

Matthew 28: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Last week we looked at the cross of Christ. This week we will look at the other side of that coin: the resurrection of Christ. Without the cross, there would have been no resurrection. And without the resurrection, Paul tells us that we would still be dead in our sins even with the cross. The two are inseparably linked.

This is what Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Cor. 15:3-4 – “For I delivered to you **as of first importance** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, **that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.**”

Notice that Paul tells us there that the resurrection on the third day occurred according to the scriptures.

Psalm 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Hosea 6:2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

As with the cross of Christ, the resurrection of Christ was part of God's plan from the beginning. How could Satan have been said to have bruised **only** Christ's heel in Genesis 3:15 if there was to be no resurrection?

We also saw last week how the cross of Christ is inseparably linked to our baptism. The same is true of the resurrection of Christ.

Romans 6:3-4 – Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from

the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

1 Peter 3:21-22 – Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Colossians 2:12 – having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Paul tells us that the cross of Christ and the resurrection of Christ are of first importance – and both are inseparably linked to our baptism. What does that tell us about our baptism? Those who belittle baptism in the plan of God are belittling the cross of Christ and the resurrection of Christ.

Let's begin our look at the resurrection of Christ with a question: What is the opposite of faith?

To the world the opposite of faith is reason.

The world tells us that scientists operate by reason, but Christians operate by faith (which presumably means that they have left their reason behind).

Anyone who has studied evolution knows that is not how it works with scientists! Evolution has a dogma and a priesthood as much as any religion does. And evolution has its heretics as well, and they are often (figuratively) burned at the stake as a warning to others.

When it comes to our origins, the truth is that those who see an intelligent designer are operating more by reason than those who believe we appeared as a result of random chance following a giant explosion. And I think we will see that the same is true when it comes to the resurrection.

So what is the opposite of faith if it is not reason? According to the Bible, faith is contrasted with sight – not with reason. (2 Cor. 5:7 – “we walk by faith, not by sight”).

Nowhere are we told to abandon reason in favor of faith or to accept God’s claims despite evidence to the contrary.

God does not expect us to believe in him despite the evidence but because of the evidence. That is certainly the case when it comes to our origins:

Rom. 1:20 – “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

By classifying the church’s views as matters of faith, the world marginalizes us and keeps our agenda out of the public arena.

After all, the world would ask, how can you have a reasoned discussion about a matter of faith? Faith is like politics – not a topic for polite conversation.

How can they get away with this, you ask?

They get away with it when we allow them to get away with it.

If we have been marginalized it is because we have allowed ourselves to be marginalized.

The Jews would have loved to have marginalized the Old Testament prophets, or Jesus, or Paul, but it never happened.

Why? Because the Old Testament prophets, and Jesus, and Paul refused to allow it.

Instead of being relegated to a footnote, they turned the world upside down.

I fear that we in the church have developed an inferiority complex regarding what we believe.

Chesterton said that the Christians of his day were becoming too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table, and I fear that we are in danger of winding up the same way.

Christians have nothing to fear from the evidence. We have nothing to fear from science or reason or truth or evidence.

We have nothing to fear from an inquiry into the truth – whether Biblical truth or scientific truth. Truth is truth.

There is not one type of truth regarding religious matters and another regarding scientific matters.

We have nothing to fear from a rational inquiry.

The evidence is on our side! And nowhere is that more true than when it comes to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus was asked for a sign by the scribes and the Pharisees, to what did he point? He pointed to his resurrection as the only sign they would receive. His resurrection was to be his single and sufficient credential.

Matthew 12:38-40 –Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” 39 But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

No one ever did what Jesus did. He not only publicly foretold his manner of death, he publicly foretold the specific day of his resurrection.

One of the songs we sometimes sing ends with a question – “you ask me how I know he lives?”

Do you remember the answer the song gives? (#346)
“He lives within my heart.”

It is a pretty song, but it has a problem.

The answer to that final question given in the song is quite different from the answer given in the New Testament. If anyone ever asks you that question, **please** give them a better answer than that!

By suggesting that the resurrection can only be supported or is best supported by some vague personal feeling in our hearts, this song (likely unintentionally) promotes several modernistic views of the resurrection.

(1) Dialectical theology (Karl Barth):

Karl Barth said that he valued the doctrine of the resurrection but did not consider it to be an event in history.

He said, “The resurrection touches history as a tangent touches a circle – that is, without really touching it.”

