

The Resurrection of Jesus

The cemetery is a very lonely place. Nobody wants to go there. Even if a rich man dies, he can't take anything there. As he was born, so he dies. When people die in Cambodia, they often say, "They are throwing away in the deepest forest, where no one lives, where no one visits. The only friends there are wild animals. We cannot take any of our wealth there. We become very poor." This saying makes people more and more afraid of death.

The Bible of the Christians says that when Jesus died on the cross, the disciples and the believers of Jesus mourned deeply and were also quite frightened. They were separated from the teacher they loved and trusted. They were afraid that someone would come and arrest them. They thought that the one who had died had become as nothing just as we often think about death as well. The Bible says that the death of Jesus was not like anything known in the past. It was instead a very strange and unusual event that they had never encountered.

1-Jesus Came Out of the Tomb

According to the Bible, on Saturday morning the religious leaders remembered what Jesus had prophesied about the third day after his death and they were afraid. They had seen Jesus' power and purity. They went to Pilate, the governor, and asked him to send someone to carefully guard the tomb. The governor sent soldiers to carefully guard the tomb according to the request of the religious leaders.

If Jesus were to rise from the dead, the ones who had fought against Jesus would truly be humiliated. People would believe in Jesus more and more because they had never seen anyone rise from the dead.

According to the Ten Commandments, Jewish people rested every Sabbath. It was a holy day. This is why Jesus' body was hurriedly placed in the tomb before sundown on Friday. The disciples waited for the Sabbath to pass and then they would go to the tomb and take flowers and incense and perfume. On Sunday morning two ladies, both named Mary, went to the tomb of Jesus in order to put perfume on Jesus according to their traditions. The Bible in Luke 24:2-6a says that, "they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember what He said.'"

The two ladies ran as if they hardly knew what they were doing to take the news that Jesus had risen from the dead to the other disciples. But the disciples had a hard time believing those ladies. They thought that the two ladies had suffered too much because of Jesus and now were a bit crazy. But because the two ladies kept claiming that this was true, the others ran to the tomb to see with their own eyes. They saw it was true just as the ladies named Mary had said. When they arrived at the tomb they saw that the stone covering of the tomb had been rolled away from the entrance. They entered and didn't see the body of Jesus. Instead they saw only the cloth that had been covering Jesus, folded neatly where His body had been. They were very surprised. How had this happened? According to the Bible, the resurrection of Jesus happened as written below.

On Sunday morning, when the two ladies went to look at the tomb, an angel had suddenly appeared, causing an earthquake. The angel made the stone roll away from the tomb and sat on the stone. Seeing this, the soldiers trembled with fear and fainted. When they woke up they ran this way and that, then off together to the city to tell their commander about this story. When the high priest and the religious leaders heard their frightening story, they gave the soldiers a lot of money to bribe them into telling a different story. The soldiers were to say that while they slept the disciples came and stole the body of Jesus.

Jesus had shown powerful evidence to the soldiers. they surely must have believed on Him and could tell others about the resurrection with powerful effectiveness. But they loved money more than truth. This happens still today, doesn't it? What about you, are you seeking the truth with all your heart?

This story is very believable that the soldiers were bribed to lie in the midst of their duty to guard Jesus. They were given the responsibility of guarding the body of Jesus, but if it was true that the disciples stole the body, why did the soldiers not get punished? Even our laws today are clear-a guard who sleeps while on duty must go to prison. This helps us know Jesus truly rose from the dead.

2-Jesus Appeared Before the Disciples

In the record of Scripture, even though disciples did not see Jesus' body in the tomb, they still didn't believe that Jesus had risen. They were confused and heart broken. The Bible in Luke 24:36-43 says, "While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and

why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' They gave him something to eat, and he took it and ate it in their presence."

We have heard and have seen that when people go through a graveyard or crematorium, when it is quiet and they hear the sound of a rat or any animal scurrying around, they become very frightened, yelling and running away. Some even become sick until they lose all their hair. What about Jesus' disciples? As they were discussing how Jesus' body had disappeared from the tomb and Jesus suddenly appeared in front of them, how afraid were they? When they knew that Jesus wasn't a ghost, but had truly risen from the dead, can you imagine how happy they were?

The Bible says in Romans 6:9-10, "I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me." This brought great hope to them. Jesus had found a way to forgive sins through His death. Jesus had also found a way to overcome death. Seeing Him, they become confident that He could help them. Are you also wondering if there is a way to escape suffering and death?

The Bible says, when Jesus appeared to the disciples one disciple named Thomas was not there. When Thomas came back, the others told him that they had seen Jesus. He did not believe their story. He said, "If I do not see the nail prints in his hands and put my finger in them and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." One week later, all the disciples came to meet in the same place. Jesus came and appeared to

them again even when the door was locked. 'Peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.' Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (John 20:24-29). Finally Thomas believed that Jesus had truly risen.

