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# Why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important?

## Part 2: The study

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### Hebrews 6: 1-2

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

It seems almost incredible that some Christian Church perceives the resurrection of Jesus Christ to be an act primarily affecting Him only, rather than as an event with repercussions that are relevant for their own lives.

In this study we will see how essential and how glorious is the fact of our Lord's resurrection.

### 1. The Importance of the resurrection of Christ.

#### A) It is one of the two primary doctrines of the gospel.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel.... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1, 3-4).

It is impossible and useless to try to determine which is the more important: His death or His resurrection, for the one without the other could never have been sufficient for the salvation of men.

If Christ had remained in the grave, His death would have been no more than that of any martyr for the Christian faith.

He could have given us nothing better than a philosophy. Yet, without the vicarious sacrifice of His death, His resurrection would have presented no saving power.

It was His resurrection which demonstrated that He was the Son of God: “concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, *and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*” (Rom. 1:3-4).

His resurrection proves that His death was of sufficient value to God to cover all our sins, for His sacrifice was the sacrifice of the Son of God.

## B) It was the foundation stone on which the Church was built.

In the famous passage from **1 Corinthians 15:13-19** is found “one of the most potent negative suppositions that can be made in connection with the Christian faith.” Paul lists five negative facts about the Resurrection which, if they were true, would divest the gospel of all its power and blessing.

**(1) Our preaching is vain** - “**And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty**” (v. 14). Without the Resurrection, our gospel is robbed of its note of joy and is changed into a funeral dirge. It would become a gospel of death, a mere biography of a man that lived an extraordinary life, but died an ordinary, though ignominious, death — “**even the death of the cross**” (Phil. 2:8). Our gospel would be emptied of its power. Unless Jesus gained a victory at Calvary, as evidenced by His resurrection over death, hell, and the grave, then we are still victims. It took the victory of the open tomb and the power of the risen Lord to give effectuality to the gospel.

**(2) Faith is vain** - “**and your faith is also empty.**” (v. 14). All that you have accepted by faith as a free gift from God through Jesus Christ—divine sonship, eternal life, justification, sanctification, glorification, and a home in heaven—you did not receive at all if Christ be not risen. Paul repeats the same in **verse 17**.

**(3) The apostles are false witnesses** - “**Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.**” (v. 15).

An essential qualification of apostleship was to be a witness of Christ's resurrection: “**Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.**” (Acts 1:21-22).

The condition for succeeding Judas was to be a witness of Christ's resurrection. If Christ is not risen these men were false witnesses.

**(4) Believers are yet in their sins** - “**And if Christ is not risen, you are still in your sins!**” (v. 17). “**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**” (Acts 4:12). “**And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.**” (Mt. 1:21).

**(5) Those who have died are perished** — “**Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable**” (vv. 18-19). It is better to sorrow as those who have no hope than to sorrow as those who have a false hope. Paul triumphantly declares, “**But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**” (1 Cor. 15:20).

## 2. Nature and manner of Christ's resurrection.

### A) His resurrection was by the work of the entire Trinity.

**(1) By God the Father** - “**and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places**” (Eph. 1:19-20). “**whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by**

it.” (Acts 2:24). “Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly” (Acts 10:40). “But God raised Him from the dead.” (Acts 13:30). (See Rom. 10:9; Col. 2:12; Rom 6:4.)

(2) **By His own power** - “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” (Jn. 10:17-18).

(3) **By the power of the Holy Spirit** - “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18). “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” (Rom. 8:11).

### **B) It was an actual resurrection.**

Jesus actually died. The results of hanging on a cross for six hours left a human body in such physical condition that it could not have been restored in only three days. Some proofs of His actual death:

(1) **The soldiers saw that He was dead** - “But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.” (Jn. 19:33). These were professional Roman soldiers who were used to conducting crucifixions and could not be deceived that their work was not finished.

(2) **The centurion attested to His death** - The centurion in charge of the crucifixion brought his personal report to Pilate. He assured the Roman governor that Jesus was indeed dead: “Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.” (Mk. 15:44-45).

