



Resurrection Sunday

The Resurrection & James

- ❑ In his letter, James does not explicitly discuss the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So how does James relate to the resurrection?
- ❑ James was earlier skeptical concerning his half-brother Jesus (*Mark 3:21, 31; John 7:1-5*). However, after the risen Jesus appeared to him (*1 Corinthians 15:7*), James was greatly changed. He became a devoted follower of Jesus and a leader of the church at Jerusalem (*Acts 15:13; Galatians 1:19; 2:9*). James was eventually killed for his faith.

James Believed but Many Don't Believe

- ❑ Many people do not believe that Jesus Christ was really raised from the dead.¹
 1. Why is it difficult for people to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead? What are the arguments against the resurrection?



- ❑ According to Jesus, belief is important!

📖 *Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26, NIV)*

Why is the Resurrection Important?

- ❑ Many people believe Jesus was a good man and a good moral teacher, but they do not really understand the significance of his death and resurrection.
 2. Jesus made great claims, including John 11:25-26 (*above*).² If Jesus remained dead, how would it affect your impression of Jesus and his claims?³ Explain.
- 📖 "[Jesus Christ] was declared to be the powerful Son of God by the resurrection from the dead" (*Romans 1:4, HCSB*)
- ❑ In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul talks about the "gospel" (good news), by which believers are saved.
 - 📖 "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve." (*1 Corinthians 15:3-5, NIV*)
- ❑ In Romans 6, Paul says that believers are "united" with Christ in his death and resurrection. Therefore "just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too may live a new life." (*6:4b, NIV*)

¹ According to a 2013 Rasmussen Poll, 64% of American adults believe Jesus rose from the dead, while 19% reject the resurrection of Jesus. Seventeen percent (17%) are not sure.

² Besides the many claims concerning his identity, Jesus explicitly predicted his resurrection on numerous occasions (*Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, 26:31; Mark 14:28; Luke 9:22; cp. John 2:19*).

³ Of course, this question assumes that the claims of Jesus are accurately recorded in the New Testament. See Jay's *The Reliability of the New Testament* which presents basis for the historic accuracy of the New Testament.

📖 “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.” (*Romans 6:8-10, NIV*)

3. If Jesus remained dead, how would it affect the central message of Christianity? Explain.

📖 “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” (*1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, NIV*)... “But Christ really has been raised from the dead. He is the first of all those who will rise.” (*1 Corinthians 15:20, NIV*)

James & the Resurrection

❑ The letter of James is full of wisdom and moral teaching. James tells us to be “doers of [God’s] word” (*1:22*) and be characterized by “wisdom from above” (*3:17-18*).

4. As we seek to understand and apply the letter of James (and other parts of God’s word), in what ways is the resurrection important?⁴

📖 “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.” (*Romans 8:11, NIV*)



James Believed and Many Others Also Believe

❑ Of course, many millions of people have believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and, like James, their lives have been greatly changed.

5. If you are a believer, why do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? How has it made a difference in your life, and also your hope for the future?

Reflection/Application

- Do you believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead? If you don’t believe, have you thoroughly investigated the evidence? See Jay for various resources on this subject.⁵
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fundamental belief in *becoming* a Christian. However, the significance of the resurrection should be realized in the Christian’s life on a daily basis. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in the Christian’s life. The Christian life is the “resurrection life” of Jesus! This week, reflect on Romans 6:1-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:3-6; and 2 Corinthians 4:14-18 and be encouraged.

⁴ First of all, while the Bible contains many moral teachings, the main purpose of the Bible is *not* simply to improve our behavior. The Bible is primarily about God’s plan and gracious provision to bring fallen humans back into personal relationship with Him. God’s provision is His Son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and was raised from the dead, thus defeating sin and death. If we want to be “doers of the word” we need to respond to the gospel, turning from self and sin, and receiving the crucified and risen Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. As we do, we are united with Christ, and we receive the Holy Spirit who transforms and empowers us to live the Christian life.

⁵ For example, see Jay’s short paper *The Resurrection of Christ*. The historical evidence for the resurrection is remarkably strong! However, many people cannot accept the historicity of the resurrection because of their philosophical presuppositions. If you do not believe, be willing to question your philosophical presuppositions.