(Apparently, Karl knew as much about geometry as he did about the Bible.)

(2) Existential theology (Rudolf Bultmann):

Rudolf Bultmann felt that modern men could not be expected to believe in miracles before becoming Christians.

He felt that the miraculous must be demythologized to reveal the true Christian message.

He said that the resurrection was a call to “authentic existence in the face of death.”

He said that “an historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable.”

Bultmann said that if the bones of Jesus were discovered in Palestine tomorrow then all of the essentials of Christianity would remain unchanged.

(And what did Paul say? If Christ be not raised then our faith is in vain – 1 Cor. 15:14.)

“To consign the resurrection to the category of myth is a typical species of modern laziness or a typically lazy modernism.”

What is the truth of the resurrection?

The truth is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact of history that has more evidence behind it than many of the historical facts that are taught in our schools and colleges.

The evidence of a literal resurrection is so overwhelming that the rationality should be questioned of one who fails to accept it rather than of one who accepts it as fact.

“Other religions depend on subjective experience and blind faith, tradition, and opinion.” Only Christianity stakes its claim to truthfulness based on historical events open to investigation.

The resurrection is and always has been the foundation of all preaching about Christ. It is the keystone that integrates the incarnation and Christ's atoning death. If it is removed, the whole gospel will collapse.

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then all humans – including all Christians – remain under the tyranny of sin and death, and their bouts of doubt and despair are fully justified. The resurrection is non-negotiable and cannot be jettisoned without gutting the Christian faith.

How weighty is the evidence for the resurrection?

Well, one well known Jewish New Testament scholar (yes, they do exist – this one's name is Pinchas Lapide, and he is one of only four Jewish New Testament scholars in the world) has written that on the basis of the evidence he is convinced that God raised Jesus from the dead. (“according to my opinion, the resurrection ... [is] a fact of history”; “without the resurrection of Jesus, af-

ter Golgotha there would not have been any Christianity”)

He does not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, yet he feels that the weight of the evidence is so strong, he does believe that God raised Jesus from the dead.

What would cause such a person to believe in the resurrection?

As Luke wrote in Acts 1:3, the resurrection is supported by “many infallible proofs.”

Let’s look at some of these infallible proofs for the resurrection.

THE EMPTY TOMB

You ask me how I know he lives?

My answer is not that I have some vague feeling in my heart that he lives.

My first answer to that question is that I know he lives because the tomb was empty. The empty tomb is a fact of history that cannot be denied. When someone asks you how you know Jesus was raised from the dead, you should always start with the empty tomb.

“No man has written, pro or con, on the subject of Christ’s resurrection, without finding himself compelled to face the problem of the empty tomb. That the tomb was empty on Sunday morning is recognized by everyone, no matter how radical a critic he may be; however anti-supernatural in all his personal convictions, he never dares to say that the body was still resting in the tomb.”

What is the evidence for the empty tomb?

(a) We know the tomb was empty because the burial site was known to all.

The site of Jesus' tomb was known to both Christian and Jew alike.

If the tomb had not been empty then no one could have believed in the resurrection of Christ.

If the tomb had not been empty then the Jewish authorities would have quickly exposed the hoax.

“The apostles went up and down the very city where he had been crucified and proclaimed right to the faces of his slayers that he had been raised, and no one could produce evidence to the contrary” – despite an extraordinary incentive to do so.

And even though the burial site was known to all, it was never turned into a shrine. Christ’s followers never made pilgrimages to the tomb – why? Because they knew he was not there!

One of the best pieces of evidence for the empty tomb is what one commentator has called “the extraordinary silence of antiquity concerning the later history of the grave of Jesus.”

And where did Christianity start? It started in Jerusalem. That is the very last place it could have started had Jesus’ tomb remained occupied. Maybe the apostles could have run back to Galilee to start things off, but they could never have done so in Jerusalem.

(b) We know the tomb was empty because the written account of the empty tomb dates back almost to the actual event

For those of us, who believe in the inspiration of the Bible, the date of the account is not relevant.

However, considered solely for its values as evidence, an account that is written down shortly after the event is much more valuable.

An eyewitness account written shortly after the event is as strong evidence as one could hope to have for an event that happened nearly 2000 years ago.

Mark describes the resurrection in Mark 16:1-8. When did Mark write down this account?

For a possible clue, let's turn to Mark 14:54. (But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest.)

If I say that the president is coming to Houston, to whom am I referring? Could I say the same thing if I were speaking of President Bush?

