

Did The Resurrection Of Christ Really Happen?

John 11

Introduction:

The Bible declares emphatically that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and He is alive today. Jesus rose from the dead bodily after three days and three nights. He walked the earth, being seen by a multitude of eye-witnesses for 40 days. Jesus Christ then ascended to heaven and took an exalted position at the right hand of God the Father. Again, eye-witnesses saw this happen. But still, people continue to doubtfully ask the question, “Did the resurrection of Christ really happen or was it all some big fraud or conspiracy?” According to the way judicial proceedings happen, using the laws of authenticity which validate historical events, Christ’s resurrection was no idea, it is historical fact. The debate is not did it happen, but rather, what does it mean now that He has risen from the dead? So what proof is there of His resurrection?

The Focus:

- **Every person must face the facts of Jesus Christ’s resurrection. By understanding...**
 - **Christ exhibited total power over life and death.**
 - **Christ declared ahead of time that He would rise from the dead.**
 - **Those in leadership were motivated to keep it from happening.**
 - **There were multiple eye-witnesses that saw Christ.**

The first fact to consider is: Christ exhibited total power over life and death. Christ gave life to a ruler’s daughter that was dead, and this man was not a disciple of Jesus, but a ruler in Israel (Mark 5:35-43). In another instance, Christ gave life to a widow’s son (Luke 7:12-15). Just prior to Jesus’ death and resurrection, He resurrected a friend of His who had been dead for four days. It was there, when He resurrected Lazarus, that Christ declared of Himself, “*I am the resurrection, and the life...*” (John 11:25). An important note about these resurrections is that Jesus did them in front of multiple people; they were not done in secret. Huge crowds of people, believers and non-believers, saw Him. As we consider whether the resurrection of Christ really happened, we have to ask ourselves, “Did Christ give any evidence of having power over death before His own resurrection?” The answer is, “Yes, absolutely.” His own resurrection from the dead was in total harmony with His life and ministry. It was in character with His actions.

The second fact to consider is: Christ declared ahead of time that He would rise from the dead. It is recorded by multiple disciples that Christ promised that He would rise from the dead (John 2:19, 21; Mark 8:31; Luke 24:6-8). Christ made it clear that He would lay down His life in death, sacrificially giving up His life to pay for our sins. He clearly stated that He had the power to take His life back again (John 10:17-18). No other religious leader made such a bold claim. Even if another man promised to rise from the dead, they would have no credibility because their decayed remains still occupy graves. Christ's tomb is empty! He wasn't trying to catch anybody off guard. If it was all a hoax, He would not have made it clear of His intention to rise again.

The third fact to consider is: those in leadership were motivated to keep it from happening. Because Christ made it clear ahead of time what He intended to do, His enemies had every opportunity to try and prevent it (Matthew 27:62-66). There was a joint effort by the religious and political leaders of that day to insure that no claim could ever be made concerning a resurrection from the dead. At the request of the Jews religious leaders, Roman soldiers were placed outside of Jesus' grave. After His resurrection, the religious leaders bribed the soldiers to say that Jesus' disciples came by night while they were asleep and stole His body. Are you kidding? So they were to say they all were asleep (these were probably some of that area's best soldiers) and never heard a group of men rolling a stone away. Logically, how is it possible that a stone weighing typically four tons (the weight of 2 or 3 cars) could be removed without any detection and then taking Christ's body without anyone noticing? To say they didn't see it, seems like a far reach. Even after the resurrection, all they had to do to stomp out Christianity was simply produce the dead body of Jesus. This all happened in a confined geographical area and they had the political power and motivation to do it. But they couldn't ever do it!

The fourth fact is: there were multiple eye-witnesses that saw Christ. Numerous people stated that they had seen this man who was supposed to be dead. They gave specific details about this. Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene, then to a group of ladies that had come to the tomb, then to Simon Peter, then to two men on the Road to Emmaus, then to ten of His disciples, then to all of them again with Thomas there this time, then to over 500 believers at one time, then to his brother, James (who was a non-believer during Christ's earthly ministry), and of course, to Paul who wrote 13 books of the New Testament. If there is a crime or a hoax, the more people involved, the easier it is to uncover. Somebody breaks down, stories don't mesh, or someone is squeezed or threatened to the point of confession. Not only this, those that saw Him declared it publicly and openly. Even after disciples were jailed and beaten, they continued to attest to the fact that Jesus was alive.

Response to the Sermon:

There was a video played during the service and it had multiple people who were questioning the validity of Jesus' resurrection, but they concluded with the statement that if He did in fact rise from the dead, then that forces a person to make a decision. What have you done with Jesus? Have you declared the truth of Christ's resurrection?

Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:

I'm sure the hours and moments leading up to the cross were very intense. Christ's ministry was people. People saw the things He accomplished. Jesus was accused of doing things secretly, but Christ said that the things He did were done out in the open. He did them openly in the Jewish places of worship. There was nothing He did that was done secretly (John 18:20). Christ never resisted the will of God. He never flinched when His accusers came to arrest Him (John 18:12-13). That's what a clear conscience can do for you. It gives you confidence. Jesus went courageously to the cross to pay the penalty of our sins. What a Savior!

1. When Judas and the officers came to retrieve Jesus, what does it say about Jesus understanding of the situation, and how did He respond (John 18:3-4)? What should be our response when called in for questioning?

2. Read John 18:19-19:31 (Christ's arrest and crucifixion). What emotions do you have regarding Christ's actions throughout the whole process? What did you learn from this? How are you going to apply what you learned to your life?

Application Questions:

So, if Christ really rose from the dead, what does that mean? Well, Jesus informed us of the meaning on the day He brought Lazarus back to life. He said, "*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*" (John 11:25) Christ's life and the proof of His resurrection demand a response from all who

have been born after the crosswork of Jesus. It also gives us a hope and a challenge to live differently than before.

1. According to Romans 4:25, what does Christ's resurrection do for every believer? How should this affect us to live?
2. Because Jesus rose from the dead (Romans 6:9), what does this mean for every believer (2 Corinthians 4:14)? Knowing this, how should this impact the way we live?
3. Jesus fulfilled prophecy about His resurrection (Isaiah 53:10-12; Psalm 16:10-11; Matthew 28:6-7). What should that do in the mind and heart of every believer?
4. Because Christ is risen, what does that mean about the gospel and the truth regarding Christ (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17-19)? What should that motivate us to do?

Prayer:

- Pray for people to understand the validity of Christ's power over death (Mark 5:35-43; Luke 7:12-15; John 11).
- Pray for people to see the difference between Christ's life and the life of other religious leaders (John 2:19, 21; Mark 8:31; Luke 24:6-8).
- Pray for people to see the evidence of Christ's resurrection and see that the facts are the proof of Christ's resurrection.
- Pray that people would see the power that Christ possesses (John 11:25-26).