



GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#174a)
The resurrection Good News!

The Holy Spirit
enables us to accept the
Good News
about the resurrection.

BUT THIS ACCEPTANCE IS NOT WITHOUT A FOUNDATION.
The resurrection is a historically verified fact;
and an unwillingness to accept it
is a moral/spiritual issue... not a fact issue.

The focus...
of the **Good News:**
Jesus.
His death, burial and resurrection.
The significance of these things.

The key issue is the **resurrection.**
This event is
The center point in history.

The RESURRECTION:
Proving its truth!

1. Prophecy said *it would happen.*
2. Signs and wonders pointed to it *as it happened.*
3. Eyewitnesses confirmed that *it had happened.*
4. Changed lives supported *what had happened.*

It is not our purpose to look at all the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus. There are over 300 of them (direct statements, symbolism, etc.), covering a wide range of details ... *and they all converge in Jesus.*
Many books have been written about these prophecies, and are available for those interested in learning more.

1. Prophecy said it would happen.
Not just the resurrection, but *everything* about Jesus.

This is what Jesus said, *before* he was killed:
"We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled."
Luke 18:31b (NIV)

This is what Jesus said, *after* he had come back from the dead:
Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled."
Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day."
Luke 24:44-46 (NLT)

Not accepting what the prophets said is an expression of foolish thinking, because much of what they said was clearly understandable.

Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?"
Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
Luke 24:25-27 (NLT)

Being foolish is part of human nature, before we come to Jesus.

In the past we were foolish too.
Titus 3:3a (ERV)

This foolishness is a moral issue, not a fact or mental capacity issue.

There are two "boundaries" to what the prophets said:

Much was clear ... yet ignored. These things could have been seen, if the people had been willing. (This is why Jesus rebuked them.)

You hypocrites! You can forecast the weather by judging the appearance of earth and sky. But for some reason you don't know how to judge the time in which you're living.

Luke 12:56 (GW)

Certain details were not given – such as the specific timing for the fulfillment of certain prophecies.

[The prophets] tried to find out what time or situation the Spirit of Christ kept referring to whenever he predicted Christ's sufferings and the glory that would follow.

God revealed to the prophets that the things they had spoken were not for their own benefit but for yours.

1 Peter 1:11-12a (GW)

7

2. Signs and wonders pointed to it as it happened.

(Two examples.)

DEATH

At that moment [when Jesus died] the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open.

The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

Matthew 27:51-53 (NIV); also darkness in v. 45.

RESURRECTION

RESURRECTION

There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. ... The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.

Matthew 28:2, 4 (CSB)

8

3. Eyewitnesses confirmed that it happened.

After his resurrection, he was seen many times, under many circumstances, by many people.

Most of these appearances were to his followers; but a few weren't.

He presented Himself to [the apostles] with many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a span of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:3b (BSB)

[Christ] appeared to Cephas [= Peter], then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time ... Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, ... he also appeared to me [= Paul].

1 Corinthians 15:5-6a, 7-8 (CSB)

Paul was not saved until after Jesus appeared to him. James (Jesus' half-brother) was probably not saved until after he saw Jesus.

9

The apostles (and other Christians) claimed to be witnesses that Jesus was raised from the dead.

They saw it; and they could testify truthfully about what they saw and heard. They were NOT "bearing false witness."

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

Acts 2:32 (NIV)

You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. And we are witnesses of this fact!

Acts 3:15 (NLT)

They were commanded to testify about what they saw and heard. It was a matter of obedience and truthfulness.

"Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."

Acts 4:19b-20 (NLT)

10

They were eyewitnesses who observed specific details.

⇒ Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed.

⇒ ... they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb.

⇒ But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

"We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus."

Acts 13:28, 29b-33a (NIV)

This word "witness" was a common word in everyday life. There is nothing to suggest that the apostles redefined the word when Jesus was the object of their testimony!

Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

2 Corinthians 13:1 (CSB)

11

They testified in clear language that the average person could understand. (No philosophical mumbo jumbo.)

"We saw all that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But he was killed. They put him on a cross made of wood. But on the third day after his death, God raised him to life and let him be seen openly. He was not seen by everyone, but only by us, the ones God had already chosen to be witnesses. We ate and drank with him after he was raised from death."

Acts 10:39-41 (ERV)

OUR obligation to "witness" doesn't mean we claim to have seen and heard these things. (This would make us false witnesses.)

Rather, our testimony is that the Bible provides an accurate record of those who did witness his resurrection.

"... you will be my witnesses to testify about me ... to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8b (GW)

[This was beyond what the original apostles could accomplish. It is still a work in progress.]

12

Are there any references to Jesus *outside* the Bible?

The Bible is so *opposed* to the ways of the world, that we wouldn't expect to find many people preoccupied with writing about it.

