

JESUS: DEAD OR ALIVE

THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

How do I know Jesus really rose from the dead?

BIG IDEA

Jesus physically died on the cross and after three days resurrected from the dead in bodily form.

SCRIPTURE USED

1 Corinthians 15:16-19: *If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished! And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world.*

Matthew 28:2-4: *Suddenly there was a great earthquake, because an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled aside the stone and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.*

1 Corinthians 15:3-6: *I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me—that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died by now.*

OPENER

Show the crucifixion/resurrection scenes from *The Passion of the Christ*, *The Bible* miniseries, *Son of God* or some other movie about Jesus.

LESSON

EXPLAIN

What we watched just now was actors in a film with special effects, the crucifixion and resurrection we saw on the screen didn't really happen. And this is exactly what many people believe about the real crucifixion and resurrection. To them, Jesus might have been real, and He might have even died on the cross, but there is no way a person comes back from the dead.

ASK

- Why do so many people have a hard time accepting the resurrection?
- Do you think the resurrection is a stumbling block for some people coming to faith in Jesus?
- "My whole worldview basically stands or falls on the resurrection being true. If it was fake, then so am I." What do you think of this statement?

EXPLAIN

Well, that statement is basically how the Apostle Paul felt. Listen in on what he said in 1 Corinthians 15:16-19:

And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

ASK

- Why does Paul think all Christians would be the most miserable people in the world if Jesus didn't come back from the dead?
- Do you think the resurrection of Jesus has implications for whether or not He was who He said He was? Why or why not?

EXPLAIN

As you can see, whether or not Jesus rose from the dead is not an exercise in trivial pursuit, it is the foundation of our faith and our hope for the future. So let's take a closer look at just three of the many reasons why you can have great confidence that the resurrection of Christ is not just a story. And hopefully, you will feel better equipped to talk about this amazing foundational truth of the Christian faith as you initiate spiritual conversations with those who don't know Jesus and seek out opportunities