

Pastors Perspective, Loon Lake Times

Did Jesus rise from the dead?

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When this comes to print, the Easter weekend will have passed. I hope yours was a meaningful and life-giving time for you and your loved ones.

When it comes to Christian holidays, Easter is by far the most significant of them all. Why, you may ask? The core of the Christian faith centers around the belief in Jesus' resurrection from the dead just as he had told his disciples on multiple occasions (Matthew 17:22; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22, and others). Moreover, the Apostles' preaching and teaching in the first century Church centered on Jesus' resurrection (Acts 4:2, 33; 17:18; 23:6). Therefore, if he did not rise from the dead, then he was a liar, Christianity is a farce, and Christians are "false witnesses" about God (1 Cor. 15:15).

The good news is that his resurrection on the third day happened just as he said. Space does not allow me to dig too deeply into the evidence, so I have included three resources at the end (out of eight) from which I have taken a few main points. I welcome the sincere inquirer to explore the resources below.

First, the tomb was empty. The religious leaders, who had convinced Pilate to crucify Jesus, demanded that he post a squad of Roman soldiers to guard the tomb for three days. Additionally, the Roman seal was placed on the tomb to prove that it had not been disturbed. These well-trained Roman soldiers risked death if they allowed anything to happen to the body of Jesus, not to mention sleeping on the job. The only explanation for the empty tomb was a supernatural event as described at the end of the first four books of the New Testament.

Secondly, the grave clothes were lying where Jesus' dead body had been laid. His body had been prepared for the tomb in the traditional Jewish manner, including seventy-five pounds of aloes and spices spread between the layers of linen wrappings around his body (John 19:39-40). In essence, Jesus' body was encased in an aromatic cocoon that would have adhered to his body. Stealing Jesus' body without the grave cloths would be a monumental time-consuming, if not impossible, task. Furthermore, a decaying body's foul odor would be enough for a grave robber to take the body in the grave clothes. Again, evidence that a supernatural event occurred.

Thirdly, hundreds of eyewitnesses testified to seeing Jesus during a forty-day period after his resurrection. Moreover, the Apostles and countless other Christians went to their graves proclaiming Jesus' resurrection. Their sacrificed lives are a powerful testimony to Jesus' resurrection.

Finally, “location, location, location.” Significantly, the central location from which Christianity grew and spread was from Jerusalem instead of some far distant land (where the hearers would not be able to verify the Apostles’ claims). If the resurrection were a lie, all that was needed to refute the Apostles’ claims was a short walk outside of the city to the tomb that contained Jesus’ corpse. That would be the end of the story – and the end of Christianity.

There is much more evidence, but my space is limited, so please check out the links below. When we come to grips with the truths that Jesus was not only an authentic historical figure but that he really did rise from the dead, then we realize he must be who he claimed to be. Then we should ask, “What moved him to become a human and give his life?” And then ask, “How must my life respond to his life, death, and resurrection?” To ignore the resurrected Jesus would be a “grave” mistake.

Just as he said, he has risen from the dead, which is good news for all people. Jesus answered the above questions in John 3:16-17, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (NIV).

There is no sector of society nor place on this earth where his gift of forgiveness cannot reach. The Bible says that “whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, will be saved.” If you are breathing, that promise is for you – at this very moment! If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me through askthepastor@loonlaketimes.com, or ask.the.pastor.ilt@gmail.com.

Resources: 1. *How To Disprove the Resurrection of Jesus*, by Kyle Davison Bair, on Medium.com, September 29, 2020; 2. *Evidence for The Resurrection*, By Josh McDowell, on Josh.org, 2009 in pdf format; 3. *Evidences for the Resurrection*, by J. Hampton Keathley III, Th.M., on Bible.org, June 2, 2004 (one of the most extensive articles on the Resurrection).