

Section: Doctrine of Christ

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

**Lesson 60 <> Question 64 &65 The Resurrection of Christ**

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**Q64. Christ Jesus’ body died on the cross, but did He remain dead?**

No. On the third day, Christ rose physically from the grave!

**Q65. Why is it important that Jesus rose from the grave?**

All authority for salvation is granted to Jesus in His resurrection. Without His resurrection, faith in Christ would be useless—no one would be redeemed from sin.

We get to spend time on two questions tonight: Q 64 & Q 65.

We have lot’s to cover so let’s jump right into the first.

**Q64. Christ Jesus’ body died on the cross, but did He remain dead?**

No. On the third day, Christ rose physically from the grave!

Tonight, we focus on t**he Resurrection of Christ:** **What it is and why it is so important?**

The resurrection of Christ is a big deal because it changes everything!

Just as our catechism answer says, **Jesus did NOT remain dead in the grave. He Rose again on the third day!**

The resurrection is truly a great miracle. **WHY?** Because people who die ARE and REMAIN… **DEAD**.

The 1689 Confession of Faith says it this way:

*On the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered.  In this body he also ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of his Father, interceding.*

To understand the miracle of the resurrection and why it is good news to our souls, turn with me to **1 Corinthians chapter 15** where we find the testimony of Paul, who most clearly proclaims the importance of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** **that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures,

**There it is.** Jesus Christ died for sins (that was Friday) and was raised from the dead (on Sunday),

all in accordance with the Scriptures. In other words, **just as it was foretold it would be.**

Notice Paul says, in Accordance with the scriptures. This is because it was foretold that the messiah would die and rise again many, many generations before it happened.

On the Jewish feast day of Shavuot when Peter preached the first gospel sermon, he boldly asserted that God had raised Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, from the dead:

**Acts 2:24** God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it

He then explained that God had performed this miraculous deed in part to fulfill David's prophecy in Psalm 16.

**🡪Jesus Himself proclaimed in all four Gospels that He must RISE!**

**For example, look at Mark 8:31:** And he began to teach them that the Son of Man **must** suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, **and after three days rise again.**

Now later in **1 Corinthians 15,** after clarifying the Gospel of Jesus and testifying he has indeed risen from the dead, Paul argues that without the resurrection we have nothing:

**1 Corinthians 15:12-19** Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. **15** We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep [dead] in Christ have perished. **19** If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

**These are incredibly strong words that highlight the centrality of the resurrection for the Gospel to be intact!**

**So TODAY, we must ask and confirm this vital aspect of the Gospel as our faith and eternal life hang in the balance: Did Jesus in FACT resurrect from the dead?**

**The Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus**

First and ultimately, we must say that Scripture is the true and final authority on all matters.

Sola Scriptura. God’s word is perfect and unfailing. So, we don’t ***need*** reasons outside of Scripture to validate or prove Scripture. We take God at His word, because His word is always true.

Get this church:

-God’s word *prophesied* that Jesus would rise from the dead, so it is true. That is enough.

-Jesus Himself *said*, as we see in Scripture, that He would rise from the dead, so it is true. That is enough.

-The inspired Apostles that were commissioned by Jesus and spoke for Him *declared* in Scripture that it happened. That is enough.

We have all three of those elements teaching us that Jesus rose from the dead, but with even one of those three elements being in Scripture, we KNOW that Jesus rose from the dead. Period. Since Scripture is the true and final authority on all matters, **we don’t need reasons outside of Scripture to validate or prove Scripture**. We take God at His word, because His word is always true.

Despite that , many people in our society (due to their fallible and sinful nature) have doubts about **Christ’s bodily resurrection!**

This is not a new thing, mankind has doubted (and hated) God and His word since the beginning!

1. **The Guards:**

That leads to the first of many ways we see that Christ did indeed rise! The very people who made sure Christ was killed wanted to make sure that His followers lost all hope. To be sure of this, they wanted to make sure no conspiracies happened, so they went to great lengths to secure His dead body.

**Matthew 27:62-66** The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate **63** and said, "Sir, we remember how that impost or said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' **64** Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, **lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." 65** Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." **66** So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

**The Roman Guard was the elite SOLDIER of the day.**

Historians say: For these elite soldiers, it was punishment by death for not fulfilling their duty (stripped and burned alive).

The Latin word used to describe the “The Roman Guard” in this text was *koustodia*.

This is translated to “custodian,” which in that day meant a “**fighting unit of soldiers.”**

In Acts 12:3-4, we see a clearer insight into what a ***Roman Guard*** looked like: “**to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each.”**

So at the tomb, they would sleep in shifts… staggered as they slept!

