

“He Is Risen”

Introduction. The words of the angel in Matthew 28:6 (“He is risen”) are some of the most profound words ever spoken by a heavenly messenger. How would you answer the question, “What is the foundation of your faith?” Would it be the Bible? Would it be creation? What would you answer? How about the resurrection? Do you realize that the resurrection is the very core of your faith?

I. The Foundation Of Our Faith

- A. It declares that Jesus was the Son of God with power (Romans 1:1-4).
- B. It is the core of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).
- C. It is of first importance (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- D. It validates our preaching and our faith (1 Corinthians 15:14).
- E. It validates our faith and forgiveness of sins (1 Corinthians 15:17).
- F. It validates our baptism (1 Corinthians 15:29).
- G. It makes our suffering meaningful (1 Corinthians 15:30, 32).
- H. It gives our life purpose (1 Corinthians 15:32).
- I. The truth we need to have firmly rooted in our mind is this: Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord — He cannot be anything else! His resurrection shows that He was not just a good man that simply died.

II. The Facts Of The Resurrection

- A. Jesus was killed by crucifixion.
 - 1. Ancient verification.
 - a) The four gospels and Acts say He was crucified (Acts 2:22-23).
 - b) The historian Tacitus says Jesus “suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius.”
 - c) Josephus reports Pilate “condemned him to be crucified.”
 - d) Lucian of Samosata (Greek satirist), Mara Bar-Serapion (pagan), and even the Jewish Talmud report that Jesus was killed.
 - 2. Modern verification.
 - a) A liberal named John Dominic Cross says, “That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical ever can be.”
 - b) Skeptic James Tabor says, “I think we need to have no doubt that given Jesus’ execution by Roman crucifixion he was truly dead.”
 - c) Other atheists and agnostics acknowledge this fact of history.
- B. Jesus’ tomb was empty.
 - 1. The Jerusalem factor.
 - a) Jesus was publicly executed, buried, and resurrected in the same city. Peter even began the teaching of the gospel from Jerusalem as well.
 - b) It would be impossible for the gospel to get off the ground in Jerusalem if Jesus’ body were still in the tomb. They could simply go get the body and the discussion would be over.

2. The enemy attestation.
 - a) The enemies of Jesus say the disciples stole the body and this was reported by Matthew, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian. This shows they admit the tomb was empty.
 - b) Could the disciples conspire to steal the body, pull it off, then be willing to suffer and die for a lie? That is absurd!
 - c) The elders and the chief priests conspired to cover up the resurrection.
 - (1) The soldiers were paid off to tell a lie (Matthew 28:11-15).
 - (2) Somehow, these soldiers got to live after failing (cp. Acts 12:18-19).
 - (3) They were told to identify someone while they were allegedly asleep.
3. The testimony of women.
 - a) In first century Jewish and Roman culture, women were not very highly esteemed and their testimony was questionable.
 - b) If you were to concoct a story that was difficult to believe in the first place, you would not do it on the testimony of women.
- C. Jesus' disciples believed that He rose and appeared to them.
 1. Paul's testimony about the early disciples.
 - a) Paul's testimony is important because he reports knowing some of the disciples personally (1 Corinthians 15:11).
 - b) Paul obviously knew the apostles reported that they believed Jesus had been raised from the dead.
 2. Oral traditions passed through the early church.
 - a) At the earliest stage, the church consciously preserved its traditions of the life, teaching, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus (cp. Acts 10:36-40).
 - b) This was not a fable that was made up many years later after the death of Christ. For instance, the Qur'an claims that Jesus did not die on the cross, but it bases this on information from Muhammad 600 years after Christ.
 3. Writings of the early church.
 - a) We have personal interaction by Paul, sermons recorded by Luke, and the writings of the apostles.
 - b) Clement claims to have received from Peter the testimony of the resurrection.
 - c) Polycarp received and wrote about the resurrection around A.D. 110.
 - d) There are at least nine sources that reflect the fact this is actually what the disciples believed.
 4. The fact the disciples died for their faith shows they believed it. They were also on the scene to verify their facts. Liars make poor martyrs!
 5. Even atheist Gerd Ludemann conceded, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as a risen Christ." He claims this is the result of visions, but he acknowledges that they believed it (John 20:24-29).
- D. The conversion of the church persecutor Paul.
 1. Saul was a confirmed enemy of Christ. Luke and Paul both recorded this (Acts 9:1-2; Philippians 3:6).
 2. There are six confirmed ancient sources in addition to Paul that confirm his willingness to suffer and die for his beliefs.

3. We cannot claim that Paul, out of wishful thinking or grief, invented a vision of Jesus. He was an enemy of Christ with nothing to gain by obeying Christ. The best explanation is he was telling the truth.
- E. The conversion of the skeptic James, Jesus' half-brother.
1. There is good evidence James was not a follower of Jesus during his lifetime. None of Jesus' brothers believed Him (John 7:5).
 2. This story has strong basis because no one trying to fabricate a story would show the embarrassing fact that not even His brother believed in Him.
 3. Jesus appeared to James after His death (1 Corinthians 15:7). Not only did James become a believer, he became a leader in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; Galatians 1:19; 2:9).

III. The Ramifications Of The Resurrection

- A. The resurrection is the core of the gospel, the very basis of what the apostles preached and taught (Acts 2:30-32; 3:13-15; 10:39-42; 13:28-31; 17:18, 30-32).
1. This proved who He was — He is the Son of God.
 2. This proved the reason He died — for our sins and salvation.
 3. This proved what He said — He will judge the world.
- B. The resurrection gives our moral life unfathomable meaning.
1. Preaching and teaching have eternal value (1 Corinthians 15:14).
 2. Sins have all been washed away (1 Corinthians 15:17).
 3. Hope is not futile or pointless (1 Corinthians 15:19).
 4. Our sufferings, temptation, struggles, pains, and death all have meaning (1 Corinthians 15:30-32).
 5. Our death in Christ will mean everlasting victory over sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:50-57).
 6. Our strength is magnified and our work rewarded (1 Corinthians 15:57-58).
 7. We can be more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37).
- C. The resurrection allows us to receive the eternal resurrection (John 5:29).
1. Paul wanted to attain to the resurrection of the dead (Philippians 3:10-11).
 2. Peter said our living hope was through the resurrection (1 Peter 1:3).

Conclusion. Anyone who says you do not have evidence for your belief that Jesus was raised from the dead has simply ignored the evidence. What do we do with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection? Paul said we connect to our death, burial and resurrection in baptism (Colossians 2:11-13). Peter says it is the answer of a good conscience in the waters of baptism that saves us (1 Peter 3:21). All of this is powered by the resurrection of Christ and it is the only time we connect to His life-saving death. This is what all His disciples did, and you need to do it today. Remember the Lord will judge the world because of His resurrection (Acts 17:30-32).

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