

The Resurrection

Introduction; Today is called 'Easter' by many in the world.

- A. It is a day when many celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
1. This is a tradition of men that evolved in the early church several hundred years after the times of the apostles.
 2. As the church spread throughout the Roman empire and many pagans were brought into the church they wanted a spring celebration to replace their spring festival —often involving fertility rites.
 3. The early church made Easter or the Eucharist to replace the spring festivals. Since Jesus died and rose in the spring they set up a special celebration to remember His resurrection —Eucharist is a Greek word that means thanksgiving or the giving of thanks.
 4. This was not the pattern from the beginning. The early church celebrated Jesus' resurrection every first day of the week. There was not a special yearly celebration or 'spring' festival.
 5. *"But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanksgiving..."* —From *'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles'*; written about AD 120.
 6. *"And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place and the memoir of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the presiding brother verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and as we before said, when our prayers is ended, **bread and wine and water** are brought, and the presiding brother in like manner offers prayers and thanksgiving according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each and a participation of that over which thanks have been given" — Justin Martyr about AD 160.*
 7. *Acts 20:7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.*
- B. The resurrection of Christ was in the spring but not when most usually celebrate Easter.
1. The resurrection occurred the first Sunday after the Passover of the Jews. However modern Easter is determined another way. It is not always immediately after the Passover.
 2. *Constantine the Great, Roman emperor, convoked the Council of Nicaea in 325. The council unanimously ruled that the Easter festival should be celebrated throughout the Christian world on the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox; and that if the full moon should occur on a Sunday and thereby coincide with the Passover festival, Easter should be commemorated on the Sunday following. Coincidence of the feasts of Easter and Passover was thus avoided —Microsoft Encarta.*
 3. The eastern, Greek church does not follow this system to fix the Eucharist at a certain time. Some denominations celebrate it at different times and some do not celebrate it at all.
 4. Easter is not a New Testament church *holy day*. Therefore the church here does not celebrate it.
 5. However the early church did meet every Lord's day to celebrate the Lord's death, burial and resurrection by the Lord's supper. Therefore we are here because it is Sunday.
- C. We will talk about the resurrection today.
1. We do so because it is the reason we are here. If Christ was not raised we would all have no hope.
 2. Also because of the holiday many are thinking about the resurrection of Christ so we will study why it is really important.
 3. This year Easter does happen to be the first Sunday after the Passover. No effort is made to avoid the Passover today. So since the Passover was Thursday night, today is probably the day Jesus was raised.
 4. Jesus and His disciples celebrated Passover on a Thursday night and Jesus was crucified on a Friday. Most recognize that the Jewish day begins at sundown so Thursday night to us was Friday to them.
- D. Consider the Resurrection of Jesus Christ with us today.

I. The Resurrection — Our Hope

- A. If the resurrection is not real we are fools.
1. Paul argues this in 1 Corinthians 15. It seems some were arguing there would be no resurrection of the dead.
 2. This may have been because of some Jews who had been Sadducees. They did not believe in a resurrection and believed all God's blessings were in this life.
 3. *Acts 23:8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection; and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.*
 4. This may have been because of some Greek converts. The Greeks did not believe in the dead being raised. Many believed in Hades, the realm of dead spirits. However the dead stayed in Hades. They were not given new bodies.
 5. *Acts 17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."*
- B. Paul tried to show them the necessity of the resurrection.
1. **1 Corinthians 15:12-19**; Paul argues that they could not accept the resurrection of Christ and deny the resurrection of men. They stand or fall together.
 2. Because of persecutions and trials Christians are very pathetic if there is no resurrection. What we get in this life is not worth following the Lord for.
 3. **Vs 20-28**; Christ is risen from the dead and we will be raised in Him. We die because of Adam and we will live because of Jesus Christ.
 4. Death is man's enemy. Death will be defeated by Jesus Christ. We will rise to die no more.
 5. **Vs 50-58**; Paul tells us a little about the resurrection. We will have new body that is incorruptible. This will happen instantly when the Lord returns.
- C. We see the hope we have in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

