

The Resurrection applies to our lives - Tony Pearce

Paul says that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and, on the third day, He rose again. Why we can rejoice and be thankful here, on this Resurrection day, is because we believe that that is true, that Jesus really rose from the dead, and the account we have in the New Testament of His Resurrection is true. Let's read one of those accounts in Luke's Gospel:

1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. **2** But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. **3** Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. **5** Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? **6** He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, **7** saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "

GOSPEL OF LUKE Chapter 24 verses 1-7

Jesus had told them many times that He was going to die and rise again from the dead. And it had happened. Now Jesus is not there, He's not in the tomb, He's risen, the stone has been rolled away and Jesus has burst out of that sealed tomb, risen in a Resurrection body. Go down to **verse 36** in **Luke** where he appears to the disciples as they gathered together in the evening of Resurrection day in Jerusalem:

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." **37** But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. **38** And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? **39** Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." **40** When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. **41** But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" **42** So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. **43** And He took it and ate in their presence. **44** Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." **45** And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

GOSPEL OF LUKE Chapter 24 verses 36-45

There was no doubt that Jesus was alive. He was alive in a Resurrection body before them. They could see Him. They could touch Him. They could hear Him speak. They could even see Him eating food. So, He was really resurrected in a body.

He says that these things will happen to fulfil the words which are written in the law of Moses and the **Torah** (תּוֹרָה), in the Prophets, the **Nevi'im** (נְבִיאִים), and in the Psalms in the **Ketuvim** (כְּתוּבִים), referring to the three distinctions in the Hebrew Bible (**Torah**) which makes the Jewish word for the Bible the **Tanach** (תַּנַּ"ךְ). And He says that all of those sections of the Bible '*speak of me. I'm the one who is spoken of*' by Moses, by the prophets, by David in the **Psalms**.



He says that *I have now risen from the dead.*

Jesus rose again from the dead. As I said, this truth is essential to our understanding of the Gospel. If we don't believe it, it's a waste of time. We can go home and give up.

But it really did happen. So, we should believe it. Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins but if He hadn't risen from the dead, then, how would we know that He had actually done that?

It's like **when He paid the price and He rose from the dead, He gave us the receipt, which, if we believe on it, will guarantee to us eternal life.**

Though He bore the wrath of God upon Himself on the cross, He was resurrected because He was without sin. And Peter, explaining this on the day of Pentecost says *that it was impossible for death to hold Him because he was the only One who has ever lived on the earth who did not deserve to die because He was without sin and His death was a sacrifice for the sin of the world.*

Also, because He is God, you can't put God to death. So God has to come back to life. **Yeah! Even if you put the body of Jesus to death, then, the spirit must come back into the body and He must live and live eternally.**

So Jesus' Resurrection is the evidence of the fact that God had accepted His sacrifice on the cross and that He's alive today, and that He can now be our Saviour, our Mediator, our Redeemer, and through Him we can have eternal life.

This is the essence of the Gospel message which Paul preached, which Peter preached, which generations of subsequent believing Christians have preached down to this day. Which, to this day, people still believe. **And the fact that people still believe it, here and all over the world, is another sign that it is true.**

If it had been just a made-up story, made-up by some fishermen 2,000 years ago, it would have been forgotten long ago. But the fact is that it is true, the evidence is even in the new life of Christians today all over the world.

And it's important that there were witnesses of this. Paul, in the passage that you just read, lists some of the witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus.

Interesting that nobody actually saw the Resurrection event when it took place, because His lifeless body was in the tomb and within a moment of time was suddenly transformed from being a lifeless corpse to being a living body as the spirit came into that body.

Perhaps a brilliant flash of light came and changed the body and the lifeless body of Jesus became a Resurrection body, a living person able to be seen and touched, and seen by those who beheld Him, able to eat and to communicate with them, able to move miraculously from one place to another, in a moment. Also, to walk through locked doors. **So the body was not a phantom, it was not a ghost or an image, it was a real body. But it wasn't a regular body either. He was coming in a Resurrection body.**

Paul is going to go on to say that **you who live in a regular body now, if you believe this, you are going to have a Resurrection body at some time in the future.** Which is why it's good news to you and me.

And Paul speaks about those who are witnesses of this. He speaks about a number of appearances which we can locate in the Gospel, and of some we can't actually place in the scriptures. He speaks about Him appearing to James, the brother of the Lord, and to 500 people at once. You won't find that in the Gospel.

But in the Gospel of John, he tells us that there are many things which Jesus did that are not recorded. **The Gospels give you a snapshot of what happened, not everything that happened. But whatever happened was witnessed by people who were still alive at that time.** So, Paul can say you can check this out, it's not just a story I'm making up.

And, of course, there would be attempts to discredit the story, and you find that in the Gospel of Matthew, the first attempt to say what had happened wasn't true. The chief priests told the soldiers to say that the disciples had come in the night and stolen the body. Is that likely to have happened? Not at all! If it did happen, well all they had to do was get the disciples in for questioning and arrest them for body stealing. And when they started preaching about the Resurrection of Jesus, they could have just said '*Well, hey! You guys stole the body so what are you talking about? It's nonsense!*

The disciples themselves, if they'd known that that was the case, they'd have known that they were telling you porkies, some kind of big lies, and **you don't give your life away to spread a story which you know isn't true. They knew the story was true, and they knew that Jesus really was risen from the dead.**

There are many other attempts to explain away the Resurrection of Jesus. One is that He swooned on the cross and that He wasn't actually dead. He swooned and they put Him into the tomb and then, after three days, He managed to get back the strength to get out. So He'd been brutally whipped and tortured on the cross, He had no food, no drink, no medical help and somehow, after three days, He managed to get the strength to roll away a stone, overpower Roman soldiers, appear to His disciples and convince them that He was really alive. Do you think that could have happened? No way!



Another way they would like to try to explain away the Resurrection is that it was because of the kind of faith experience the disciples had; that they wanted to believe it so much that they psyched themselves up to believe that they'd really seen Jesus risen from the dead and then spread the story. Also, that it was a hallucination of the disciples. Well, again, that doesn't add up. You can't make up a story like this. If you do, perhaps one person might believe it, two people might do, possibly, but you can't get a whole group of people to say the same thing. It just doesn't work psychologically. **The only way you could explain it is: it really did happen.**

They really were witnesses of Jesus the Messiah and we can believe that it truly is the truth. That Jesus really is risen from the dead. Not that we have seen it ourselves -- Jesus said that those who hadn't seen it and believe would be blessed -- but **we can believe it because we have the testimony of others and it makes sense, and we can know it applies to our lives.**