

Resurrection of Jesus

According to Scripture there are some 16 appearances of Jesus following his resurrection. He showed himself to those who knew him best because they better than any others would be able to affirm that it was truly him and not another posing as him.

He showed himself to people one at a time and in groups even up to 500 in size.

He was seen, he was touched, he was talked to, and he was seen eating. He was not a figment of anyone's imagination and he was not a ghost or apparition.

While one or two might have been deceived, it is impossible for so many to have been deceived over such a length of time.

The whole of our system of belief rests on this resurrection!

Jesus took the liability for our sin and died.

In his resurrection he was cleared of all the liability of our sins.

He was set free from death – the consequence of sin.

He discharged the debt of his people.

He was a hostage to death for us, he was our representative.

“We have endured the sentence of the law in our Substitute, we have lain in its prison, and even died under its death-warrant, and now we are no longer under its curse.”

Romans 6:8-11 “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Acts 25:16ff Festus to Agrippa and his summary of the Paul's situation and teaching.

This is not a memorial service. We are not just commemorating a life or an event. We are celebrating the presence of the resurrected Lord.

We don't just sit and remember, we engage him here and now.

HE IS ALIVE AND HE IS HERE!

He is presently claiming eternity for us – I go to prepare a place for you.

He is presently interceding for us – Rom 8

He presently oversees all things on our behalf.

He is here seeking our fellowship – desiring to commune with us.

Treat Jesus even now not as a phantom, a ghost, an idea or ideal, but treat him as a living person – to be sure the living person of God – but a person with whom you talk and in whom you trust and whom you love.

I Peter 1:8 “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

The Prophets and Moses proclaimed the same truth that Paul claimed and proclaimed:

Job – I know that my redeemer lives...in my flesh shall I see God.

Dauid – Psalm 16 My flesh also shall rest in hope.

Isaiah 26:19 Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise...for the earth shall cast out the dead.

Daniel 12:2,3 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt.

Hosea 13:14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; O death I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction

And add to that Jesus own words and the words of the apostles:

John 5:28 Jesus said, “Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth.

John 6:40 And of all who believe, I will raise him up on the last day.

Romans 8
Philippians 3:21
I Corinthians 15

If there is no resurrection then your faith is a delusion.
We lie to ourselves to give small comfort in the face of great tragedy
– the death of a loved one.
We are self-deluded and intentionally so.

If he rose from the dead – consider the implications:
His death accomplished what he purposed – the atonement for our
sins.
His promises are believable and certain – he will save us.
We and our loved ones will be resurrected when Christ comes again.

Our lives do not depend upon our moral condition.
Our eternities do not depend upon our spiritual state.
The foundation of our future rests on an historical fact – Jesus rose
from the dead.
If that did not happen then our religion like the rest of the religions
and philosophies of the world rests on wishful thinking.
The basis of our hope is not in our upstanding character nor even in
our faith, the basis is the resurrection of Jesus.

Have you ever faced death – looked it squarely in the eye?
Have you ever yourself been at the brink of death, certain you were
about to pass out of this life?
Have you ever watched a friend or loved one pass away?
If you have then you know something of the testing of your faith, the
trying of your religion that is.
At that time, like no other time, the ground beneath the feet of your
religion either begins to dissolve away or it remains firm.
At that time you experience your faith – is it solid or is it sand.
When you are certain that Jesus was raised from the dead, that truth
alone gives you solid ground on which to stand.
You sink down in the fear or grief of death and then your feet touch –
they settle on rock – the sure truth of Jesus' resurrection.
Christ's deity rests on the resurrection (Rom 1:4)

Jesus appeared out of Nazareth and Galilee declaring himself to be the son of God. Why should he be believed? Ultimately he proved who he was by the resurrection.

We would have no more reasons to believe Jesus than Mohammed or the Buddha or Karl Marx if Jesus did not rise from the dead.

Christ's sovereignty rests on the resurrection (Rom 14:9) :

Our justification rests on the resurrection (Rom 4:25)

Our resurrection rests on Jesus' resurrection (Rom 8:11 and

John 20:24-28

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

If beauty of language or eloquence of speech were required to convince anyone of the resurrection of Jesus then God surely would have called angels to declare that resurrection.

But instead he called mostly no-name, simple, peasant people to not speak with eloquence but to simply testify, to simply bear witness.

Can you imagine a better way for the truth of the resurrection to be attested than the way Jesus did it?

The witnesses knew him.

The witnesses had nothing to gain and everything to lose by lying.

The Gospel is simple.

Our tendency is to sophisticate it.

The cultured sages of every era seem to want to add to the simple truth a mist of human thought and speculation.

The Gospel is built on three plain facts of history:

God the Son came to our world.

He died for our sins (buried).

He rose from the dead.

I Corinthians 15:1-8 “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.

2 Timothy 2:8 “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel...”

It is not enough to know that our believing loved ones are in the presence of Jesus but that even their physical bodies (disintegrated as they may be) are in “divine custody” until their resurrection. (Spurgeon Sermon 1653, 1882 p199)

Charles Kingsley (Anglican preacher) lay terminally ill in one room while his wife of many years lay in the next room also terminally ill. She sent a note to her husband saying, “My darling, it is cowardly of me to tremble before the unseen realities of what lies beyond death?” Kingsley wrote back reassuringly, “My darling, it is not cowardly, but we do not need to be afraid. It will not be dark because God is light. We shall not be lonely because Jesus Christ is with us.” (From Larsen “God’s Great Amen” in Bodey’s Good News for All Seasons p 78-79)

Revelation 1:9-17

I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Calcutta – the sheer immensity of hopelessness.
A young friend facing life-threatening cancer.
An older friend nearing death from a brain tumor.

I Cor 15/2 Tim 2:8 The heart of the good news
John 20 A simple witness – not philosophy but fact.
Rev 1 The Risen Lord – God's Great Amen
Acts 25-26 Festus, Agrippa and Paul