

The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

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Resurrection

1. NT Evidence
 - 1.1. Gospels - Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20
 - 1.2. The core of early apostolic preaching - God raised Him up!
 - 1.2.1. Acts 2:24, 31-32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 4:33; 5:30
 - 1.3. Basis for Christian Gospel and faith - 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17
 - 1.4. Whole NT falls apart if there is no resurrection
2. The Nature of Christ's Resurrection
 - 2.1. Not merely resuscitation - permanent resurrection
 - 2.1.1. Lazarus, widows son, and other had been raised temporarily.
 - 2.1.2. However, all of these died again and so were really resuscitations rather than eternal resurrections.
 - 2.1.3. Jesus was raised once and for all, never to die again.
 - 2.1.4. Romans 6:9-10 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.
 - 2.1.5. Revelation 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.
 - 2.2. It was a bodily resurrection - not merely spiritual
 - 2.2.1. Jesus has a real body composed of flesh that could be seen, touched, felt, and could eat and drink
 - 2.2.1.1. Luke 24:39-43 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.
 - 2.2.1.2. John 20:20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.
 - 2.2.1.3. Matthew 28:9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.
 - 2.2.1.4. Acts 10:41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

2.2.2. The literal. bodily resurrection of Jesus is an essential element of the Christian faith

2.2.2.1. 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

2.2.2.2. 1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

2.2.2.3. 1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

2.2.2.4. 1 Corinthians 15:35-54 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.³⁹ All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.⁴⁵ So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of

an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

- 2.2.3. This is essential because Jesus lives and reigns as the God-Man. His redemption encompassed us in our totality - and this includes our bodies. If He was not bodily raised, then our salvation does not include our bodies, and redemption is less in scope than creation and than the fall. In essence, this means God lost and His plans were frustrated. May it never be!
- 2.3. His Resurrection Body, while a real physical body, has been glorified in the Resurrection, and may have abilities that supersede our normal bodies
 - 2.3.1. It may be that sometimes Jesus sometimes was recognizable while at other times His appearance had changed so that the disciples did not recognize Him.
 - 2.3.1.1. Note that the disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus (Luke 24:13-32), and Mary Magdalene did not recognize him at first (John 20:14-16). It may be that He looked different at these times.
 - 2.3.1.2. However, as Grudem points out on page 609, it may have been that God prevented the disciples on the road from recognizing Jesus, and Mary may not have recognized Him because it was dark.
 - 2.3.1.3. Normally it seems that the disciples recognized Jesus fairly quickly. See Matthew 28:9, 17; John 20:19-20, 26-28; John 21:7, 12).
 - 2.3.1.4. I would not make much of this point as it seems inconclusive.
 - 2.3.2. It may be that Jesus' body was able to do things our bodies can not do such as pass through walls, disappear from sight, or float in the air (at the ascension).
 - 2.3.2.1. Jesus seems to have passed through locked doors or walls in John 20:19, 26. However, as Grudem points out, it may be that an angel simply unlocked and relocked the door as in Acts 5 and Acts 12.
 - 2.3.2.2. While it does appear that Jesus disappeared in Luke 24, Philip seems to have had a similar experience by the power of the Spirit in Acts 8.
 - 2.3.2.3. Jesus is taken up in the ascension, but before His death He walked on water. Both of these could simply be miraculous occurrences rather than the norm.
 - 2.3.3. The important thing to state is not any new properties Jesus' body may have, but rather its literal, physical nature, and its continuity with His pre-resurrection body. The body is transformed to be sure, but it is the same body.
 - 2.3.4. Grudem, 610-613, has a good discussion of this.

