

"Seeking Jesus"
Pastor Wally Contreras
April 12, 2020

"Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.'" (Matthew 28:1-10)

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Pastor Wally pointed out in his Maundy Thursday message that Peter said to Jesus "You shall never wash my feet [and] Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." (John 13:8) In what way(s) have I been like Peter and told Jesus that He couldn't cleanse me of my sin or deal with my failures?

Pastor Wally during his Good Friday message spoke of Jesus' beatings, suffering, and crucifixion. So, why do we call Good Friday "good," when it is such a dark and bleak event commemorating a day of suffering and death for Jesus?

Pastor Wally said that it is important for me to understand the meaning of resurrection. The Latin word (resurrectus, resurgo) means "to rise". Webster, 1828 defines it to mean "[a] rising again; chiefly, the revival of the dead of the human race, or their return from the grave, particularly at the general judgment." It is also important to remember that Jesus' resurrection wasn't the first resurrection seen by the world:

1. Widow of Zarephath's son - 1 Kings 17:17-24 (Raised by Elijah)
2. Shunamite's son - 2 Kings 4:20-37 (Raised by Elisha)
3. Man tossed into Elisha's tomb - 2 Kings 13:21 (Raised by God)
4. Widow of Nain's son - Luke 7:11-17 (Raised by Jesus)
5. Jairus' daughter - Mark 5:35-43 (Raised by Jesus)
6. Lazarus - John 11:1-44 (Raised by Jesus)
7. Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) - Acts 9:36-41 (Raised by Peter)
8. Eutychus - Acts 20:7-12 (Raised by Paul)
9. Those resurrected at Jesus' crucifixion - Matthew 27:51-53 (Raised by God)
10. Jesus - Mark 16:1-8 (Raised by God)

What do these resurrections mean to me in general and concerning the resurrection of Jesus in particular?

C.H. Spurgeon said this regarding resurrection in his February 17, 1856 sermon: "There are very few Christians who believe the resurrection of the dead. You may be surprised to hear that, but I should not wonder if I discovered that you yourself have doubts on the subject. By the resurrection of the dead is meant something very different from the immortality of the soul: that, every Christian believes, and therein is only on a level with the heathen, who believes it too...The doctrine is that this actual body in which I now exist is to live with my soul; that not only is the "vital spark of heavenly flame" to burn in heaven, but the very censer in which the incense of my life doth smoke is holy unto the Lord, and is to be preserved for ever. The spirit, every one confesses, is eternal; but how many there are who deny that the bodies of men will actually start up from their graves at the great day? Many of you believe you will have a body in heaven, but you think it will be an airy fantastic body, instead of believing that it will be a body like to this—flesh and blood (although not the same kind of flesh, for all flesh is not the same flesh), a solid, substantial body, even such as we have here. And there are yet fewer of you who believe that the wicked will have bodies in hell; for it is gaining ground everywhere that there are to be no positive torments for the damned in hell to affect their bodies, but that it is to be metaphorical fire, metaphorical brimstone, metaphorical chains, metaphorical torture." Do I truly grasp the true nature of bodily resurrection or has this miracle of God somehow become normalized/trivialized/ignored by me over time? Do I simply accept Jesus' resurrection as a matter of faith because it's just too difficult or too "weird" to explain? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Luke 7:17 says of Nain's son's resurrection that "...this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country." Of Jairus' daughter's resurrection we're told that "...the report of this went through all that district." (Matthew 9:26). In John 12:10-11 we see that "...the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus." Of Jesus' resurrection we learn of the guards who had been present at the tomb "...when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'" (Matthew 28:12-13) In 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 after His resurrection, Jesus was seen by "...Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me (Paul). What, if any, was the impact that these resurrections had on the world?

What was the world's response to these resurrections?

How does the world today respond to Jesus' resurrection and why?