You and I have not been able to touch Jesus. But He said we would be blessed if we believe He is alive. Surely if He is alive and we believe and call on Him for help, we will receive great blessings. Think how much He helped people while on earth. He can do that for us now! You should pray in the name of the living Savior and see how the Father of Life answers you.

According to these points we can have strong confidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

3-Jesus Returned to Heaven

Jesus told the disciples He was going to heaven but that he would return one day to resurrect those who believe Him and take them to be with Him. Jesus appeared to the disciples for forty days, teaching them and strengthening their faith.

The disciples asked Jesus when He would come back. "He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going,

when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here, looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven'" (Acts 1:7-11).

The disciples were amazed to see Jesus go up into the sky in the clouds. They returned to the city to do the work He had left them to do, which was sharing the good news about Him. They knew that Jesus had promised, in Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." The disciples were filled with the Spirit of God and went everywhere telling the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection. Many people believed and were transformed.

Within the next few years the Romans began to persecute the disciples of Jesus. They told them not to preach the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. They imprisoned, beat them and killed some but the disciples would not stop. They were full of courage because they knew the story was true. That it would give people great hope.

Many people in this world believe that Jesus existed because they use the birth of Jesus as the year for the official date (A.D.). Often those who don't believe that Jesus is a God who came from heaven, died on the cross and returned to heaven still number their years from Christ's birth, saying "I was born in 1970." Though you can visit the tombs of many great men and women, no one can claim that Jesus is dead by displaying the bones of Jesus or by showing a mausoleum that contains His bones. His followers today believe He is alive and in heaven, answering prayers.

* Jesus was clearly dead. He did not just faint and then gain consciousness in the grave. The soldier thrust his spear in his

side to show for sure that Jesus had died on the cross.

* Nobody could steal Jesus' body from the grave. It was too heavily guarded and no one dared touch the tomb under penalty of death. The disciples were hiding far away from the tomb, fearful for their own lives.

*The soldiers were not put to death for sleeping. They saw Jesus, but lied.

* After He rose again, Jesus showed Himself to His disciples and hundreds saw Him.

* After Jesus rose again the disciples told the good news with courage, even if they met persecution or were cruelly killed by others.

*many lives have changed because they have asked the living Jesus to help them.

A journalist for the Chicago Tribune did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. He thought that Jesus maybe lived, but was just a good teacher. He set out to research the evidence so he could prove that Christians are wrong. As he looked at history and ancient documents he became more and more convinced that the story of Jesus' death and resurrection was true just as we have read here. Instead of criticizing Christians, he chose to recognize that it was his sins that had helped kill Jesus. He confessed his sins and asked God to forgive him. He found real peace and was no longer afraid of death.

Would you like to experience the same? Think again about the steps to receiving salvation.

* God condemns your sin. But if you confess your sin that leads to death, He will help you turn from your sins.

* God forgives you when you ask Him to forgive you because Jesus took your sins on the cross and already received the penalty of death for them.

* God cleanses you from sin and gives you a new heart filled with the Holy Spirit when you believe in Him.

If it is your desire, say the following prayer,

“Living God of Mighty Power, I am sorry that I have sinned against you. Please forgive me and give me a clean heart, full of your righteousness. Thank you that Jesus is alive and that you hear my prayers through Jesus' name. Amen.”

Points to Remember

* Jesus' body was put into the tomb on Friday. He rested in the tomb on Saturday and He came out of the grave on Sunday.

* There is much evidence that Jesus is alive from the dead.

* There is no evidence and no book that can prove that Jesus is dead on this earth. The Bible says that Jesus has gone up to heaven.

John 14:2-3 “In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Questions

1--Underline the sentence that is correct:

The leaders of the Jewish religion arrange for soldiers to carefully guard the tomb.

The careful guarding shows that they were afraid that Jesus would rise from the dead.

The disciples saw the empty tomb on Sunday.

The disciples moved the stone away from the mouth of the tomb and removed the body of Jesus.

The soldiers told the story of Jesus' resurrection truthfully.

2--Write T before true statements and F before false statements:

_____ After Jesus died His disciples were afraid.

_____ The first time Jesus appeared, all twelve disciples saw Him.

_____ Thomas was one disciple who said he didn't believe Jesus had risen again because he didn't see Him.

_____ The disciples knew that Jesus rose again but they didn't tell anyone else.

3--Fill in the blanks below:

Jesus was with the disciples _____ days before He went up to _____.

Jesus said, I go to _____ and _____ for you. If I prepare a place for you, I will _____ and take you to be with me.

The disciples went to all places in order to tell the goodness about _____ of Jesus. Many people _____ in what they said.

4--Write briefly what you think about the resurrection of Jesus. What do you understand

about it?

5--If this statement is true of your choice today, check it:

_____ I choose to believe that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive to help me today. I will

learn more about Him and seek to follow His teachings and example.