

# Jesus Christ - His resurrection

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're looking at the fundamental points of the Christian message, and we've been looking at the work of Jesus Christ. The things that we looked at his person, who he was, and then we're looking at the things that he's done.

The incarnation is Jesus becoming human, the word becoming flesh, and we didn't look at that because I put that on the back burner till Christmas.

Because that will be useful at Christmas. We did look at his death on the cross. His resurrection from the dead is the next, which we're going to look at today.

We will then look at his session in heaven now, and then his coming in glory. That's where we're going, but at the moment we've just got to number two, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And I'm going to ask two questions. Number one, is it believable? And number two, is it significant?

[ 1 : 09 ] So I'll explain what I mean by those two questions, but we'll just look at those two things this morning. But before we get into it, I need to do a definition. You see that the printer didn't do the deaf bit, and I had to write that in later, to my annoyance.

What do we mean by resurrection? Let me tell you the definition I'm going to use. A resurrection is a physical human body, a physical body, coming alive after it has been properly dead.

So not stunned, so not stunned, but properly dead. And the resurrection of Jesus, my definition is that this person goes from death to deathlessness.

So moving from death to never being able to die again. So that is different to resuscitation.

So those of you who know the Bible know that Lazarus was dead, and he rose again. Jesus called him out of the tomb, Lazarus come out, and the dead man came out.

[ 2 : 29 ] But I want to say that my definition of resurrection today is not the same as that, for the simple reason that Lazarus died later.

He rose from the dead temporarily, and then died the same as the rest of us will. So I'm going to say that is technically a sort of resuscitation.

It's the power of resurrection, but not fully engaged, if I can put it that way. And medical science can resuscitate. You have amazing stories about people who, according to this definition or that definition, are dead for this amount of time or that amount of time, and they stand back and boom, and they breathe, breathe, breathe, breathe, breathe.

Resuscitation. So not resuscitation, resurrection. And I don't mean life after death in the sense of conscious, personal existence without a body.

That's not resurrection. There would be some other name for that. So whatever culture you're from, you probably have the idea of a ghost, which is a person without a body, wandering around, scaring people or whatever.

[ 3 : 55 ] I'm not talking about that. Jesus said, don't be afraid. I'm not a ghost. I'm not a spirit. We're talking about a body.

And on a less sinister level, believers now, with the Lord Jesus, have a conscious existence without their bodies. So I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about resurrection. I'm talking about a physical body coming alive, having been fully dead, and entering into a state of deathlessness.

And again, before we get going completely, let me say something about world views. So this is how you see the world, what you think the world is like.

And here is somebody who has a world view of materialism. So this is the idea. You have it in your mind.

[ 4 : 58 ] The only things that are real are things you can touch and weigh and measure and see with your eyes.

So some people would say that that's what science tells us. Now I don't think that science does actually tell us those are the only things, as you'll see in a minute.

But you might have that as a world view. The only things that exist are things you can touch and measure and predict. So that's actually a very narrow view of the world.

In the bit of the... No, I'm getting ahead of myself. So there's one world view. Here's another world view that the Bible and other cultures would have.

Please, see, I was trying to do the writing, and I found it wouldn't do a dot on the I, wouldn't do a proper K. So the world view that the Bible takes says, there are some things that exist that can be touched and measured and predicted.

[ 6 : 18 ] Yeah, there are such things. But that's not all there is. There are other things in the world too. So as well as things that weigh 297 kilograms, and you can put them on the scales, there's such a thing as love.

You can't put love on scales, can you? You can't measure the length of love. You can... There are things in the world that are 31,724 meters long, but there's also mind.

You're using your mind at the moment, almost certainly. You're thinking, now where does that, how do you measure that? How does it, how do you, could you take your mind out and weigh it on scales or something?

You take your brain out, but that's not your mind, is it? And in this world view, there are things that you can't necessarily have in front of you and touch.

