

# *Truth for Today*

## **The Bible Explained**

---

For reply: Email: [truthfortoday@aol.com](mailto:truthfortoday@aol.com)

**Broadcast:** 25/26 February 2023

**No.:** T1291

**Speaker:** Paul Callicott

---

## **The Gospel of Christ Jesus**

### **A risen Saviour – Luke 24:1-8**

*NKJV Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.*

#### **Introduction**

There are various groups and organisations all over the world of which people are members. In order to be a member of these different groups there is usually some kind of membership criteria. Many simply require a payment to sign up, but there are some which are more specific and if you don't meet their criteria then you can't be a member, no matter how much money you may put forward.

Our topic today is a little like this. If we were to put Christianity down as a specific group of people, then I would go so far as to say that you could not be considered a Christian if you didn't believe in the risen Saviour. Our topic considers this essential part of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, and I am looking to set out why it is such a key part of this wonderful gospel.

#### **The Risen Christ**

We are moving into chapter 24 of Luke's Gospel as we work our way through this series which covers the different aspects of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. The resurrection morning is presented to us in the first eight verses with the account of some of the women who were the first to find the empty tomb of Jesus. It is well worth us reading this incredible passage.

'Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" And they remembered His words.'

In many respects these verses do not really need much explanation as they very much provide a narrative that we can easily understand. Having said that I will bring out three points which act as confirmation of the validity of Luke's account. Firstly, the women saw with their own eyes that there was no body in the tomb. This is not word of mouth, but eyewitness accounts. Secondly, it was then confirmed by the angels that Jesus had indeed risen. So, we now have two independent confirmations of the event. Finally, the women remembered the words of the Lord Jesus. This was not an out of the blue or unplanned event, so they could see that once again the things that the Lord Jesus had said were being fulfilled.

I would also like to consider for a moment the magnitude of this short passage of Scripture. We can be guilty of knowing passages well but overlook how incredible they are. This can be one of those passages. But let us try to consider what it must have been like to have been there when this event happened. These women were coming to the tomb to dress a body that they had seen placed in that very tomb. It was likely they would have been turned away by the Roman guard who had sealed the tomb, but instead they find it abandoned, open and empty. There are also two angels there to tell them the news. The scene that they walk into is incredible enough. But then we hear the message from the angels, and events take another twist. There has been nothing like this scene in the history of the world and there never will be again until the Lord returns in all His glory to deal with this world. These things we are considering are certainly not fairy stories or trinkets. They are world changing events of such magnitude that it can be difficult to fully grasp them.

### **The Challenge of Jesus' Resurrection**

Of course, bringing in the resurrection of Christ puts Christianity into a controversial category. This is perhaps the most important aspect of the gospel story for believers. This is by no means an attempt to lessen the importance of any of the other aspects covered in this gospel series! They are all vitally important and each is a demonstration of the incredible power of God, particularly in relation to the work of salvation. But there is something unique in the resurrection of Christ for people in this world because it is the point at which people tend either to accept or reject the Gospel.

Secular history accepts that there was a person called Jesus who lived in the world at the time the Bible speaks about Him. There are many, including other major religions in the world, who accept that He was a good teacher and a good man. There are even those who accept that He was a man of God. The death of this Jesus by crucifixion is also fairly well established and accepted. But bring in the resurrection of Christ and then the Gospel is either acceptable or it isn't. There is no middle ground on this, and it is usually the point at which people stop listening. We move from the conceivable to the miraculous. Alas it is only those who have faith in the Christian Gospel who are able to move into the enjoyment of all the comforts and blessing that the resurrection of Christ brings. For everyone else His resurrection is simply not a possibility. It is always interesting to note that the Lord, after He had been raised, only appeared to those who believed in Him.

### **The Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection**

Because of this I believe it is important just to spend a little time putting forward some reasons why believing in the resurrection of Christ is not just some irrational blind faith. There is good cause to believe it. I remember catching the end of a television debate a few years ago in which there was a discussion about this topic. Alas it was not being conducted in a way that was at all friendly to the idea of the resurrection of Christ and the last words from one of the historical experts have always stuck in my mind – 'There is no evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.' These words were said with such authority and with a hint of disdain for the others on the programme who might have suggested anything to the contrary. Sadly, this has become the prevailing wisdom in society and as such causes many to think that believing in the resurrection of Christ is as naive as believing in fairies or in Father Christmas.

I don't want to go into masses of detail because I don't have the time. There are also resources available that do go into detail about the resurrection of Christ and the evidence that is available for it. But I didn't want to go through this whole talk without briefly putting forward some of things that can give us confidence that His resurrection is not a thing of fairy stories but is a real part of history that should not be dismissed.