(3) **Blood and water flowed from His side** - In order to ensure that Jesus was dead one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus with his lance or spear: “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” (Jn. 19:34).

(4) **Joseph of Arimathea believed He was dead** - “Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.” (Mk. 15:43).

(5) **The women who had stood by His cross believed He died** - As soon as the Sabbath day was past, they came with spices to anoint the dead body: “Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.” (Mk. 16:1).

(6) **Jesus said He died** - Jesus, who is the Truth, declared that He died: “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” (Rev. 1:18). Thus we have every reason to believe that Christ's resurrection was a genuine resurrection of One who was indeed dead.

### **C) It was a bodily resurrection.**

There is abundant proof that the body of our Lord was literally raised to life again.

(1) **His resurrection body was composed of flesh and bones** - He was not a phantom: “Now as they

said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you” But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” (Lk. 24:36-39).

(2) His resurrection body could be touched and felt. “And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.” (Mt. 28:9). “Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” (Jn. 20:27).

(3) He ate before their eyes - “But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.” (Lk. 24:41-43).

(4) The disciples and His followers recognized Him - It is natural to suppose that they recognized Him by His physical features. “Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.” (Lk. 24:31). “Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!”... Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.” (Jn. 20:16, 18). “Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.” (Jn. 20:20). “Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”” (Jn. 21:7).

(5) He appeared in the same body into which the nails had been driven and the spear had been thrust - “When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.” (Lk. 24:40 & Jn. 20:20). The Scripture indicates that these same wounds will be visible in His body when He comes again: “then they will look on Me whom they pierced” (Zec. 12:10); “And *one* will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your arms?’ Then he will answer, ‘*Those* with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.’” (Zec. 13:6); “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.” (Rev. 1:7).

(6) Jesus, Himself, had foretold His bodily resurrection - “Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. - But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.” (Jn. 2:19, 21-22).

(7) David, through the Spirit, had prophesied that His body would be raised - “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” (Ps. 16:10). The Jews, in keeping with others in eastern lands, believed that corruption of the body set in on the fourth day after death. Jesus was raised on the third day. This gives significance to Martha's words concerning her brother Lazarus, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” (Jn. 11:39).

#### **D) It was a unique resurrection.**

Eight incidents of human bodies being raised from the dead are recorded in the Scriptures:

- (1) the son of the widow at Zarephath (1 Ki. 17:17-24);
- (2) the Shunammite woman's son (2 Ki. 4:17-27);
- (3) the man who was laid on the bones of Elisha (2 Ki. 13:21);
- (4) Jairus' daughter (Mk. 5:22-43);

- (5) the young man of Nain (Lk. 7:11-17);
- (6) Lazarus (Jn. 11);
- (7) Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43);
- (8) and Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12).

We have every reason to believe that these were not raised in an immortal body, but that they died again. **1 Timothy 6:16** tells us that He alone “has immortality.” Paul states, “**knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.**” (Rom. 6:9-10). Jesus said, “**I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**” (Rev. 1:18).

Though the body that was raised from Joseph's tomb was the same body in which Jesus had lived and ministered, it was somewhat different. It was a spiritual body, one not bound by physical limitations. He could enter a room though the doors were shut: “**Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them.... And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst**” (Jn. 20:19, 26).

Jesus' resurrection body was also unique in that it was not recognizable at times, such as during the incident of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-16; Mk. 16:12-13), the occasion at the tomb when Mary mistook Him for the gardener (Jn. 20:14-15), and the disciples on Galilee after a fruitless night of fishing (Jn. 21:4-6).

### 3. Some proofs of Christ's resurrection.

**A) The empty tomb.** The angel bore witness that the tomb was empty: “**He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay**” (Mt. 28:6). The women found the tomb empty: “**And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus**” (Lk. 24:3). Mary Magdalene testified the same: “**Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him**” (Jn. 20:2). That His body had been stolen from the sepulchre was the story told by the soldiers only after they were bribed.

