



## **What Christians Believe**

### **The Apostles Creed**

#### **(7) I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

**Matthew 28:1-10**

**June 14<sup>th</sup> 2020**

#### **#1 Introduction - Two Faces, One Coin**

A coin has two faces, and each face is just as important as the other. Someone may argue that the face with the queen's image on it is the more important—but if someone removed the other face—which I'm pretty sure is illegal—this would no longer be a pound coin. Both faces are essential parts of the pound coin. And so it is with the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We sometimes give the impression that the death of Jesus Christ is the Queen's image, more important than the reverse side, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but that is not true. The pound of salvation would be worth nothing without both faces, the Death of Jesus Christ and his glorious Resurrection from the dead.

If you have been with us for the last month or so, you will know that we have been making our way through the short summary of the Christian faith called "The Apostles Creed" which summarises the Christian faith in just a few lines. And today we come to the line, "On the third day he rose from the dead." Last week we talked about the suffering and death of Jesus Christ: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried." And today we consider the amazing miracle that took place three days later.

Why don't we examine the evidence together and then let me draw out some wonderful ways the resurrection of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago impacts our lives today: this event is remarkably relevant for today and for every age. So what happened on that glorious Sunday morning? (By the way when the Bible says Jesus rose on the "Third Day" it doesn't mean 3 x 24 hours, as we count days, 72 hours; a part of a day was counted as a "day" — (use fingers) part of Friday, all day Saturday and part of Sunday).

#### **#2 The Resurrection**

We left off the story last Sunday with Jesus' dead body laid in a borrowed tomb on Friday evening. Jesus had suffered and died on Good Friday to pay the penalty for our sins, our wrongdoing, so that we could be forgiven: that is the main significance of the cross of Jesus

Christ. And then his dead body was laid in a tomb. The disciples of Jesus deserted him and never in all the history of the world was there a more dejected and confused and fearful group of followers. Though Jesus had told them many times “I am going to die and rise on the third day” it had not sunk in, because they were possessed by a world view that said “Messiah’s aren’t crucified.” (It is truly amazing how blind we can be to the facts when we have a worldview that denies the evidence before our eyes). And now that their Master had died an enemy of the Roman Empire they feared the worst for themselves, so we see them huddled together behind closed doors, dejected and disillusioned.

*You poor deluded youths go home*

*Mend the old nets you left to roam*

*Tie the split oar, patch the torn sail*

*It was indeed all, an idle tale!*

On Saturday night no-one, absolutely no-one was expecting Jesus to rise from the dead! But then at sunrise on Sunday morning, some of the ladies who followed Jesus took spices to anoint the dead body of Jesus—that’s how much they expected him to be dead—but found the stone that protected the tomb rolled away! When they went into the tomb they found no body but an angel who told them not to be alarmed, for Jesus had risen from the dead! That first report was the start of an amazing Sunday, for Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, fisherman Peter, a group of four women, two disciples walking to Emmaus, ten of the twelve disciples. And then over the next 40 days, Jesus appeared to many other people, in small groups all the way up to a group of 500 people! It was the same body because it had nail marks on the hands and the voice which Mary Magdalene instantly recognised, but it was clearly not exactly the same body, for no body-wounds from Roman scourging and Crucifixion heal over in a couple of days! And no body can pass through grave cloths and leave them there un disturbed and no body can pass through closed doors as light passes through a glass pane!

The evidence is overwhelming for the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ: The tomb was empty; No-one did or has produced a dead body—which would have scotched the resurrection story in an instant; Many people saw Jesus, in small groups and in large groups, in broad daylight and in the evening, in the city and the countryside; And perhaps the greatest evidence of all—the disciples were totally transformed by the event and began preaching the

Good News with a zeal they had never had before! And when the church began in earnest some 50 days after the Resurrection of Jesus, on the Day of Pentecost the resurrection became the founding miracle of their preaching:

*“Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs... this man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose.. And you with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him up fro the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” (Acts 2:22-24)*

*“Jesus has conquered death and so he is Lord of lord and King of kings.”*

And from that day onwards Christians have bene prepared to die for their Lord. Would you be prepared to die for a lie? Christians all over the world to day are being persecuted, imprisoned tortured, and killed for their belief in the coin of salvation—both faces, Jesus’ death and his resurrection.

Athanasius, a Christian from many years ago said that when you see children playing with a lion, you know that either that the lion is dead or the lion has been rendered powerless! Christians all over the world today are prepared to die for their Lord because through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, death has been conquered, lost its sting, and brings no fear!

*Lives again our glorious King*

*Where, O death is now your sting?*

*Once he died, our souls to save*

*Where’s your victory, boasting grave*

Of all the solid proofs of Jesus’ resurrection the existence of a church that spans the globe, made up of men and women who are prepared to die because of their belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is perhaps the greatest! Now how does this event impact you and I today? Six ways the Resurrection of Jesus touches our lives today...

