

The Significance of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ

Given that the major Christian denominations around the world celebrate Easter from Friday 18 April to Monday 21st of April, and given that the Jehovah's Witness (JW) churches have sent out invitations to homes around Auckland inviting people to a meeting to "listen to a brief talk" that "will explain why Jesus' death is so important", and we covered a study on that topic last week. But given that following His death, He was, according to the Scriptures, raised from the dead, and even if the JW does not provide a follow-up meeting to their "brief talk" on His death, we put forward this study of the Scriptures as a comparison with what the official JW teaching is, according to www.JW.org. In the hope that we can learn more about the importance of the Lord's resurrection as recorded by the Holy Spirit of God in the Authorised Bible, and encourage believers to identify a counterfeit man-made religion that our adversary uses to deceive people by using bible words and a corrupt copy of the Scriptures to establish doctrine that is *like* Biblical doctrine yet is contradictory to Biblical teaching. For our study of what the Scriptures say about the significance of the resurrection of Christ, we have searched the Scriptures using the words "resurrection", "resurrected", "rise", "risen" & "raised" using a concordance, and considered the verses that apply to the death and subsequent resurrection of Christ. In doing so we have captured the majority of verses that speak of Jesus' resurrection.

We will establish nine points about the significance of Christ's resurrection:- (1) some Jewish leaders did not believe their Scriptures and said "there is no resurrection", and (2) if there is no resurrection then Christians are still in their sins, and (3) the Scriptures record that the Lord Jesus *was* raised from the dead and appeared unto many, and (4) Christ was raised a spiritual body, and (5) Paul preached the gospel of Christ crucified that includes His death, burial and resurrection, and (6) When the resurrection of Christ is preached it differentiates God Almighty and the *all* the other gods, and (7) those who do not believe God are raised to the great white throne judgement, and (8) Christians hope to be raised from the dead at the rapture, or if they are alive, to ascend into the clouds to meet the Lord, and forever be with the Lord, and (9) when a Christian is resurrected he will be fashioned unto Christ's glorious body.

Before we consider these points let us establish some background on what happened after a man died up until the time of Christ's death and resurrection.

- a) a man who does not believe God, dies and is resurrected in the last days (Job.19: 25-27), and
- b) a man who believes God, dies and he goes to be with his fathers (2Kg.12: 21), and
- c) God raised the dead to life again in the Old Testament through the hand of His prophets (Heb 11:35). This verse refers to the two occurrences in the Old Testament, the first in 1Kg.17: 21 and the second in 2Kg.4: 35. In both accounts the prophet prayed to the Lord God Almighty. In the case of 1Kg.17: 22 indicates that at death the soul leaves the body, because when the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, "the soul of the child come unto him again, and he revived." So a Jew that believes his Tanakh, an acronym that refers to the division of the Jewish Bible into "Torah (teaching), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (writings)", believes that his God can raise the dead back to life. The Lord Jesus testified in Jn 5:21 that "the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth [them]" (Jn.5: 21).
- d) In the Old Testament they expected, they hoped, in a better resurrection to come, refer Heb. 11:35.
- e) In the Old Testament it is prophesied that Christ would suffer and rise from the dead, refer Lk. 24: 46, see also Jn.20: 9, Acts 17: 3 & 26: 23.
- f) The Lord Jesus Christ foretold of His resurrection from the dead, refer Mt 17: 9, see also: Mk 9: 9. He foretold of His resurrection from the dead that when it came true His disciples would believe His words, refer Jn 2: 22.

Hence, the resurrection of Christ proved what He spoke to be truth.

- g) The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ raised the dead, refer Jn 12:17, see also: Mt 10:8, 11:5, Lk 7:22, Jn 12: 1 & 9
- h) The Lord Jesus taught there are two resurrections, good/just and those who are evil/unjust, refer Jn 5: 29, see also: Lk.14: 14, Acts 24: 15 & Rev 20: 5 & 6
- i) The Lord Jesus taught He is the resurrection, those who believes in Him shall live, though they were dead, refer Jn 11: 24.
- j) The Lord Jesus taught that in the resurrection there is neither marrying, nor women given in marriage, refer Mt 22:28, 30, 31 & 32, see also Mk 12: 23-26 & Lk 20:33-35.

k) Is it any wonder that the chief priest and Pharisees came to Pilate after Jesus' death and commanded him to guard the tomb lest His disciples steal His body, in which case their last error would be worse than their first, refer Mt 27: 64.?

Given all the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the words of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament, what is the significance of Jesus' resurrection, compared to the child whom God raised through the hand of Elijah? We will answer this question with nine points:

1. Some Jewish leaders did not believe their Scriptures and said "there is no resurrection".

Mt 22:23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection,

See also Mk 12:18, Lk 20:27 & Acts 23:8 & 1Cor 15:12.

In other words those who said there was no resurrection, did not believe their Scriptures. It is no different to today when those "Christians" who claim to believe the Bible reject the resurrection.

2. If there is no resurrection then;

i) Christ is not risen

1Cor.15: 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

See also: 1Cor.15: 16

ii) Christians are still in their sins.

1Cor 15: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye are yet in your sins.

iii) Christians are false witnesses of God

1Cor 15: 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

3. The Scriptures record that the Lord Jesus *was* raised from the dead and appeared unto many.

Mt 27:53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

And God Almighty sent an angel to tell the women at His tomb that Christ had risen from the dead (Mt 28: 6 & 7).

i) Christ *is* risen from the dead and is the first fruits of those that are dead, refer 1Cor.15: 20, and

ii) God the Father raised Christ from the dead, refer Acts 3: 15, see also Acts 4:10, 13: 30, 34 & 17:31, 2Cor 1: 9, Gal 1: 1 & Col 2:12, and

iii) God the Father raised Christ from the dead and set him at his right hand in heaven, refer Eph.1: 20.