No, the phrase "the president" without any modifier can only refer to the current president.

Here Mark refers to the High Priest in the same way; that is, the High Priest when Jesus was crucified was still the High Priest when Mark wrote the account!

Caiaphas held his office until AD 37, which could place Mark's account to within 7 years of Jesus' death.

(Note that Caiaphas is mentioned by name in Matthew, Luke, John, and Acts but not in Mark.)

We talked about the dates and order of the gospel accounts in our introductory class. This verse is evidence that Mark may well have been the earliest gospel account written (although we also considered some evidence that suggests Matthew came first).

(c) We know the tomb was empty because the gospels record that it was discovered by women

Women occupied the lowest rung on the social ladder.

The rabbis said "Sooner let the words of the law be burned than be delivered to a woman."

The testimony of women was considered so worthless that they were not allowed to testify in court.

A legendary account would have arranged things so that men discovered the tomb.

For example, in the second century (non-inspired) so-called gospel of Peter, a voice rings out from Heaven during the night, the stone rolls back by itself, and two men descend from Heaven and enter the tomb. Then three men are seen coming out of the tomb and into the clouds. Then a cross comes out of the tomb and a voice asks "Hast thou preached to them that sleep?" The cross answers "Yea."

In another account, Jesus comes out of the tomb sitting on the shoulders of the angels Michael and Gabriel.

(d) We know the tomb was empty because the earliest Jewish attack on the resurrection of Christ presupposes the empty tomb.

In Matthew 28:11-15, Matthew refuted the earliest attempt by the Jews to dispute the resurrection. There he wrote:

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" 14 "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The earliest attempt by the Jews to discredit the resurrection assumed the FACT of the empty tomb. That tomb was empty, and that is a FACT!

Paul never directly mentions the empty tomb or tries to convince anyone of it – the fact of the empty tomb was known to ALL.

We talked last week about the ridiculous “swoon theory” proposed by some to explain the resurrection. Why is there a swoon theory? Because there was an empty tomb! No one denies that tomb was empty!

Of course, an empty tomb by itself is only a mystery. Unless Jesus actually appeared alive, the empty tomb is ultimately irrelevant.

THE APPEARANCES

You ask me how I know he lives? I know because of all the people he appeared to after his resurrection from the dead.

The apostles always stressed the eyewitness nature of the evidence for the resurrection.

Acts 2:32 – “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.”

Acts 3:15 – “The one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.”

“The appearances of Jesus are as well authenticated as anything in antiquity. There can be no rational doubt that they occurred, and that the main reason why Christians became sure of the resurrection in the earliest days was just this. They could say with assurance, ‘We have seen the Lord.’”

(a) Jesus appeared to the apostles.

This is the best attested resurrection appearance. We can read about it in Luke 24 and John 20.

The most important aspect of this appearance is the physical manifestation of Christ showing his wounds and eating.

Jesus was physically raised and this is the same Jesus who was crucified. (Theologians describe this by saying that the body was corporeal and continuous.)

How else do we explain their transformation between the gospels and Acts? How else do we explain their courage? Those who fled for their lives in the gospels willingly went to their deaths in Acts. Why? The only explanation is the one they gave themselves – they were witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

(b) Jesus appeared to over 500 at one time:

1 Cor. 15:6 – “Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.”

This appearance comes as somewhat of a shock – Jesus appeared to over 500 at one time! This appearance is not described in the gospel accounts.

Why did Paul mention that some were still alive? The witnesses were there to be questioned! Paul could never have said this if the event had not occurred.

(c) Jesus appeared to his own brother, James (1 Cor. 15:7):

This is the most amazing appearance of all. Jesus appeared to his younger brother James.

What makes this amazing is that neither James nor Jesus' other brothers believed in him during his life. (Mark 3:21, Luke 8:19-21; John 7:5)

James' unbelief continued to the cross at which time Jesus gave charge of his mother to his cousin John rather than to his brother James. (John 19:26)

But suddenly something changed! James was present with the apostles in the upper room. (Acts 1:13-14)

The next mention of James is found in Acts 12:17 when Peter gets out of prison and says "Go tell this to James."

In Galatians 1:19 Paul says that he met with two people after his conversion – Peter and James.

In fact, in Galatians 1:19 Paul possibly suggests that James was considered an apostle! (From Acts 1:22 we know that an apostle had to have witnessed the resurrected Christ.)

