grass or upon the cabbage-leaf; and, in a few short days, you find that insect floating in the air in all the beautiful colors of the rainbow. Look at the dry root in the gloomy season of winter; and, when spring comes forth, you find that root bloom into a beautiful rose. Look at the egg-shell: in that, there is the eagle, that is to wing its flight above all other birds, and rivet its eye upon the meridian sun. The doctrine of the resurrection is not inconsistent with the analogies of Nature or the experience of our common history.

See: Psalm 8; Romans 1:20

No Funerals

Dr. E. Stanley Jones, the famous missionary, wrote a charming and delightful autobiography called A Song of Ascents. He tells about a layman, a newspaperman, a mutual friend, who was called upon to conduct a funeral service. Being an exact man, he wanted to do it properly and in the best Christian tradition. So he turned to the New Testament as the original source and example of how Jesus conducted a funeral. And he found that Jesus didn't conduct funerals at all. All He dealt with were resurrections.

See: Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44

Hold the Potatoes

It was our family custom to have a sing-along while traveling by car. It helped keep the boys out of trouble and in a good mood. On one trip our eldest, Aaron, asked if we could sing the Gravy Song.
"What's that?" we asked. "Teach it to us."
With all innocence Aaron began singing the Easter hymn, "Up from the gravy arose."

See: 1 Corinthians 14:19

The Opposite of Dead
My husband and I homeschool our two children, Seth and Glenna. One day, the lesson was on "opposites."
Glenna, who was six at the time, was being quizzed. I would say a word and she would give its opposite.
When I said, "good," Glenna quickly said, "bad."
"Hot?"
"Cold!" she squealed.
It was time for something a little more difficult. "How about 'dead'?" I asked.
Expecting the answer to be "alive," I was delighted when Glenna, without hesitation, replied, "risen."

See: John 6:44; Romans 8:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:55

Humor: Dead Again
When my parents were visiting the Holy Land, they sent us a postcard of Lazarus's tomb. Showing it to our six-year-old son Leslie, my husband explained that this is where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Leslie asked if Grandma and Grandpa met Lazarus.
"Of course not, he's dead," my husband said.
To which Leslie retorted, "What? Again?"

See: John 11:1-14, 38-44; 12:17-18

Neagu's Resurrection
Bucharest—A Romanian woman fainted recently when she opened her front door and found her husband standing there.
The Romanian weekly Tinerama says it all started when a man named Neagu choked on a fish bone, stopped breathing and collapsed.
The family doctor, knowing Neagu's heart condition, didn't think twice about proclaiming the 71-year-old dead of a heart attack. But three days later, grave-diggers at the cemetery heard someone knock on wood.
They opened Neagu's coffin to find him surrounded by wilted flowers but very much alive. When Neagu arrived home his wife, fearing he was a ghost, barred him from spending nights at home. It took Neagu three weeks to convince the authorities to cancel his death certificate from their registers.

See: Romans 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 19-20

Risen Indeed
We did not merely say "Be good, come to church." We did not merely say "Keep the commandments" but above all, "Christ is risen, Christ is risen."

See: Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24

Can't Make Any Converts
The originator of a new religion came to the great French diplomat-statesman Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord and complained that he could not make any converts. "What would you suggest I do?" he asked.
"I should recommend," said Talleyrand, "that you get yourself crucified, and then die, but be sure to rise again the third day."
Christianity stands on the resurrection.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Puzzled
A minister in Darby, Pennsylvania, tell this one:
The four-year-old son of an undertaker was puzzled one Easter morning when he heard about the Resurrection. "Do you mean," he asked, "that Jesus really rose up from the dead?"
"Oh, yes," the teacher said.
The boy shook his head. "I know my daddy didn't take care of Him after He died," the boy said. "He'd never get up again!"

See: Luke 23:50-24:6

The Nut Is Gone

Dear Ann Landers:
A recent column of yours about a minister who mispronounced the name of the deceased three times during the service brought back some memories.
Our preacher got this one off a few weeks ago while extolling the virtues of a leading citizen during the eulogy: "We have here only the shell—the nut is gone."
Dear D:
Thanks for my laugh for the day. Beautiful!

See: Job 19:26

Funeral Sermon
At the funeral services, the pastor got carried away and his sermon far exceeded the time limit. Finally his assistant whispered, "It's getting late sir!"
"I know," the pastor said, "but this doctrine of resurrection is extremely important."
"Yes, sir," the minister said, "But we've got to get the body over to the cemetery in time for it."

See: Daniel 12:2; John 5:25; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Those Who Love, See
The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the glorious manifestation of the victory of love over death. The same love that makes us mourn and protest against death will now free us to live in hope. Do you realize that Jesus appeared only to those who knew him, who had listened to his words and who had come to love him deeply? It was that love that gave them the eyes to see his face and the ears to hear his voice when he appeared to them on the third day after his death. Once they had seen and heard him and believed, the rest of their lives became a continuing recognition of his presence in their midst.

See: Acts 1:22; Romans 6:5; 1 Peter 3:21

Eighth Day
Resurrection! It happens in the dark with no witnesses, just the Father bending over the Son and breathing the Spirit back into his flesh. And everything is shattered. The sabbath is over. It is the first day of the week, the eighth day of the week. It is the new creation, and it is just dawning. ...
Resurrection sends Jesus back into the world, and it sends us back into the world, unafraid now, still seeking the crucified One who is now raised up in glory and hidden in our midst.

See: Acts 1:22; Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 1:3

A New Religion
In my book World Aflame, I told the story about Auguste Comte, the French philosopher, and Thomas Caryle, the Scottish essayist. Comte said he was going to start a new religion that would supplant the religion of Christ. It was to have no mysteries and was to be as plain as the multiplication table; its name was to be positivism. "Very good, Mr. Comte," Carlyle replied, "very good. All you will need to do will be to speak as never a man spake, and live as never a man lived, and be crucified, and rise again the third day, and get the world to believe that you are still alive. Then your religion will have a chance to get on."

See: John 17:21

Christ Is Alive
On one occasion Michelangelo turned to his fellow artists and said with frustration in his voice, "Why do you keep filling gallery after gallery with endless pictures on the one theme of Christ in weakness, Christ on the cross, and most of all, Christ hanging dead?" he asked. "Why do you concentrate on the passing episode as if it were the last work, as if the curtain dropped down there on disaster and defeat? That dreadful scene lasted only a few hours. But to the unending eternity Christ is alive; Christ rules and reigns and triumphs!"
Michelangelo was right. Even though the cross is vitally important because of the redemption Jesus accomplished for us there, we must not emphasize His death to the exclusion of His resurrection victory. We should think of Him now in His glorified state in heaven.

See: Acts 3:13; Philippians 2:9-11

Prove It
The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Without it the believer has no hope for this life or for the life to come. The apostle Paul wrote, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Our belief in this great teaching is not based upon some religious feeling or upon an unfounded idea about what may have happened in the past. Nor are

we talking about an isolated rumor, but about a historical fact with solid evidence to support it.

In the early part of this century, a group of lawyers met in England to discuss the biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection. They wanted to see if sufficient information was available to make a case that would hold up in an English court of law. When their study was completed, they published the results of their investigation. They concluded that Christ's resurrection was one of the most well-established facts of history!

In his little book, Countdown, G. B. Hardy has given us some thought-provoking questions about the resurrection. "There are but two essential requirements: 1. Has anyone cheated death and proved it? 2. Is it available to me? Here is the complete record: Confucius' tomb—occupied. Buddha's tomb—occupied. Mohammed's tomb—occupied. Jesus' tomb—empty! Argue as you will, there is no point in following a loser."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a reality. Countless changed lives testify that it's a fact—not a fable!

Who Is Jesus Christ?

Who is Jesus Christ? The God-man—the most unique Person who ever lived. The awesome Son of God!

Some time ago a lady wrote me a true story of an event that happened in a Christian school:

A kindergarten teacher was determining how much religious training her new students had. While talking with one little boy, to whom the story of Jesus was obviously brand new, she began relating His death on the cross. When asked what a cross was, she picked up some sticks, and fashioning a crude one, she explained that Jesus was actually nailed to that cross, and then He died. The little boy with eyes downcast quietly acknowledged, "Oh, that's too bad." In the very next breath, however, she related that He arose again and that He came back to life. And his little eyes got big as saucers. He lit up and exclaimed, "Totally awesome!"

You don't know the full identity of Jesus if your response is "Oh, that's too bad." You know His identity only if your description is "Totally awesome!"