This world view would allow that sometimes God does things that you couldn't predict. It's miracles. And this is a world in which it's worth praying, because in some mysterious way, that makes a difference when you pray, God sends rain or doesn't send rain.

[ 7 : 32 ] God can heal people or not heal people. But prayer is a reality in this world view. And what I'm going to say in a moment, you will think differently depending on your world view.

So when we talk about the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, if you are a materialist, you will say, oh well, I'm not going to listen to anything he says, because I know that can't happen.

It's not predicted. It's not according to the laws of science. That can't happen. Well, all I can say is, I'm going to try my best.

I'm going to show you evidence. I'm going to put forward the reasons. I'm going to say what it says in the Bible. And if you've already decided you're not going to listen, because you've got a better reason for not believing it, well, I think that's your problem.

The resurrection is impossible for the materialist. For the other person, I don't think they're an idiot. I don't think they're gullible.

[ 8 : 39 ] I don't think they believe everything that you say to them. Oh, you know, this, this, this, this, this. They would say, well, the resurrection is extremely unlikely.

I would really like to be convinced if you're going to tell me about that now. If that's where you're, where you are, then let's, let's, let's carry on.

So my first question then was, is it believable? And we have our own visual aid on this.

So, is it believable? Now, I think nearly all of us believe that there are things that we can't see in front of us and touch and weigh.

Things that we have to take on trust from other people's, what other people have said. So I thought, Lindsay's here from America. What a wonderful example that would be.

[ 9 : 41 ] How many people here believe in the existence of America? America? Okay. Is America believable? Well, most of us, don't spoil it, most of us haven't, haven't been there.

We take it on trust from other sorts of evidence. And I've drawn a picture of Lindsay there getting off the plane. Did you, Lindsay, now tell us the truth. Did you, have you really been in America?

Does it really exist? You're sure? I think so, yes. Sorry. Yes. Yeah. I think, I think if you can be sure of anything, you can be sure America exists.

Okay. Lindsay says so. See what this, see what the program did with my punctuation here. The L got in front of the, there was a computer that did that. It wasn't me.

Is history believable? Can we believe in things that happened in the past? Because if you think, for example, of Julius Caesar, do we believe that he existed?

[ 10 : 49 ] Well, we don't have a Lindsay who, who is old enough to say, well, I met him. I can remember what he was like. We have to go on evidence of other sorts, but we still say, yeah, we could be convinced.

We could be convinced about Roman coins, and Roman history, and we could be convinced about Roman roads, and Roman castles, and things like that. Yeah, there's enough to say, in the past, history happened.

What does the evidence say? Now, the resurrection is something like that. It is to do with testimony of people who were there at the time.

Let me read you a little bit. Let me read you a little bit.

as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, went inside.

[12:22] He saw and believed. They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. There's an example of somebody going in, at the tomb, looking, seeing there's no corpse, and being persuaded, by the evidence, and this faith grew.

It goes on a little bit later. One of the women went down to see the tomb, and somebody says, woman, why are you crying? Who is it that you are looking for?

And the woman thinks this is the gardener, and she says, sir, if you have carried the body of Jesus away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him. And it's Jesus himself.

And she says, and he says, Mary. And she turns towards him, and cries out, in her own language, Rabboni, which means teacher. And she rushes back with the news.

I've seen the Lord. And we are talking about testimony of ordinary people, like John, whose gospel I just read, like Peter, of whom I read, like Paul, we call him St. Paul, one of the first Christian missionaries, like Luke, who was, by profession, a doctor.

[13:46] We have each of the gospels, different documents, and depending on your view of the text, we might even have another document, the ending of Mark.

We have it written down in the letter that Ruth read to us. And of course, we have also the evidence of history.

Because something must have happened, something big must have happened to the Christian movement, because at the point of Jesus' death, everything had gone wrong.

They hoped that Jesus would lead a big, strong kingdom, but he died. And they were disappointed, and there was no reason to take things any further.

And they were depressed, and sad, disillusioned. But, in just a few weeks, we see them strong, and positive, and convinced, and saying, we've got a message about Jesus, which we are prepared to die for.

