

The Resurrection of Our Lord



The most important idea in the Christian Church is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without that, Christianity becomes a religion of “do-gooders,” or an appeal to “love one another”—neither of these bad in themselves—but not enough to change the world, or to deal with a humanity cut off from God.

If the Resurrection is true, then everything changes. Suddenly, we can prove that there is life beyond this; we can prove that God loves us; we can prove that Jesus is truly our Saviour and Lord; we can prove that our sins can be forgiven; we can prove that this life is meant to be a part of an Eternal Life, lived in the presence of God our Father. The Cross becomes, not an execution of a remarkably good man, but the beginning of a Sacrifice of Himself to the Father for our forgiveness.

In other words, Christianity hangs or falls on the truth of the Resurrection.

Let’s look at the facts. Jesus had taught his disciples and many others for 3 years. He told us that we are loved by the Father; that the Father wants us to live our lives in harmony with His; that our sin continues to separate us from God; that we were created to have a life lived with the Father for ever; that our worship is simply not good enough; that only He is the Gate that can lead us to God; that He is the Light of the World; that He is the Messiah and Saviour; that He is the Lamb of God who intends to bring us back to the Father. All these things were either true, or, as the Jewish authorities of His day decided, the babblings of an idiot—a good man perhaps but still a dangerous idiot.

For all these teachings, Jesus was deemed to be a danger to decent and religious people. He was either who He said He was—or the exact opposite. There was no middle ground here—and the Jewish Leaders (and Roman Commanders) understood this perfectly. And they made the decision that Jesus had to go before He created real problems. He was either King or a Leader of dangerous Rebels. Since there was no King but Caesar, that left only one answer. Jesus had to be executed. And He was.

Jesus hung for 6 hours dying on the Cross. To be certain that He had died, a spear was plunged into His left side to puncture His heart. He was then removed from the cross and buried hurriedly before the Passover sabbath began. The Tomb was sealed, and a guard set.

Then on the Sunday morning, Jesus appeared, brilliantly alive and well, and was seen by his disciples and others 17 recorded times, talking and walking, in the next 40 days, at one time by over 500 people, before He returned to Heaven. Those are the recorded facts. What are we to make of it all?

Those who argue against the Resurrection have 3 main points:

1) Jesus didn't really die. The facts however show that, after He was whipped and beaten, He was nailed (not tied) to a cross for 6 hours, seen to expire; was stabbed with a spear so that plasma and blood poured out; that He was wrapped and placed in a cold tomb, and left over the rest of Friday and all of Saturday and into Sunday morning. After all this, the argument suggests that He untied the wrappings, pushed the stone out of the way, and appeared well and thoroughly alive to a number of people who knew Him well. No doctors, no medical aid, no medicines, no care. I believe that this argument is baseless. Jesus really did die.

2) The disciples went to the wrong tomb and found it empty. That's possible, I suppose, though St. Mary Magdalene, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John, St Joseph, and others knew the right tomb to go to. And most emphatically, if they had gone to the wrong tomb and found it empty, don't you think that Jewish Authorities would have gone to the right tomb, and found the body? Don't you think they would have undertaken a thorough search to endeavour to find the body of Jesus—because if they had found the body, all they had to do to stop the preaching of the Resurrection was lay the body down at the feet of the preachers to bring the early Christian preaching to an abrupt end? No, there is no doubt that the disciples went to the right tomb, and found it empty, and were met by Jesus, brilliantly alive.

3) The disciples stole the body and hid it elsewhere. Possible, I suppose. But then consider what happened. The disciples spent the rest of their lives preaching the Resurrection, in country after country, enduring pain, hunger, beatings, and finally martyrdom because they insisted on declaring the truth of the Resurrection. Don't you think that at least one of these disciples would have admitted to stealing and hiding the body of Jesus to escape from martyrdom? Wouldn't you do that, if you knew you had stolen the body, and could save yourself from execution by finally admitting to what you had done? Wouldn't you? The disciples (later called Apostles) spent their lives preaching the Resurrection of Jesus, wonderfully, powerfully, sacrificially, enough to bring thousands of people to faith in countries all around the Mediterranean, in their lifetime, and their only reward was execution (all were martyred except St. John). No, the disciples did not steal the body. They genuinely met and talked with Jesus, whom they had known for 3 years, and witnessed to the truth of His Resurrection.

There are no other arguments against the Resurrection. You either acknowledge all the facts and believe in the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus, or you ignore the facts, and persist in denying it. There are no other positions to take. Jesus rose from the dead, is alive, and is now in Heaven, before the Father pleading for us.

Easter is the seal of truth on the Christian Faith, and the answer to our dreams. If Jesus has risen and is alive, then there is life after the death of the body. At least there is life for those who have come to Jesus in faith, have been baptised into Him, and are now walking with Him faithfully. Easter answers the greatest questions humans have ever asked and answers it in the affirmative. If you deny the Resurrection of Jesus, you must accept that

this world is all there is—that for good or evil, this life ends in death, and there is nothing else. If that is so, then forget about being decent—just go after whatever you want, because there is no reason for morality or goodness or righteousness. Without Easter, life ceases to have any meaning. It's every man or woman for himself/herself. And the devil take the hindmost.

But, if Easter is true, then suddenly there is meaning to life. Life is meant to be lived with God, and one another, in decency, righteousness, and sharing. Worship becomes central to our life, since it is our way to be with our Father and to get our life right. Easter proclaims that this life is part of a larger life, which continues after the death of the body for those who have accepted the Gift of Eternal Life from Jesus. Easter proclaims that the Church is the fellowship of all those in Christ, all those who are trying to build the Kingdom of God right here, because they know that it is beginning of wider life beyond this world—a wider life lived in the presence of the Father in the glory of the angels, and in the company of the Saints and the Faithful Departed.

The only question is this: What are you going to do now? If Easter is only about chocolate bunnies and coloured eggs, you are missing the greatest truth of life. If Easter points to truth of a Life lived forever with Jesus, the Risen Saviour, then resolve today to redeclare your acceptance of Him as the Risen Saviour and your Lord, start walking with Jesus, and put Worship in in the centre of your life. If that is your decision, come to the Altar, and receive His Body and Blood into your soul, and begin to grow in Faith and Hope and Joy, because you have a long, long Life to go with God.

Easter is the greatest Promise of Christ to us—He promises to take us to Himself, forever. He promises to walk with us forever. He promises us Eternal Life, with the Father, with the angels, with the Saints, in that world without end. Amen

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.