See: 1 Corinthians 15:56-57

Evidence

John Singleton Copley, one of the great legal minds in British history and three times High Chancellor of England, wrote, "I know pretty well what evidence is, and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never broken down yet."

See: Matthew 28:1-17

Don't Forget

A man was going down a street when in a store window he saw a very beautiful picture of the crucifixion. As he gazed spellbound at the vividly pictured story, he suddenly became conscious that at his side stood a young boy. The boy, too, was gazing at the picture, and his tense expression made the man know that "The Crucifixion" had really gripped the eager little soul. Touching the boy on the shoulder, the man said, "Sonny, what does it mean?" "Doncha know?" he answered, his face full of the marvel of the man's ignorance. "That there man is Jesus, an' them others is Roman soldiers, an' the woman what's cryin' is His mother, an'" he added, "they killed 'im!"

The man did not want to move from in front of that impressive piece of artwork but he had other things he had to do, so he turned and walked away. In a few moments he heard footsteps on the street behind him, and there came rushing up the boy. "Say, mister," he exclaimed breathlessly, "I forgot to tell you, but He rose again!"

See: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Death Will Not Hold Us

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the epicenter of Christianity. During his three-year ministry, Jesus raised at least three people from the dead. But these resurrections really amount to little more than resuscitations. Jesus' resurrection stands for this truth: death, which could not hold Jesus in the grave, will also not hold those who believe in him.

See: Isaiah 25:8; John 5:25; 6:54; Acts 26:6-8

Durable Rumor of Hope

Dr. Carl F. Henry, one of America's leading contemporary theologians, said of Jesus, "He planted the only durable rumor of hope amid the widespread despair of a hopeless world."

See: Romans 5:1-2; 8:20-28

Don't Cry

While in an art gallery a man gazed intently at a picture of Christ hanging lifelessly on the Cross. Tears trickled down the man's cheeks as he contemplated the pain Jesus suffered when the nails were driven into His hands and feet. In a moment a little boy stood at the man's side. Looking down, the tearful man asked, "Do you know who that is in the picture?"

"Why, sure," the boy replied, "that's Jesus. He died for our sins. I learned that in Sunday school."

A short time later the man walked away from the picture. He hadn't gone far when he felt a tug at his coat. "Say, Mister," the boy

said, "I wanted to tell you that you don't need to cry. Jesus came alive again!"

See: Hebrews 12:2

Life Springs from Death

Two hundred miles northeast of Los Angeles is a baked-out gorge called Death Valley; the lowest place in the United States, 276 feet below sea level. It is also the hottest place in the country, with an official recording of 134 degrees. Streams flow into Death Valley only to evaporate in the scorching heat, and a scant two and one half inches of rain falls on the barren wasteland each year. But some years ago, an amazing thing happened. Due to a freak weather pattern, rain fell into the bone-dry earth for nineteen days straight. Suddenly, millions of seeds, which had lain dormant for untold years burst into bloom. The Valley of Death exploded into beauty, color, and life.

This is the message of the resurrection. Life springs forth from death. A desert becomes a garden. Beauty transcends the ugly. Love overcomes hatred. A tomb is emptied. The grim and haunting outline of a cross is swallowed in the glow of an Easter morning sunrise.

See: John 5:24; 11:25-26; Romans 5:14-21; 6:4-5

The Fantastic Act of History

As apologist Josh McDowell points out, some theories to explain away the resurrection of Christ take as much faith to believe as the resurrection itself. He's debated the resurrection with skeptics more than just about anybody alive. He writes:

After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, and thoroughly investigating its foundation, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic act of history. A student at the University of Uruguay said to me, "Professor McDowell, why can't you refute Christianity?" I answered, "For a very simple reason: I am not able to explain away an event in history—the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

See: Psalm 16:10; Matthew 16:21; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:39; John 2:19; Acts 2:25-32; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 17

Christ Is Risen

In the early 1920s, Nikolai Bukharin was sent from Moscow to Kiev to address a vast anti-God rally. For an hour he abused and ridiculed the Christian faith until it seemed as if the whole structure of belief was in ruins. Questions were invited. A priest of the Orthodox church rose and asked leave to speak. He faced the people and gave them the ancient Easter greeting, "Christ is risen." Instantly the whole vast assemble rose to its feet, and the reply came back like a crash of breakers against the cliff, "He is risen indeed."

See: Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:6; Acts 4:33; 1 Corinthians 15:12-13; 1 Peter 1:2-4

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

Plenty of great teachers, mystics, martyrs and saints have spoken words full of grace and truth. In the case of Jesus alone, however, the belief has persisted that when he came into the world, God deigned to take on the likeness of a man in order that men might reach out.

For myself, as I approach my end, I find Jesus' outrageous claim ever more captivating and meaningful. Quite often, waking up in the night as the old do, I feel myself to be half out of my body, hovering between life and death, with eternity rising in the distance.

I see my ancient carcass, prone between the sheets, stained and worn like a scrap of paper dropped in the gutter and, hovering over it, myself, like a butterfly released from its chrysalis stage and ready to fly away. Are caterpillars told of their impending resurrection? How in dying they will be transformed from poor earth-crawlers into creatures of the air, with exquisitely painted wings? If told, do they believe it? I imagine the wise old caterpillars shaking their heads—no, it can't be; it's a fantasy.

Yet in the limbo between living and dying, as the night clocks tick remorselessly on, and the black sky implacably shows not one single streak or scratch of gray, I hear those words: I am the resurrection, and the life, and feel myself to be carried along on a great tide of joy and peace.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

All These Questions

All these questions have the same answer.

What is it that gives a widow courage as she stands beside a fresh grave?

What is the ultimate hope of the cripple, the amputee, the abused, the burn victim?

How can the parents of brain-damaged or physically handicapped children keep from living their entire lives totally and completely depressed?

Why would anyone who is blind or deaf or paralyzed be encouraged when they think of the life beyond?

How can we see past the martyrdom of some helpless hostage or devoted missionary?
Where do the thoughts of a young couple go when they finally recover from the grief of losing their baby?
When a family receives the tragic news that a little daughter was found dead or their dad was killed in a plane crash or a son overdosed on drugs, what single truth becomes their whole focus?
What is the final answer to pain, mourning, senility, insanity, terminal diseases, sudden calamities, and fatal accidents?
By now you've guessed correctly: the hope of bodily resurrection.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:42-57

Because of Easter
The promise of the resurrection was especially comforting to a woman named Frieda Barkman after her 15-year-old foster son, Vernon, was killed in an accident. Afraid that he would soon be forgotten by most of his friends, she was writing feverishly, hoping she could in some way help to keep alive the memory of her son. Then suddenly she realized that she did not need to do this. Vernon was still alive. He was not out of existence. He and all his Christian loved ones and friends would meet again. How did she know? Her is her answer: "Because of Easter. Because at our last family devotions he had prayed, 'Thank you, God, that I am Your son.'"

See: Revelation 14:13

Thorns Become Roses
An old legend tells of a parish priest who found a branch of a thorn tree twisted around so that it resembled a crown of thorns. Thinking it a symbol of the crucifixion of Christ, he took it into his chapel and placed it on the altar on Good Friday. Early on Easter morning he remembered what he had done. Feeling it was not appropriate for Easter Sunday, he hurried into the church to clear it away before the congregation came. But when he came into the church, he found the thorn branches blossoming with beautiful roses.

See: Isaiah 53:11-12; Hebrews 2:9-10; 1 Peter 4:1-2

Jesus
Now there was about this time Jesus a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him from the first did not forsake him for he appeared to them alive on the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And even now, the race of Christians, so named from him, has not died out.

See: Romans 4:23-25; 1 Corinthians 15:13-20

The Garden Tomb
When the Garden Tomb was discovered in 1885, the godly General Gordon was convinced that this was the place where the body of Jesus had lain. There is a traditional tomb inside the wall of modern Jerusalem, but no certainty attaches to the site.
The Garden Tomb, hidden for centuries, was covered with rubbish twenty feet high. When they first cleared the spot, with great caution they gathered all the dust and debris within the tomb and carefully shipped it to the Scientific Association of Great Britain. Every part of it was analyzed, but there was no trace of human remains. If this is the real tomb of Christ, then Jesus was the first to be laid there and he was also the last.

See: Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

An Empty Grave
A conversation between a Christian missionary and a Muslim illustrates a great point. The Mohammedan wanted to impress the missionary with what he considered to be the superiority of Islam. So he said, "When we go to Mecca, we at least find a coffin, but when you Christians go the Jerusalem, your mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave." To this the believer replied, "That is just the difference, Mohammed is dead and in his coffin. And all other systems of religion and philosophy are in their coffins. But Christ is risen, and all power in heaven and on earth is given to Him! He is alive forevermore!