“**And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.**” (Mt. 28:12-15)

Note how well the body was secured: a huge stone was rolled over the door to the sepulchre; it was sealed with the official Roman seal; it was watched over by the Roman guard. The guards would have placed their lives in jeopardy if they had allowed the body to be stolen. Furthermore, if they were asleep (Mt. 28:13) how would they have known what took place?

**B) The grave clothes.** It was customary for the Jews to wind long strips of cloth around a body from the neck to the feet, preparing it for burial. “**And he [John] stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself**” (Jn. 20:5-7).

Of Lazarus we read, “**And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and**

his face was bound about with a napkin" (Jn. 11:44).

These strips of cloth would become impregnated with the vast weight of spices that were used for embalming so that they would form a sort of cocoon. (Jn. 19:39-40.) Jesus' body apparently slipped out of this, leaving the clothes undisturbed. Only the napkin about the face was removed - possibly to let it be seen that His body was not within.

### C) It was not challenged in the first century.

The apostles preached the resurrection of Christ immediately after it occurred, and in the very region where it took place. They placed the guilt of the killing of Jesus Christ upon the very ones who had committed the deed. If Christ had not really risen from the dead, it could and would have been disproved; but there is no hint in history, sacred or profane, of anyone's challenging this fact of the apostles' preaching.

### D) Three effects that demand a cause:

(1) The Lord's Day was made to celebrate the fact that the Lord arose on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2).

(2) The real historical evidence for the resurrection is the fact that it was believed, preached, propagated, and produced its fruit and effect in the new phenomena of the Christian Church, long before any of our gospels was written.

(3) The New Testament is the book of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ had remained buried in the grave, the story of His life and death would have been buried with Him...

## 4. Results or benefits of His resurrection.

**A) It provides a firm foundation for our faith.** First, it solidifies our faith in God: "who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." (1 Pet. 1:21). Only God can raise the dead. He proved that He is God when He raised up Jesus. Secondly, Jesus' resurrection is a firm affirmation that He is all He claimed to be - the very Son of God: "and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:4). Christ's resurrection did not *make* Him the Son of God, but rather *declared* Him to be such. Had Christ remained in the tomb, there would have been no reason to believe that He was any different from all those who had died before Him. The Jews twice asked Jesus to show them a sign by which they might believe. In each case, He gave them a sign that pointed to His death and His resurrection. The first was that of Jonah being three days and three nights in the fish's belly (Mt. 12:38-40). The second pointed to the destruction and rebuilding of the temple of His body (Jn. 2:18-21).

**B) It provides an assurance of forgiveness of sins.** Those who believe on Him can be assured of forgiveness of sins: "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9). The sinner's justification is confirmed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, "who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." (Rom. 4:25). Only by His resurrection can the believer have confidence that God was satisfied with the sacrifice Christ had made in his behalf. Indeed, the new birth is said to be accomplished because of His resurrection: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3).

**C) We have an understanding, merciful, and faithful High Priest in heaven.** “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” (Heb. 2:17). “Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” (Rom. 8:34). “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” (Heb. 7:25).

**D) It assures the believer of all needed power for life and service.** The apostle Paul expressed the greatest desire of his life when he said, “that I may know him, and the power of His resurrection” (Phil. 3:10). Paul prays that the saints at Ephesus might know “what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:19-20). This was the power that defeated death. This is sufficient for every day and every emergency.

**E) The believer has the assurance of resurrection and immortality.** “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” (1 Thes. 4:14). “knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.” (2 Cor. 4:14). “Because I live, you will live also.” (Jn. 14:19). (See also Jn. 5:28-29; 6:40; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:20-23.)

In Romans 5:14 we read, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses.” But now, in the resurrection of Jesus, death was defeated! Christ defeated death, not by avoiding it, but by enduring and conquering it. Through death, He destroyed “him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). The power of His resurrection conquered the power of death. In one of the last pictures we have of the Savior, He has “the keys of Hades and of Death.” (Rev. 1:18). (see also 1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

**F) It guarantees the certainty of a day of judgment.** There will be a time of judgment for both the godly and the ungodly: “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31).