

Can I Believe In Resurrection?

I Corinthians 15:1-6, 12-18, 50-52, 54b-57

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Resurrection (386)Greek (**anastasis** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = to cause to stand) literally means "to stand again" or "to cause to stand again" and most NT uses refer to a physical body rising from the dead or coming back to life after having once died.

The **resurrection** is distinguished from belief in reincarnation, which usually involves a series of rebirths from which the soul may seek release. Resurrection has primary reference to the body. The resurrection is the central, defining doctrine and claim of the gospel for as Paul wrote "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." (1Cor 15:14)

Anastasis - 42x in 40v in **NAS** - Matt. 22:23, 28, 30, 31; Mk. 12:18, 23; Lk. 2:34; 14:14; 20:27, 33, 35, 36; Jn. 5:29; 11:24, 25; Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33; 17:18, 32; 23:6, 8; 24:15, 21; 26:23; Ro 1:4; 6:5; 1 Co. 15:12, 13, 21, 42; Phil. 3:10; 2Ti 2:18; Heb. 6:2; 11:35; 1Pe 1:3; 3:21; Rev. 20:5, 6) and 4 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (Ps. 66:1 reads in LXX "For the end, a Song of Psalm of resurrection."; Lam. 3:63; Dan. 11:20; Zeph. 3:8) but none of these OT uses refer to physical resurrection as used in this verse.

A Little Humor: Funeral Sermon At the funeral services, the pastor got carried away and his sermon far exceeded the time limit. Finally his assistant whispered, "It's getting late sir!" "I know," the pastor said, "but this doctrine of resurrection is extremely important." "Yes, sir," the minister said, "But we've got to get the body over to the cemetery in time for it." —In *Forbes Magazine*, June 5, 1995, p. 198. See: Daniel 12:2; John 5:25; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

I. The Resurrection of Christ. I Cor. 15:1-6

The Proofs of the resurrection:

1. The empty tomb.
2. The tremendous change in the lives of the disciples.
3. The silence from both the Romans and Pharisees. Not once did either of these enemy groups ever attempt to deny Christ's resurrection. They hated it and tried to suppress it, but could not refute it.
4. The existence of the church. In the less than fifty years after Christ's death, the Christian church had become a mighty power, causing the Roman government to view with growing concern its influence upon men and women. Legends and religions simply do not develop this quickly.

When we wander through a graveyard and look at the tombstones, or go into the church and examine the old monuments, we see one heading to them all, "Here lies." Then follows the name with the date of death, and perhaps some praise of the good qualities of the deceased. But how different is the epitaph on the tomb of Jesus! It is not written in gold nor cut in stone, it is spoken by the mouth of an angel; and it is the exact reverse of what is put on all other tombs: "He is not here."

--Rev. S. Baring-Gould, in the Expositor

From the book Best Sermon Illustrations by J. G. Lawson

Two irreligious young men were discussing the resurrection, telling each other why it was impossible for them to accept the doctrine. Then Deacon Myers came passing by, and in a joking way one of the young fellows called to him, "Say, Deacon, tell us why you believe that Jesus rose again!" "Well," he replied, "one reason is that I was talking with Him for half an hour this very morning." We all may have experimental proof of His resurrection and presence.

--The Sunday School Times

From the book Best Sermon Illustrations by J. G. Lawson

II. The Significance of Christ's Resurrection. I Cor. 15:12-18

The chief priests and the Pharisees were determined that Jesus was going to stay in his grave. They used every resource and power available to see to that. They secured the tomb by placing a seal on the great stone that had

been rolled in front of it to close the entrance (Matt. 27:66). They also posted guards at the entrance of the tomb. These were not the {spekoulator} who were bodyguards or executioners (Mark 6:27), nor the phulax who were keepers (Acts 5:23), but the elite {koustodia} who were the Roman army's special forces.

In spite of all their human efforts, the Jewish leaders were unable to prevent Jesus from accomplishing what had already been determined and promised: "After three days I will rise again" (Matt. 27:63). These carnal-minded, religious leaders did not know that NOTHING in the physical realm has the ability to hinder the divine will from accomplishing its purpose. **YOU CANNOT STOP A REAL RESURRECTION.**

Paul states that all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death, and in the same manner that Christ was resurrected they are to be resurrected to a new life in Christ (Rom. 6:3-7). There are individuals who want others to believe that someone or something prevents their resurrection to a new life. Such a person remains the same individual that he was before his "conversion." At this point, you should again remember that **YOU CANNOT STOP A REAL RESURRECTION** in an individual's life. You can stop a fake, but not a genuine resurrection to a new life in Christ.

God's incomparably great power is available for those who believe. "That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 1:19, 20). If you deliberately decide in your heart that you are going to bury your old self and be resurrected to a new life in Christ, you have God's promise that you cannot be stopped. However, if you are looking for an excuse for living the same old life day after day, you will find one. There are numerous people and things to blame. You can blame society, or your mate or your children, or your parents, or your neighbors or hypocrites in the church. You can blame bad breaks, the wrong side of the bed, circumstances, or your tough childhood. Excuses are endless, but if you want to be resurrected to a new life you will be. Nothing can stop you.

If you are a fake, you will always have an excuse why you cannot change. If you are genuine, you will not be stopped. **YOU CANNOT STOP A REAL RESURRECTION!**

III. The Resurrection of Believers. I Cor. 15:35-57

Unbelief Cannot Deter the Resurrection In a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, is a grave on which were placed huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel clasps. It belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Yet strangely, she directed in her will that her grave be made so secure that if there were a resurrection, it could not reach her. On the marker were inscribed these words: "This burial place must never be opened." In time, a seed, covered over by the stones, began to grow. Slowly it pushed its way through the soil and out from beneath them. As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel clasps were wrenched from their sockets. A tiny seed had become a tree that had pushed aside the stones. The dynamic life force contained in that little seed is a faint reflection of the tremendous power of God's creative word that someday will call to life the bodies of all who are in their graves. He will also bring back every person drowned at sea, cremated, or destroyed in some other way. This is no problem to the One who made something out of nothing when He spoke the universe into existence. Unbelief cannot deter the resurrection. But faith in the risen Christ opens the door to blessings that His resurrection guarantees—a glorious new spiritual body and a home in heaven. In new bodies we will be reunited with saved loved ones to live with Jesus throughout all eternity. See: John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

An Empty Grave A conversation between a Christian missionary and a Muslim illustrates a great point. The Mohammedan wanted to impress the missionary with what he considered to be the superiority of Islam. So he said, "When we go to Mecca, we at least find a coffin, but when you Christians go the Jerusalem, your mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave." To this the believer replied, "That is just the difference, Mohammed is dead and in his coffin. And all other systems of religion and philosophy are in their coffins. But Christ is risen, and all power in heaven and on earth is given to Him! He is alive forevermore! See: 1 Corinthians 15:20-24