- *The Bible* is *unique*, in that *many* copies were faithfully made. *No other ancient document is so well preserved!*
- *Most 2000-year-old documents* no longer exist, even as *copies*. But there are a *few* still-existing references that *do* mention Jesus.
- Such references are brief, and don't contribute anything of importance that isn't already in the Bible. They include:
 - ✓ Disapproval and ridicule of Jesus and his followers.
 - ✓ Statements that Jesus existed, sometimes with a few comments describing what they had heard about him.
 - ✓ A few references to his name in magical chants, (based on his reputation as a "miracle worker"), exorcism, etc.
- But we also see examples of these *in* the Bible! (These extra-biblical sources don't give us any new information.)

13

Similar occurrences *in* the Bible:

- ✓ Disapproval and ridicule. EXAMPLE: People at Athens.
When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule [Paul] ...
Acts 17:32a (NLT)
- ✓ Just stating that Jesus existed, and maybe mentioning a few generalized comments about him. EXAMPLE: Governor Festus' explanation to King Agrippa.
... a dead man named Jesus, who Paul insists is alive.
Acts 25:19b (NLT)
- ✓ Jesus' name used in magical chants, exorcism, etc. EXAMPLE: Some Jewish exorcists at Ephesus.
A group of Jews ... casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!"
Acts 19:13 (NLT); see vs. 13-16.

14

4. Changed lives supported what had happened.

★ Read the book of Acts! ★

The apostles went from being terrified cowards to bold proclaimers of the Good News, willing to die for the truth.

Both Jews and Gentiles were willing to turn from their sins and follow Jesus. The fruit of the Spirit became evident in their lives.

Today, we can testify about what God has done (and is continuing to do) in *OUR* lives. But this testimony is *secondary* to the testimony that *Scripture* gives. Many kinds of experiences can change a person's life; but *only when Scripture gives those changes their significance* do they have eternal value.

15

The very fact that Christianity *still* exists (and changes lives) is a testimony worth considering.

- ✓ Consider all the attempts made, down through the centuries, to destroy Christianity – from without and within, including both persecution and false teaching.
- ✓ Even so, the "gates of hell/Hades" will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18).

★ Consider the warning given by Gamaliel... ★

[Who was] a Pharisee ... a highly respected expert in Moses' Teachings.
Acts 5:34 (GW)

He warned the religious leaders ...

"Men of Israel, consider carefully what you do with these men [= the apostles]."
Acts 5:35b (GW)

16

(Gamaliel's warning:)

"Some time ago Theudas appeared. He claimed that he was important, and about four hundred men joined him. He was killed, and all his followers were scattered. *The whole movement was a failure.*

"After that man, at the time of the census, Judas from Galilee appeared and led people in a revolt. He, too, died, and *all his followers were scattered.*"
Acts 5:36-37 (GW)

**If it's of human origin, *it* (= Christianity) will fail!
If it's of God, *you* (= its opponents) will fail!**

"We should keep away from these men for now. We should leave them alone. I can guarantee that if the plan they put into action is of human origin, it will fail. However, if it's from God, *you won't be able to stop them.* You may even discover that you're *fighting against God.*"
Acts 5:38-39 (GW)

17

**The RESURRECTION:
Understanding its truth!**

Sometimes it took a while for individuals to fully comprehend the significance of the resurrection. *Many issues* needed to be accepted – they needed "believed" (which, in Scripture, means *acknowledging the facts and basing one's life on them*).

- ☞ They needed to believe (= accept the fact) that at least *four different things* had occurred: (1) Jesus was not in the tomb, (2) he was alive (resurrected) and (3) visible, and (4) he had a physical body.
- ☞ Different resurrection accounts mention different steps in this "believing process."

18

1. They had to accept the fact that Jesus was no longer in the tomb. Something had happened!

Luke's Account: Emphasis: the *group* of women; what the angels said (which, to the apostles, sounded like nonsense); Peter investigates and finds the tomb empty, and wonders what happened.

[The women] found the stone rolled away from the tomb. They entered in, and didn't find the Lord Jesus' body.

[Angels said ...] He isn't here, but is risen. ...

[The women] told these things to the apostles. These words seemed to them to be nonsense, and they **didn't believe** them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Stooping and looking in, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he departed to his home, wondering what had happened.

Luke 24:2-3, 6a, 10b-12 (WEB)

19

John's Account: Emphasis: what *one* specific woman (Mary Magdalene) did; "The tomb is empty!"; Peter and John investigate and find the tomb empty; and wonder what happened.

[Mary Magdalene] ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved [= John], and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have laid him!" ...

[The two go to the tomb to investigate. Peter enters first.]

[Then John] also entered in, and he saw and **believed**.

For as yet they didn't know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

John 20:2, 8b-9 (WEB)

At this point in time, their "believing" was NOT about the resurrection. It was just the fact that Jesus' body was missing!

20

2. & 3. They had to accept the fact that Jesus was alive and visible.

(BACKGROUND INFO.) Matthew: The women had returned to the tomb. This time, *Jesus* appeared to them.