**So the protection of a Roman Guard was a serious and professional deal.**

So for Jesus’ body to be taken/stolen under such professional guard would have been impossible for Jesus’s disciples.

The second **argument against a conspiracy is:**

1. **The Huge Stone:**

**In Mark 16:1-4** When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. **2** And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. **3** And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

They were surely very emotional and realized their lack of planning because they realized they would require others to roll the stone away. The passage continues:

**4** And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back--it was very large.

Years ago, engineers from Georgia Tech were in Israel researching the type of stone that would have covered the typical 4-5 ft. opening to one’s tomb. They concluded that the stone would have been in the neighborhood of 2-2&½ tons. **So when the women observed the stone as very large, they weren’t joking.**

In Mark 16🡪The Greek word to describe how it was rolled was (**anakulio**) translates: “**to roll up a slope or incline.”** Which makes sense because many times the way they got this massive stone to go into place was to have it wedged up a hill. Then when the time came, they pulled the wedge and it would roll into place.

In John Chapter 20, a different Greek word is used (**Airo**) to describe the stone being moved. This word is translated: **“to pick something up and carry it away.”** So basically it is saying it appeared as if the stone had been picked up and moved.

**Church: there is a reason why God includes the details in His word about the stone. To help us see the power of God at work and not some trumped up conspiracy derived by man.**

So from these observations, we can see that FOR THERE TO HAVE BEEN FUNNY BUSINESS, THE CULPRITS WOULD HAVE HAD TO MOVE A TWO-TON STONEup an incline, possibly having picked it up and moved it over and/or around the Roman Elite possibly numbering 16 men.  **Nope … I don’t think so!**

**Quick side note: The stone wasn’t rolled away so Jesus could get out. He is God. He is recorded as suddenly appearing in rooms that were completely locked down. No, the stone was rolled away so others could get it and see that he was indeed risen and NOT THERE!**

1. **Now, in my opinion the greatest proof of the resurrection is one of the biggest focuses of scripture and that is, the eyewitness accounts**.

Go back to **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** with me:

Paul says, **“**For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. **7** Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. **8** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”

**The biggest evidence we have that Jesus Christ did indeed rise from the Dead is:** **the account, the reaction and changed lives of those who were most devoted to Him!**

**Eyewitness accounts** have always been used to validate the accuracy of any published report, to prove the events at a crime scene, or to prove a story true!

🡪 Understand that JESUS DID NOT APPEAR TO JUST A LIMITED, HIDDEN, CONTROVERSIAL, FEW... **HE APPEARED TO MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE and on one occasion, 500 at once!**

So in **1 Corinthians 15,** Paul is basically saying if you don’t believe me, ask these people who are still around.

🡪If we gave each of those 500 eyewitnesses six minutes on the stand to give their account, we would have **50 hours** of what would be the most lopsided trial in history!

ADDITIONALLY, the witnesses were not stereotyped in one similar way…

* **Mary** saw Jesus in the morning,
* The **travelers to Emmaus** saw Him in the afternoon,
* The **apostles** saw Him at night,
* Some saw Him outside,
* Some indoors;
* The reactions were varying in emotion:
* Some were overwhelmed, frightened, or questioning; some worshipped Him

**Now it’s not the fact that these people saw the resurrected Jesus that is enough; it is the fact that it transformed them and propelled them to live utterly different lives.**

**The primary example being** **the disciples.**

Before the death and resurrection of Christ, these guys were **cowards.** They were scared and timid.

Peter went so far as to deny knowing Jesus when the heat got turned up (three different times).

Yet after the resurrection, Peter became a man of courage, and he was empowered to dedicate his every day to the sharing of the Good News of Jesus… **to the point that he was killed for his faith. 🡪 The disciples were transformed!**

Now one might ask the question: **Was there any gain for the disciples to do these things?**

**What if they wanted to lie about Jesus’ resurrection and keep the groupies going?**

**<> Typically when one lies, it is for that person’s advantage, YES?**

**So were there physical advantages for the disciples to the point that they would lie?**

Let’s consider the two biggest things our flesh cheats to gain: money and fame.

* **Financial gain**: NOPE! They lived in poverty and traveled with nothing.
* **Fame:** No. They got persecuted and were murdered for their faith.

🡪**THERE WAS and continues to be NO MOTIVE APART FROM THE TRUTH** that TRUE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST CONTINUALLY WITHOUT EXPLANATION PURSUE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS IN THE FACE OF MAJOR TURMOIL AND DEATH and DO NOT RECANT.