See: 1 Corinthians 15:20-24

DRAPER'S QUOTATIONS - RESURRECTION

Christianity is a religion of the open tomb.
ROY L. SMITH

Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion. The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed.

JOHN R. W. STOTT (1921–)

9690 I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone;
But I am the dance and I still go on:
Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

SYDNEY CARTER

If you are irrevocably committed to the proposition that it would have been impossible for Christ to triumph over death, you may as well quit fiddling around the fringes of Christianity, because, as Paul bluntly said, the whole thing stands or falls on the fact of the Resurrection. Either it happened, or it didn't, and if it didn't, Christianity is a gigantic fraud, and the sooner we are quit of it, the better.

LOUIS CASSELS (1922–1974)

Jesus is risen! he shall the world restore!
Awake, ye dead! dull sinners, sleep no more!

JOHN WESLEY (1703–1791)

No person hearing the story of the Resurrection can possibly be any more skeptical of it than were the apostles when they first heard about it. The record shows that Jesus had to go to great lengths to overcome their disbelief. Once he ate an impromptu meal of cold fish and honeycomb—the only food at hand—to demonstrate to one diehard doubter that he wasn't a ghost.

LOUIS CASSELS (1922–1974)

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.

MARTIN LUTHER (1483–1546)

The best proof that Christ has risen is that he is still alive. And for the immense majority of our contemporaries, the only way of seeing him alive is for us Christians to love one another.

LOUIS EVELY (1910–)

The Gospels do not explain the Resurrection; the Resurrection explains the Gospels. Belief in the Resurrection is not an appendage to the Christian faith; it is the Christian faith.

JOHN S. WHALE

The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now.

THOMAS KELLEY (1769–1855)

The same power that brought Christ back from the dead is operative within those who are Christ's. The Resurrection is an ongoing thing.

LEON MORRIS

The stone was rolled away from the door, not to permit Christ to come out, but to enable the disciples to go in.

There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived or that Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three.

BILLY GRAHAM (1918–)

To renounce all is to gain all; to descend is to rise; to die is to live.

KARL RAHNER (1904–1984)

Whether we are prepared or not to accept the occurrence of the Resurrection as a fact of history, we cannot deny the influence that a belief in it has exercised in the world. We cannot deny that it has brought life and immortality to light as no other belief could conceivably have done; that it has substituted for the fear of death, for a large portion of the human race, that sure and certain knowledge of God which is eternal life; that it has permeated our customs, our literature, and our language with a glory and a hope that could have been derived from no other source.

C. H. ROBINSON

BILLY GRAHAM QUOTES

The resurrection of Christ changed the
midnight of bereavement into a sunrise of reunion;
it changed the midnight of disappointment into a sunrise of joy;
it changed the midnight of fear to a sunrise of peace.

Because of what Jesus Christ did for us
through His cross and resurrection,
we know that we have hope for the future.

By [Christ's] resurrection life,
He gives us the power over the tendency to sin
as we allow Him to control our lives.

Never forget that the resurrection of Christ is in many ways
the central event of all history.

At the return of Christ the resurrection of believers will take place.
It will take the unbelieving world by surprise.

Death has two stages, first the separation of the body from the spirit . . .
for a purely spiritual existence, and second, reunion with the body
and a glorious resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ.

The resurrection is our great hope.

The resurrection blasts apart the finality of death,
providing an alternative to the stifling,
settling dust of death and opens the way to new life.

Christ broke the bonds of death by His resurrection,
and from that moment on, Satan was a defeated foe.

The most important events in human history were
the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Without the resurrection, the cross is meaningless

SPURGEON QUOTES ON RESURRECTION

The divinity of Christ finds its surest proof in his resurrection (Rom. 1:4). Christ's sovereignty also depends on his resurrection (Rom. 14:9). Again, our justification hangs on Christ's resurrection (Rom. 4:25). Our very regeneration depends on his resurrection (1 Peter 1:3). And most certainly our ultimate resurrection rests here (Rom. 8:11). The silver thread of resurrection runs through all the blessings, from regeneration onward to our eternal glory, and binds them together.

The resurrection is a fact better attested than any event recorded in any history, whether ancient or modern.

The electric telegraph, though it be but an invention of man, would have been as hard to believe in a thousand years ago as the resurrection of the dead is now. Who in the days of pack-horses would have believed in flashing a message from England to America? Everything is full of wonder till we are used to it, and resurrection owes the incredible portion of its marvel to our never having come across it in our observation—that is all. After the resurrection we shall regard it as a divine display of power as familiar to us as creation and providence now are.

The resurrection of our divine Lord from the dead is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine. Perhaps I might more accurately call it the keystone of the arch of Christianity, for if that fact could be disproved, the whole fabric of the gospel would fall to the ground.

Living Hope - You could speak of Jesus' rising as the most hopeful (hope-full) thing that has ever happened—and you would be right!—J. I. Packer in Your Father Loves You.

History's Watershed - The resurrection cannot be tamed or tethered by any utilitarian test. It is a vast watershed in history, or it is

nothing. It cannot be tested for truth; it is the test of lesser truths. No light can be thrown on it; its own light blinds the investigator. It does not compel belief; it resists it. But once accepted as fact, it tells more about the universe, about history, and about man's state and fate than all the mountains of other facts in the human accumulation. —Editorial in Life (c) 1956, Time, Inc

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Death Will Not Hold Us

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the epicenter of Christianity. During his three-year ministry, Jesus raised at least three people from the dead. But these resurrections really amount to little more than resuscitations. Jesus' resurrection stands for this truth: death, which could not hold Jesus in the grave, will also not hold those who believe in him. —Calvin Miller in The Book of Jesus.

It's a Fact - [T]here really is no story about the Resurrection in the New Testament. Except in the most fragmentary way, it is not described at all. There is no poetry about it. Instead, it is simply proclaimed as a fact. Christ is risen! In fact, the very existence of the New Testament itself proclaims it. Unless something very real indeed took place on that strange, confused morning, there would be no New Testament, no Church, no Christianity. —Buechner, Frederick. The Magnificent Defeat,

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On a Morning Like This - In the sky The song of the skylark Greets the dawn In the fields wet with dew The scent of the violets Fills the air On such a lovely morning as this Surely on such a lovely morning as this Lord Jesus Came forth From the tomb. —Genzo, Misuna. in John Carden, A Procession of Prayers,

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Faith in the Coming Resurrection

Mike Fuller is a close friend of some in this congregation. His name will be remembered by followers of the San Diego Chargers. After he played there, he went back to Cincinnati to play for the Bengals. After retiring from professional football, he took a job in Alabama. About a year and a half ago, at the age of 37, he was diagnosed as having Hodgkin's disease, a form of cancer.

A few months ago, I had the privilege of speaking with Mike, and I was deeply impressed with the sincerity of his faith and profound peace in his life. Mike said, "It's like the song says: I fear no evil. God has been with me since day one. I don't have any fear of this disease or the word death. Jesus Christ has overcome death, and all I have to do is rely on him and his strength."

About a year ago, I flew to Austin, Texas, to visit my close friend Alan Lewis. At the time, we thought he wouldn't live more than a day or two. His first words to me when I entered the hospital room were "Don, I'm not afraid. For underneath is the solid rock of the resurrection." —Don McCullough, "Reasons to Fear Easter,"

"He's Dead Now, but He'll Be Back."

I loved our Easter pageant. One night I sat behind a 5 year-old boy who was enthralled. When the crucifixion scene took place, he got real quiet. But then Jesus came back from the grave and there was a song of celebration and his eyes lit up. He looked at his mother and said, "He's alive, Mom. He's alive!" and began to clap. And he hugged her around the neck. It was fun to see somebody understand the resurrection for the first time.

I told that to a youth minister from another church. He said, "I want to tell you what happened in our church. We showed a cartoon video of the crucifixion and resurrection to our kindergarten students. When Jesus was buried, one little boy who knew the story pretty well turned to a buddy and said, 'He's dead now, but he'll be back.' "—Robert Russell, "Resurrection Promises," Preaching Today

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You Can't Spoil This Story

The Good Friday service in Dampara Baptist Church, Chittagong, Bangladesh, was packed. Little children sat on the floor in the aisles and across the front of the church. Rows of people stood in the back, craning their necks to see the crucifixion scene as depicted in the "Jesus Film."

Weeping and gasps of unbelief could be heard in the shocked hush as Jesus was crucified. As the Bengalis watched, they were feeling the agony of Jesus' pain and the disappointment of the disciples.