3. The whole Trinity is involved in Jesus' resurrection
 - 3.1. The Father raised Jesus
 - 3.1.1. Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.
 - 3.1.2. Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
 - 3.1.3. 1 Corinthians 6:14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.
 - 3.1.4. Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle--sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead--
 - 3.1.5. Ephesians 1:20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
 - 3.2. Jesus raised Himself from the dead
 - 3.2.1. John 2:19-21 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."²⁰ The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.
 - 3.2.2. John 10:17-18 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again.¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."
 - 3.3. The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead
 - 3.3.1. Romans 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.
 - 3.3.2. 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,
 - 3.3.3. Romans 1:3-4 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - 3.3.4. These verses regarding the Spirit as not as clear as those regarding the Father and the Son, but it appears that, as usual, this work of God was fully Trinitarian.
4. The significance of Christ's resurrection
 - 4.1. His resurrections assures our regeneration
 - 4.1.1. 1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1. Ephesians 2:5-6 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
2. His resurrection assures our justification
 - 2.1. Romans 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
 - 2.2. Romans 8:33-34 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
 - 2.3. God has accepted His sacrifice, so our sins can be forgiven and removed!
3. His resurrection assures our sanctification
 - 3.1. Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
 - 3.2. 1 Peter 3:21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
 - 3.3. Colossians 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
 - 3.4. Also note how in the great resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul concludes the discussion with 1 Corinthians 15:58 - "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."
4. His resurrection assures our future glorification - our bodies will be resurrected as well
 - 4.1. 1 Corinthians 6:14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.
 - 4.2. 2 Corinthians 4:14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.
 - 4.3. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.
 - 4.4. Note how Christ's literal, physical, bodily resurrection and our own future literal, physical bodily resurrection are inextricably intertwined in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul says that this is an essential element of the Gospel. To deny either of these facets - Christ's literal, physical, bodily resurrection or our own future literal, physical, bodily resurrection - is to deny the Gospel and to have believed in vain - to be a heretic.

Ascension

1. Christ Ascended to the Right Hand of God
 - 1.1. Psalm 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
 - 1.2. Acts 2:34-35 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
 - 1.3. Ephesians 1:20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
2. Christ ascension means that He is Lord and Messiah - His claims have been validated
 - 2.1. Acts 2:34-36 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 2.2. Acts 5:31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.
3. Christ's ascension to God's right hand means He has all authority and rules all things
 - 3.1. 1 Peter 3:22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.
 - 3.2. Ephesians 1:20-21 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
 - 3.3. Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
4. This is the completion of the "states of Christ"
 - 4.1. The phrase "the states of Christ" refers to the different relationships Jesus had to God's law, mankind, the primacy of humility or honor, etc. at the various stages of Christ's redemptive work.
 - 4.2. Two two main states that are discussed are Christ's humiliation and His exaltation
 - 4.2.1. Christ's humiliation includes His incarnation, life, suffering, death, and burial into the realm of the dead.
 - 4.2.2. Christ's exaltation includes His resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand (being seated at God's right hand), and future return in glory.
5. The significance of Christ's ascension for us
 - 5.1. We are united with Christ and sit in the heavenly realms with Him now
 - 5.1.1. Ephesians 2:5-6 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

- 5.1.2. Just as we are united with Christ in his humiliation - his suffering, death, and burial, - so we are united with Him in His exaltation - His resurrection and ascension.
- 5.2. This means we have authority over spiritual powers of darkness now.
 - 5.2.1. Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
 - 5.2.2. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
 - 5.2.3. Mark 16:15-18 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."
 - 5.2.4. These powers are exercised in spiritual warfare, prayer, and especially as we preach the Gospel.
- 5.3. This guarantees our own future ascension to God to be with Him
 - 5.3.1. John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
 - 5.3.2. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.
- 5.4. This guarantees our future authority in the new heavens and earth where we will reign as God intended for man to reign
 - 5.4.1. 1 Corinthians 6:3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!
 - 5.4.2. Revelation 2:26-27 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations-- ²⁷ 'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'-- just as I have received authority from my Father.
 - 5.4.3. Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.
 - 5.4.4. Hebrews 2:5-8 It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. ⁶ But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you

care for him?⁷ You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor⁸ and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.