The first of these is related to the Scripture we are looking at in the Gospel of Luke – which is in effect an eyewitness account of that resurrection morning. One of the accusations levelled against Jesus' Resurrection is that the facts don't all match and there is seeming confusion and contradiction about the events that took place. The reality is that it just needs some piecing

together. Each account in the four Gospels covers a different part of that morning; and they are all needed to provide the whole picture of what went on. In addition to this there is also the very real need to consider how evidence from eyewitnesses should be given. If you were to ask any barrister about these things, they would likely tell you that evidence of this sort never matches up properly, there are always different things brought out by different witnesses. But one thing is for certain, that a perfectly aligned set of accounts is never provided. If every account is exactly the same, then that points to a false account of what has gone on. It is therefore more fitting that the Gospel accounts aren't exactly aligned but each give us pieces of the events that took place on that resurrection morning.

The next point is the fact that this story has survived intact for over 2000 years. The culture at the time relied on witness accounts and corroboration of those events by others who were there. All of the Gospel accounts are based on eyewitness accounts, whether the writer was someone who had seen it or who was using information from people who had seen it. The fact remains that when they were written there was the opportunity for anyone to go and ask the people who were there to confirm that the accounts were real. This is not unreasonable and is effectively what is suggested by the apostle Paul in Corinthians when he provides the evidence for Christ's resurrection. It is almost as if he says to the readers, "Go and speak to these people." Regarding the story of the resurrection of Jesus we do not read in secular history of any refuting evidence of these eyewitness accounts. There is no piece of information that says that they were all lies, and to be frank, if they were then the Gospel accounts would not have survived all these years later. I know there may be arguments that suggest that this is an unreasonable statement because we don't have a similar way of working in our society today, but in the days in which the Gospels were written, it was a much more common process to corroborate the truth of things that were being stated.

My final point regarding confidence builders in Jesus' resurrection is the change it produced in those who witnessed it and believed it. There was a huge change in the people who saw the Lord Jesus after His resurrection. The disciples had hidden themselves in a room and locked the door, but when they see the risen Lord, they start to change, things are now different. They were beginning the process of change that gave rise to them being described as the people who turned the world upside down in Acts chapter 17 and verse 6. We can also look at the apostle Paul. Someone who was a highly successful man in the Jewish nation, who turned his back on it all after meeting the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. A life changed completely. There were, no doubt, many others who had similar experiences. They were all prepared to die rather than deny that Jesus had risen from the dead. It seems inconceivable that their lives would have changed so much for something that was just made up. Again, the claims of the Bible as to its truth were well able to be challenged at the time, but we don't find this in the other historical records. In fact, there is mention of the followers of Jesus in secular history, mentioning that they were prepared to suffer and die for the things they knew to be true.

### **The Importance of Jesus' Resurrection**

But let us turn to the importance of the Christ's resurrection and of the risen Christ to those of us who are believers. And how it is not just an exciting event in the Gospel story, but an important and necessary part of the work of the Gospel. There are three aspects I intend to bring out.

The first point is that His resurrection is effectively confirmation of the perfect completion of the work of salvation. In the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, verse 30, we read that on the cross the Lord stated those well-known words, 'It is finished!.' In Luke chapter 23 verse 45, we read of the temple curtain being torn down the middle. We know that the curtain was at least about a foot thick, so this was no ordinary event. In these verses we see two significant events that begin to represent the work of the Lord Jesus' death. In the statement, 'It is finished!' the Lord was saying His work that He came to do was complete. With the torn curtain we see a symbolic

representation of the fact that access to God had now been provided in a more wonderful way through the death of the Lord Jesus.

So why do we need Jesus' resurrection if these things have been accomplished? His resurrection is the proof that this work was finished, that the new access had been granted. In raising Him from the dead, it is as if God is rubber stamping the work as well done. We have to remember that Jesus was providing a perfect sacrifice. We know that the high priests of Israel had to provide the sacrifice on the day of atonement in the correct way. Christ's resurrection is the proof that the sacrifice Jesus offered was acceptable, was able to take away sin, and therefore provides the path back to God for the lost sinner who is looking for salvation. How can we be sure that the work of Jesus is enough? He has been raised from the dead in order to be given the honour and glory that He is due for the single most important work that has ever been accomplished. If Jesus had been left in that tomb, we would never have any assurance that He has indeed provided us with this great salvation.

Just as an additional point I quote 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 4:

'That he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.'

This scripture shows us that Christ's resurrection was required by the word of God. We could also look at all the scriptural revelations regarding the future glory, judgement, and reign of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, not only was this confirmation that the work was indeed complete, perfect, and good, but it also confirms that Jesus is the One who is written of and that He will be able to fulfil all of the future prophecies written about the Messiah.