[15:02] for whom there was no earthly reason to continue, into people who said, we've got a message which is absolutely unique, and powerful, and for which we're prepared to die.

History gives us testimony, something happened, and the only something that I think makes any sense, is something as big as the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We have the testimony of ordinary people. We have the testimony of sensible people. There is a strange idea that people in previous centuries were more stupid than we are.

Did I say that the right way around? I think I did, yes. So in those days people say, oh they used to believe in all sorts of silly things, and they were very silly people. That is a big mistake to make.

By what right do we feel that we are more sophisticated, intelligent, than people in those days? So it's recorded in the Gospels. When the people in Luke 24, 11, were told about the resurrection of Jesus, they didn't say, oh yes, we believe in all that sort of thing.

[16:29] They said, no, it's nonsense. Please notice that. It seemed to them to be nonsense. They told the apostles, but they did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

It's the same as you and me. They're not gullible. people. They were people who needed convincing. In the end of Matthew's Gospel, it says, some doubted.

They were some people who said, this is so, the idea of somebody coming alive from the dead, this is so beyond what we can understand, and so outside our experience, that they doubted.

Well, they weren't stupid, were they? Jesus, however, Jesus is very patient with people who need convincing because he knows it's a very unusual thing and a very strange thing, but in the end he says, look, you've been given enough evidence.

You can see the picture of it. Now you need to believe it. And he says to them, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

[17:50] Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? He says, it does take some believing, it does take some evidence, certainly it does, but the evidence is there, so believe it.

The testimony of ordinary people, they weren't out to make a million bucks by telling us a lie, they were sensible people and they said things like this.

The woman and the women who said, we've seen the Lord. And Thomas, who is sometimes called Doubting Thomas, who said, I won't believe, unless I've got good evidence.

And Jesus gave him the evidence, he said, I won't believe unless I touch him, unless I put my hand into his side because, you know, people don't rise from the dead. And Jesus stood there in front of him and said, you can touch me, you can put your hand into the wound in my side, now believe it. Stop being unbelieving and believe. And Thomas, see we can sympathise with Thomas, can't we? We can say, I don't think I'd find that hard to believe unless I saw the hard evidence.

[19:12] And Thomas says, you are my Lord and my God. And the apostles, the apostles means the people that Jesus trained and educated and the people and the people who saw Jesus doing things and heard what he said and then Jesus said, right, you are now going to be sent out to tell everybody else.

Those are the apostles and the apostle John says about that privilege that he has, he says, that which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the word of life.

The life appeared, we have seen it and testify to it and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and which has appeared to us.

And he says, we saw it, we were there, we saw it with our own eyes and now we're telling you. And that's how history works, isn't it? Things that happened, testimony goes down, we can read it, we can hear it, we can listen to it and he says, there's enough there to believe even this.

And in the bit that Ruth read to us, Paul says, we're not telling you something we made up, we're telling you the truth and the people in Corinth, they weren't actually materialists but they were saying, oh that can't happen, Jesus couldn't be risen from the dead, we must understand it in some other way.

[21:09] And Paul says, these are the facts as we have believed them. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, he was buried and on the third day he rose according to the scriptures and we saw it and we saw him.

And at one point there was more than 500 people present at the same time. So my first question was, is it believable? And I say, it's not easy to believe, but there is enough evidence to believe it. There is enough evidence to believe it. So I wouldn't like to think of you sitting there saying, oh well he's just telling us about religion, some people are very gullible.

I am not doing that, I'm saying something happened in history, whether you like it or not. Something happened in history, absolutely unique, absolute game changer.

And if you don't think about it, if you don't say, how will I respond to that?

[22:24] Then you are running away from history. You are living in a make-believe world because the real world has got the resurrection of Jesus embedded in it and you can't make it go away.

So the second question was, is it significant? Is it significant?