**One of my favorite evidences is the fact that:**

**4. The Tomb Was Not Enshrined**

This is a great circumstantial evidence.

Man’s practice is to memorialize and remember someone when they die.

This is what we do at a funeral service: we light candles, and sing songs, and tell stories to remember the one that passed away! We get on planes and go to the grave to be as near to the body as we can.

Understand in the day of Jesus, there were no less than 50 tombs of holy men that had been memorialized or enshrined.

But, the greatest man who ever lived, the most influential figure in all of human history didn’t have a funeral… **WHY?**

**Because He was not there.** There was not enough time to put together His wake:

If Jesus’ legacy ended there with His burial, the people who once followed Him passionately would have slowly and surely hung up their hats at His tomb. We still would today. But Jesus does not have this kind of place of memorial—there is ***no verified* place** to go see His tomb. (There are some who think this tomb or that tomb may where He was laid after death. Surely, if you travel to Israel, there are people there suggesting they know the location. But this claim and declaration of a tomb site happened much later. An exact tomb location is not declared in Scripture and memorializing His true tomb was not commanded or accounted in Scripture.)

If Jesus’ legacy **ended there** with His burial, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MARKED TO THIS DAY AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TOMBS WHERE ONE OF THE GREATEST MEN THAT EVER LIVED WAS BURIED…

**WHY?** **Because that’s where it would have ended!**

**But it did not end there!**

There was no reason to go right a poem, sing a song, light a candle.

<> They didn’t enshrine this great man at His tomb… **because Jesus wasn’t there!!!!**

**He was alive! Walking the earth about to go sit at the right hand of the Father on His throne in in heaven.**

**The resurrection brought new life to a group who had been beat down, broken, and marginalized by the world.**

The good news of the Gospel is the fact that Jesus died for our sins and conquered death and now reigns at the right hand of the Father. **He is ALIVE. He is well. He is eternal.**

**He is victorious. And His spirit has been poured out to all who believe.**

**The Gospel is the GOOD NEWS OF JESUS. It will change your life.**

**But do you see tonight how essential the resurrection is?**

This leads us to our second question and answer tonight …

**Q65. Why is it important that Jesus rose from the grave?**

All authority for salvation is granted to Jesus in His resurrection. Without His resurrection, faith in Christ would be useless—no one would be redeemed from sin.

If we stop at the cross, then we stop with an incomplete view of our new life with God.

Salvation is not just the removal of our sin-- not just the payment of our sin.

The payment Jesus made on the Cross for our sins makes possible for us to have new life with God. **It is the justification for the elect to be reborn and to live in righteousness for His glory.**

**This is why Jesus had to RISE!** So He could pave the way and lead the victory march.

Jesus rising form the dead is His way of leading us forward in righteousness.

Not only did He pay our debt, but He has given us access to His endless account of righteousness and glory.

* No longer do we stand on our own merit (or more truly lack thereof) but on Christ.
* No longer are we shamed or condemned by our sins, but they are not counted against us.
* No longer are we enslaved to selfishness but instead in new life-- in resurrected life-- we are empowered to glory and love.

**Too often in some churches the resurrection of Christ is a doctrine of secondary importance.**

I love how Matthew Barrett (Professor of Theology & Author) emphasizes the Resurrection: “It is neglected and forgotten until Easter comes around each year. The same disregard for the resurrection is seen in how we share the gospel. Christians tend to share the gospel as if Jesus died on the cross and that is the end of the story. We make a zip line from the crucifixion to ‘repent and believe.’ The cross is central to our salvation, but what God accomplished there is incomplete unless the tomb is empty on Sunday morning. Therefore, the resurrection of Christ is vital ‘for us and our salvation.’"

Think about our “gospel” catechism answer, it was critical to include the truth of the resurrection! “The gospel is the good news of the grace and power of God to redeem undeserving sinners to eternal life through Jesus’ perfect, sinless life; substitutional, sacrificial death; **and victorious resurrection from the grave.”**

**We are asking: Why does the resurrection matter so much?**

***The Answer:* OUR SALVATION IS GROUNDED IN THE RESURRECTION.**

Let me break this down:

1. **Our New Birth (Regeneration) is Grounded in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

**Have you ever read the resurrection narratives and said, "Praise God! Because Christ ‘has risen,’ I am born again!?"**

What we often say is “because Christ died….”

But if we truly understood the implications of Christ's resurrection for our salvation, the new birth would be the first place to turn.