When Paul visited the Jerusalem church 14 years later he said there were three pillars in the church: Peter, John, and James (Gal 2:9).

Finally in Acts 21:18 James appears to have been a leader in the Jerusalem church. Josephus tells us that James was stoned to death in AD 60.

HOW CAN THIS COMPLETE AND SUDDEN TURN AROUND BE EXPLAINED?

Why did James' opinion of Jesus change so suddenly?

The only possible answer is that Jesus appeared to James! It is fascinating to imagine what that scene must have been like! (1 Corinthians 9:5 tells us that Jesus' other brothers also became believers.)

Even skeptical critics have acknowledged that the conversion of James is among the very best evidence for the resurrection of Christ.

(d) Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus (1 Cor. 15:8):

Jesus' appearances to James and Saul have something in common – they were the only known post-resurrection appearances to unbelievers, and each appearance had a very dramatic effect!

This event changed Paul's entire life. He was a Pharisee, a respected Jewish leader, and a hater of Christians.

Suddenly he turned around completely, left everything behind, and became a Christian missionary who entered a life of poverty, labor, and suffering.

Why? What instantly converted the greatest enemy of the church into its greatest defender? What could it have been?

It could only have been a direct appearance by the risen Lord, which, as we know, occurred on the road to Damascus.

Something happened back then and historians can see its effects like ripples in a pond.

How can we explain the ripples in the pond apart from the rock?

At a moment when it was still possible to test every incident, to examine every witness, and to expose every trace of fraud, the apostles openly and unhesitatingly proclaimed the fact of Christ's resurrection.

THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY

You ask me how I know he lives? I know he lives because of the amazing growth of Christianity following his crucifixion.

“The origin of Christianity must remain an unsolved enigma for any historian who refuses to take seriously the only explanation offered by the church itself.”

“Beginning in Jerusalem without money and without social or political prestige, this handful of disciples was able to do what the Roman Empire with all its military and political power was unable to do. It was able to conquer the world and bring into existence a kingdom under one king. Truly their achievement is a monument to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.”

But, the disciples were initially skeptics.

Thomas refused at first to believe in John 20:25.

Matthew 28:17 tells us that some were doubtful.

They refused to believe reports of his resurrection in Mark 16:11, 13.

In Mark 16:14, Jesus rebuked the apostles for their failure to believe the witnesses.

Without the resurrection of Christ, Christianity would never have come into existence. It would have failed before it ever got started. Isn't that exactly what Gamaliel said in Acts 5?

Acts 5:34-39 – But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. 36 For before these days **Theudas** rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. 37 After him **Judas** the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. 38 So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!”

Something got the movement started after Jesus' death – even diehard skeptics admit that. What was that something? What took the disciples from being skeptics in Matthew 28 and Mark 16 to turning the world upside down in Acts 17?

Why didn't Christianity die out just as all the other “Messiah movements” had done? Why didn't Jesus turn out to be just like Theudas in Acts 5:36 or Judas in Acts 5:37? What was the difference?

The only possible answer is the resurrection. The early Christians firmly held to a belief in the resurrection even while they were being thrown out of the synagogue and persecuted and killed.

One historian has said that the origin of Christianity rips a great hole in history that can only be filled with the resurrection.

The birth and rapid rise of the church cannot be explained in any other way.

One who disbelieves the resurrection has the burden to fill that gaping hole with something else that could explain the origin of Christianity.

We have looked at some of the infallible proofs for the resurrection, but why is the resurrection so important?

Rom. 1:4 – The resurrection declares that Jesus is the Son of God.

Romans 6:3-4 – The resurrection explains our baptism for the remission of sins.

Romans 6:5 – The resurrection is the basis of our hope of life beyond death.

Philippians 3:10 – The resurrection is the source of power.

1 Peter 1:3 – The resurrection is the source of our hope.

1 Peter 3:21 – The resurrection is the source of our salvation.

How important was the resurrection to Paul?

When he preached to the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers in Athens they thought he was preaching two new Gods: Jesus and Anastasis (Greek for resurrection). See Acts 17:18.

18 Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

Why is the resurrection important? Paul explains it best in 1 Corinthians 15:12-20.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.

In verses 13-19 Paul shows how futile the Christian faith would be if there were no resurrection of the dead. If there is no resurrection, then Christ was not raised. And if Christ was not raised from the dead, then everything that is based on that fact collapses into a heap of broken dreams. The gospel would be emptied of its content and power; it would become devoid of any spiritual value. It would become bogus and worthless.