The next point to raise is that Christ's resurrection demonstrates a final victory in the Gospel – the victory over death itself. The subject of death is one which is no longer taken up in our society. It has become something that people don't want to accept is there, and is reserved for the very, very old. They think it should only occur in a peaceful, painless way once we have had a chance to live a full life. But even then, it seems that people are not ready to accept it as being inevitable. I find it remarkable how people are surprised that someone in their 90's dies. We hear statements like, 'They were so healthy' or 'They were in the prime of life' even when someone of great age dies. Death seems to take people by surprise nowadays.

I can only conclude that this is because it actually scares people to consider the irreversible nature of death. We can face many disasters and the world is littered with stories of people who have come back from devastating lows to reach some high-flying point in their lives. There is no such comeback from death though. It is final, absolute, and unrecoverable; and this is clearly not a popular subject with unbelievers. Given that we are constantly being told now that this present life is all that there is and that there is no God; or that after death there is nothing, such an outlook of death is quite intolerable. I can quite see why people shy away from it. The apostle Paul actually has sympathy with this view in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 19:

'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.'

Paul had been speaking in the previous verses about what it would mean if there was no resurrection, and this is his concluding thought. But of course, that is not what he really believed, and it is not the view for the Christian. The resurrection is the antidote to death and when the Lord was raised from the dead, He showed that it was defeated, it has no power any more and what a hope that is for the Christian. The most devastating, absolute, and final act that people have to go through in this world is rendered null and void. At the moment of death God has the victory by

bringing those who believe the Gospel to glory, and this is all provided and demonstrated through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus on that third day.

There is an interesting point here that is worth bringing out. Was Jesus raised or did He raise himself? People being raised from the dead is not a singular occurrence in the Bible. Elijah and Elisha both brought children back from the dead. The Lord Jesus also raised some people from the dead during his life and also after his death according to Matthew 27 verses 52 and 53. The apostles also raised people from the dead according to The Acts. So why is His so special? It comes back to the point of how Jesus was raised. In all of those other examples there is someone else involved and therefore the person being raised has nothing to do with the act and ultimately it is all being done through the power of God.

When we come to the resurrection of Christ we can look at another passage in John 2 verse 19 where the Lord Himself uses the words,

‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’

Here we know He was speaking on His resurrection. Now, look at the words – ‘I will raise it up.’

This is backed up by Greek translations as well. Jesus is saying that He will raise himself up from the dead! John chapter 10 verses 17 and 18 have a similar statement from Jesus which clearly shows that He had the power to raise Himself from the dead, emphasising this point.

Therefore, it would seem from that passage in John 2 and chapter 10, that the Lord Jesus Himself brought about His own resurrection. This therefore sets His resurrection apart from the others I have mentioned. A person going into death and bringing themselves out of it is indeed unique and only attributable to the Lord Jesus. However, there is a question that remains - is this a contradiction to other passages of scripture in the New Testament which speak of God raising Him up, and sometimes even the Father who raised up His Son? I don't believe it is. We are seeing here the full harmony of the Godhead. We are moving into the realms of things we struggle to comprehend. We have a triune God and therefore they are separate Persons who are linked as a single Being. Their perfect unity and harmony of purpose therefore means that They are all involved in the work of Jesus' resurrection, and that was always the plan of God from before the beginning of time. Alas, this is too big a subject to cover, but we can be sure that His resurrection is like no other in both its occurrence and its significance.

Turning to the third point, we have the hope that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus brings to the believer. The idea of resurrection is a difficult one to comprehend. Because it is not something we see or experience, it is doubted and questioned by some people as to its credibility. It was no different during the time that Jesus walked this earth. We know that the Sadducees didn't accept the reality of resurrection. There were problems with this doctrine in the early Church era as we know from 1 Corinthians 15. Here we are today, and the same issues continue. Admittedly, it is beyond our natural comprehension because it is dealing with a reality beyond the tangible ones that make up our world. But Christians believe it by faith.

Christ's resurrection is a pivotal reference point for this aspect of Christianity. The teaching that we find in the Bible is that Christian believers will be raised from the dead and enjoy a future in heaven. It is not some strange spiritual thing; we will be there with our raised bodies which will be changed to conform with the requirements of heaven. But how can we know this? It is because Someone has already done it. The Lord Jesus has already walked the pathway for us. He went into death and has come back as One who has been raised. We know that there is an ascended Man in the glory. The highest place in heaven has been given to Him. Why would we doubt when we know that He is already there waiting for us to join Him. If we have grasped and accepted His

resurrection, then we can know that we will be brought through the same experience because the One who has done it has told us it will be so.

### **Conclusion**

The subject of resurrection is a big subject and there is so much more that could be said about it, and I would encourage everyone to look in more detail into the areas I have considered. In order to close I will use the words of 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 3 and 4:

‘For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: 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.’

Thank you for listening to the Truth for Today talk on The Gospel of Christ Jesus, risen Saviour, talk number T1291.

---

### **Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1.