

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST - HISTORICAL

Although the resurrection of Jesus Christ was unique, resurrection itself was not new.

There had been resurrections in the OT:

- 1) Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:32-37).
- 2) A man being buried in Elisha's tomb was raised when his body touched Elisha's body (2 Kings 13:20, 21).

Men as far back as Abraham believed in resurrection (Gen. 22:5; Heb. 11:19). Cf. also what Job said in Job 19:25-27. Also Daniel (Dan. 12:2).

We have the record of resurrections during the time that Christ was here on earth. Cf Matt. 10:8; Luke 7:22. There are three specific resurrections recorded:

- 1) The widow's son (only in Luke 7:11-18).
- 2) Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19, 23-25; also in Mark 5 and Luke 8).
- 3) Lazarus (only in John 11:41-44).

The Lord spoke repeatedly of His own death and resurrection (Matt. 12:38-40--where resurrection is implied; Matt. 16:21-23; 17:9,23; 20:19; 26:29, 32).

This was the fear of His enemies--not that He would actually arise, but that His disciples would steal His body and say that He had. See Matt. 27:62-66. Then see Matt. 28:11-15.

What evidence do we have? Cf. Acts 1:3. The evidence is overwhelming. Some have referred to it as the best-attested fact in all history. Let us examine the record.

- 1) It is recorded by the four men who wrote the four Gospels. And so Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John believed it to be true. Matthew and John saw him; Mark and Luke checked the reports, and agreed that they were true.
- 2) It is basic in all of the messages recorded in the book of Acts. Cf. Acts 2:24-32.
- 3) It is at the very heart of all of the teaching of the Apostle Paul. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-8; Rom. 1:3, 4.
- 4) We have, in addition ^{to} what Paul recorded in 1 Cor. 15, the record of those saw Him. Some of the details are not absolutely clear, but the following seems to be the order:
 - a) First, to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11).
 - b) To the other women who went to the tomb, possibly with Mary Magdalene, or maybe shortly after she went.
 - John (20:11-18) mentions only Mary Magdalene.
 - Matthew (28:1) mentions the two Marys.
 - Mark (16:1) mentions MM, Mary the mother of James, and Salome.
 - Luke (24:10) mentions even more.So the women may have gone in one group, in two, or even in three, but there is no doubt but that our Lord appeared to Mary alone first, and then to those mentioned in Matt. 28:9, 10.
 - c) To Peter--not recorded, but referred to in Luke 24:34 and 1 Cor. 15:5.
 - d) To the two disciples (one whose name was Cleopas) on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13-32).
 - e) To the eleven without Thomas (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-24).
 - f) To 500 brethren--not recorded, but referred to in 1 Cor. 15:6.
 - g) To James--not recorded, but referred to in 1 Cor. 15:7.
 - h) Eight days after His first appearance with the eleven He appeared to them again. This time Thomas was present. Cf. John 20:26-29.
 - i) By the sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-14). Note that v. 14 says that this was "the third time."
 - j) At His ascension, but obviously many other unrecorded times (Acts 1:1-9).

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THERE IS NO
EVIDENCE
THAT HE WAS
EVER SEEN
BY ANYONE
EXCEPT BELIEVERS.

k) After His ascension:

- 1/ To Stephen (Acts 7:54-56).
- 2/ To Paul--on several occasions (Acts 9:1-7, 17; 22:1-11, 14, 15; 22:13-18; also Acts 18:9, 10; 22:17, 18; 23:11; 1 Cor. 12:1-4). See 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8.
- 3/ To John (Rev. 1:10-19).

Therefore, the evidence is indisputable. We have proof of the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ historically:

- 1) Because of the great number of witnesses. Moses in the Law said, "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established" (Deut. 19:15b).
- 2) Because we not only have actual eye-witnesses, but we have men like Mark and Luke who have examined those who were eye-witnesses, etc., and have come to the conclusion that their witness was true.
- 3) Because there is no conflict among the witnesses as to what they saw. Thomas was convinced that the disciples 8 days before actually saw what they said they had seen: the risen Christ.

All of this is extremely important because the doctrines which are based upon the death and resurrection of Christ cannot be true if He did not die, and rise again. But, since He did, we have a solid foundation for our faith.