Everything stands or falls on the truthfulness of the assertion that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. If that is false, then Christianity is nothing but a joke --- and the joke is on us.

Unlike all other religions, Christianity rests on the truthfulness of a historical event that is open to investigation by the world. If that event did not occur, then the apostles and prophets were liars, with Jesus himself being either a liar or a lunatic. Death would still be reigning supreme with no one able to defeat it.

If Christ is not raised then we are still in our sins. Notice that Paul does not say that if Christ had not died we would still be in our sins – even though that is certainly true. But even with the atoning death of Christ, we would

still be in our sins absent the resurrection of Christ. Why?

Because if the dead are not raised, then Christ is not coming back. And if Christ is not coming back, then the gospel is based on a lie and is emptied of its power to save. Because if the dead are not raised, then everyone will pay the wages of sin without regard to whether they obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because if Christ is not raised, then there is no one interceding on our behalf. We have no savior and we have no hope.

Paul tells us why Jesus was raised:

Romans 4:24-25 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and **was raised again for our justification.**

If Christ is not raised then those who have died will remain forever in the clutches of death. They have perished and are no different from those who died outside of Christ. Absent the resurrection, the inescapable conclusion is that God abandons the faithful when they die. Absent the resurrection, we have no hope.

Peter tells us why we have hope:

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto **a lively hope** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Cor. 15:19 comes straight to the point: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

If the dead are not raised, then Christians are placing their hope in someone who is dead. If the dead are not

raised, then the world is right – the cross is utter foolishness and we are utter fools to believe in it.

Christian joy is based on our confidence that Christ is alive, that he will return, that the dead will be raised, that all wrongs will be made right, and that the faithful will join him in the sky to return to their heavenly home. If that is not true, then our joy is replaced by despair. Without the resurrection, his grave is our grave and in it rests all of our hopes.

But those who read 1 Cor. 15:19 need to keep reading!

19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 **But** in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Verse 20 starts with one of the most beautiful words in the Bible – “but”! In **fact** Christ has been raised from the dead!

Let’s proclaim that fact – and let’s live that fact.

Quotes About the Resurrection

Men and women disbelieve the Easter story not because of the evidence but in spite of it. J. N. D. Anderson

I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair enquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose from the dead. Thomas Arnold

Nothing less than a resurrected Christ could have caused those men to maintain to their dying whispers that Jesus is alive and is Lord. Chuck Colson

When that great Christian and scientist Sir Michael Faraday was dying, journalists questioned him about his speculations for a life after death. "Speculations!" said

Faraday, " I know nothing of speculations. I'm resting on certainties. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and because He lives, I shall live also." Michael Faraday

To consign the resurrection to the category of myth is a typical species of modern laziness or a typically lazy modernism. Hans Frei

There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived or that Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three. Billy Graham

Christianity does not hold the resurrection to be one among many tenets of belief. Without faith in the resurrection there would be no Christianity at all. . . . Once disprove it, and you have disposed of Christianity. Michael Green

There is more evidence for the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ than for just about any other event in history. Simon Greenleaf, Dane Professor of Law at Harvard University

The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate sign that our salvation comes only when we cease trying to interpret Jesus' story in the light of our history, and instead we interpret ourselves in the light of his. Stanley Hauerwas

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the crowning proof of Christianity. If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion. If it did take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth. Henry Morris

The origin of Christianity must remain an unsolved enigma for any historian who refuses to take seriously the only explanation offered by the Church itself. C. F. D. Moule

It really is harder to disbelieve the resurrection than to accept it, much harder. J. I. Packer

To echo the words of ex-doubter Thomas, " My Lord and my God," is certainly more than an exercise of reason, but in the face of the evidence it is the only reasonable thing a person can do. J. I. Packer

Without His Resurrection the death of Christ would be of no avail, and His grave would be the grave of all our hopes. Philip Schaff

The meaning of the resurrection is a theological matter, but the fact of the resurrection is a historical matter; the nature of the resurrection body of Jesus may be a mystery, but the fact that the body disappeared from the tomb is a matter to be decided upon by historical evidence. Wilbur Smith

It was the resurrection which changed Saul the Pharisee into Paul the Apostle and turned his persecuting into preaching. John Stott

Christ himself deliberately staked his whole claim to the credit of men upon his resurrection. When asked for a sign he pointed to this sign as his single and sufficient credential. B. B. Warfield