

#29 - Resurrection Luke 24:1-49

Engage:

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

“The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is either one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon people, or it is the most important fact of history.” Josh McDowell

God’s plan of redemption is no longer a future event. The two key pivotal events of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus have set the finished work in motion. Throughout the rest of the New Testament the resurrection is portrayed as the reason for the faith of those who are followers of Jesus. For example see: Acts 2:22-36; 4:2, 33; 23:6; 24:15; Romans 1:4; 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:16--5:10; Ephesians 1:18; 2:7; Philippians 3:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Revelation 20:5-6.

“Paul goes so far as to say that if Jesus didn’t actually, factually, bodily raise from the dead, then we Christians are a pitiable lot (1 Cor 15:19). This event makes all the difference in the world. It validates Jesus as God’s Son. We can believe in Him implicitly and follow Him completely. It validates Jesus’ work on the cross. If He didn’t raise from the dead, then He was nothing more than a valiant martyr, and we are still in our sins (1 Cor 15:17). It assures our own victory over the tomb and grants us hope for our own resurrection (1 Cor 15:21-22, 42-44, 51-54). Humanity’s only unconquered enemy has now been defeated! These are not just theological acrobatics. The evangelists record for us the most important message of life and death (and life again!).” Mark Moore

Throughout the gospel accounts we see Jesus in many different roles, for example a teacher, healer, miracle worker, prophet, mentor, etc. As we conclude this section in God’s Redemption Story dealing with the life of Jesus, we have examined His death as an innocent victim and now it is time to view His resurrection. The words “He is risen!” are a triumphant expression of what followed.

Extra: “‘The King is dead; long live the King.’ With those words many a monarch has passed from the scene, only to be succeeded by another. But in the case of Christ, the King of the Jews, the phrase takes on added significance.

Never before had a king died only to succeed himself to the throne. But Christ did. Never before had a man been crucified and buried only to emerge bodily three days later. But Christ did. Never before had a man endured such human hatred in order to demonstrate such divine love. But the Son of Man did.

No other event in human history could be so aptly described as ‘old, yet ever new.’ No other single piece of good news has brought more comfort, more encouragement, more peace to more people than the ringing declaration, ‘He is risen!’” ?? DW, October, 2002

Quote: “Many teachers of the world have tried to explain everything but have changed nothing. Jesus explained little and changed everything.” (Unknown) DW, October, 2002

“Death died when Christ arose.”

Thoughts about the story:

- Luke 24:1-12 – The resurrection:

vv. 1-8 (also Mathew 28:5-8; Mark 16:2-8; John 20:1) - The women who were last to leave the cross (Luke 23:55-56) were the first to come to the tomb. They came out of love and respect for Jesus. Anointing a dead body with spices was such an act of devotion. They were not afraid and they certainly were not going to be stopped from doing what they came to do. They came wondering how they would enter the tomb, but found it to be open and empty! An angel had opened the tomb (Matthew 28:2).

Before they came Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. We do not know exactly when this occurred. There is nothing said about the soldiers guarding the tomb seeing the resurrection. We only know that there were two men (angels) present when the women arrived. When they saw that the stone had been removed, they looked inside and found that the body of Jesus was gone. They thought that moving the stone would be their greatest problem, but finding the tomb empty presented the potential for an even greater problem. Who took the body of Jesus? Where had it been taken? The next thing they saw were the two men (angels) whose garments “gleamed like lightning.” The women instinctively fell to their knees with their “faces to the ground.”

The angels made the epoch-making announcement: “He is risen!” Then they repeated what Jesus had been telling them: “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.” (See Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31-34; Matthew 16:21; 17:9, 22-23; 20:17-19; John 2:19-22). Then their eyes and minds were opened.

vv. 9-12 (John 20:2-10) - The women then returned as quickly as they could to tell the Eleven (this term is used after the betrayal of Judas - Acts 1:26; 2:14) and the others what they had found. They did not believe them at first. Peter (Note: John records that another disciple went with Peter. It is thought that this disciple was John - John 20:3-9) then made a fast trip to the tomb where he found that the women had spoken the truth. He (they) also left, wondering what had happened to the body of Jesus. Seeing the burial linens laying there did not make sense. If you were stealing a dead body, why would you take the time to unwrap it – especially with Roman guards present?

Note: The gospel of John (20:6-7) records that the burial clothes were left – and they were neatly folded. There must not have been a reason for haste on the part of Jesus.

Luke 24:13-35 (also Mark 16:12-13) – On the road to Emmaus:

Cleopas and another person were very disappointed that Jesus had been crucified. They were traveling to Emmaus, which is about 7 miles from Jerusalem, when Jesus joined them as they walked. They were kept from recognizing Jesus as their walking companion. As they walked they were talking about the crucifixion of Jesus. These men were amazed that their new traveling companion (Jesus) did not seem to know about what had happened to Jesus at Jerusalem (v. 18). They related that they had heard that the women and some of their companions had found the tomb of Jesus empty. At that point they were not able to understand that Jesus had been raised. What they had hoped (v. 21) was no more – so they believed at that point. Jesus then told them that they were “slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His

glory” (vv. 25-26).

