

Date : 30 June 2024
Theme : Evidence of our faith
Topic : Jesus Rose from the dead
Key Verse : *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... 1 Corinthians 15: 3, 4*

Introduction

Regarding Jesus' resurrection, Dr Luke's investigative report stated ...*After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days... Acts 1:3*

In his earlier book, Dr Luke explained ...*I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning...* So Dr Luke did not just copy from others, he investigated, meaning he examined the evidences like a good detective.

What was Luke's conclusions?

- That the proofs (evidences) of Jesus resurrection were many
- That the proofs were convincing (credible)
- That Jesus' resurrection was...*according to the Scriptures... 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4* meaning He had fulfilled exactly the prophecies (regarding His death), in the Old Testament.

1. How did Jesus' resurrection fulfill exactly as prophesied?

- a. To rise from the dead, one must first be dead. But not only must He die, He must die according to the prophecies in the Old Testament; to name a few:
- He would die between criminals *Isaiah 53:12*
 - He would die by scourging (stripes) *Isaiah 53:5*
 - He would be buried in a rich man's tomb *Isaiah 53:9*
 - He must be nailed in His death *Psalms 22:16*
 - He would be God forsaken *Psalms 22:1*
 - He must die on the day and hour of the Passover Feast *Leviticus 23:5*
 - His death was evidenced by the fact that His legs were not broken *Psalms 34:20*.
- b. His resurrection must be
- On the 3rd day after His death as foreshadowed by the sign of Jonah
 - Fulfilment of the feast of firstfruits by being the firstfruits of the resurrection *1 Corinthians 15:20*
 - As prophesied by King David, Jesus' body would not suffer decay *Psalms 16:10*.

2. What are some evidences of His resurrection?

a. The empty tomb

Immediately after Jesus' death on the cross was verified, Pontus Pilate, the governor, gave Joseph of Arimathea the permit to claim Jesus' body for burial.

(The tomb was hewn out of a rock hill, a cave like tomb, called a sepulchre. Only the rich could afford to pay for it. So not many of these were found around the rocky hills of Jerusalem. Such tombs were private property and clearly identified).

- The tomb was sealed with Pilates' authority and guards were in attendance round the clock, until the resurrection.
- Some skeptics questioned whether believers knew which tomb; but the ladies present at the cross also saw the tomb where He was laid.

- b. The empty shell of the burial shroud caked with 35g of dried herbs was left in the tomb but the body of Jesus seemed to have vapourised leaving behind a cocoon-shaped covering (much like after a chrysalis had emerged).
- c. Eye witnesses, who visited the tomb on the 1st day of the week, saw that it was empty. The ladies who brought spices at dawn, were the two Marys and Salome. Peter and John followed soon after.
- d. Appearances to many during the 40 days before His ascension.
 - Two men on the Emmaus road *Luke 24:35*
 - Two occasions on the 1st day of the week, then to His 12 disciples. *John 20:19-20, 26-28*
 - One beach event (where the Lord served His disciples barbecued fish) *John 21:12-14*
 - 500 people on one occasion *1 Corinthians 15: 3-8*
 - Further appearances of Jesus after His ascension
 - to Stephen the martyr
 - to Paul on the road to Damascus
 - to John on the Isle of Patmos
- e. Mentioned by non-Christian historians
- f. From the start of the church, every believer has demonstrated his belief in the resurrection of Christ by an act of baptism and the breaking of bread.
In fact, no one would call himself a Christ follower without declaring Jesus is Lord and faith in Jesus' resurrection.
 - Today we can experience the joy of answered prayer when we come in the merit of Jesus' name. Jesus has also promised His presence when we preach or speak in His Name. He empowers us with resurrection power to confront demonic forces. His Name embodies His presence. We can commune to Him daily because He hears and speaks to us.
 - Because of Jesus' resurrection, we also have hope to be resurrected when He returns. Scripture prophesied the time of His death and resurrection *Daniel 9:25*, that He would be *cut off* after a prophetic 62 weeks (ie 434 years) after the decree (by Xerxes) to rebuild Jerusalem.

3. Application

- a) Christ resurrection gives hope for the future. Jesus said...*Because I live you will also...* *John 14:19*. (He is the Firstfruit, we are the ones to follow). We will receive our resurrected bodies at His second coming.
- b) What does the Resurrection power do for the present?
Paul's life ambition was to experience the power of the Resurrection. *Philippians 3:10*
How does the Resurrection impart power in this present life?

In *Philippians 3:10* Paul says he has a passion for Christ and that passion is to experience the power of Christ' resurrection. Paul wants the same power that raised Jesus up from the dead. He does not want deadness in his life as a Christ follower.

The resurrection gives power to cast out personal bondages such as addiction to bad habits that can destroy your health or wealth. For example, addiction to cigarette smoking, drug abuse, liquor intoxication or gambling. Also bondages to pornography and sexual sins, uncontrollable rage etc.

- How do we take the dead stuff out of our lives and experience resurrection power?

Story: An unbeliever, who was completely against Christianity, died with instructions that a huge slab be placed over his grave. He did not wish to have anything to do with the resurrection of the dead. However, an acorn fell into the grave and as the years went by, it grew and grew through the grave and split the slab. A hundred years later, the acorn had grown to be a tall towering oak tree.

If an acorn, which has the power of biological life, can split a slab of that magnitude, what can God's resurrection power not do in a person's life?

What are the immovable slabs in your life?

My action

These things can be split and moved away.

- Take your anger, for example. How about that being turned into forgiveness?
- Insecurity – turned into confidence to speak up for Jesus?
- Self-centeredness – turned into compassion and generosity?

c) Paul gives a clue how the resurrection power works.

Paul's desire to attain to the power of the resurrection also includes the willingness to suffer for Christ ...*fellowship of His sufferings...* *Philippians 3:10*

There is power to endure suffering for Jesus so that we do not succumb to weakness or fear of suffering, alienation or rejection.

For example...

- It means to love people who are unlovable. To pray for such a person who has angered you and be willing to forgive him.
- To turn over your insecurity to Jesus and take steps to be part of a happiness group to invite friends and speak up for Him.
- To receive His resurrection power to be generous and be giving instead of holding back in self-centeredness.

Only when we are willing (like the early disciples) to share in Christ' sufferings, can we die to self and allow the Holy Spirit to uproot the dead roots, and breathe His resurrection life within us.