

**Text:** Acts 2:22-40

**Title:** The Fact and Meaning of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

**Truth:** The resurrection means that Jesus is the risen Lord and Christ who will reign over the world—and who offers you forgiveness and eternal life.

**Date/Location:** Resurrection Sunday April 5, 2026 at FBC

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## **Introduction**

On this Resurrection Sunday, or what is more commonly called Easter, we focus on the miracle that Jesus came back to life after dying a brutal death a couple of days before.

### **I. The Fact of the Resurrection**

- A. Let us review what we studied on Resurrection Sunday in 2025.
  1. We can make a historical case for the resurrection. To begin with, we observed several facts subsequent to the crucifixion of Christ. First, He was buried. Second, early that Sunday morning certain witnesses claimed the tomb was empty. Third, there are many testimonies of post-mortem appearances of Christ. Fourth and finally, Jesus's disciples came to genuinely believe that He rose from the dead and then carried on a decades-long ministry that upended the world's religious systems.
  2. The best explanation of these facts is this: God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection explains all the facts very well, is plausible given the Lord's previous claims and prior record of working verified, eyewitnessed miracles, and it fits given the nature of God and the nature of the supernatural person Jesus.
  3. I explained why Christians believe in the resurrection—starting with how we presuppose that God exists and has revealed Himself to us. We depend on God for everything, including our lives, our faculties of reason, our prosperity, and information about key historical events including the interpretation of those events. He—not we—is our ultimate authority and without Him we can explain nothing. Then, we believe the resurrection is more than adequately attested in the Scriptures, world history, and the millions of people who have come to know Him.

4. I explained that if someone does not believe in the resurrection of Christ, it is likely because of an allegiance to oneself as the ultimate authority. But you—if you are that someone—cannot trust yourself that way because there are many people just as smart and thoughtful as you are who contradict your view, and because you have not thoroughly reviewed all the evidence for and against the resurrection of Christ. Apart from God, you simply cannot be sure of your view because it is tightly circular—you believe it because *you* say so! The Christian’s assurance is quite different because it is sourced outside of ourselves, not within us!

B. Hopefully you do believe that God raised Jesus from the dead—probably the majority of you do. I am grateful for that. What that means is that you have come to realize that Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and then on the third day was raised in His same body from the grave. The same body that went into the tomb was re-enlivened and came out of the tomb. He was then observed by many eyewitnesses on about 12 separate occasions over a period of nearly six weeks (40 days). For reference, see Acts 1:1-3 and 1 Cor. 15:3-4.

1. Jesus did not rise “spiritually” or merely in their imagination.
2. Jesus actually overcame the state of death and returned to physical life.

But what does His resurrection mean? What is the significance of it?

## **II. The Meaning of the Resurrection**

A. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a very uplifting thing because it means that it is possible to overcome death.

I think if we could live in good health and a decent society (keep those two conditions in mind), we would all like to live forever, enjoying the good things that God has provided as long as possible. I doubt that we are more “noble” than the average person in that we find death to be preferable or that it is a natural thing or that we look forward to “making way” for the next generation so that we do not overburden the earth with our ongoing presence. Some people might say things like that, but no one really savors the

thought of going through death and leaving the familiar behind. We understand intuitively that death is not a friend, it is not a virtue, it is not fun, it is not a good thing.

We all face the dreaded end of death, and often much sooner than we would like. Poor health and terrible societal conditions make it even *seem* preferable in some cases as a release from suffering. But that suffering is because sin entered the world, and death through sin. Had sin and death not taken over our world, we would be very happy to live 250, 500, or even 1000 years.

So, the resurrection of Jesus should be of intense interest to us. What does it mean that He overcame death? Somehow can we do the same? Indeed, that is at the core of what Christianity is about.

B. We could take this in several directions.

1. We could focus on the **meaning of the resurrection of Jesus for the non-Christian**. God “now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31). God has ordained Jesus to be the judge of all mankind (Acts 10:42). Jesus’s resurrection means our judgment is assured because the qualified judge is alive.
2. We could, alternately, focus on the **meaning of the resurrection for the Christian**. It means that if we genuinely believe God raised the Lord from the dead, we will be rescued from sin and death (Romans 10:9). It means that every Christian will rise from the dead (John 11:24-25, 1 Cor. 6:14). It gives us hope that the future is not empty and in fact the Law and the Prophets were completely correct when they told of a resurrection not only for the Messiah but for His people (Acts 24:15, 1 Peter 1:3). It shows us that we can trust in God even when circumstances are dire (2 Cor. 1:9). The resurrection means that death is not the end. It also proves that believers are justified (Rom 4:25). We aim to know the power of His resurrection in this life and to arrive at resurrection in the next (Phil. 3:10). Some in our extended Christian family will receive “a better resurrection” because they have suffered extra for the Lord (Heb. 11:35). God

raised up Jesus in order to bless us by turning us away from our sins (Acts 3:26) and to give us repentance and forgiveness (Acts 5:30). His resurrection sets our affection on things above instead of on things on this earth (Col. 3:1).