### **#3 The resurrection of Jesus Applied**

#### ***(1) The resurrection of Jesus tells us something about God!***

It tells us that God is all powerful and is in the business of using that power to overrule evil with good! “You with the help of wicked men put him to death.. but God raised him up.” (Acts 2:23-24) God is all-powerful, not evil or wrongdoing or sin! And God uses that power to bring good out of evil! God used his mighty power to feed nations out of the terrible injustices suffered by Joseph in the Old Testament. God used his mighty power to make a path through

the sea when Pharaoh's enslaving army pursued them to death. Why is it in our own lives, when “bad things” happen to us do we fail to believe that God, by his mighty resurrection power, is able to overrule those things and bring about good! “Lord help us to believe that we are more than conquerors through him who loved us, that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8) What is the “bad thing” in your life you need faith to believe God can turn upside down? Is it more difficult than bringing the dead to life? I doubt it! Ask him for more faith, for with God all things are possible.

### ***(2) The resurrection of Jesus tells us something about Jesus***

Jesus told his disciples that he would raise himself from the dead! “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.” “This temple took forty-six years to build,” the Jews replied, “and You are going to raise it up in three days?” But Jesus was speaking about the temple of His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this.” (John 19) Only God can raise the dead, so Jesus must be God! And if this prediction was true, we can trust all his other truthful and comforting words. “Jesus, through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.” (Romans 1:4)

### ***(3) The resurrection of Jesus tells us something about salvation***

In the third place, the resurrection tells us something about salvation. The other side of the coin, the death of Jesus Christ for our sins—how do we know that the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins was acceptable to God? How do we know that the sentence of death was completed, and we are forgiven? When Jesus ceased to be dead, when he rose from the dead! “Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” (Romans 4:25)

The resurrection of Jesus assures us that he has taken away our sins, every one of them, the worst of them. If you are struggling with remorse or regret or guilt over some past sin, confess it to God and know that the resurrection proves that the “blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.”

### ***(4) The Resurrection of Jesus tells us something about Nature***

This one is for anyone who is troubled by the science question—how can we believe in miracles in an age of science? The resurrection of Jesus Christ, shows us that we live in an open universe, not a closed one. A closed universe is a universe that runs only on natural law

and where no-one “from the outside” - namely God! - can interfere with those laws. It’s a great tragedy to report that a few church leaders in the West, wowed by science but completely misunderstanding what it can and can not say, began to reinterpret the miracles of the Bible, including the resurrection of Jesus, as myths! Rudolph Bultmann from the last century wrote: “It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless (he’s talking radio, not internet) and to avail ourselves of modern medical discoveries and at the same time to believe in the New Testament word of miracles..” And so these “liberal Christians” deny that Jesus was ever raised from the dead, but somehow still think that the “Easter Event” is important!

When I peel potatoes—which is more often than you might imagine! - I normally use one of those vegetable peelers—perhaps 999/1000 times out of 1000. But just occasionally I choose to use a kitchen knife. Normally, the God who created the universe, runs it with the laws he designed, but occasionally he does things in a different way, he performs a miracle, and there isn’t a line in the whole of science against miracles.

If you want to know more about God and Science, I’ve written a short booklet which you can order free of charge if you go to our website. I hope you are still with me! Like a diamond, the resurrection pours forth a thousand gleams of light. Two more beams.

### ***(5) The resurrection of Jesus tells us something wonderful about the Christian life!***

Thirdly, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, tells us something wonderful about the Christian life. Because he rose from the dead, he can be with his people by his Spirit. We are never alone. Some of the last words Jesus said to his disciples were: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20) And what is more, the mighty power that raised Jesus from the dead, is at work in us, strengthening us through mighty trials.

The apostle Paul was a church planter—and boy did he have enemies and problems and setbacks of all kinds. There is no way he could have kept going without supernatural power surging through him. One day he concluded his description of his suffering like this: “Indeed in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened so that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.” (2 Cor 1:9) God allowed me to reach the very end of myself, so that I might rely on the supernatural, death-busting resurrection power of God!

Let’s not rely on our own button-cell battery power but by prayer, plug into the mains of God’s resurrection power?

### ***(6) The resurrection of Jesus tells us something about our future***

Finally, the resurrection of Jesus tells us something about our future. Some 50 years ago

Ernest Becker wrote "The Denial of Death," a book which is still in print. Everything we do in society is aimed at avoiding the subject and the reality of death, though we know it is going to happen. For example, why do people want to become famous? Because they know they will soon die, but want to create an immortal legacy that will live on beyond death, and so on. Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

Jesus was the first one to rise from the dead, never to die again, and everyone who believes in him will also one day rise from the dead to eternal life.

*Soar we now where Christ has led*

*Following our exalted Head*

*Made like him, like him we rise*

*Ours the cross, the grave, the skies*