

The Resurrection of Christ

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The Resurrection of Christ was Anticipated in the Old Testament.

- Psalm 16:10 says, *"For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."*

Psalm 16 is a personal testimony of David's trust in the Lord. But, Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11 in Acts 2:25-28 and applies it to Christ. (READ Acts 2:22-28.) As we examine the passage of Acts 2:22-28, we see that Psalm 16:10 is speaking prophetically of Christ's resurrection. Peter says that Psalm 16:10 means it was impossible for Christ to be held in death. Therefore He must be raised. Look back at Acts 2:24, *"But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."* Since Psalm 16:10 clearly states that Christ could not be held by the power of death it implies and thus anticipates the resurrection of Christ.

- Psalm 2:7 says, *"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord; He said to Me, You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."*

This verse expresses the privileges of relationship, with its prophetic application to The Son, The Messiah. Psalm 2:7 is quoted in Hebrews 1:5-6 with reference to the birth of Jesus. But it is also quoted in Acts 13:33-34 by the Apostle Paul in reference to the resurrection of Christ as the actual fulfillment. Paul says in Acts 13:33, *"that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son; Today I have begotten You."*

While we have to admit with just the Old Testament in front of us it is hard to see, the New Testament clearly demonstrates that in some sense these Old Testament passages anticipate the Resurrection of Christ.

The Resurrection of Christ was Foretold by Christ, Himself.

- Like I mentioned earlier, there are many times during the ministry of our Lord on the earth that He warned the disciples of His impending death and announced His resurrection:
- **Announcement #1**-Jesus' first distinct prophecy of His soon rejection, trial, death and resurrection occurs just prior to the Transfiguration (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; and Luke 9:22)
- Matthew 16:21, *"From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day."*
- **Announcement #2**-As Jesus, Peter, James and John are descending the mountain after the transfiguration, Jesus asks them to keep the vision to themselves and in so doing announces His resurrection.

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- Matthew 17:9, "*As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.*"
- **Announcement #3**-A third prediction of His resurrection occurs as the disciples are returning through Galilee shortly after the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:43-45)
- Matthew 17:22-23, "*And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.'*"
- **Announcement #4**-Jesus again privately tells His disciples of His coming death and resurrection on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover (Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34).
- Matthew 20:17-19, "*And Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.'*"
- **Announcement #5**-Jesus gives a final announcement to the disciples on Thursday evening after the Passover Meal as they went out to the Mount of Olives. He warned them of their desertion of Him as He is arrested and crucified and then informs them of where He will be after His resurrection.
- Matthew 26:31-32, "*Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike down the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered. But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.'*"

Clearly Jesus didn't just expect to be killed by crucifixion, but He also expected to be raised from the dead. And He sufficiently announced His resurrection ahead of time to His disciples.

The Resurrection of Christ was Confirmed by Specific Eyewitness Testimony.

Throughout history one of the most reliable forms of evidence in a court of law is that of eyewitness testimony. The resurrection of Christ is ably supported by plenty of eyewitness testimony.

First, There seems to be five appearances of the resurrected Christ on the day of His resurrection:

- **Appearance #1**-He first appeared to Mary Magdalene who in turn went to tell the disciples.
- Mark 16:9-11, "*Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.*"
- **Appearance #2**-He then appeared to the other women after an angel at the tomb announced that Jesus had been raised to life.

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- Matthew 28:9-10, "*And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.*"
- **Appearance #3**-After that He appeared to two disciples traveling on the road to Emmaus.
- You will find the full account recorded in Luke 24:13-31, while an abbreviated mention is found in Mark 16:12-13, "*After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along their way to the country. They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.*"
- **Appearance #4**-There is a brief mention that Jesus appeared to Simon Peter.
- Luke 24:33-34, "*And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."*
- In addition to this, in 1 Corinthians 15:5, Paul makes the brief statement that Jesus appeared to Cephas. Cephas is another name for Peter.
- **Appearance #5**- Jesus appears to the astonished disciples, but Thomas is absent at this time.
- Recorded in John 20:19-25.