Look what the computer does to my wonderful artwork. So this is the, couldn't even draw the lines parallel. This is the viaduct. So the viaduct is just over there and there are, in the viaduct, I forget if it's 11 million or 12 million bricks, but, I think that says 11 million, doesn't it?

There's 11 million bricks. The viaduct has 11 million bricks. Now is that significant? Is there a special meaning to 11 million? Is it 144,000 times 7 raised to the 7th power or something like that? Is there some deep truth in these 11 million bricks? And I would say, if you think that, you're really wasting your time because I think there is absolutely no significance, no meaning in that figure whatsoever.

[23:44] I mean, the viaduct, there's a lot of meaning in having a viaduct. You'd need an awful lot of willpower to get the train from Brighton Station to London Road Station if you didn't have the viaduct.

But the 11 million has no significance at all. Compare that with, I think I was getting a little bit better with that, Brighton Pavilion.

Now it has onion-shaped roofs. Now is that, is there any meaning in that? Is it just because that's the best sort of roof to have rain fall off?

And I would say, actually there are reasons why it has that sort of roof. It does tell us something. I think it tells us something about the builder.

I think it tells us he was slightly crazy, actually. Don't you think? Brighton Pavilion is, it shows that it was built by the Prince Regent, ah, what a wonderful picture of the Prince Regent.

[ 24 : 47 ] He, he, he did have a, he said, I want to build something that looks a bit crazy and that looks a bit really special. I want it to look like it's Indian. I want to make it look like Chinese because I'm going to have all my friends here and we're going to have wild parties and we're not really going to be spending our money on improving the lot of the common people.

We're just going to have this bizarre building. That's why it's got onion-shaped roofs. It does mean something. Yeah? It tells us about the person who did it. Now what about the resurrection? Is it just, you know, well, okay, it happened?

Bizarre? Or does it mean something? And I want to say it's full of meaning. And I've got, I think I've got five, but of course the computer messed up the numbering system, so there isn't a number four. So just don't, don't, don't even go there. It shows that Jesus, significance, number one, it shows that Jesus was right in what he said.

In his life before his crucifixion, Jesus said a lot of things and you might say, well, did he, is he right? Did he say things that were true?

[ 26 : 05 ] Or, or did he just say random stuff? Now, consistently, he said things like, destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days.

That's what he says in John's Gospel. Destroy this temple, I will rebuild it in three days. The temple of which he spoke was his body. He said that and they might have thought, well, I don't know, that's a bit random, isn't it?

Destroying a temple, rebuilding it in three days? But Jesus was right in what he said. He died and he rose again on the third day.

That's what he meant. More specifically, he said several times, if you follow it through in Mark's Gospel, he said, he took his disciples aside and said, listen, the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and to the sinners.

They will flog him, they will mistreat him, they will put him to death and on the third day he will rise from the dead. And they probably thought, I don't know what he's talking about.

[ 27 : 15 ] Can't be right. But he did say it and he was proved right by it actually happening. There's a big difference between saying all sorts of random things, you know, the world's going to end in, very rash prediction, isn't it?

The world's going to end in 1984. Of course it didn't. So you look stupid. And then, oh, the world's actually got that wrong. The world's actually going to end in 2005, 2005.

Well, you can say that, but of course it didn't. And you look even more stupid. Jesus said, I will rise on the third day and on the third day he did rise. In John's Gospel he says, I lay down my life only to take it again, which is a rash thing to say unless you're actually going to do it.

In the Christmas story, the angel says, a savior is born, his reign will have no end. Of course if he died, his reign would have a pretty sudden and disappointing end.

But if he rose from the dead, then the angel too was right in what he said. So there's a, we would say, a vindication. He's proved right in what he said.

[ 28 : 30 ] Number two, significance. Jesus was right compared with what people thought of him. So, how did Jesus die?

I once asked this when I was a school teacher. I asked some of the kids, how did Jesus die? They didn't know. I don't know. How did he die? He was crucified. The Roman authorities, he was handed over by the Jewish authorities, the Roman authorities, they put him on trial and they said, he's worthy of death.

