

5 Life-Changing Truths You Should Know About the Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the bedrock of the Christian faith. That is why it has been the target of the most vicious attacks by those who oppose the Christian faith. If the physical resurrection of Jesus can be disproven, then the entire Christian faith comes crashing down. But if the resurrection is true and Jesus Christ is alive today, then at the end of the day, nothing else really matters and He and His cause are worthy of our absolute devotion and faith.

Here are five life-changing truths you should know about the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1. The Resurrection Is a Historical Fact

A few nights ago, Bill O'Reilly stated that his book *Killing Jesus* does not contain the word *Christ* because, he said, "It [his book] is based on history, not faith." His statement revealed a certain mindset, based in liberal theology, that has divorced the Christ of faith from the Jesus of history. Beginning in the 19th century, and driven by modern skepticism, the propagators of this thinking theorized that the Gospels were written not by contemporary eyewitnesses but by later followers of Jesus who embellished His life with all kinds of mythical stories of miracles and a resurrection.

There thus emerged a false dichotomy between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith and a quest by many to find the Jesus of history hidden behind the supposed unreliable stories of the Christ of faith in the Gospels. But let's be clear: There is no dichotomy between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. They are one and the same! The Gospels contain reliable eyewitness accounts of Jesus, His life and

His resurrection.

This was the general belief for 1,700 years in the Western world, until the recent advent of modern rationalism and skepticism. Modern rationalistic professors may sit in their stuffy offices indulging in all sorts of speculation about the historicity of the Gospels, but those who have been willing to do the real work of empirical investigation have, again and again, been convinced of the historicity and truthfulness of the gospel account of Jesus and His resurrection.

A Harvard Law Professor Is Convinced

Dr. Simon Greenleaf (1783-1853) was the Royal Professor of Law at Harvard University and one of the principal founders of Harvard Law School. He authored the famous three-volume work *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence*, which is still considered one of the greatest single authorities on judicial legal procedure. Greenleaf, a nonbeliever, originally set out to disprove the biblical testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, believing that a careful examination of the internal witness of the Gospels would reveal the myth at the heart of Christianity.

But after months of carefully examining and cross-examining the testimonies of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, this legal scholar came to the conclusion that the witnesses were reliable and that the Resurrection did, in fact, happen. As a result, he became a believer and wrote a book entitled *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice*. Greenleaf concluded that, according to the jurisdiction of legal evidence, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best-supported event in all of ancient history.

A Skeptical Professor and Archaeologist Is Convinced

Sir William Ramsay believed and taught that the New Testament is a second-century document filled with myths and

embellishments and not a reliable source of history. He set out to prove this theory by retracing Luke's account of Paul's travels in the book of Acts. He assumed that by carefully examining the places, people, laws and histories mentioned in Acts, he would be able to show all the mistakes and demonstrate with finality that the New Testament does not contain reliable history.

However, after years of archaeological digs and excavations in the cities and locations along Paul's route as recorded in Acts, Ramsay's view of the New Testament was completely changed and he acquired a very high regard for Luke as a historian. He wrote, "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy, he is possessed of the true historic sense; in short, this author should be placed along with the greatest of historians. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment."

If Luke was this careful to get his facts right about names, places and dates, can we not be confident that he was also careful to get his facts right concerning the more important things about which he reported, such as the resurrection of Jesus? At the beginning of his Gospel, Luke says that he has thoroughly investigated the matter at hand, including interviews with those who were eyewitnesses of the events about which he is writing. We can be confident that if there had been any smell of conspiracy or hallucination from these eyewitness accounts, Dr. Luke would have detected it.

2. The Resurrection Removes the Fear of Death

"Don't be afraid of death, because I am the Resurrection" were the words I heard at one of the most devastating times of my life. The ministry my wife, Sue, and I had begun shortly after our marriage had died, and we had lost everything, including a

place to have our meetings and a place to live. In spite of the loss, I continued meetings with a small group of people in homes because I knew the vision for a congregation and teaching center were from God.

Then I received word from Oklahoma that my brother had been killed in an accident and I had to depart to attend the funeral. Everyone was discouraged, and no one had the motivation to continue the meetings and they ceased. Chris, my mother-in-law, later said, "That was when it all died."

Thank God for the Holy Spirit, for one evening, while in prayer, I sensed the Holy Spirit rising up out of my innermost being, and I began to pray in other tongues. All the time I was praying in the Spirit, I was hearing those words: "Don't be afraid of death, because I am the Resurrection."