There are also 5 more appearances of the resurrected Christ during the 40 days between His resurrection and ascension:

- **Appearance #6**-The Apostle John informs us that Jesus makes a second appearance to the disciples, this time with Thomas present and convinced. Recorded in John 20:26-31.
- **Appearance #7**- John 21:1-23 tells of Christ's appearance to seven of the disciples on the Sea of Galilee and the miraculous catch of fish.
- **Appearance #8**-In Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus appears to at least 500 brethren gathered in Galilee, where He gives them the Great Commission.
- **Appearance #9**-1 Corinthians 15:7 makes a brief mention of the appearance of the resurrected Christ to James His half-brother.
- **Appearance #10**-Jesus appears to the assembled disciples in Jerusalem just prior to His Ascension from the Mount of Olives. Recorded in Acts 1:3-11.
- An eleventh and final eyewitness account is given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:8-10. Paul himself had witnessed the resurrected Christ. This obviously occurred during His conversion on the road to Damascus, which is recorded for us in Acts 9:1-8.

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Clearly the accounts of the many eyewitnesses support the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

- Lawyer Sir Edward Clarke said in regard to the eyewitness testimony:

"As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the events of the first Easter day. For me, the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the high court I have secured a verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling. As a lawyer I accept the gospel evidence for the resurrection unreservedly as the testimony of truthful men to facts they were able to substantiate."

- Historian Thomas Arnold of Oxford said:

"The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be and often has been shown to be satisfactory. It is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad...I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is better proved by fuller evidence than the great sign that God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

The Resurrection of Christ Involved a Physical Rising of the Body.

First, notice that the tomb was empty. His physical body was no longer there.

- Matthew 28:6, *"He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying."*

Historic explanations for the empty tomb:

1-The Swoon Theory: Christ did not die on the cross, he just lapsed into unconsciousness, was placed in the tomb where He was revived due to the coolness and then presented Himself as raised.

Response:

1) Consider His death - His death was confirmed by professional executioners, who would be killed if they made a mistake.

2) Consider His burial - His body would have been prepared, plaster coated (over 100 pounds). How could He get out of this stuff?

3) Consider the nature of the tomb - How does He get out? It was a solid rock tomb, with a stone larger than the opening.

4) Consider the guards - How does He get past them?

5) Consider history - How could His appearances be believable to the disciples if He was in the condition that He would have been in?

2-The Theft Theory: The Disciples stole the body to perpetuate the story of a resurrection (The only explanation offered by non-believers in the Bible).

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Response:

- 1) Consider the disciples at the time of His death - They ran away, denied and abandoned the Lord.
- 2) Consider the guards - They certainly were not capable of facing the Roman guards who would have been instructed to kill anyone attempting to get into the tomb.
- 3) Consider the apostles' death - They would have been perpetuating a lie. They preached resurrection. Why would they face a martyrs death if they knew it was just a lie.

3-The Wrong Tomb Theory: Because of all the events and excitement they went to the wrong tomb.

Response:

- 1) If your best friend or a dear loved one died, would you go to the wrong tomb? Very unlikely!
- 2) If the women went to the wrong tomb, it would seem quite unlikely that Peter and John did also.
- 3) All the Jews had to do was produce the body.
- 4) Jerusalem at the time was a very small town. It was not big enough to make this kind of mistake.

4-The Jewish Theft Theory: Jewish leaders took the body.

Response:

- 1) Why would they do this? They have no motive. Why go to the trouble to seal the tomb?
- 2) All they would have had to do is produce the body to shut down Christianity.

Second, notice the statements, which show that Christ was now in His body after the resurrection.

- Matthew 28:9, "*And behold Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him.*"
- Luke 24:15, "*While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them.*"
- Luke 24:39-43, "*See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, Have you anything here to eat? They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them.*"
- John 20:20, "*And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.*"
- John 20:27, "*Then He said to Thomas, Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.*"

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Clearly the Scripture teaches that the resurrection of Jesus included a physical rising of His body.

The Resurrection of Christ Involved the Activity of the Trinity.

All three persons of the Trinity are said to have a hand in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

First, God the Father was involved in the resurrection of Christ.

- Galatians 1:1, "*Paul an apostle not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.*"
- Acts 2:24, "*But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death.*"
- Acts 3:14-15, "*But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.*"

Second, the Holy Spirit was involved in the resurrection of Christ.

