



RESURRECTION 101

Introducing Reasons for Confidence

1 ~ Resurrection: History and Faith

Romans 8 — The Message of Hope

- The word, “hope” (*elpis*; noun and verb) appears just six times (vv. 20, 24, 25), but the message runs throughout.
- Chapter 8 has two sections:
 1. Delivered from slavery → life of the Spirit (vv. 1-17)
 2. Living in glory: power to conquer suffering (vv. 18-39)
- Section anchors:
 1. Verse 11 - “If the Spirit of him who *raised Jesus from the dead* dwells in you, he who *raised Christ Jesus from the dead* will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”
 2. Verse 34 - “Who is to condemn? *Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—* who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”
- But what if Jesus was *not* raised? Or was “raised” only in the sense of the continuation of a great ideal?
 - Paul: “What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? *If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’*” (1 Cor 15:32; cf. vv. 14, 17, 19)

- Resurrection: History and Faith
 - A Matter of Public Record
 - These Things Must Be Explained
 - “He Is Not Here . . .”
 - We Have Witnesses
 - Because He Lives: Declaration and Validation

“So, as far as the New Testament is concerned, there is a great deal at stake in the question of whether or not Jesus actually rose from the dead: the very validity of the Christian faith. And it is more than a bit ironic that so many professed Christians today fail to grasp this aspect of the gospel.”

James T. South, *Just Jesus: The Evidence of History*, 121

Responding to Current Events

- Assumptions, rooted in philosophical presuppositions, are made about Jesus and steadily repeated at the popular level; we can neither go along with these conclusions nor ignore them.
 - “In America particularly, Jesus . . . has been featured in *Time* magazine, on television and elsewhere in the media. And the people whom ordinary Christians meet, to whom they must address the gospel, have been told over and over and over by the media, on the basis of some recent book or other [e.g., *The Da Vinci Code*], that the Jesus of the Gospels is historically incredible and that Christianity is therefore based on a mistake.” (N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*, 18)
 - “It simply will not do to declare this question [of historical credibility] out-of-bounds, to say that the church’s teaching will do for us, thank you very much, so we do not need to ask historical questions. You cannot say that to a serious and enquiring person [including many of our teens and young adults] who engages you in conversation on a train or to someone who wanders into a church one Sunday and asks what it is all about” (Wright).

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The New Testament Story Happened In History

- As he began his letter to a church that had been troubled by those who rejected fundamental teachings about Jesus (cf. 1 John 2.18-19, 22; 4.2), John reminded his readers about what had happened.
 - What the church had always taught ("from the beginning"): "... the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us" (1 John 1.1-2).
 - In reaffirming the teaching, he used the language of historical occurrence: "*That which . . . we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we **looked upon** and have **touched** with our hands, . . .*" (v. 1).
- Paul declared that Jesus died, was buried, was raised, and was seen; like John, he also said that these declarations were what the apostles had always preached (1 Cor 15.3-8, 11).
- In his defense to Agrippa (and Festus), Paul appealed to what the king knew about current events: "For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, *for this has not been done in a corner*" (Acts 26.26).

"If Christianity is not rooted in things that actually happened in first-century Palestine, we might as well be Buddhists, Marxists or almost anything else. And if Jesus never existed, or if he was quite different from what the Gospels and the church's worship affirms him to have been, then we are indeed living in cloud-cuckoo land" (Wright)

Taking History Seriously

- "It cannot be stated too strongly that Christianity is an historical religion, and that it is so intimately tied to history that if the historical credibility of its sources were to be proven false, it would at once collapse as a possible claimant for our loyalty" (Charles C. Anderson, *The Historical Jesus: A Continuing Quest*, 55).
- "... I have to confess my conviction that as a Christian I have no business operating with double standards. Because my faith is tied to history I have to use the best historical tools available for studying history. The rules of the game do not allow me to relax the standards when it comes to matters of faith" (Colin Brown, *History and Faith: A Personal Exploration*, 14-15).
- "... our starting point [in defending the Jesus of the Bible] is not belief in the Bible as divinely inspired or infallible—or anything similar. We believe that when the tools of the historian are applied to the biblical text, it builds its own case for its unique character. Or as one British scholar said, 'We treat the Bible like any other book to show that it is not like any other book.'" (J. Ed Komoszewski, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace, *Reinventing Jesus: How Contemporary Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture*, 18).

In Part 2, A Matter of Public Record:

- A closer look at New Testament texts that illustrate the earliest believers' emphasis on and teaching about the resurrection.
- With particular emphasis on their commitment to evidence and persuasion.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV