

RESPONSE TO RESURRECTION

We've looked at several reasons why the truth of resurrection trumps the foolishness of unbelief. 1) Jesus predicted it. 2) God reported it. 3) Witnesses confirm it. Jesus was dead. The tomb was empty. The rapid reports of resurrection were not credibly refuted. Ancient sources, both within and without New Testament accounts, corroborate the reality of numerous personal encounters with the risen Christ. There's more. In Matthew 28, the angel said, "*He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come see the place where He lay. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen.*" Jesus met them, and they worshiped Him.

4- Transformed people proclaim it. In the "resurrection chapter" 1Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul spells it out. "*I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.*" It's the purpose, process, and principle of redemption, for all who will believe. As both predicted and reported in the Bible, resurrection is essential to the gospel. Paul says "*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*" It is hope beyond the grave that propels a life lived for the Lord Jesus, for His disciples, and for those today in the Middle East who are crucified for their faith. Believers noted in the New Testament give personal testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because they were gripped by the irrefutable truth of the power of the Gospel. Their lives were transformed by His truth - which they proclaim to you whenever you read the Bible. Jesus saves. His death paid for sins, and His resurrection gives new eternal spiritual life to all who receive Him as Savior and Lord. Resurrection is the defeat of death, the last enemy of mankind. Because Jesus lives, resurrected and glorified forever, all those who believe in Him will also live - and never fear death. Because He is risen!

5- Jesus demonstrates it. The resurrection is God's promise that earthly bodies of believers will be re-united with their eternal spirits, glorified for the heavenly realm. In 1Corinthians 15:20, the resurrected Jesus is presented as the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep, died and resurrected. Because "*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*" Answering questions of the "*foolish person*" Paul explains resurrection as God's supernatural miracle converting the perishable natural body into an imperishable heavenly body. Mortality puts on immortality, no longer subject to death as the just wages of sin, but made new. Not just in soul or spirit, but new glorified bodies, fit for eternity in heaven. Death is swallowed up in Jesus' victory! In John's vision, the risen reigning Lord Jesus Christ in heaven declares in Revelation 1:19, "*I AM the first and the last, and the Living One. I died, and behold, I AM alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death.*" The Bible says those who reject Christ will resurrect to eternal damnation. But those who receive Him will be raised to eternal life. In the gospel of John 11:25, Jesus spoke words of comfort to Martha, whose brother Lazarus had recently died. "*Your brother will rise again.*" Martha said "*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.*" Jesus said to her "*I AM the resurrection, and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*" She said "*Yes Lord, I believe that You are the Christ.*"

6- Jesus asks you! What's your response? In a recent Ligonier-Lifeway survey, nearly 45 percent of Americans claim to believe Jesus was raised bodily from the dead, as accurately reported in the Bible; and 19 percent "agree somewhat." But intellectual belief alone is not "saving faith," which involves your whole being: heart, mind, will, submitting to and trusting God's truth with all that you are. Paul explains in Romans 10:9, "*if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*" Not simply accepting the truth of the Bible, but staking your life on it. Believing with all your being. It's what the Bible calls "repentance and faith," turning from old beliefs and trusting wholly in what God says is true, as we saw author Lee Strobel do. Believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and receiving His new resurrection life - to be lived through your life, by His power within. Don't be like the doubting in Luke 24:25 to whom Jesus says "*O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.*" Be like the believers in Luke 24:34 proclaiming "*The Lord has risen indeed!*" The truth of resurrection trumps the foolishness of unbelief. Because this world is not all there is. The reality of real life for the believer is to be resurrected for all eternity in the new heavens and new earth. It would be very foolish to reject what God reveals as truth. Because it is true whether or not you believe it. And when you submit to His truth, Jesus transforms YOUR life! Then you join the company of transformed lives to show and tell the good news: Jesus is alive and Jesus saves! □