I was reminded that this was the word of Jesus to Martha as they stood before the tomb of her brother, Lazarus, and she had stated her theological belief that her brother would live again at the resurrection. Jesus had replied, "I am the Resurrection." I also, at that moment, realized that the resurrection is not just a future event but is personified in the Person of Jesus Christ, and is a present reality in the life of the believer

As Paul said in Philippians 3:10, "[For my determined purpose] is that I may know Him ... and that I may in that same way come to know the power out flowing from His resurrection" (AMP).

A resurrection did occur in our lives and in that ministry. A yielding to God, a determination not to quit, a step of obedience and resurrection power flowed forth. The ministry that came forth was not the same as before, for it came forth in His resurrection power and in ways we could never have planned or strategized.

Perhaps there is some area of your life that you feel has died—a relationship, a dream, a career, a project. Maybe you

have suffered the loss of a spouse in death or in divorce. On the eve of this Good Friday, I felt to share with you those words the Lord spoke to me years ago in the midst of death. He said, "Don't be afraid of death, because I am the Resurrection."

3. Resurrection Power Is at Work in You as a Believer

The power that God works in the life of the believer is the very same power by which He raised Jesus from the dead. Paul makes this clear in Ephesians 1:15-23, where he prays that the Ephesian believers will be enlightened to know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. The English word *toward* is a translation of the Greek preposition *eis*, which means "into" or "in." This mighty power that Paul wants them to know about is directed "into" the believer; or we could say it is at work "in" the believer. But what kind of power is this?

Paul then makes clear the nature of this power. He says this power is according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:19-20). This resurrection power that is at work in you will make you an overcomer and will strengthen and heal your physical body, as Paul says in Romans 8:11: "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal body bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

My friends, you do not need to run here and there looking for some special anointing. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is already at work in you. Believe that, and act like it is true.

4. The Resurrection Ushered in a New Era of Freedom for Women

The Gospel writers are very explicit in noting that it was Mary Magdalene to whom Jesus appeared first after His

resurrection. The importance the evangelists attach to this fact indicates it was no accidental occurrence but that Jesus purposely appeared first to Mary Magdalene in order to make an important statement to His followers.

When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, He gave her certain, specific instructions. Matthew 28:10 records His words to Mary to “Go and tell my brethren.” In other words, He sent her on a specific mission defined by the words “Go and tell.” The Greek word *apostolos*, from which we get the English *apostle* simply means “one who is sent” or “one sent on assignment.” Mary, therefore, was a “sent one” and as such received the first apostolic commission from the risen Lord. It is for this reason that, throughout Christian history, Mary has often been referred to as “the apostle to the apostles.”

This commissioning of Mary by Jesus was revolutionary since the Jewish male of this time normally began his day with a prayer that included thanks to God that he was not born a Gentile, a slave or a woman. Women were barred from studying Scripture, and a rabbi considered it beneath his dignity to speak to a woman in public. Neither Jewish nor Roman courts of law would allow the testimony of women.

Jesus challenged this deeply ingrained religious and cultural bias by appearing first to Mary and sending her forth as the first apostolic witness of His resurrection. By appearing first to Mary and giving her the first apostolic commission after His resurrection, Jesus made a clear statement that women would be included in leadership and ministry in His church.

5. The Resurrection Guarantees That Everything Jesus Taught Is True

Jesus taught many things about heaven, hell, eternity, God, the future of the human race and the fact that He would always be with us. He also predicted that He would die and rise again

from the dead on the third day. Now, if He did not rise from the dead as predicted, then everything else He said is cast into doubt and question. But if He did rise again on the third day as predicted, then it stands to reason that everything else He taught is true and will come to pass.

He did rise again on the third day, and His resurrection guarantees that everything He promised is true. He will return to this earth again. He will raise from the dead all those who have put their faith in Him. There is a place called heaven prepared for those who love Him and look for His appearing. There is a glorious future for this planet and for all those who trust in Him. His promise to be continually with us and never leave us is validated by His glorious resurrection and expressed so well in the following old hymn:

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me,
Along the narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart;
You ask me how I know He lives,
He lives within my heart.

Dr. Eddie L. Hyatt is the co-founder and president of Hyatt Int'l Ministries, and his passion is to see the contemporary church return to the New Testament pattern of simplicity, humility and a radical dependence on the Holy Spirit. He is an author and his latest book, *Pursuing Power: How the Quest for Apostolic Authority & Control Has Divided and Damaged the Church*, is available from Amazon (including Kindle) and from his website at