In that emotional moment, one young boy in the crowded church suddenly cried out, "Do not be afraid. He gets up again! I saw it before."

A small boy's encouraging cry gave new hope to the viewers of the film. "He is risen!" is the cry that gives new hope to all. —William D. Barrick, Christian Reader

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Hurry to the Tomb

The Easter vigil gives us a sense of urgency as people hurry to and from an empty tomb.

We must shake off our comas and stupors and lazy sleeping. We must arise and go with the risen Lord toward the fullness of light and peace. Time and eternity intersect, finitude and infinity lose their boundaries. All creation is gathered to a great oneness—now! —Robert F. Morneau in Ashes to Easter.

A Psalm for Easter

Let's celebrate Easter with the rite of laughter.
Christ died and rose and lives.
Laugh like woman who holds her first baby.
Our enemy death will soon be destroyed.
Laugh like a man who finds he doesn't have cancer or he does but now there's a cure.
Christ opened wide the door to heaven.
Laugh like children at Disneyland's gates.
This world is owned by God and He'll return to rule.
Laugh like a man who walks away uninjured from a wreck in which his car was totaled.
Laugh as if all the people in the whole world were invited to a picnic and then invite them.

—Joseph Bayly in Psalms of My Life

Glorious Paradox - We live and die. Christ died and lived! —John Stott in Authentic Christianity.

The Greatest Fact in the World

We can say that the story of the resurrection means simply that the teachings of Jesus are immortal like the plays of Shakespeare or the music of Beethoven and that their wisdom and truth will live on forever. Or we can say that the resurrection means that the spirit of Jesus is undying, that he himself lives on among us, the way that Socrates does, for instance, in the good that he left behind him, in the lives of all who follow his great example. Or we can say that the language in which the Gospels describe the resurrection of Jesus is the language of poetry and that, as such, it is not to be taken literally but as pointing to a truth more profound than literal. But in the case of the resurrection, this simply does not apply because there really is no story about the resurrection in the New Testament. Except in the most fragmentary way, it is not described at all. There is no poetry about it. Instead, it is simply proclaimed as a fact. Christ is risen! —Frederick Buechner in The Magnificent Defeat. Christianity Today, Vol. 39, no. 4

The Greatest Victory

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? This is so true that even Satan cannot deny it. Christ's resurrection and victory over sin, death and hell is greater than all heaven and earth. You can never imagine his resurrection and victory so great but that in actuality it is far, far greater.—Martin Luther, quoted in The Joy of the Saints. Christianity Today, Vol. 37, no. 4.

Wings of Eternity

In the midst of a storm, a little bird was clinging to the limb of a tree, seemingly calm and unafraid. As the wind tore at the limbs of the tree, the bird continued to look the storm in the face, as if to say, "Shake me off; I still have wings." Because of Christ's resurrection, each Christian can look the experience of death in the face and confidently say, "Shake me off; I still have wings. I'll live anyway." —Wayne A. Lamb in 100 Meditations on Hope. Christianity Today, Vol. 40, no. 4.

More than Alive

Something happened on Easter Day which made Christ more alive on the streets of Jerusalem forty days after his crucifixion than on the day of His Triumphal Entry. A false report might last forty days but the church which was founded on a Risen Christ has lasted for nineteen centuries, producing generations of the race's finest characters. —Ralph W. Sockman in Pulpit Preaching. Christianity Today, Vol. 41, no. 4.

Resurrection and Coronation

We understand and acknowledge that the Resurrection has placed a glorious crown upon all of Christ's sufferings! —A. W. Tozer in Renewed Day by Day. Christianity Today, Vol. 40, no. 4.

Believe in the Resurrection

When the world seems a defeat for God and you are sick with the disorder, the violence, the terror, the war on the streets; when the earth seems to be chaos, say to yourself, "Jesus died and rose again on purpose to save, and his salvation is already with us."

Every departing missionary is an act of faith in the resurrection.
Every peace treaty is an act of faith in the resurrection.
Every agreed commitment is an act of faith in the resurrection.

When you forgive your enemy
When you feed the hungry
When you defend the weak
you believe in the resurrection.
When you have the courage to marry
When you welcome the newly-born child
When you build your home
you believe in the resurrection.
When you wake at peace in the morning
When you sing to the rising sun
When you go to work with joy
you believe in the resurrection.

Most of the following are from **Knight's Master Book of New Illustrations** (1956) - While many are of an older genre, there are some that are timeless and excellent.

"Do You Plant Corn?"
A missionary lady in Africa was talking to some black men and women. "Jesus died on the Cross for us all," she told them. "Then His body was put in a grave and on the third day He arose from the grave. We, too, shall arise from our graves after our bodies have rested for a time in the ground."
"How can that happen?" asked one old black man. "I do not believe that What is put in the ground cannot come up."
"Listen to me," said the missionary lady. "Do you plant corn?"
"Yes, I do," he answered.
"Well, what happens when you put the grain of corn in the ground?"
"The grain decays and the corn comes up out of the ground," he replied.
"Very well," said the missionary lady. "The grain decays but the life in the corn doesn't die. It sends up a plant that comes through the soil and grows several feet above the ground.
"It will be the same with us. When we are dead our bodies will be put into the ground. They will lie there until Jesus comes again. Then He will wake us and we shall arise from our graves. We believe that His Word is true."
"I cannot understand it," said the old black man, "but I believe it now, too, for Jesus has said it." —Selected

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"I Feel It in the Air!"
I know it's Easter time again,
I feel it in the air.
The breath of spring with woodsy tang,
And new life everywhere.
And spring glides on with magic touch
O'er mountain side and glen;
And wakens all the sleeping plants
For Easter time again.
The brooklets leap from rock to rock,
As if in joyful play;
The flowers peep from darkened tombs
To welcome Easter Day.
The birds are swinging on the boughs,
And trill in ecstasy;
They seem to show the world's great joy
Of Easter mystery.
Why should we dread the thing called death?
It's just an open door,
Where all within is love and peace
And joy forever more.
"Because I live, you too shall live,"
We hear the Saviour say.
Let's consecrate our lives anew,
On this glad Easter Day.—Edna Reed

The Power of Resurrection

I remember that after I had worked in university centers in Portugal I went from there to Norway, and I was a little impressed by the difference among the people. I wondered how one could explain it. Then I remembered that every representation I had seen in Portugal of Jesus Christ was that of an infant in arms, or else someone crucified. We glory in the fact that He was an infant in arms, for everything depends on the incarnation; we glory in the fact that He died on the cross. But the first painting I saw on reaching Norway was that of the empty tomb, the three women and the angel. "He is not here; He is risen." The thought came to me, "May that not explain possibly some of the difference in the types of Christianity in Portugal and in Norway?" He is risen, and the power is available for you and me, so that we too can be seated in heavenly places with Jesus Christ, and live a life of victory.—R. P. Wilder

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Better Trust in the Living One!

Two little colored boys were slaves to an Arab master. He taught them to believe in Mohammed, whose body, they were informed, was preserved in a coffin in the city of Medina in Arabia. One day these little lads heard a missionary tell about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. That night in the darkness of their little hut, they talked the matter over. "What think you?" asked one of them. "Our master tells us that Mohammed is dead, and that his dead body is kept in a coffin; but the white man tells us that Jesus, the Son of God, who came to die for us, rose again and is alive." "I think," replied the other, "that I would rather believe in the Living One." So they did. They were taken to the mission station and taught more about the truth of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ.—Good News

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"Please Do Not Give A Moment's Grief to Me!"

My doctor at last has given what has been his real diagnosis of my illness for weeks—an inoperable case of cancer of the pancreas. Now if he had been a Christian he wouldn't have been so dilatory and shaken, for he would have known, as you and I do, that life or death is equally welcome when we live in the will and presence of the Lord.

If the Lord has chosen me to go to Him soon, I go gladly. On the other hand, I remember that Christ is still the Great Physician. And so in simple faith and trust I say to Him, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole." I await His answer utterly at peace.

Please do not give a moment's grief to me. Think of me only happily, gaily, as I do of you. My interest is as keen as ever in everything over there—Memorial Student center and buildings that are to follow, commencement affairs with all the joy and lightheartedness.

I do not say a cold goodbye, but rather a warm "auf Wiedersehen," till I see you again—by God's power and grace on campus this fall or later in the Blessed Land, where I may be allowed to draw aside a curtain when you enter.

With a heart full of love for every individual of you, —Effie Jane Wheeler

(Dr. Effie Jane Wheeler was a member of Wheaton College Faculty for sixteen years. The foregoing, she wrote to Faculty and student body before she entered into the presence of her Lord!)

