

'BODILY RESURRECTION AS NON-NEGOTIABLE FOR THE GOSPEL' # 4

“The resurrection of Jesus is the central historical event in the Christian faith. It is the most pivotal event in human history. Without the Resurrection, there would be no Christianity.” (Brian G. Hedges)

Read 1 Corinthians 15: 12-20

Paul is particularly (thankfully) direct here. He is apparently dealing with some members of the Corinthian church that are allowing the views of the surrounding cultures (resurrection is a fantasy - there is no such thing) to permeate their Christianity. Sadly, we find ourselves under similar pressure today.

When preparing to write these notes on such an important yet complicated subject I felt it would be helpful if my approach was more in the way of a reflection or perhaps a reminder of all that was achieved by Jesus' resurrection. Knowing that most group leaders provide copies of these notes to all group members I will lay this out in question-and-answer form. By locating my answers away from the questions, my hope is that it may stimulate some interesting answers and discussion, rather than allowing my answers limit what your group might say. My answers are by no means comprehensive, and feel free to challenge them!

What does Jesus' resurrection say about**1. Jesus' identity**

Rising from the dead must say something about Jesus' identity. How would you answer this? In the identity you have discussed, what does it say about His teaching?

2. Victory over death. Suggest reading 1 Corinth 15:21-23 & 55-57 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

Why is Jesus' victory over death relevant for us? What is its relevance for all in death?

3. Our salvation is assured. Suggest reading Romans 4:25 & John 3: 1-8

This has a direct connection to sin and Jesus' public execution. What connection do you make? What should be our response if we accept the assurance of salvation?

4. Jesus did not rise as a ghost, suggest reading Luke 24:36-43, John 21:10-14, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 & Romans 8:18-25 (perhaps too much for all passages to be read in group).

Jesus' resurrection body was both the same as it was before death and yet also different. Is that relevant for you? Why is bodily resurrection so important? Why not just resurrection as a spirit?

Prayer: Risen Lord, we adore you. Hallelujah for your rising! Fill us with the joy of the resurrection: make us strong in the certainty of faith. Amen (J Wallace)

“Our old history ends with the cross; our new history begins with the resurrection.” (Nee)

“The New Testament writers speak as if Christ’s achievement in rising from the dead was the first event of its kind in the whole history of the universe. He is the ‘first fruits,’ the pioneer of life. He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought, and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because He has done so.” (C S Lewis)

Answers:

1. It affirms Jesus’ identity: as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the validity of all his teaching.

2. Victory over death. If Jesus was raised to life, it means that Jesus not only defeated death for himself, but that he defeated it for us. He died and rose as a new representative for humanity, as the second Adam (1 Corinth 15:21-23 & 55-57). His resurrection guarantees ours, indeed guarantees the resurrection of all (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

3. Our salvation is assured. When Jesus rose again on the third day, it was the public announcement that God was fully satisfied with the sacrificial death of his Son. Nothing was or will be left outstanding and unpaid. “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Romans 4:25). This signifies that through faith in Christ’s resurrection, believers are spiritually reborn, receiving forgiveness for their sins and the promise of eternal life.

4. Jesus did not rise as a ghost, or an aberration, but bodily. Jesus came out of the tomb in a physical body (Luke 24:36-43, John 21:10-14, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8). This is crucial for it shows that God has won the victory over evil. The empty tomb assures us that sickness and suffering, death and disease will not have the final word; God does.

The early Christians looked to the future with confidence that the created order itself would be redeemed (see Romans 8:18-25), and (eventually) returned to the order of first creation. This has been God’s plan of restoration since Adam and Eve’s rebellion.

For a comprehensive set of answers for the evidence of the resurrection see https://biblehub.com/top10/historical_evidences_for_jesus'_resurrection.htm