

John 20:1-18

1. First, the gospel would be meaningless

1 Corinthians 15:1-2, “Now I make known to you ... the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.” Paul is saying we must hold fast to these cardinal truths, otherwise, believing will be emptiness; a mere religious exercise amounting to nothing.

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day!” **Romans 10: 9**, “... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Here are the cardinal truths.

2. Forgiveness of sins would be hopeless

1 Corinthians 15:17, “... and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” It was not enough for Jesus to die for our sins, He had to rise from the dead as proof that His payment for our sins had been accepted by God.

3. Without the resurrection, our present life would be joyless

1 Corinthians 15:18-19, “Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.” A person cannot really enjoy life until they are ready to experience death. And a person is not ready to experience death until they have been saved by the conqueror of death – the resurrected Christ.

4. Without the resurrection, godly living would be fruitless (John 14:12, 16-17, 26)

¹² Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth . . .” ²⁶ “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” The condition for the coming and indwelling of the Spirit is the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. If He goes up to heaven, the Spirit will come down to earth, and the divine Comforter, will build into our lives the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, and peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, etc. (*Galatians 5:22-23*). If Christ did not resurrect this would be just an empty promise.

1 Corinthians 15: 3b-4a – and this is the heart of the good news, “... that Christ died for our sins . . . and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day.”

5. Without the resurrection, our future lives would be emptiness (John 14:1-3)

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.” If what Jesus Christ said was not true, what He promised in the future could not happen, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” What is promised by Jesus requires His resurrection. If Christ did not rise again, He cannot return again.

The Resurrection – False Teachings!

Dr. David Strauss, an unbelieving skeptic, once acknowledged that, “the resurrection is decisive for the whole view of Christianity.”

Christ’s Tomb – Occupied

There are so called scholars, who speculate that the grave of Christ is still occupied. No body has been discovered, nor will be.

There is another false teaching that Jesus’ tomb is unknown or that the wrong one was identified. This would mean that the women went to the wrong tomb, Peter and John ran to the wrong tomb, the Jews went to the wrong tomb, the Roman guards were stationed at the wrong tomb, and Joseph of Arimathea forgot which tomb he had put Jesus in, even though it was a new tomb and he was the owner.

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Other false theories include the spiritual resurrection, which says that a ghost appeared, a spiritual vapor Christ. Apostle John recorded that he and the other disciples ate fish with Jesus after His resurrection, this is recorded in *John 21:15*. The disciple and doctor, Luke, also recorded the experience of Jesus appearing to Thomas who doubted that Jesus had resurrected. When Jesus appeared to Thomas He told Thomas to touch his side where He was pierced with the sword and touch His hands pierced by nails. Jesus then said to Thomas, "... a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." There is solid proof that Jesus was not a ghost.

There is the false teaching called the hallucination theory. This is proposed by J. M. Allegro's book, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*. He alleges that Jesus was originally just a code name for an ancient hallucinogenic mushroom that was used by people who were called Christians. They ate the mushrooms and they all had the same hallucinations. That is too preposterous for anyone to take seriously

Paul Althaus wrote, from Germany's University of Erlangen, "*The resurrection could not have been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact.*"

The Empty Tomb – Natural explanation

Another theory is that the body was stolen by the disciples. The disciple Peter was too cowardly to speak for a living Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane when the guards came to arrest Jesus all of the disciples fled the scene in fear. The disciples then met secretly in an upper room hiding from the authorities. Would this group, who were ordinary citizens and not trained soldiers suddenly act bravely and attempt to overpower trained Roman guards in an attempt to steal Jesus' body?

Another false theory says that Christ's body was moved by the Roman authorities. Why would they do that? If they wanted to prove Jesus was dead all they had to do was produce the body and the case against Christianity would have been undeniably closed forever. Dr. Cassels writes, "*The amazing thing about all these theories is that they accept as much of the recorded gospels as they find convenient, then ignore or repudiate other parts of the same documents which contradict their notions.*"

The Resurrection – The Biblical Evidence

1. Mary saw that the stone was moved and thrown off track.

The Greek word, "*airo*," literally means "*separated from.*"⁵ Arndt and Gringrich's Greek lexicon translates this verb "*to pick something up and carry it away.*" An angel literally picked up the stone and set it aside some distance away.

2. Peter and John saw that the grave clothes were undisturbed (Vs. 5-8)

Bodies were wrapped in linen cloths in such a manner as to leave the face bare. The upper part of the face and head would be covered by a cloth that had been twirled about the head, much like a turban. As the body was wrapped, the overlapping edges of the linen would be coated with spices, some dry and some made from a gummy, sticky substance called myrrh that would cause the linen to harden so the strips of burial cloth would stay in place. This would make a hardened cast for the body.

The first Greek word for "*look*" in this passage of Scripture is the Greek word "*blepo*" which means "a casual glance" (vs. 5). John glanced in and saw the grave clothes and then, waited for Peter. The second Greek word used is "*theoreo*" which means "to observe carefully." Peter arrives and is staring at the clothes (vs. 6). The third Greek word for "look" is "*eido*" which means "to see and to comprehend" (vs. 8). The disciples "saw" "*eido*" and comprehended.

3. Mary saw the Lord and was the first to tell (Vs. 10-15)

D. A. Carson, a Greek scholar, has taken all the nuances of this verse, in its original context and language, and has expanded the translation to read, "*Stop holding on to Me as if I were about to disappear permanently, for I am not yet ready to ascend to My Father. This is a time for joy and sharing the good news, not for clutching Me as if I were some private dream-come true. Stop clinging to Me, but go and tell My brothers that I am in the process of ascending to My Father and your Father . . . I want them to know the good news too.*"