4. Christ was raised a spiritual body

Lk 24: 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

See also: 1Cor.15: 50

Significance of Christ's resurrection

5. Paul preached the gospel of Christ crucified that includes His death, burial and resurrection.

Rom 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

See also: 1Cor.15: 1-4 & 2Tim 2: 8

Hence, the gospel that Paul gave the church-age to preach was different to that which Jesus preached. When a person believes the gospel of Christ crucified they become a new creature "in Christ", a Christian, and they believe the Bible.

6. When the resurrection of Christ is preached it differentiates God Almighty and the *all* the other gods.

Acts 17:18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

7. Those who do not believe God are raised to the great white throne judgement.

Acts 24:15 *And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. Compare: Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. Compare: Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

See also Job 19: 25-27

Those who do not take part in the first resurrection (the non-believers, the unjust) remain in the grave. Their resurrection from the grave will be via the great white throne judgement of Rev.20: 11, to then be delivered into the lake of fire in verse 13.

8. Christians hope to be raised from the dead at the rapture, or if they are alive, to ascend into the clouds to meet the Lord and forever be with the Lord.

1Thes.4: 16 & 17 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

9. When a Christian is resurrected he will be fashioned unto Christ's glorious body
Phil.3: 21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

See also: 1Jn.3: 2.

Hence, when a believer he will be raised in incorruption (1Cor.15: 42 & 52).

We now have an understanding of what the Bible says, now what does the JW say? See [http://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-the-resurrection/#?insight\[search_id\]=4cc7df3b-9c73-4c48-99d8-cff6cb31045f&insight\[search_result_index\]=1](http://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-the-resurrection/#?insight[search_id]=4cc7df3b-9c73-4c48-99d8-cff6cb31045f&insight[search_result_index]=1)

"Of course, Paul himself did not believe that death meant an eternity of oblivion. He was convinced that the dead could live again, with the prospect of never dying at all. That conviction was founded on an event of immense importance, the truthfulness of which he considered to be unassailable—the resurrection of Christ Jesus."
"Where will people be resurrected? Some people are resurrected to life in heaven to rule as kings with Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 5:9, 10). The Bible calls this "the first resurrection" and "the earlier resurrection," both expressions implying that there is another resurrection to follow. (Revelation 20:6; Philippians 3:11) This later resurrection will be to life on earth, which the vast majority of those brought back to life will enjoy. — Psalm 37:29.

Who will be resurrected? The Bible says that "there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) The righteous include faithful people, such as Noah, Sarah, and Abraham. (Genesis 6:9; Hebrews 11:11; James 2:21) The unrighteous include those who failed to meet God's standards but did not have the opportunity to learn and follow them. However, those who become so wicked that they are beyond reform will not be resurrected. When such ones die, they suffer permanent destruction with no hope of a return to life. — Matthew 23:33; Hebrews 10:26, 27."

Each of us could do the same exercise and compare what Scripture says compared to the Roman Catholics, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists and any other "Christian" church the world believes to be "just" another denomination. And you will find two things in common:

1. Each will use similar words to the Bible.
2. Each will have *some* truth in what they say.

So, how does the reader establish which is truth and which is error, given that our study is from the Scriptures and the JW quotes bible verses as well?

First, they compare the JW doctrine to the Scriptures to see what is missing, and second they establish any contradictions between the JW doctrine and the Scriptures.

i) Comparison of the JW doctrine to the Scriptures:-

- a) The JW miss the significance of Jesus returning in the clouds, and the dead in Christ being raised to meet Him in the clouds, and
- b) therefore, the hope of a believer waiting for the trumpet is lost, as is the hope of spending eternity with the Lord in heaven also being lost.

ii) Contradictions between the JW and the Scriptures:-

- a) the lost man is raised to the great white throne judgment and then cast into the lake of fire.

The interpretation of the JW does not compare Scripture with Scripture and therefore some of their points contradict other parts of the scriptures and are false.

From our study we encourage you to know what the Scriptures say first, whether it be about the Lord Jesus' birth, His death, His resurrection, or any other topic. Then look for aspects of the JW

(and others) instruction that are not supported in Scripture, and that are contrary to Scripture. Such that when the Lord, even Jesus, opens up an opportunity for you to speak with a "Christian" from any denomination, you are able to show them "what saith the Scriptures", and able to convince the gainsayers (Tit.1: 9).

Having said what we have said let us say it again. In this study on the significance of the resurrection of Christ we have covered nine points:- (1) some Jewish leaders did not believe their Scriptures and said "there is no resurrection", and (2) if there is no resurrection then Christians are still in their sins, and (3) the Scriptures record that the Lord Jesus *was* raised from the dead and appeared unto many, and (4) Christ was raised a spiritual body, and (5) Paul preached the gospel of Christ crucified that includes His death, burial and resurrection, and (6) When the resurrection of Christ is preached it differentiates God Almighty and the *all* the other gods, and (7) those who do not believe God are raised to the great white throne judgement, and (8) Christians hope to be raised from the dead at the rapture, or if they are alive, to ascend into the clouds to meet the Lord, and forever be with the Lord, and (9) when a Christian is resurrected he will be fashioned unto Christ's glorious body.