

JESUS AROSE FROM THE DEAD

Islamic Terrorist acts have included [airline hijacking](#), [beheading](#), [kidnapping](#), [assassination](#), [roadside bombing](#), [suicide bombing](#) and [rape](#). The hijacking of four passenger jets and the destruction of the [World Trade Center](#) on the day of [September 11](#) 2001, in the [United States of America](#) was a significant attack. Other prominent attacks have occurred in [Iraq](#), [Afghanistan](#), [India](#), [Israel](#), [Indonesia](#), [Thailand](#), [Philippines](#), [Britain](#), [Spain](#), [France](#), [Russia](#) and [China](#). These Islamic terrorist commit their violence and murder in the name of Allah and connect terror with the worship of God.

These terrorists have become agents of the devil to further his causes of trying to destroy those who have put their trust and faith in the living Savior of all mankind. Their faith in an evil god motivates their evil behavior. The Bible says that we are also saved by faith so faith is important. Unless you stand for something, you are apt to fall for anything. But standing for the wrong thing can destroy you, your future, your destiny, and your world.

The believers in Jesus Christ have chosen to believe that which has been tested by the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament and 2,000 years of church history. In the words of the classic Apostles' Creed, I believe Jesus was crucified, dead and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead." Is it true? Did it really happen? If so, it is truly extraordinary. The ordinary is what we see when pass a Cemetery with thousands of graves. And every grave contains the body of someone who stayed put. Jesus didn't stay put. We believe that Jesus died and on the third day he rose again from His grave. That's a miracle.

THE MIRACLE

I don't believe every reported miracle, do you? Why should we believe this one? To begin with, let's check the *historical evidence*. When the risen Christ came to His disciples He appealed to their sense of *hearing* "Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings !'" (Matthew 28:9). Dead men don't talk. Jesus talked because he wasn't dead. He appealed to their sense of *seeing*. "Go to Galilee," he said, "there you will see me" (Matthew 28:10). He appealed to their sense of *touching*. "Look at my hands and my feet," he said, "see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39).

Night seems to be the time for ghosts. Rarely do you hear of anyone seeing a spook in the light of day. Perhaps it is because evening shadows make us more susceptible to other-worldly phenomenon. That makes it all the more amazing that when Jesus arose from the grave he met his disciples in broad daylight — and not once but several times. It is one thing to see a specter in dim twilight which might be the neighborhood cat and quite another to see a friend who died on Friday have breakfast with you a few days later (John 21:1- 24). It is one thing for a confused, excitable person to meet someone they thought was dead and quite another for 500 people to meet that person (1 Corinthians 15:6). Yet that is exactly what happened. And it happened over a forty day period.

The book of Acts gives an account of nine sermons preached by the apostles during the first twenty-five years of church history. And every one was an Easter sermon.

Every sermon was centered on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. At one point the people in Athens got confused thinking Paul was preaching about two gods: Jesus and Anastasia (Acts 17:18). The name, Anastasia, is the Greek word for resurrection. It was constantly on Paul's lips: "Jesus and resurrection... Jesus and resurrection."

The gospels do not explain the miracle of the resurrection. **The miracle of the resurrection explains the gospels.** Without the resurrection there would be no believing apostles to write the

gospels. As Paul said, " And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. (1 Corinthians 15:14).

- Nothing short of the resurrection of Jesus could have changed Peter from the fearful denier of Christ to the faithful pillar of the church.
- Nothing short of the resurrection of Jesus could have changed James, the unbelieving brother of Jesus into the pastor of the church at Jerusalem.
- Nothing short of the resurrection could have changed Paul from a persecutor of the church to a promoter of the church. The proof of Christ's resurrection is the living church drawing life from him who overcame death.

We believe Jesus rose again from the dead not only because of the historical evidence, but because of *personal experience*. Paul said, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10). Notice Paul did not say, "I want to know about Christ," but "I want to know Christ." **Not information but association was his desire.** The following song talks about personal experience and association with a living Savior.

1. I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living, whatever men may say.
I see his hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
and, just the time I need Him, He's always near.

Refrain

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

2. In all the world around me I see His loving care,
And tho' my heart grows weary, I never will despair.
I know that He is leading thro' all the stormy blase;
The day of His appearing will come at last.

Refrain

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

3. Rejoice, rejoice, O Christians, lift up your voice and sing
eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find,
None other is so loving, so good and kind.

Refrain

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.*

*He lives, He lives salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

The resurrection of Jesus is not just a matter of faith, it is a matter of fact. It's not mystery but history. The resurrection of Jesus is a fact of history without which history makes no sense. The resurrection of Jesus reversed forever the inexorable law of decay and death so that history is no longer a dead end street; it is a highway going somewhere (Ephesians 1:9-10).

Fifty years ago the editor of Life Magazine wrote: "The resurrection is a vast watershed in history. It cannot be tested for truth; it is the test for lesser truths. No light can be thrown on it; its own light blinds the investigator. It does not compel belief; it resists it. **But once accepted as fact, it tells more about the universe, about history, and about man's state and fate than all the mountains of other facts in the human accumulation.**"

The resurrection is an extraordinary miracle, but what does it mean?

THE MEANING

The resurrection is not just ancient history, it is **current events and future hope**. Paul concluded his sermon to the Athenians with these words: "God... now commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed, and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

The resurrection of Christ is **current events**. You have to make a choice. You can live as though Christ arose from the dead, or live as though he did not. To live as though he arose means you have to change your way of living, i.e. as Paul said, "repent." God raised Jesus from the dead not just as an allegation that you will go to heaven when you die, but as a **declaration** that Jesus is alive on planet earth. The resurrection places Jesus on this side of the grave, here and now, in the midst of life. He is not just standing on the shore of eternity beckoning you to join Him there. He is standing beside you strengthening you in this life. The good news of the resurrection is not only that you will die and go home with Him, **but that He has risen and goes home with you today and every day!**

The resurrection of Jesus is also a **future hope**. It tells you that death is not the end of life. It is a comma not a period. There is more to follow. Specifically, there is a day fixed on the calendar of eternity when God will judge the world in righteousness. Are you ready for that day?

There's a great day coming, a great day coming;
There's a great day coming by and by,
When the saints and the sinners shall be parted right and left,
Are you ready for that day to come?

Refrain

*Are you ready? Are you ready?
Are you ready for the judgment day?
Are you ready? Are you ready?
For the judgment day?*

There's a bright day coming, a bright day coming;
There's a bright day coming by and by.
But its brightness shall only come to them that love the Lord.
Are you ready for that day to come?

Refrain

*Are you ready? Are you ready?
Are you ready for the judgment day?
Are you ready? Are you ready?
For the judgment day?*

There's a sad day coming, a sad day coming;
There's a sad day coming by and by,
When the sinner shall hear his doom: "Depart, I know you not!"
Are you ready for that day to come?

Refrain

*Are you ready? Are you ready?
Are you ready for the judgment day?
Are you ready? Are you ready?
For the judgment day?*