But this was not the end of the story. Even though they were “slow of heart” they were teachable. Jesus then began with the writing of Moses and then the Prophets to demonstrate how the Scriptures spoke of His coming. Before the evening was over, their “eyes were opened and they recognized” Jesus after seeing how He “took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them” (vv. 30-31). Note: This was not the Lord’s Supper that He observed. That is yet to come (Revelation 19:6-9).

Once they saw that Jesus was in their presence, they were transformed from being discouraged to being enthusiastic witnesses of the resurrected Christ! By this time it was night time, a potentially dangerous time to travel, but that did not stop them from rushing back to Jerusalem. There they found that Jesus had already appeared to Peter (Mark 16:7).

Note: The story began with two disciples walking the 7 miles to Emmaus in despair because their reason for hope – Jesus – they believed was dead. The story ended with the two disciples hurrying back to Jerusalem to share with the other disciples that Jesus was alive! Belief was born!

Luke 24:36-49 (also Mark 16:14; John 20:19-25; Acts 1:3-8) – Jesus appeared to the disciples:

There were now three different accounts of the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection: 1) the women, 2) Peter and John and 3) Cleopas and the other person.

Shortly after Cleopas and the other person arrived at the Upper Room to tell them their good news, Jesus appeared in the room, even though the doors were closed and locked (John 20:19-25).

Instead of being excited at the appearance of Jesus, they were afraid. Jesus reassured them that He was not a ghost by 1) showing them His hands and feet, 2) He told them that they could touch Him and 3) He asked for food and they gave Him fish to eat.

Again He reassured those in His presence that all they were seeing and experiencing had fulfilled what Scripture has said would happen when the Messiah came to redeem humankind. He spoke again from the Law of Moses, the Prophets and this time from the Psalms (v. 44). The following is a sample of some of the Scriptures that He likely referred them to: 1) Law of Moses - Deuteronomy 18:15-20; 2) the Prophets - Isaiah 53; 61:1 and the Psalms - Psalms 2:7; 16:9-11; 22:14-18; 69. Note: It has often been said that it would have been great to have been there to have heard what Jesus had to say or to have it recorded in Scripture. But when you read the gospels (especially Matthew), it seems quite evident that what they wrote would coincide with what Jesus had told them or had been passed on firsthand.

Note: The “Acts of the Apostles,” the second work of Luke, is a continuation of the same story revealed in his gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The result was that the first century church lived “boldly and without hindrance” (Acts 28:31). Before the resurrection the first disciples hid, after the resurrection they lived out their faith within their personal relationships and advanced the faith through evangelism and discipleship throughout the Roman world.

Extra:

Consider the strong testimony of the following evidence to the resurrection of Jesus:

- The total number of those who saw Jesus was over 500, many of which were still living when Paul wrote the letter called 1st Corinthians. See 1 Corinthians 15:1-8).
- The total transformation of Peter, Paul and many others
- The martyrdom of the Apostles (Question: Who would die for a lie? Answer: No one would knowingly die for a lie!)
- The conversion of about 3,000 people on the day of Pentecost a few days after the ascension of Jesus
- Those who could have produced the body of Jesus as evidence that He had not raised from the dead never did! If they had been able to do this, Christianity would not have lived! Here is a list of those who could have challenged the resurrection: Pilate, the Jewish religious leaders, the Jews present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the Jewish priests who became Christians (Acts 6:7), Saul (Acts 9), Felix (Acts 24), Festus (Acts 25), King Agrippa (Acts 26).
- The meaning of Christian baptism (Romans 6:4-11) and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-29; Revelation 19:6-9) would lose its meaning.
- The primary day of worship for Christians celebrates the day of Christ's resurrection.
- The testimony of early church fathers was unshakable.
- The changed lives of people down through the ages, including now.
- The belief in the resurrection is based on historical evidence which has never been successfully refuted, only doubted, and then by those who do not want to recognize Jesus as Lord.

Why is the resurrection so important? (The following was either quoted or taken from the Life Application Bible.)

- We know that the kingdom of heaven has broken into earth's history. Our world is now headed for redemption, not disaster.
- We know that death has been conquered and that we too will be raised from the dead to live forever with Christ.
- The resurrection gives authority to the church's witness in the world.
- The resurrection helps us find hope even in great tragedy.
- The resurrection gives us assurance that Christ is alive and real.
- God's power that brought Jesus back from the dead is available to us so that we can live for Him in an evil world.

See the following books for a defense of why Christians believe in the resurrection:

The Case for Faith & The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel
Reasonable Faith by William Lane Craig

Discussion starters:

- Many who personally witnessed the crucifixion and resurrection were never the same, i.e. Mary Magdalene, the disciples of Jesus. How about you?

- In what ways do you see yourself motivated to serve Jesus after considering the facts of His death and resurrection?