

Resurrection of Jesus Christ-Devotionals

The Empty Tomb Affirms The Resurrection

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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 invincibility. 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 Th 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

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

A friend 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. (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

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.

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).

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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).

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 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](#) (Can be used free ONLINE) p. 183.

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).

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 13:29–30

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

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

Benjamin Franklin penned his own epitaph, on one hand funny but on the other hand tragically sad for he was "Deist" not a Disciple! **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.

The Body of B. Franklin, Printer
Like the Cover of an old Book
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its Lettering and Gilding,
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.