- Romans 8:11, "*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.*" John MacArthur says of this verse, "It was the Holy Spirit who was the divine agent of Christ's resurrection."
- 1 Peter 3:18 (NIV) best rendering of this verse, "*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit.*" Made alive is speaking of the resurrection. Christ's resurrection was accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

Third, Christ Himself was involved in His resurrection.

- John 2:19, "*Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*"
- In John 10:17-18 Jesus says, "*For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it up again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.*"

Clearly we see all three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit involved in Christ's resurrection.

The Resurrection of Christ Accomplished Certain Results.

The resurrection of Christ accomplished at least three specific results:

First, The resurrection of Christ established His identity as the Son. It established Jesus' deity.

- Paul says of Christ in Romans 1:4, "*who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of Holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.*"
- The resurrection identified Christ as the Son of God. The phrase Son of God was understood as a term for deity. In other words Jesus was identified as God very God by His resurrection.

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Second, The resurrection of Christ validated His atoning work on the cross.

- Romans 4:25, "*He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.*"
- Here Paul informs us that the resurrection provided proof that God accepted the sacrifice of His Son and justifies the ungodly. In 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, Paul emphasizes that the resurrection of Christ affirms His work on the cross otherwise our faith is in vain.

Third, The resurrection of Christ guarantees the believer's future resurrection and possession of a glorified body.

- 1 Corinthians 15:20-21, "*But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.*" Here Paul states that the resurrection of Christ will lead to a resurrection of the dead in Christ.
- Paul tells us in Philippians 3:20-21 that this resurrected body will be a glorified body like that of Christ's. Philippians 3:20-21, "*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory.*"

The Ascension of Christ

The Ascension of Christ occurred 40 days after His resurrection. We will briefly examine the verses where the ascension is recorded and alluded to. In so doing, we will examine the nature of the ascension (what it involved) and the results of the ascension.

The Fact of the Ascension.

First, the Ascension of Christ is recorded for us in two places:

- Luke 24:50-51, "*And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came about that while He was blessing them, He parted from them.*"
- Acts 1:9-11, "*And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."*

Second, the Ascension of Christ is alluded to in other places:

- John 20:17, "*Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, "I **ascend** to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God."*

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- 1 Timothy 3:16, "*And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, **Taken up in glory.***"
- Hebrews 8:1, "*Now the main point in what has been said {is this} : we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat **at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.***"
- Hebrews 9:24, "*For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a {mere} copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear **in the presence of God** for us."*
- Hebrews 10:12, "*but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.***"

The Nature of the Ascension.

As we examine the preceding verses that describe and mention the ascension of Christ, we come to a clear understanding of what was involved in the ascension.

- Jesus departed visibly (It was not a vision or a dream).
- Jesus departed physically (It was an ascension of His physical/glorified body).
- Jesus departed from the earth and was received into Heaven.
- Jesus departed into the presence of God the Father, where He now is.
- Jesus' ascension was gradual not immediate.

The Results from the Ascension.

The Ascension of Christ achieved certain results:

1-It marked the end of His first coming.

- So that the kenosis (self humbling of Christ) is definitely ended and He is now in an exalted position. After having been in a resurrected state with His disciples, His final departure had to be so convincing that His disciples would not expect the come and go pattern to continue. He is gone until He comes again.

2-It began His high-priestly work.

- Hebrews 8:1-4, "*Now the main point in what has been said {is this} : we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this {high priest} also have something to offer. **Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law.***"

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- Christ ever lives to make intercession for us. He enters heaven as the One whose sacrifice has been accepted and has accomplished its purpose.

3-It settled the supremacy of Christ.

- Ephesians 1:18-23, "*{I pray that} the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. {These are} in accordance with the working of the strength of His might, which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly {places}, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.*"
- Philippians 2:9-11, "*Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

4-It made possible Christ's present work through the Spirit.

- John 16:5-7, "*But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 'But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 'But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.'*"
- Acts 2:33, "*Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.*"

5-It guarantees that believers have an Advocate at the Father's right hand.

- 1 John 2:1, "*My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.***"
- Hebrews 4:14-16, "*Since then we **have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as {we are, yet} without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.***"
- Hebrews 9:24, "*For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a {mere} copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, **now to appear in the presence of God for us.***"

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6-It guarantees Christ's return.

- Acts 1:11, "*and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, **will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.**"*
- John 14:3, "*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."*