

3. WHERE IS JESUS NOW?

Jesus is in heaven. *“He was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight”*. Two angels said, *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus ... will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:9-11). Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:12). He is alive for evermore (Revelation 1:18). He is our mediator, and presents our prayers to our Heavenly Father.

The great news for us is that he will not stay in heaven. He is going to come back to the earth to set up God’s Kingdom and to be King of the world. Peter tells us God shall *“send the Christ ... whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke”* (Acts 3:19-21).

When Jesus comes, Paul tells us he *“will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body”* (Philippians 3:21). Jesus now has an immortal body. He is going to be a visible King. His faithful saints (followers) will all have immortal bodies, after they are *“repaid at the resurrection of the just”* (Luke 14:14).

They will teach God’s word to the mortal people living on earth. The Bible calls this time *“The Kingdom of God”*.

4. CAN GOD GIVE ME AN IMMORTAL BODY LIKE THAT OF JESUS?

Yes He can, and He will, if you take God at His word. Seriously, God offers you everlasting life,

but on his terms. If you love God and keep His commandments, Jesus will be pleased to change your mortal body to be like his glorious resurrected body, when he returns. You will live and reign on earth with him forever.

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BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

FACT OR FICTION?

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. Can we be sure that Jesus died on the cross?
2. How does the Bible prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
3. Where is Jesus now?
4. Can God give me an immortal body like that of Jesus?

1. CAN WE BE SURE THAT JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS?

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ died.

Cruel Roman soldiers, expert killers knew a dead body when they saw one. Soldiers on duty at the crucifixion *“came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead”*. To be doubly sure, *“one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water”* (John 19:33,34). Yes, Jesus was dead. Let the Apostle Paul have the final word, *“Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:3).

2. HOW DOES THE BIBLE PROVE THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS?

Just as there is no doubt that Jesus died, so also is there no doubt that God raised him from the dead. Look at the witnesses to Christ's resurrection. They are all the more credible because none of them were expecting his resurrection. They were all amazed by it. Jesus had told them to expect it, but they had not understood his words. After all, nobody had been raised from the dead to everlasting life before Jesus.

Many events took place before the apostles, (his closest friends) were convinced:

a) The dead body of Jesus was laid in a tomb. Faithful women saw the body and knew he was dead. When they returned later, the body of Jesus had gone! Two angels appeared with wonderful news, "*Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen!*" They reminded the women that Jesus must "*be crucified and on the third day rise*" (Luke 24:5-7).

Suddenly the light dawned. The women remembered his words, and for the first time, they understood them. They returned and "*told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest*" (v9).

What was their response? "*These words seemed to them an idle tale (as nonsense), and they did not believe them*" (Luke 24:11). Doesn't their response ring true? They were certainly not expecting the resurrection of Jesus.

b) Peter ran to the tomb. Jesus was nowhere to be seen! Could his resurrection be true?

c) The same day, two other disciples were walking to Emmaus. The risen Jesus joined them. Not recognizing him, they spoke of Jesus being crucified, saying "*we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel*" (v21). Surely, this was now impossible? Jesus told them the scriptures foretold that the Christ "should suffer these things and enter into His glory".

"*Their eyes were opened and they recognised him*" (v31). Jesus vanished, and they rushed to find the eleven apostles, who also said "*The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!*" (v34).

d) Jesus stood in the midst of the apostles, saying "*Peace to you*". Did they welcome him? They did not! "*They were startled and frightened, and thought they saw a spirit*". But the resurrected Christ was not a spirit. Jesus said, "*See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have*" (v36-39).

He ate in their presence, and reminded them, "*it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead*" (v46).

Were the apostles convinced at last about the resurrection of Jesus? Yes, including 'doubting' Thomas! "*They worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy*". (All quotes from Luke 24).

e) Paul tells us Jesus appeared after his resurrection to: Cephas (Peter); the twelve; more than five hundred brothers at one time; James; all the apostles; and himself (1 Corinthians 15:5-

8). Truly, Jesus "*presented himself alive after His suffering by many proofs*" (Acts 1:3).

f) There is one final, powerful proof. Only the physical resurrection of Jesus could have changed the apostles. Before his death, they feared for their lives. Sadly, "*They all left him and fled*". Not any more! They became fearless preachers. Peter boldly spoke about Jesus on the day of Pentecost, him "*you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up ... God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified*" (Acts 2:23,24,36).

Peter healed a lame man. He told Annas, the High Priest, Caiaphas and the rulers, "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified" the man was healed. The apostles had seen the risen Christ. Nothing was going to stop them telling everyone about him! Only the resurrection of Jesus could have caused such a profound change from being fearful to becoming fearless men. The most striking evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is the Apostle Paul.

Previously he was "*breathing threats and murder against the disciples*" (Acts 9:1). Nothing less than seeing the risen Christ on the Damascus road could have caused such a dramatic change in him. Paul, the persecutor of Christians was now willing to be persecuted for the gospel's sake.

To summarise this section:

Jesus had been killed. His body was laid in a tomb. That same body became alive again. It was seen and handled. It even showed the nail marks from the cross. Jesus, in his immortal state, had flesh and bones, and could not die again. He was not a spirit or an immortal soul.