**Scripture teaches that our new birth-- God's supernatural, monergistic act whereby the Spirit makes us new creatures in Christ, replacing our hearts of stone with hearts of flesh and giving us saving faith-- is only a reality for us because Jesus is risen.**

Look…

**1 Peter 1:3**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

The same God who raised Christ from the grave has also raised us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

**Ephesians 2:5-6**even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—  and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Because God has raised Christ from the dead, He alone freely chooses whom He will give saving faith by first making us alive together with Christ. This is the NEW BIRTH!

**Christ's resurrection is the very basis and means by which we are born again.**

1. **Our Belief and Justification is Grounded in the Resurrection of Christ**

**The resurrection of Jesus is a cornerstone of WHAT WE BELIEVE about our all-powerful God.**

**It is God alone who creates the world, who breathes into existence life and raises the dead.**

**This is the God on whom our faith is grounded.**

**Romans 4:23-25** But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, **24** but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, **25** who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

**Belief is a necessary part of our salvation. And as this text clarifies:**

- It is not just belief that Jesus is God who put on flesh and lived,

- It is not just belief that Christ did indeed satisfy God’s wrath as our substitute on the Cross,

- But it is also and essentially belief that God did in fact raise Jesus from the dead.

This verse also clarifies that by raising Jesus from the dead, God approved the work of Christ on the Cross for our sins. God declared His Son's work complete! The penalty for our sin has been paid, and no guilt remains.

As Wayne Grudem explains:

*When the Father in essence said to Christ, "All the penalty for sins has been paid and I find you not guilty but righteous in my sight," he was thereby making the declaration that would also apply to us once we trusted in Christ for salvation. In this way Christ's resurrection also gave final proof that he had earned our justification.*

The great pastor and theologian, Jonathan Edwards, also states the matter precisely:

*For if Christ were not risen, it would be evidence that God was not yet satisfied for [our] sins. Now the resurrection is God declaring his satisfaction; he thereby declared that it was enough; Christ was thereby released from his work; Christ, as he was Mediator, is thereby justified.*

**If Christ is not resurrected, our faith in God’s saving grace is futile, for He didn’t even raise the Son He sent to accomplish victory over death.**

In other words, if God did not raise Christ from the dead, He would essentially be saying, "I am not satisfied with your atoning work on behalf of sinners." If this were the case, we would still be dead in our sins.

This is the case that Paul is fighting for in **1 Corinthians 15:17:**

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

This is why our answer says: “Without His resurrection, faith in Christ would be useless—no one would be redeemed from sin" Church, without His resurrection, Christians would be the most pitiable people on the earth. Do you see how important the resurrection is!?

1. **Our Sanctification is Grounded in the Resurrection of Christ**

Look at Paul’s great clarity in..

**Romans 6:1-14**  What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

**5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

**12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. **13** Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. **14** For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Here, Paul explains that we can **"walk in newness of life"** because Christ was raised from the dead.

We are not to continue in sin, for how, as Paul asked, "**can we who died to sin still live in it?"**

Paul's next words are especially powerful. As Christians, we are united to Christ.

**Christ died to sin, and so also must we consider ourselves dead to sin.**

**But Christ also came back to life. The life He lives He lives to God.**

Therefore, as those who are in Christ, we are alive to God.

No longer are we to walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

None of this, however, is possible if Christ remains in the tomb. His resurrection is our victory over the reign of sin. Only because He has risen do we have the assurance, the confidence, and the ability to now walk in godliness.

**Why is the Resurrection of Jesus Good News?**

**Because Christ secured our victory over sin and death.** Which means we are risen from the enslavement of our sin to enjoy the greatest prize we could ever know: GOD Himself!

The reason why we sing and celebrate Jesus’s life, death and resurrection is the fact that it means we get to forever enjoy life with God.

BECAUSE OF Jesus’ perfect, sinless life; substitutional, sacrificial death; **and victorious resurrection from the grave,** we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone from the eternal wrath we deserved, and **are reconciled into an eternally secure relationship with God.**

**Heaven is not primary;** it is a secondary benefit.

The truth is if we could be restored to life with God but still suffer, we would not trade it for the world.

This is the joy we have right now… While we are still here on earth… Suffering for His name’s sake…

We are sorrowful but always rejoicing. **WHY?** Because we have been reconciled to the King.

He is the prize of our salvation and the reason why the GOOD NEWS is so GOOD!

This is what Jesus means when He says in **John 11:25:** "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.”

Next week we will explore what happened after the resurrection, focusing on where Christ went and when Christ will return. You won’t want to miss it.

Let’s pray!