Resurrection

If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the... man made in the image of his Creator? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay? No, I am as sure that there is another life as I am, that I live today!"—William Jennings Bryan

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Immortality

In the Metropolitan Museum of New York is a monument to Edgar Allen Poe and on it are inscribed these words, "He was great in genius; unhappy in life; wretched in death; but in fame he is immortal."

That is one kind of immortality. But there is a better one; an immortality not for genius, nor of power, nor of earthly greatness of any kind, but an immortality "brought to light," as Paul says, "through the gospel," that comes through devotion to the will of God and service in the name of Christ, that knows nothing of unhappiness in life or wretchedness in death, but looks out through the stress and the strife of the life that now is, through the doorway of death into the light of heaven, where everlasting woe gives place to a never-ending life of glory and riches and honor before the throne of the living God and our Christ.—From The Man Who Said He Would by William Edward Biederwolf,

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Daffodils

Daffodils in early spring
Seem to cheer up everything.
Little sermons do they preach,
Valued lessons, too, they teach.

Growing up from murky mire,
Higher thoughts they would inspire.
Though they're planted in the ground
Far above it they are found.
There's a Flower pure and true
Blooming e'er before our view.
From the darkness of the tomb,
Where He lay in deepest gloom,
Jesus rose, His life to pour
Sweetest fragrance evermore. —Selected

"We Are Seven!"

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?"
'How many? Seven in all,' she said,
And, wondering, looked at me.
"And where are they? I pray you tell?"
She answered, 'Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.'
"'Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my Mother.'
"How many are you, then" said I
"If they two are in heaven?"
The little maiden did reply,
'O master, we are seven!'
"But they are dead; those two are dead;
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little maid would have her will,
And say, 'Nay, we are seven!'" —Wordsworth

"Vivit! Vivit!"

Luther was once found at a moment of peril and fear, when he had need to grasp unseen strength, sitting in an abstracted mood tracing on the table with his finger the words, "Vivit! vivit!" ("He lives! He lives!") It is our hope for ourselves, and for His truth and for mankind. Men come and go; leaders, teachers, thinkers speak and work for a season, and then fall silent and impotent. He abides. They die, but He lives. They are lights kindled, and therefore, sooner or later quenched; but He is the true light from which they draw all their brightness, and He shines for ever more. —Alexander Maclaren

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A Daring Challenge

A certain Hanoverian countess, who lived about a hundred years ago, was a noted unbeliever, and was especially opposed to the doctrine of the resurrection, as indeed every unbeliever might well be, especially if his opposition could alter it.

This lady died when about thirty years of age. Before her death she gave orders that her grave should be covered with a slab of granite; that around it should be placed square blocks of stone, and that the corners should be fastened to each other and to the granite slab by heavy iron clamps.

Upon the covering this inscription was placed: THIS BURIAL PLACE PURCHASED TO ALL ETERNITY MUST NEVER BE OPENED

All that human power could do to prevent any change in that grave was done. But a little birch tree seed sprouted, and the root found its way between the side stone and the upper slab and grew there. Slowly but steadily it forced its way until the iron clamps were torn asunder, the granite lid was raised, and it is now resting upon the trunk of the birch tree, which is large and flourishing.—Selected.

The Arch of Triumph

The Arc de Triomphe in Paris is a center of radiating life. It is the most magnificent triumphal arch in all the world. From it a dozen of

the stateliest and most lovely avenues of the city stretch forth into the far distances. All life floods it; and all life flows out from it; So the world's life has its central Arch of Triumph in Christ's Cross and resurrection. Two mighty bulwarks of stone rise to their tremendous yet graceful height to form the single Arc de Triomphe—two yet one. Neither is complete without the other. "Christ died —and rose again," but the resurrection power gives meaning and power to the cross.—King's Business.

Dr. Hinson's Valedictory

The following is a quotation from the words of Dr. W. B. Hinson, speaking from the pulpit a year after the commencement of the illness from which he ultimately died: "I remember a year ago when a man in this city said, 'You have got to go to your death.' I walked out to where I live, five miles out of this city, and I looked across at that mountain that I love, and I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting his lamps, and I said: 'I may not see you many more times, but, Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and, River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and, Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down-pulling of the material universe!'" This is the confidence of one who knew the Saviour. Is it yours? —Advent Herald

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"When the Stars Have Passed!"

The stars shine over the earth,
The stars shine over the sea;
The stars look up to the mighty God,
The stars look down on me.
The stars shall live for a million years,
A million years and a day;
But God and I will live and love
When the stars have passed away —Earl G. Hamlett

"Behold, A Mystery Indeed!"

Behold, a mystery indeed!
The tinted flower that once was seed;
The power of faith, transcending creed;
God! Who appears in direst need.
Once ugly bulb, now lily bloom,
Diffusing fragrance through the room;
A cruel cross, Golgotha's gloom;
A Risen Christ, an empty tomb.—Selected

Thomas Jefferson's Dead Bible

Congress once issued a special edition of Thomas Jefferson's Bible. It was simply a copy of our Bible with all references to the supernatural eliminated. Jefferson, in making his selections from the Bible, confined himself solely to the moral teachings of Jesus. The closing words of Jefferson's Bible are: "There laid they Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the mouth of the sepulchre and departed." If our Bible ended like that, it would mean the impossibility of other resurrections. But thank God our Bible does not end like that. And the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is our "living hope." —Moody Monthly

- Here is a link to Jefferson's "Dead Bible"

He Will Not Leave Us

In a book by Archibald Rutledge, called, "Children of Swamp and Wood," a nature story, we find this passage referring to our migration—"And when the time comes for our migration hence to a land unknown, through a misty darkness, He will not desert us. In the rainy night, in that cavernous and monstrous dark, the frailest abide secure. In that flight amid other spheres than ours I believe we shall know what it means to be sustained by Everlasting Arms."

The migration of the birds ends in finding their desired haven. Shall we then doubt the end of our migration when He goes with us all the way? "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." —Julia Graydon

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Looking Ahead

It seems but the other day, though full seventy years have passed since then, that I heard two boys talking under my little east window that looked out upon the sea. It was springtime, and good old black Enoch was planting flowers. "I don't like to see seeds

bein' planted," said the older boy; "makes me think o' diggin' graves an' buryin' folks." "It don't make me feel that way a bit," said the younger. "I just look ahead and see 'em wake right up into posies." —Sunday School Times

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Who'll See Him First?

Some years ago a minister of my acquaintance said to me: "I have always known and preached the necessity for the new birth, and the Resurrection, but it's only of late years I have come to know of the personal return of the Lord Jesus. It came to me with a great light, while sitting beside an aged member of my congregation—a poor man, yet rich toward God. Just before he died, he sat up in bed and said: 'Pastor, He has been a great Saviour and Lord. I always longed to live to see Him come in person, but now I'm going; but I'll see Him first anyway, for the dead in Christ shall rise first.'"—As told to me

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The Garden Tomb

When the Garden Tomb was discovered in 1885, the godly General Gordon was convinced that this was the place where the body of Jesus had lain. There is a traditional tomb inside the wall of modern Jerusalem, but no certainty attaches to the site. The Garden Tomb, hidden for centuries, was covered with rubbish twenty feet high. When they first cleared the spot, with great caution they gathered all the dust and debris within the tomb and carefully shipped it to the Scientific Association of Great Britain. Every part of it was analyzed, but there was no trace of human remains. If this is the real tomb of Christ, then Jesus was the first to be laid there and he was also the last.—Alliance Weekly

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"Winter Just A Memory!"

Ever see a farm scene
At joyous Easter time?
With Winter just a memory,
The whole world seems in rhyme.
The crocus buds a-bulging,
Just ache to be in bloom,
And morning-glories crowd the fence
In search of growing-room.
The pigs and piglets softly drowse,
The cows seem more content,
While calves and lambs all sniff to catch
The breeze's gentle scent.
"It's Spring," the zephyrs whisper,
The trees repeat it through,
And every blade of grass chimes in...
"Happy Easter... to You!" —Selected

The Mistaken Love Letter

I saw a little child's grave without a headstone. A fresh bunch of flowers had been laid there and a little piece of paper held down by a twig. Struck by the unusualness of this, I opened it, and read: "May 30, 1887. Papa has been here." It seemed both sweet and sad. The father's heart had not yet learned to think about the departed as having passed to the Glory overhead. He thought of his child as lonely and shut away, and it might be a comfort to know that "Papa" had been there. It was a little love letter, and gave a beautiful glimpse into a father's heart. It is to be hoped that he may learn to think so much differently about his child—even as I think of those whose cast-off garments of earth are buried near by.—Frances E. Willard, in a letter to children

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Where Was the Key?

