

examination of the evidence of the resurrection. Of course, the truth of the resurrection is a matter of historical fact and is not dependent on anyone's belief. And mere intellectual assent to the facts does little for one's life.

At one time I professed myself an atheist. I came to realize that attempts to explain away the authority of the Scripture and the evidence of the resurrection of Christ were vain. Christ is risen, and He has changed my life and given me the great joy of knowing I will go to heaven someday and that I have hope today no matter what trial or difficulty I may face.

"But If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). Jesus Himself said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25, 26) Believe in the risen Christ so you can be assured of everlasting life with Him!

Worth considering? If we can help you with your faith, please do not hesitate to visit our church, call us (212-947-5316), visit our web site (www.hbcnyc.org) or listen to our Heritage of Faith radio broadcast (Sunday at 8:30 pm on WMCA 570 AM).



Matthew Recker, Pastor

OUR MEETING PLACES

SUNDAY:

127 E. 22th Street
New York, NY 10010
(Corner of Lexington Avenue)

10:00 am Bible Study Hour
11:00 am Worship Service

DEAF CHURCH

Pastor Emmanuel Sterlin

SUNDAY:

519 8th Ave. at W. 36th Street
New York, NY 10018
Room 807

10:00 am Bible Study Hour
11:00 am Worship Service

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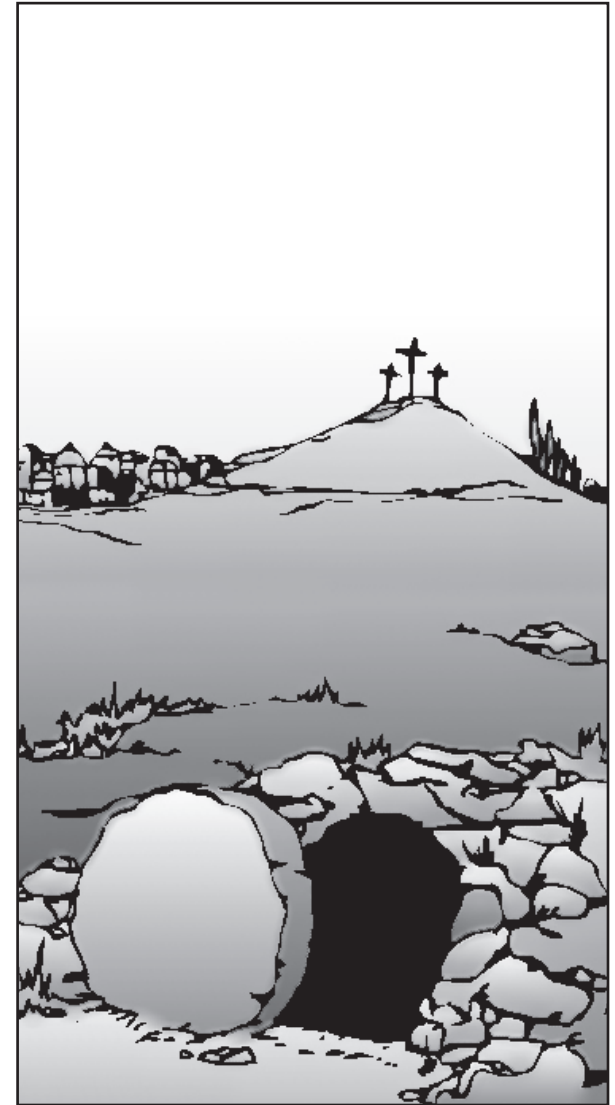
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The Resurrection



DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

THE RESURRECTION: DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

Is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ a hoax? Does one commit intellectual suicide by believing in the resurrection? Others may wonder, "What does it really matter? What difference does it make if Jesus did rise again?"

The resurrection does matter because life matters. If Jesus rose again from the dead, then we have assurance we can have life in heaven after this brief, trouble-filled existence. The Apostle Paul, a chief persecutor of the church who turned into a great preacher for Christ said, "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... after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once...then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also" (1 Corinthians 15:3-7). The entire veracity of the Scripture rests upon the resurrection of Christ. The salvation of the entire earth relies upon it as well, for "If Christ be not raised...ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

Please consider four proofs for Jesus' bodily resurrection:

1. Jesus' body was gone and the tomb empty. After Jesus died, His body was wrapped in grave clothes and placed in a solid-rock tomb.

A two-ton stone was rolled into a slightly depressed groove to physically secure the tomb's entrance. Pilate, the Roman Governor, placed his seal upon the stone; this secured Christ's body politically. If anyone dared break that seal, death would result. Finally, a well trained unit of soldiers guarded the grave, securing His body in the tomb militarily.

What happened to His body? Did his enemies steal it? Surely, if the Roman or Jewish authorities stole the body they would have exposed it for all to see. Christianity would have soon died out. But instead they resorted to silence regarding the body of Christ and threatened the apostles with violence if they continued to spread the message of Jesus resurrection.

Did Jesus merely faint? Some say that Jesus did not actually die but the expert Roman executioners only thought he was dead. Are we to believe that without medical attention, weak, sickly, and hungry he broke free from the 100 pounds of grave clothes, rolled away the stone with his nail-pierced hands, scared an entire unit of Roman soldiers into shaking dead men, walked miles on wounded feet and convinced his disciples he'd been raised from the dead? This one is harder to believe than the resurrection itself.

It is even more impossible to imagine one of the disciples removed the body. Neither Peter nor Thomas (remember their unbelief and doubts?) were ready to overpower the guards, unwrap the body, deliberately preach a lie that Jesus was alive, and then die for it.

These theories are not possible. The guard was too powerful, the stone too heavy and the disciples too weak-willed to attempt such a deed.

2. The undisturbed grave clothes. The Gospel writers challenge us to "come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6). When the Apostle John looked into the tomb, two things made him believe. One, he did not see the body of Christ. Second, he saw the grave clothes. John's Gospel tells us that they were like a discarded cocoon from which a butterfly had broken forth. The linen clothes were lying, still wrapped together showing that Jesus passed

through the grave clothes, preserving them in the place where he had laid. No wonder John "saw, and believed" (John 20:8).

3. The appearances of the risen Christ. For forty days after his death, Jesus showed he was alive by many "infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). The Scripture tells us of at least ten separate appearances of the risen Lord to various individuals and groups of people. This dispels the theory that Jesus' appearances were mere hallucinations. Witnesses included both women and men, many who were skeptical about believing until they were assured by the reality of Jesus' resurrection body. Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails...I will not believe" (John 20:25) When Jesus met Thomas' objections by showing his pierced hands and side, Thomas believed in and worshiped the risen Lord by saying, "My Lord and my God."

4. The disciples' transformed lives. After Jesus' arrest most of the disciples fled in fear. Peter denied three times that he was a follower of Jesus. After Jesus' death they were even more despondent, disillusioned, and unbelieving. Something happened however to prove that Jesus was alive. After they each believed Jesus was physically alive from death, they all hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps the changed lives of the disciples is the greatest evidence for the resurrection; their fear was transformed into faith; their doubt was transformed into dedication that led all the apostles (except Judas) to live faithful unto their death. Ten of the original apostles (all except John) eventually died a martyr's death.

The above does not constitute an exhaustive proof, rather a reasonable and Biblical