II. The Resurrection — Historical

- A. The New Testament treats the resurrection as an event of history.
1. Many say it is just a symbolic picture of Jesus' cause or teaching extending beyond His death.
 2. Many others say He was not really raised but that His disciples foolishly believed it and went around teaching the world it happened.
 3. Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 15 that it was a verified, proven event. He lists many witnesses to it.
 4. **1 Corinthians 15:1-8**; This is a large list of witnesses that saw the risen Lord over a period of forty days. Paul himself saw the risen Lord and so he suffered much for the cause of Christ. Luke also acknowledges this.
 5. *Acts 1:1-3 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*
- B. The four Gospel writers all testify of the history of Jesus' resurrection.
1. *Luke 23:32-33 There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.*
 2. Jesus died on the cross with two others. We know from other sources of history that the Romans often crucified criminals. Jesus' death fits what we know of history.
 3. *Luke 23:44-46 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.*
 4. The Roman soldiers were experts at killing criminals. There were four at the cross. There is no question that Jesus was dead.
 5. *John 19:32-37 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36 For*

these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

6. The soldiers made sure Jesus was dead. The apostles John was there and amazed at what happened when they pierced His side with the spear. John was an eye-witness.
7. *Mark 16:9 Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.*
8. Here Mark testifies of the day Jesus rose on. It was the Sunday after the Passover.

C. We see that the resurrection of Christ is a matter of history.

III. The Resurrection — Reality

A. The N.T. offers good evidence that the resurrection was real.

1. This is seen in the many witnesses we have looked at. The Gospel writers and Paul and his long list in 1 Corinthians 15 show this.
2. This is also seen in **fulfilled prophecy**. Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection were all prophesied hundreds of years beforehand.
3. *Zech 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."*
4. Zechariah's prophecy was seen earlier in John 19 —previous column. The piercing of His side and the people being amazed was promised about 500 years before it happened.
5. *Psa 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*
6. David spoke in Psalm 16 of the Father not leaving his soul in Sheol —realm of the dead or Hades. Being a type of Christ he was prophesying of what the Father would do for Jesus Christ. Peter explains this.
7. *Acts 2:29-32 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses."*

B. Another argument for the resurrection of Christ is the empty tomb.

1. Many do not believe Jesus was raised from the dead. Thomas Jefferson is one of these. He assembled a summary of Jesus life. The last lines of his book are;
2. *Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus: and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed. —The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth; page 168.*
3. Yet the empty tomb is strong evidence of Jesus' resurrection. First there is the change in the character of the disciples. Before Jesus' death they were selfish, weak and ran away when He was taken.
4. Yet later they were brave and faithful and gave their lives for the truth of Jesus' resurrection.
5. *Acts 12:1-2 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. 2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*
6. What changed them? It wasn't money or power or fame for they did not get these things.
7. They were changed because the tomb was empty. Jefferson did not believe Jesus was raised and left Him in the tomb. Yet the tomb was empty.
8. *Luke 24:1-3 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.*
9. The empty tomb changed the disciples because they knew why it was empty. It was empty because Jesus was raised from the dead. He appeared to them time and again.
10. *"The Empty Tomb Itself Did Not Convince the Apostles. It was the appearance of Jesus to witnesses that convinced them."* —Introduction to Christians Evidences by 'Ferrell Jenkins.
11. The disciples really believed the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They believed that they would be raised like He was. Therefore they obeyed Him and went throughout the world telling others about Him.
12. They suffered and died for Him. Why would they do this if He was not raised? Why would they believe He was raised if they did not have good evidence?

13. We have good evident to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We need to believe we will also be raised too and prepare for it. We need to be ready for the Lord's return.

C. We need to see the reality of Jesus' resurrection.

Conclusion; Jesus was raised from the dead.

A. We have good reason to believe this and to have a hope of being raised too.

1. We may not know the exact day He was raised on. Yet this does not matter for the early church remembered it every first day of the week.
2. We need to do this too. We need to put the Lord first in our lives and worship and serve Him every day. We meet as the church on Sundays to remember His death, burial and resurrection.

B. We are raised with Christ in baptism.

1. Only Christians have a hope of being raised to be with the Lord. Only those who are in Christ have the hope of heaven when this life is over.
2. We become a Christian by faith, repentance and baptism. We believe in Jesus as God's Son and believe in His death, burial and resurrection.
3. We then repent of our sins. We are sorry for sin and turn from it. We turn to Christ and determine to follow Him.
4. We are then buried with Him in baptism. We are buried with Him and raised with Him spiritually so we can be raised with Him physically when He returns.
5. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
6. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
7. *Acts 22:16 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'*
8. *Gal 3:26-28 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*
9. See also Romans 6:3-7, John 3:3-6, Acts 8:35-39, 17:30-31, 18:8, Matt 28:18-20, 1 Pet 3:21, etc.

C. If the church can help anyone in service to their God, please let us.