A little girl died at a hotel where she was stopping with her father. The mother was dead. Just two followed the body to the cemetery, the father and a minister. The man's grief was great. At the grave he took from his pocket a key, unlocked the casket and looked on the face of his child once more, then silently closed the casket, and handed the key to the keeper of the cemetery. On the way back to the city the minister quoted to the brokenhearted man Revelation 1:18, explaining how the Lord Jesus though dead was now alive. "But what is that about the keys?" asked the man. "It means this," said the minister. "You think the key to your little girl's casket is in the hands of the keeper of the cemetery. Let me tell you, the key to your little girl's grave hangs at the girdle of the Son of God, and he will come some morning and use it." Then the light broke through the man's tears, and he saw the glory of the Resurrection. —Record of Christian Work

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The Lesson of the Lily

Rightly the lily is the flower of Easter. It lies buried in the ooze of pond or stream. There is nothing in the grave of the dead lily that appeals to nostril or eye. But silently the forces of life are working in the dark and the damp to prepare a glorious resurrection. A shaft of green shoots upward toward the sun. This is followed by a cluster of tiny buds. One day the sun smiles with special warmth upon the dank, black ooze, and there leaps into the light a creature of light and beauty: it is the lily, an angel of the earth, whose look is light. —Fuel for the Fire

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An Easter Message

A few years ago a submarine sank off Provincetown. As soon as possible divers descended. They walked about the disabled ship endeavoring to find some signs of life within. At last they heard a gentle tapping. Listening intently they recognized the dots and dashes of the Morse code. These were the words spelled out, "Is there hope?"

"IS THERE HOPE?" This is the constant cry of humanity, and Easter is the answer to that cry.—Selected

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The Difference

A Japanese Baron, through an interpreter, was addressing Bethany Sunday School in Philadelphia. The superintendent, Mr. John Wanamaker, listened in amazement as his distinguished guest was explaining that the teachings of Confucius and Jesus were the same, and there was no need of his changing his faith. The Baron was visiting America to study educational methods, and was deeply interested in the work of Sunday Schools.

After this defense of heathenism before his school, Mr. Wanamaker, distinguished veteran Sunday School leader and great merchant, rose up and spoke what came out of his heart on the spur of the moment. Acknowledging the high moral standards of Confucius, he continued, "There is this vital difference between Confucius and our Lord Jesus Christ. Confucius is dead and buried, and he will remain in his grave till Jesus Christ tells him to arise. But our Christ's grave is empty. He is living. He is here in this room today." And taking a little Testament from his pocket, Mr. Wanamaker added with deep emotion, "We have His Words; they are living Words, and we can read them in this Book." —Gospel Herald

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Overwhelming Evidence!

Arnold of Rugby declared: "I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair enquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead." —Joseph C. Macaulay, D. D. in Moody Monthly

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In One Triumphant Move

There is a wonderful picture called "The Game of Death," in which a young man is represented as playing chess with the Devil. The Devil, apparently, by the position of the chessmen, has won the game. A noted chess player went to see the picture, and after looking at it, he said, "I can save that fellow!" Then he explained how the chessmen should be moved to win the game. That is what Jesus Christ has done for us. He has, in one move, eternally checkmated the Devil, and snatched the prey from the mighty. By His victory over death Jesus has given us victory over the grave. —Sunday School Chronicle

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From Despair to Joy

It is said that when Harry Lauder received a telegram that his son had been killed on the battlefield he was hurled into a state of despondency that threatened his reason. He raved against a cruel fate that had torn his son from him. Then one day he learned that the boy had become a Christian and was waiting for him on the other side of death. The realization that the life in Christ would blossom anew in the life beyond, because Christ had risen from the dead, lifted him out of black despair. He found a new incentive to live. He exclaimed, "I would that I could picture to you the joy that lies in the assurance of seeing my boy again."

If Easter be not true, Then faith must mount on broken wing;
Then hope no more immortal spring;
Then hope must lose her mighty urge;
Life prove a phantom, death a dirge—

If Easter be not true.—Henry H. Barstow, in Open Windows

What Broke the Opposition

Our coming to the northern Indians often met with chilly opposition. "We don't want you," they would say. "You white people brought us measles, scarlet fever, smallpox, firewater, and many have died." Trying to address one sullenly indifferent encampment, I breathed prayer for guidance, and after getting my message, I shouted: "Indians, listen to me! I know where all your children are who

are not among the living. Many hearts are sad and lonely, but I am so glad that the Great Spirit gives the authority to tell you that you may all meet your children again, and be happy with them forever." At these words a stalwart Indian at the other end of the tent sprang up, threw back his blanket, and rushed toward me, exclaiming: "I had eight children, and they are all dead! My heart is empty, and my wigwam is lonely. They no longer play on the beach, and the canoes are rotting on the sand. I long to see my children again and clasp them in my arms. Tell me, missionary, where they are, and how I can hope to see them. I will do anything you tell me." I turned to the Book, to the Saviour's comforting words, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven." I told them how Jesus had satisfied the claims of justice, and all the children were saved. We may be uncertain about men and women who have become careless, but the children of the white man, red man, and black man are all safe in the paradise of God. Every bit of opposition had vanished, and day after day I opened to them the Scriptures. On that spot, as a result, is a splendid church, with the majority of the people converted. —From Experiences Among the Indians, by Egerton R. Young

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Even Ingersoll Had Hope!

The infidel, Robert Ingersoll, when standing at the grave of his brother, said, "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the height. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word. But in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing!"—W. B. K

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Christ Sees Us As We Are Going to Be

The story is told of an artist who had in his mind the conception of a great picture. He stretched his vast canvas, and prepared the paint. He painted with great sweeps of his brush as he put in the background. Day after day, he would walk back and forth, putting a daub of gray here, a daub of blue there, and some black there. One day, he came down from the scaffolding to look at what he had done. He kept moving back, back, back. A visitor had come in unnoticed. As the artist moved backward, he bumped right into the stranger. Said the artist, "I didn't know you were here. When did you come in? What do you think of the picture? It is going to be the masterpiece of my life. Isn't it magnificent?" The other said, "I don't see anything there but great daubs of paint!" "Oh," said the artist, "I forgot. You can see only what is there, while I see the picture as it is going to be!"

The blessed Lord Jesus sees us as we are going to be when we awaken with His likeness. Then we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is! —From The Epistles of John, by Dr. Harry A. Ironside

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The Difference

As a missionary finished preaching in a market place in one of the villages of northern India, a Mohammedan stepped up to him and said: "You must admit that we have one thing you have not, and it is better than anything you have."

"And what is it you have?"

"When we go to Mecca," said the Mohammedan, "we at least find a coffin. But when you Christians go to Jerusalem, your Mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave."

Smilingly, the missionary explained, "That is just the difference. Mohammed is dead and in his coffin. And all false systems of religion and philosophy are in their coffins. But Christ is risen, and all power in Heaven and on earth is given to Him. He is alive forevermore!" —Sunday School Times

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"Don't You Believe It!"

It was this blessed hope of unending bliss that rendered D. L. Moody triumphant in life and all-glorious in death. Before his homegoing, he said, "Some day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody is dead. Don't you believe it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all! I was born of the flesh in 1837; I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die, but that which is born of the Spirit will live forever!"—From Because He Lives, by W. B. K.

"Christ in You"

Many years ago we were traveling through a Southern State. It was the month of February and the time of the blossoming glory of the peach tree. By and by our train pulled up by a great peach orchard. In it were a hundred thousand trees. Each individual tree was robed in splendor of pink and white bloom. As the train slowly wheeled past the great orchard the south wind which blew into the car window was heavily laden with the perfume of that vast orchard of blooms. Suppose you had stood on the same spot in the dead of winter. Those peach trees were all in the same place, but how different. There was not a sign of life, or bloom, or beauty. There they were stretching their dead, bare leafless branches toward the winter sky as though in mute appeal for the life, beauty and blossoms to come of which there was yet no sign. Suppose you were to whisper to them, "Peach trees, as you stand here, so dead and dry and blossomless, what is your hope that you will some day be clothed in the splendor and glory of the spring blossomtime?"

