

End-Times Disasters Abound, but Jesus' Comeback Offers Eternal Hope

In recent years, we have seen devastating environmental **disasters**—tornadoes, fires, floods, hurricanes and snow storms—that have destroyed homes and entire communities. We have seen random school shootings that have taken the lives of innocent students, leaving families emotionally distraught. We have seen sadistic terrorist attacks tear at the very foundation of a nation's security and identity, ushering in waves of fear and hatred. And the list goes on.

Every day we either read or watch or hear of a new disaster, so that the one that happened yesterday is quickly forgotten with the news of one that happens today. And the one that happens today will be driven from our minds by what happens tomorrow. Even if the disaster is of record-breaking, biblical proportions, within a short time it is no longer front-page news and becomes just a statistic or an asterisk in other stories.

We soon forget that those who lived through whatever the disaster was are still struggling to cope. To take the next breath. To survive financially and physically and emotionally and in every other way. It can be overwhelming to rebuild. From scratch. From nothing into something. The comeback trail can be long and hard and flooded with tears.

Which is why Easter pulsates with hope. After the horror of the cross on Friday, after the agony of knowing that God's Son was dead on Saturday, the beginning of His comeback story exploded into human history with an **empty tomb**!

Exploded With an Empty Tomb

From the following verses, list as much proof for the resurrection of Jesus Christ as you can find: John 20:1-8, 10-18, 19-20, 24-29 and 21:1-14; Matthew 28:1-10 and 11-15; Luke 24:1-3, 13-15 and 36-39; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; and Revelation 2:8.

Give phrases that prove His resurrection was not spiritual or mystical but literal and physical, from Luke 24:36-40, 41-43; and John 20:24-29.

How serious a matter is it to reject the proof of the Resurrection? See 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

Is Jesus still alive today? Read Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-56 and 9:1-6. What does this mean to you?

What experiences in your own life or in the lives of others you know offer further proof that Jesus is not dead but is indeed alive today?

The tomb was empty. Do you truly believe that? Your own comeback begins with a positive answer.

Experienced With Power

How does the living Lord Jesus Christ impart power to you and me for our own comeback? Refer to Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:1-8, 2:1-4, 16-18 and 3:1-16.

What astounding connection does Paul make between the resurrection of Jesus and the life of believers? See Ephesians 1:18-21.

How was this power demonstrated in Acts 3:1-4:4; John 18:10-18 and 25-27 with Acts 4:13? Acts 4:33? Acts 9:1-20?

In what way have you experienced the power of the risen Christ to enable you to boldly share the gospel with an unbeliever? To free you from guilt? To break an addiction? To overcome a habit? To extend forgiveness to your wounder? To love your

enemy? Or to _____? Fill in the blank.

What encouragement do you receive from Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 as you struggle to come back?

Ends With Glory

How does His comeback story give you hope for tomorrow? See 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 2 Corinthians 4:13-14 and Revelation 3:11.

In what way are you encouraged today by the promises given because Jesus lives? Read Hebrews 7:23-28, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, Hebrews 12:2-3 and 1 Peter 1:3-5.

What promise for not only your future, but also the future of the world directly rests on the fact that Jesus is alive? See John 14:1-3 and Acts 1:10-11.

How did Jesus allude to His comeback during His trial before the religious leaders in Matthew 26:63-66?

Describe the climax of His comeback story, as seen in Revelation 1:7, 12-16, 4:1, 5:6-12 and 19:6-16.

How does the end of His comeback story impact the end of your own? See Romans 8:16-17 and 1 Peter 1:6-9.

Emboldens Us to Tell Others

If Jesus never came back from the dead—if He was not raised—what difference would that make to you? To our world?

Who do you know who is living as though Jesus was dead? What difference do you think it would make to them if they could know He is alive?

How did the world in the first century, as well as the generations that have followed, know Jesus had risen from the dead? See John 15:26-27, Matthew 28:5-7, Acts 2:22-24, Acts

5:27-32 and Acts 10:39-43.

How will your family, your friends and your world know Jesus is alive and is coming back?

Would you celebrate this **Easter** by telling others that His comeback story can be theirs?

The wonderful, good news of the **gospel** is that there can be a comeback story for each of us. Not only can we rebuild our lives, but we can actually be **reborn**! Because Jesus lives, we can live too—not just one day in heaven, but right here and now as we struggle with our own comeback stories from alcoholism, addiction, depression, disaster, betrayal, brokenness, bankruptcy or whatever has seemed to bury us. We, too, can explode into abundant life and joy and hope and power through fully trusting in Him. As we work out the day-to-day process of coming back, we can experience His peace and power and presence and purpose. And one day, our comeback trail will end at His throne in our heavenly home and we will reign with Him in glory. Now that's a story to tell!

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This story can be found at .