He's a terrible man, he's worthy of death. We condemn him. And the cross is that sentence carried out. It says, a condemned man, worthy of death.

And that's where the cross takes us to. That's what people thought of him. But God says, I don't want that said about my son.

I don't want that to be the last word about Jesus. I don't want that, as it were, written on his grave, condemned, guilty, worthy of death. And several times the apostles in their early preaching say, you

killed him, but God raised him from the dead.

[ 29 : 46 ] You did what you thought he deserved, but God said, no, he didn't deserve that. I'm going to raise him from the dead. And in the passage that you probably know quite well in Philippians, he, it says how Jesus had the mindset of being prepared to be obedient and humble and suffer and die even to death on the cross.

And then the next word is therefore. Therefore, God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And people said, he's not worthy of anything apart from death. And God said, he's worthy of absolutely everything. He's worthy of the top place. Jesus was proved right in his resurrection and when he's proved right, he takes his people along with him.

And it interestingly says in Romans 4, 25, he was raised not only for his vindication, but for our justification too.

That when that verdict of not guilty by any means, not guilty, God raises him up, he takes us too. Raised for our justification.

[ 31 : 16 ] They're not guilty either. God's people, they're not guilty. Raised for our justification. That was number two. Significance. Significance number three. The resurrection marks Jesus out as, I've put, a man plus, a special man.

Now if you wanted to mark somebody out as being very special, I suppose you could do it in a number of different ways. You could give them a Nobel Prize. How do you feel about that, Tim? Would you like a Nobel Prize? He's indifferent to the possibility. You could mark him out. You could be Sir, arise Sir Matthew.

You could be, all sorts of things you could do to mark them out. But the Bible says that God marked out Jesus as special by raising him from the dead.

So at the beginning of Romans it says he was shown to be the son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. Or it might be punctuated the other way, shown powerfully to be the son of God by his resurrection from the dead.

[ 32 : 26 ] But it certainly marks somebody out, doesn't it? If you raise them from the dead, there's something special there. In Romans he says he's shown to be the son of God. The son of God.

In Acts 17 Paul says he's shown to be the judge of the living and the dead. I only put an abbreviated quote there.

Let me tell you what it says in a fuller way. It says in the past God overlooked ignorance but now he commands all people everywhere to repent for he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.

He has given proof of this to all by raising him from the dead. so Jesus is proven to be the man the judge.

Everybody will see him. We'll all see him. You'll see him and he will say what did you do with your life? Who did you trust in? Who did you offer your life to?

[ 33 : 34 ] Why did you do the things that you did? Were you doing it for God or what? everybody will have to give an account because he's the man appointed proven by raising him from the dead and in the chapter that Ruth read to us he's called the last Adam.

That's a man. The first Adam was a special man. He led his family into sin and the last Adam puts it all right and leads his family into righteousness and deathlessness.

So it marks out Jesus as a man plus a special man. That was point number four. We're going to jump straight to point number five.

That's my fault not the computer's fault. he fulfills scripture. He fulfills scripture. It's significant because as Paul says he rose on the third day according to the scriptures and we might ask which scriptures?

Which scriptures? Well for example David King David in the Old Testament has this sense of being king forever or there being a king from him or a king that follows him or a king like him that will live forever.

[ 35 : 14 ] You will not let your holy one see decay is one of the quotes from David and the apostles say do you know what he meant by that?