C. But I want to focus on the **meaning of the resurrection for Jesus Himself**, for how we view Him, and for what His present and future looks like.

1. The resurrection makes the statement that Jesus is different from other humanity. It sets Him apart as Lord and Son of God because He laid down his life and took it up again (John 10:17-18; 1 John 3:16).
2. The resurrection designates to all that He is the Son of God (Romans 1:3-4) in the manner of being coronated as King (Psalm 2:7). Not that He became the Son at this moment, for He was already God's "Son Jesus Christ." Rather, He became exalted in glory with a new sort of office, at the right hand of God, Prince, and Savior (Acts 5:30) who will eventually be set as king in Zion (Acts 13:33, see Psalm 2).
3. He is no longer subject to death (Romans 6:9). In fact, death could not hold onto Him (Acts 2:24). He was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God (2 Cor. 13:4).

D. Let us continue to focus on the resurrection of Jesus by seeing what it meant for Him by looking at Acts 2:22-40. Please turn there and read along. Notice the layout of Peter's message. He speaks in several paragraphs, and interleaves two prophecies from the Old Testament. Each of these Old Testament texts were predictions that came to fulfillment in Jesus. He explains how God affirmed Jesus to be His messenger, but how the people rejected and crucified Him. This was all in accordance with God's predetermined purpose and plan.

E. What happened for Jesus in all this?

1. God raised Jesus from the grave, freeing Him from the pains of death. In fact, death was not strong enough to retain Him.

2. King David predicted that His Messiah-Son would be assured by God's presence at His right hand.
  3. David said that His Son would rest (the sleep of death) in hope that He would not experience decay in the grave like all other men. This part of the Psalm in particular cannot refer to King David—it looks forward to someone quite different than David.
  4. David said that Jesus would rejoice in the presence of the Father as He enjoyed "the ways of life" after His death.
  5. David knew that Christ would sit on his (David's) throne.
  6. In sum, David knowing all this prophesied that the Christ would not be left in Hades, not experience corruption of the body, and would rise from the dead.
  7. Now Jesus is exalted, that is lifted up to the right hand of God. His honor has been enhanced in fame and power.
  8. He received the promise of the Spirit which He poured out on His church beginning 50 days after His resurrection.
  9. Jesus is experiencing the promise of Psalm 110:1, that the Father told Him to sit at the right hand of God and await His enemies to be put under His feet.
- F. This Jesus, who was crucified by our sins, has been made Lord and Christ. He is the creator of all creation, the redeemer of all creation, and now also He is the declared Lord of all creation who will reign over it as king and judge. He is the chosen one of God to bring you back to Himself.

The resurrection means all of that, and it calls for us to respond by moving our allegiance over to Him, from whatever has our allegiance now. That might be pagan idols, or money, or pleasure, or self-autonomy. But the resurrection of Jesus demands that we switch our loyalty to Jesus by trusting our eternal souls to Him, by repenting of sin and setting out in faith to follow Him.

- G. Notice how Peter's audience responded when they heard that they had just offed their Messiah and Lord. Their assassination did not hold, and the Man came back from the dead. Uh oh. If someone

comes back from the dead like that, you would naturally conclude that you are in trouble. They cried out, “What shall we do?”

It is the same when you realize that Jesus died because of your sins and then miraculously came back to life. You either get lined up with Him and receive His forgiveness, or you will face Him again in a not-so-friendly encounter.

H. Peter tells them what to do: repent. You will receive the Spirit of God as a gift from the Lord. Then be baptized as an outward symbol of that inward spiritual transformation. God has promised this salvation to Jews (“you and your children” in Acts 2:39) as well as to Gentiles (“all who are afar off”). Think of the grace of this—that the same people who killed Jesus are now offered peace, a truce, life, forgiveness, and a place with Christ in His kingdom. Instead of being offered death, they are offered life.

This is right in line with Jesus, as He was nailed to the cross, asking God the Father to forgive His murderers (Luke 23:34). Thank the Lord for extending this offer of forgiveness to us too.

## **Conclusion**

It might seem unbelievable to think that God raises the dead (Acts 26:8). But with all that people believe today, including sketchy accounts of post-mortem experiences followed by a re-enlivening, or the spontaneous generation of life from non-life, it does not seem so far-fetched to think that the Creator of the universe can rejuvenate a body and bring back to life what He created from nothing in the first place.

He did it with Jesus. He will do it with you (Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29). His resurrection means your resurrection. His resurrection means your judgment.

But His resurrection also means glory and honor for Him. It means that He is sitting at God’s right hand, waiting to step into His kingdom and rule the world, with His people by His side. It means He is Lord and Christ, King, and Judge. He is worthy of our worship and praise.