If the peach trees could answer you they would call back with one voice, "The peach life that is in us is our hope and glory"—just as

Paul tells the Colossians that it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). —James McConkey

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The Resurrection Symbolized

There is a story told of a workman helper of the great chemist, Faraday. One day he knocked into a jar of acid a little silver cup. It disappeared, being eaten by the acid. The great chemist came in and put some chemical into the jar, and in a moment every particle of silver was precipitated to the bottom. He sifted it out a shapeless mass, sent it to a silversmith, and the cup was restored, shining brighter than before. If Faraday could precipitate that silver and recover his cup, I believe God can restore my sleeping and scattered dust. There are greater miracles of God's than those that He accomplishes through men.—Sunday School Times

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The Blessed Future

The doctor did not think the dying daughter would hear when he said to the mother, "Poor child; she has seen her best days." But she heard him and said, "No, Doctor, I haven't seen my best days; my best days are still to come when I shall see the King in His glory."—From The Man Nobody Missed, by W. E. Biederwolf

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"Trav'ling Toward the Sunset!"

I am trav'ling toward the sunset,
All is calm and all is well;
And the golden tints tow'ring heav'nward,
Are but Nature's crowning spell.
There is quiet midst the shadows,
For the day's turmoil is spent.
Past the noon with all its travail!
Past the hours of stress and strife!
Fleeting ecstacy and triumph,
Mingled in a plodding life.
There is rapture in the sunset
And the pathway, smooth and straight;
I am longing for the sunrise,
Of that glad resplendent day,
Then the climax and the glory
With the earthlife far away—Frank Wilford

He Lives and Loves Forever

Some time ago a preacher was speaking about the resurrection of Christ, and he said that he had been telling the story of the crucifixion to his four-year-old boy. As he went on with the story, the little fellow looked up with a sad expression on his face, and said, "Did Jesus die, then, Dad?" "Yes," said the father, "He died on the cross." "Oh," said the boy, "He cannot love me now, then." Said the father, in telling this incident, "How I realized the value of the resurrection at that moment, and what a joy it was to be able to say: 'He can love one now, because He rose again from the dead on the third day. He lives, and loves, now and forever.'"—Wonderful Word

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The Believer's Resurrection

A vase closely sealed was found in a mummy pit in Egypt by the English traveler Wilkinson. In it were discovered a few peas, old, wrinkled, and hard as a stone. The peas were planted carefully under a glass and at the end of thirty days they sprang into life, after having lain sleeping in the dust of a tomb for almost three thousand years—a faint illustration of the mortal body which shall put on immortality. "Because He lives, we shall live also."—Gospel Herald

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The Power of Praise

When the armies of Napoleon swept over Europe, one of his generals made a surprise attack on the little town of Feldkirch, on the Austrian border. As Napoleon's formidable army maneuvered on the heights above Feldkirch, a council of its citizens was hastily summoned to decide whether to surrender or attempt a defense. In this assembly the venerable dean of the church arose to declare: "This is Easter Day. We have been counting on our own strength, and that will fail. This is the day of our Lord's resurrection. Let us ring the bells and have services as usual, and leave the matter in God's hands. We know only our weakness and not the power of God." The council accepted his plan, and in a few minutes the church belfry chimed the joyous bells announcing the Saviour's resurrection. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army had arrived during the night, broke up camp, and before the Easter bells had ceased, the danger had been lifted. —Lutheran Hour

Power in Christ

Within fifty days of the death of Jesus Christ, and the apparent collapse of His cause, the city of Jerusalem rang with the clarion cries of men who, with all boldness, declared that God had raised Him from the dead, and that they were His witnesses.

Craven cowards were changed into courageous confessors, and rude unlettered fishermen from Galilee had become royal heralds of the King, so that all who saw them and heard them were compelled to acknowledge that something had happened which had utterly transformed their lives.

When questioned by their critics the Apostles had no hesitancy in making reply. They account for their own boldness by attributing everything to the Risen Christ. —Rev. G. H. Lunn

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When You Really Believe It

A little more than a month before Easter she had returned from the burial place outside the great city, leaving there in the silence her fourteen-year-old boy. Two days later her little girl gave up the fight, and in less than a week her baby. Only the three-year-old escaped. It was diphtheria. When Easter came she was at church with her husband and the child. Her face was pale, but tender and beautiful. She wore no emblem of her sorrow, and the lilies and violets on her coat were like those she had worn every Easter since I had known her. When the great congregation rose to sing, she sang softly the words:

The powers of death have done their worst,
But Christ their legions hath dispersed.

Her husband stood with his head bowed. He could not sing. But she touched his hand as it lay on the back of the pew, and when they recited the Creed I heard him saying the words steadily, "I believe in... the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting." She taught her class of girls that day, and he went to his superintendent's desk, led his school in worship, and read the Easter story with only a break now and then in his fine voice. Amidst the faces lined with suffering, rebellion, and despair of that Easter congregation, they had seemed a miracle. A fifteen-year-old boy, walking home with his father from the Sunday school said, "Dad, I guess Mr. and Mrs. L—really believe it, don't they?" "Believe what?" said the father. "The whole big thing, all of it; Easter, you know." —Earnest Worker

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"What Has Science to Say?"

Said Dr. Joseph A. Parker: "Some have found fault with me. They say I am old-fashioned and out of date; I am always quoting the Bible; why not turn to science this morning.

"There is a poor widow here who has lost her only son. She wants to know if she will see him again. Science shall give the answer, and I will put the Book away." So he took the Book and put it on the seat behind. "Will this woman see her son again? Where is he? Does death end all? What has science to say?" Here a long pause. "We are waiting for an answer, the woman is anxious." Another long pause. "The woman's heart is breaking. Science must speak. Nothing to say? Surely? Then we must take the Book," and here he reverently replaced it, and with great deliberation opened it and read: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me... The dead shall arise... for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. O death, where is thy sting.... I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

Then, closing the Book, and patting it affectionately, he said, "We will stick to the Book!" —From The Lamb Upon His Throne, by Dr. Joseph Parker

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A Living Saviour

One day an Indian fakir was sitting under a tree when some leaves of a torn book blew his way. They were from a New Testament, and as he read the words on them his heart was strangely warmed, and he set out to look for someone who obeyed the book. He found an Englishman with a black band on his arm, and concluding that this was the distinctive mark of a Christian, the fakir donned one, too. Sometime later he entered into a Christian church for the first time and listened to his first Christian preacher, staying after the service to say that he, too, was a follower of this way, and pointing to the black band as proof. They explained that it was the English sign of the death of a loved one. He mused for a moment, and then answered: "But I read in the Book that my Loved One has died, so I shall wear it in memory of Him." And so he did, until he heard the story of the Resurrection, and learned that his Loved One was alive forevermore. Then he removed the black band from his arm, and thereafter his shining face was sufficient advertisement of his new allegiance.—Methodist Recorder

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Christ Is Risen—Hallelujah!

Christ is risen! Hallelujah!
Gladness fills the world today;
From the tomb that could not hold Him,
See, the stone is rolled away!

Christ hath risen! Hallelujah!
Blessed morn of life and light!
Lo, the grave is rent asunder,
Death is conquered through His might.
Christ hath risen! Hallelujah!
Friends of Jesus, dry your tears;
Through the veil of gloom and darkness,
Lo, the Son of God appears!
Christ hath risen! Hallelujah!
He hath risen, as He said;
He is now the King of Glory,
And our great, exalted Head.—Fanny J. Crosby

It's That Simple

Somebody said to Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun during the French Revolution, one of the most astute men who ever lived:
"The Christian religion—what is it? It would be easy to start a religion like that."
"Oh, yes," replied Talleyrand. "One would only have to get crucified and rise again the third day."—Power

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The Resurrection in Nature

Some years ago I kept a marine aquarium. As I stood looking at it one summer day I saw on the surface of the water a tiny creature, half fish, half snake, not an inch long, writhing as in mortal agony. With convulsive efforts it bent its head to tail, now on this side, now on that, springing in circles with a force simply wonderful in a creature so small.

I was stretching out my hands to remove it lest it should sink and die and pollute the clear waters, when, lo, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, its skin split from end to end, and there sprang out a delicate fly with slender legs and pale lavender wings. Balancing itself for one instant on its discarded skin, it preened its gossamer wings and then flew out of an open window.

The impression made upon me was deep and overpowering. I learned that nature was everywhere hinting at the truth of the resurrection. —Moody Monthly

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"Alas for Him!"

Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees!
Who, hopelessly, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own! —John Greenleaf Whittier

"Come Forth"

Before the tomb Christ stood one day,
And dried the people's tears away
As He spoke forth in mighty voice
That made Judea's hills rejoice,
"Come forth!"
Inside the tomb Christ lay one morn,
Defeated seemed Salvation's Horn,
But God the Father spoke the word,
And this He said, though no man heard,
"Come forth!"
Inside the tomb of sin I lay,
The price of sin I had to pay;
But Christ the Raiser of the dead
Spoke to my poor, bound soul and said,

"Come forth!"
And when the great and final sound
Shall raise our loved ones from the ground,
'Twill be the last time we shall hear
That glorious sound upon our ear,
"Come forth!"—Louie W. Stokes

Remembering Only the Cocoon

Arthur Brisbane once pictured a crowd of grieving caterpillars carrying the corpse of a cocoon to its final resting place. The poor, distressed caterpillars, clad in black raiment, were weeping, and all the while the beautiful butterfly fluttered happily above the muck and mire of earth, forever freed from its earthly shell. Needless to say, Brisbane had the average orthodox funeral in mind and sought to convey the idea that when our loved ones pass, it is foolish to remember only the cocoon and concentrate our attention on the remains, while forgetting the bright butterfly. —Edmund K. Goldsborough, in Sanctuary Magazine

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Ten Years or a Thousand

When Rufus Choate, the distinguished American statesman, took ship for England in search of health, a friend said to him, "I feel sure that your health will be restored and that you will be living and at your work ten years from now." "Living ten years from now!" said the great lawyer. "I shall be living a thousand years from now." In a few days Mr. Choate died, but in the sense in which he used the words he did not die.—Westminster Teacher

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Following Dead Gods

A missionary states that on one occasion a number of persons who were hearing him, mostly women, showed great astonishment when he told them that the God he worshipped, and wished them to worship, is a living God. They said, "The foreigner's God is better than ours; ours has no life."—Missionary Herald

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"Each Covered With Drapery of Snow"

An army chaplain tells of having bivouacked with his brigade upon an open field with nothing over him, or his soldiers, but the cold, cloudy sky. On arising the next morning, all over the field were little mounds like new made graves, each covered with a drapery of snow which had fallen during the night and covered each soldier, as with the winding sheet of death. While he was gazing upon the strange spectacle, here and there a man began to stir, rise, shake himself and stand in momentary amazement at the sight. It was a beautiful symbol of the resurrection. —Gospel Herald

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A Triumphant Funeral

London had never witnessed such a funeral service as was held for Dr. F. B. Meyer in Christ Church Cathedral. There was never a note of defeat, no hint of tragedy, no suggestion of regret, but there were radiant Scripture passages and glorious Easter hymns. At the conclusion of the service, the vast congregation rose as the organist began to play. They stood with bowed heads waiting for the throbbing dirge of the Death March, but instead the organist swung into the triumphal notes of the Halleluiah Chorus. And why should it be otherwise, when a great servant of Christ was standing at attention before his King? That is the faith which is ours today! We worship, not a dead Jesus, but a living Christ, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." —Presbyterian

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The Only One Who Conquered Death

Dr. Harry Rimmer was traveling in Egypt and, while negotiating with the Secretary of State, a refined and cultured gentleman, he engaged him in conversation concerning religious experience. "We believe that God has given to man three revelations of Himself," said Dr. Rimmer. "We, too, believe that," said the man, who was a Moslem. "We believe that God has revealed Himself in the works of creation. "We, too, believe that." "We believe that God has revealed Himself in a book—the Bible." "We believe that God has revealed Himself in a book—the Koran." "We believe that God has revealed Himself in a man—that man is Jesus Christ." "We believe that God has revealed Himself in a man—that man is the prophet Mohammed." "We believe that Jesus died to save His followers." "We believe that Mohammed died for his people." "We believe," said Dr. Rimmer, "that Jesus is able to substantiate His claims because He rose from the dead." The Moslem hesitated, then his eyes fell, and finally he replied, "We have no information concerning our prophet after his death." Jesus Christ is supreme because He is the only one who ever conquered death and triumphed over the grave.—Sunday School Times

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How To Know Easter's Coming:
"Thirty days hath September,"

Every person can remember;
But to know when Easter'll come
Puzzles even scholars some.
When March the twenty-first is past
Just watch the silvery moon,
And when you see it full and round,
Know Easter'll be here soon.
After the moon has reached its full,
Then Easter will be here
The very Sunday after
In each and every year.
And if it hap on Sunday
The moon should reach its height,
The Sunday following this event
Will be the Easter bright. —The Friend

Which Christ?

A very learned man once said to a little girl who believed in the Lord Jesus: "My poor little girl, you don't know whom you believe in. There have been many christs. In which of them do you believe?" "I know which one I believe in," replied the child. "I believe in the Christ who rose from the dead." —Sunday School Times

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Our Living Saviour

Vital Christian experience comes from knowing Jesus as the living Saviour.

Two irreligious young men were discussing the resurrection, telling each other why it was impossible for them to accept the doctrine. Then a deacon of a near-by church walked by, and in a joking way one of the young fellows called to him, "Say, Deacon, tell us why you believe that Jesus rose again." "Well," he answered, "one reason is that I was talking with Him for half an hour this very morning." We may all experience proof of the resurrection of Christ in the acknowledging of His living presence in our lives. No one who knows Jesus personally questions the resurrection.—Watchman-Examiner

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Contrasting Views of Ghandi and Sankey

Some fifteen years before Ghandi's death, he wrote:

"I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism, as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being, and I find a solace in the Bhagavad and Upainshads that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount."

Just before his death, Ghandi wrote:

"My days are numbered. I am not likely to live very long—perhaps a year or a little more. For the first time in fifty years I find myself in the slough of despond. All about me is darkness; I am praying for light."

Just before Sankey's homegoing, he wrote:

"I believe in Him who said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.' "I believe in the Son of God with all my soul, might, mind, and strength, and am therefore saved by the word of One who cannot lie. I have only a little longer weary tossing on the billows' foam, only a little longer of earthly darkness, and then the sunshine of the Father's throne. So sure am I of meeting in heaven those of my friends who are following the Lamb, that I send them this final message, that God is love. Good night, good night."—W. B. K.

"If Easter Be Not True!"

If Easter be not true,
Then all the lilies low must lie,
The Flanders poppies fade and die;
The spring must lose her fairest bloom,
For Christ were still within the tomb—
If Easter be not true.
If Easter be not true,
Then faith must mount on broken wings.,
Then hope no more immortal spring,
Then hope must lose her mighty urge,
Life prove a phantom, death a dirge—

If Easter be not true.
If Easter be not true,
'Twere foolishness the cross to bear,
He died in vain who suffered there;
What matter though we laugh or cry,
Be good or evil, live or die,
If Easter be not true.
If Easter be not true—
But it Is true, and Christ is risen!
And mortal spirit from its prison
Worthwhile the struggle sure the prize,
Since Easter, aye, is true! —Henry H. Barstow

"Yet Shall He Live"

A little girl whose baby brother had just died asked her mother where baby had gone. "To be with Jesus," replied the mother. A few days later, talking to a friend, the mother said, "I am so grieved to have lost my baby." The little girl heard her, and, remembering what her mother had told her, looked up into her face and asked, "Mother, is a thing lost when you know where it is?"

"No, of course not." "Well, then, how can baby be lost when he has gone to be with Jesus?" Her mother never forgot this. It was the truth. —Junior King's Business

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"He Tore the Bars Away!"

A stanza from an old hymn says that Jesus Christ "burst the bars" of the grave and "tore its bands away." If a man bursts the bars of state's prison all the police force of the commonwealth is after him to bring him back. If, on the contrary, he has served out his full time, all the power in the state cannot retain him a single hour longer. Jesus Christ must remain in the grave three days "according to scripture," but after the three days had expired there was not power enough in heaven or in hell to retain Him another moment. —A. J. Gordon

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Certainties—Not Speculations

When that great Christian and scientist, Sir Michael Faraday, was dying, some journalists questioned him as to his speculations for a life after death. "Speculations! "said he, "I know nothing about speculations. I'm resting on certainties. 'I know that my redeemer liveth,' and because He lives, I shall live also." —Gospel Trumpet

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An Anticipated Delight!

One of the anticipated delights of the life beyond is our reunion with those dear ones who have died in the Lord, "whom we have loved long since, and lost awhile." "And the stately ships go on, To the haven under the hill; But O for the touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still!"\—Alfred Tennyson

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Christ Is Risen

"Oh, we see Him in the springtime,
When each bud and leaf and flower
Bursting from its deathlike sleeping
Speaks of resurrection power!
When all nature wakes in gladness,
Birds sing out their tuneful lays,
And the earth, bedecked with blossoms,
Joins in its Creator's praise."—Pentecostal Evangelist

Reveille!—Not Taps

A soldier said, "When I die do not sound taps over my grave, but reveille—the morning call, the summons to rise."

—From Streams in the Desert, by M