Mark and John: (Focus on Mary Magdalene.) She was back at the tomb, and was the *first* of the women to see Jesus.

Also in **Mark's Account:** He described the apostles' response.

[Jesus] appeared first to Mary Magdalene ...

She went and told those who had been with him [= the apostles], as they mourned and wept.

When they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, they **disbelieved**.

Mark 16:9b, 10-11 (WEB)

21

(BACKGROUND INFO.) Luke's Account: Jesus appeared to two of his followers who were walking on a road toward Emmaus. Jesus rebuked them for not believing what *the Old Testament prophets* had said about him.

He said to them, "Foolish men, and **slow of heart to believe** in all that the prophets have spoken!"

Luke 24:25 (WEB)

(At this point, the issue involved believing the *Bible*. Jesus had not yet allowed them to recognize *him*, though he later did.)

Mark's Account: These two followers tell the group (apostles and others) what happened... and the group *still* doesn't believe it.

They went away and told it to the rest. They **didn't believe** them, either.

Mark 16:13 (WEB)

22

4. They had to accept the fact that Jesus had a physical body – he could be touched, etc.

John's Account: Jesus appears to them. Thomas, who *wasn't* there, *still* didn't believe that the resurrection was physical.

But [Thomas] said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I **will not believe**."

John 20:25b (WEB)

(Thomas accepts it later, when Jesus appears while he is present.)

Mark's Account: Jesus rebukes them for their unwillingness to believe the testimony of those who had seen him.

Afterward he was revealed to the eleven themselves as they sat at the table, and he rebuked them for their **unbelief** and hardness of heart, because they **didn't believe** those who had seen him after he had risen.

Mark 16:14 (WEB)

23

Luke's Account: Jesus appears to them, and they *still* think he's a spirit (or ghost). After he proves that he has a *physical* body, they initially *still* have difficulty believing it. "It's too good to be true!"

Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be to you." But they were terrified and filled with fear, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

He said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is truly me. Touch me and see, for *a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see that I have*." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

While they **still didn't believe** for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

Luke 24:36b-41 (WEB)

(Then he *ate some food* in their presence – something non-physical spirits don't do.)

24

At a later time, Jesus met with some of his followers on a mountain in Galilee. This included the apostles, but it could have also included the 500+ followers mentioned by Paul – 1 Corinthians 15:6.

Matthew's Account: Jesus appears to them and some had a moment of doubt (hesitancy).

When they saw him, they bowed down to him, but some **doubted**.
Jesus came to them and spoke to them, ...
Matthew 28:17-18a (WEB)

This involved uncertainty or hesitation, *not disbelief*. The exact nature of this doubt is uncertain (because there are so few details about it).
But here are three possibilities:

1. While Jesus was still at a distance, some may have questioned who they were seeing. (He didn't reach them until verse 18.)
2. If the 500+ (1 Corinthians 15:6) were present, some of them may have had questions – "doubts" that needed cleared up.
3. Some were still trying to "mentally process" all that had happened.

25

The RESURRECTION:
Responding to its truth!

*ALL of these things are documented, verified historical facts.
But they are facts that demand a change.*

To accept these facts, requires us to admit that the *entire* human race is wrong! We must admit:

- ✓ We have lived in sin and deserve the wrath of God.
- ✓ Jesus paid the penalty for those who are willing to accept it.
- ✓ We must be willing to change our ways (thoughts, values, conduct, etc.) – to repent, trust Jesus, and obey him (trusting God to provide the power, the Holy Spirit, to do it).

26

Most people are *not willing* to admit that they are under the judgment of God, or to make the necessary changes which are a part of following Jesus.

- ✓ They *don't* accept the truth, nor the Spirit's power to change.
- ✓ Instead, they would rather live in denial, detachment, or ignorance. If faced with the evidence, they would rather distort or lie about it.

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**We *cannot* be "neutral" about the resurrection!** Scripture treats it as *historical fact* that has been *verified by eyewitnesses* who saw and heard Jesus after he was resurrected.

**WE HAVE TO EITHER:**

- ❖ **ACCEPT** that it *is* verified historical fact, and respond appropriately,
- or
- ❖ **NOT ACCEPT** it, and do one of the following: oppose it, ignore it, distort it, deny it, etc.

27

**YOUR RESPONSE?**

**Jesus REBUKED the apostles**, when they were *unwilling* to accept the *eyewitness testimony* of those who had seen him physically alive again.

... he *rebuked* them for their **unbelief** and hardness of heart, because they **didn't believe** those who had seen him after he had risen.  
Mark 16:14b (WEB)

**He leaves BLESSED for us**, if we are willing to accept the *eyewitness testimony* of those who had seen him physically alive again.

"How *blessed* are those who have never seen me and yet have **believed!**"  
John 20:29b (ISV)

28

**YOUR MISSION:**

**Be different!**

**Choose to be BLESSED!**

29

Credits

SCRIPTURE

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30