He might not even have completely known what he meant by it but I'll tell you! he meant that Jesus Christ would rise from the dead and really and truly the holy one would not decay his body would be

fresh if you like or you could think of going right back to the beginning of the Old Testament where when Adam and Eve when Adam sinned and Eve sinned along with him there's a prophecy a prophecy from God that there will come somebody who will crush the serpent's head and you think well what does that mean maybe they didn't know but here's the fulfillment of it somebody who as scripture foretells would take Satan and all his work and death and all of that and squash it he will crush the head of the serpent and this is what

Jesus is doing when he does crush death doesn't he and he crushes the kingdom of Satan by rising from the dead and perhaps a little more thought provokingly the scriptures about Israel there's many acres of scripture which talk about in the Old Testament about the people of God and say what a terrible state they're in they're far from God everything is going wrong the spiritual thing is at the heart of it and everything else comes from that and one day God will put that all right and it's often expressed in physical terms you know there will be corn and oil and wine flowing and abundant and so on and I want to suggest to you and I'm not going to talking about geography and agriculture I think those scriptures are using the ideas of geography and agriculture to say God will sort things out for his people fully finally physically in the resurrection and I'd invite you to see all those prophecies as being fulfilled through Jesus Christ and what comes from him and if you wanted a place to start you could go to Ezekiel 37 13 where the prophecy of what God will do for his people is put in terms of the dry bones do you know that these dry bones live and the dry bones and coming back into the land are put together as being two ways of saying the same thing and I'd like to suggest that it's Jesus in his resurrection coming alive from the dead who spearheads the new life life from the dead the new world the new land the new place of God's people well that was number five number six it's significant it's significant in that what we see is the first intrusion of a new world order the first breaking in of a new world now

I don't know how many of you are building surveyors building surveyors here I think Chris could probably teach us a lot about building if you if you were if you were looking at that wall and you saw a crack there you might say ah there's a crack or you might say the building is going to fall down you know you need to know wouldn't you is that crack just a little random thing or is it really dangerous you see Chris looks at bridges professionally and he's looking at that crack nothing to worry about that crack is it significant does it mean something's going to happen does it show us something bigger and worse is behind it all bigger and more more the resurrection is not just a little crack and you walk away and say oh that didn't make much difference just a little thing it is the beginning of a huge crack in this sinful world order and from that little crack will open out a whole new world our old world this world is a world of sin and decay and death and isolation from [ 40 : 22 ] God and Jesus has punched a hole in that by his resurrection just one a hole one person wide but one day Jesus will blast that hole open and it will be a whole human race wide and there will be a new heaven and a new earth a place of righteousness instead of sin of fruitfulness instead of decay of life instead of death and the presence of God will be everywhere not in snippets and things that we never quite grasp and occasions but the new world will be filled with the presence of God and in the book of Revelation the one on the throne says what am I doing I'm making everything new and the resurrection is the first intrusion of this new world order into our world and lastly the fact of

Christ being raised empowers the Christian life now what is the Christian life now please don't think that the Christian life is being religious and saying prayers every now and again and doing a few extra things it isn't that I mean it is that but it's it's actually new life resurrection life implanted in people who are still sinners it's a new world it's a miracle Christians talk about being born again and being born again is just another way of saying this being co-raised with Christ just as Christ was raised from the dead into new life that transition that change that transformation that power comes into your life when you become a

Christian we are raised with him spiritually when we become Christians one day we will be raised with him physically but becoming a Christian is being raised with him spiritually raised physically not yet spiritually and you know the Christian they don't always realise it a Christian is somebody who lives with a resurrection power new power above us new power around us new power within us the resurrection of Jesus Christ is how we live now seven or perhaps six reasons to be significant let me finish with a challenge to the to you if you're not a believer and I don't know what you've made of what I've said but if you're not a person of Christian faith please consider the historical evidence for the resurrection if that is true your unbelief is a refusal to live in the real world world you need to get

your life into alignment with how things really are there is somebody who rose from the dead now you need to get something sorted out with that person and for believers the other night when I couldn't sleep

I listened to a podcast and the minister was speaking on it said it's the job of the Christian pastor to prepare his people for death I'd never quite thought of it like that but I think he's absolutely right it's the job of the Christian pastor to prepare his people for death and what I want to say is this message here prepares us for death doesn't it if we don't know how to die we certainly don't know how to live this tells us that there is as the hymn says strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow and even if today goes wonky and isn't the way we want it to be for a Christian nothing can take away the bright hope for tomorrow the hope of the resurrection