

**The
Reality
Of
The
Resurrection**

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The subject on the resurrection is treated as a fact to Christians. Indeed, the resurrection is a theological fact in the Holy Bible. More so, it is the hope of all believers in Christ that there is life after death. If there is no resurrection, then how can it be a comfort for believers in Christ bidding farewell to those who have died in faith in Christ? How can it be a relief to those who have debilitating infirmities look forward to a new lease of life after death where sickness, pains, sorrows and sufferings will not plague them again in the future living in the presence of Almighty God? If the resurrection is not real, then why be a Christian in the first place? Why should we shortchange ourselves by living according to the precepts of the Holy Bible disadvantaging ourselves in this world when there is no resurrection in the future? But Christians do believe that there is a resurrection especially the resurrection is part of the component of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the resurrection of Christ, the gospel is incomplete and can save no one.

Notwithstanding, this topic on the resurrection may not be as apparent to those disciples living with the Lord during the Lord's earthly ministry. In fact, the resurrection seems so unbelievable to them. In addition, why is there a necessity for the resurrection when the Lord is already on earth who could make things right immediately by imposing His rule and power on earth? The resurrection is understandably an wanted and unnecessary interruption to the plans and perception of the disciples with Christ. Hence, here is this book based on a sermon to examine the context and condition during those days of the disciples concerning this subject on the resurrection. May we live above those myopic perception and understanding of the disciples in time past! May the Lord bless the study of His holy words!

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. (John 11:20-27)

The passage here concerns the topic on the resurrection. It is a controversial topic. Some believe there is a resurrection and some do not believe there is any resurrection. Some believe in reincarnation and some believe death is the end of a living experience and there is no punishment for sin after death. Some also believe in the endless cycle of reincarnation and achieving utopia is the final ultimate goal.

For Bible believing Christians, resurrection is one of the central tenets of the Christian faith. In particular, Christianity is centered on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, the resurrection is a very important doctrine of our Christian faith. It is important enough for Paul to deliver people to Satan for having the wrong idea about the resurrection. If Christ is not resurrected, then Christianity is just like any other religion where all their founders died and were buried and remained buried. Without the resurrection of Christ our faith is in vain. **And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (1 Corinthians 15:17-19)**

Indeed if the Lord Jesus Christ did not rise again from the dead, then our faith is in vain. Why are we wasting our time here? What are we singing about every Sunday? Are we singing about a dead Saviour and praising a dead Saviour? Are we worshipping a dead Saviour? How can a dead Saviour save us in the first place? What is the point of worship and praises when the Saviour is dead and remained dead? Surely we have been deceived. Someone has told us a cock and bull story. If there is no life after death, then we are really hopeless.

Do not we have better things to do? Do not we have a hobby? If Christ is not risen from the dead and our gathering Sunday after Sunday is indeed a complete waste of time. We better get a life while we can. Why waste it away with some vain worship worshipping a dead Saviour who could not even save himself. Can He save us? But we all know better, do not we? We who believe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ know Christ is alive and He is right now interceding for us at the right hand of God.

The passage here concerns the death of Lazarus and his eventual resurrection. No doubt the two sisters Mary and Martha were broken hearted. Who would not mourn and weep over the lost of a loved one? Death is the ultimate equalizer for all man. Death is a certainty and its appointment no man can skip. Death comes when we least expect it too. For these two sisters, their grief is compounded over the fact that the lost of their brother could be avoidable as the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, was not far away from them. He was within reach and Lazarus could have been healed. Martha in fact blamed the Lord for the death of her brother.

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (John 11:21) This was a factual statement. This was a claim that can be substantiated by facts. When Lazarus was sick, the two sisters informed the Lord and they hoped He could come and heal him. The Lord had been healing the sick and casting out devils and of course what is too hard for the Lord! But the Lord refused to come. He stayed behind for two more days and to ensure that Lazarus die. So Martha was blaming the Lord for not coming earlier to heal him and prevent his death. But then she still had hope in the Lord to perform a miracle. **But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. (John 11:22)** So the Lord told her that her brother would come back to life. **Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. (John 11:23)**

However, Martha's response seems to be out of frequency here. **Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. (John 11:24)** She just claimed that if Christ would ask God for anything, God would grant it even on that day back then. But when the Lord told her that her brother shall live again, she suddenly talked about the resurrection in the last day and not on that particular day. What double mindedness we witness here. We are talking about a face to face conversation with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are talking about someone familiar with the miracles that the Lord performed on earth. Why this about turn in the faith on the capability of the Lord Jesus Christ?

It is so easy to claim we have faith in the Lord but we can only go so far and restrict the Lord in what He could do for us. This is what the psalmist said of the children of Israel: **Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. (Psalm 78:41)** Did not Martha want her brother to be healed? Did not Martha want her brother to come back to life? Yes, but when? Not now but in the last day. How sad! How

embarrassing not to trust God and ask great things from God! Is our God so small and incapable? Yet a moment ago, Martha claimed she knew God would answer the Lord in whatever the Lord would ask. She did not expect the Lord to ask for her brother to come back to life that day though the Lord had raised people back to life before. Resurrection is something beyond the human experience whereby man cannot fully comprehend what is on the other side. Has someone come back from the other side and tell us about it? Did the Old Testament saints believe in the resurrection?

Job did. **For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. (Job 19:25-27)** Job believed he would see God in his very own flesh after his body was destroyed. He believed he would live again. His trials and tribulations and his debilitating physical conditions did not cause him to lose faith in the resurrection where he would see God in his own flesh. It would in fact be a blessing to see God in a new coat of flesh where the trials and tribulations would be a thing of the past. So Job looked forward to his resurrection.

Abraham also believed in the resurrection. **By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. (Hebrews 11:17-19)** Abraham believed God would raise up Isaac should Isaac be offered as a sacrifice to God because of God's promise to him concerning Isaac. Abraham indeed believed in the resurrection of Isaac. Abraham believed God would keep His promise and the resurrection is a sure thing to him.

David believed in the resurrection as well. Concerning his son born out of adultery and died, he mentioned that he would go to him. He believed he would live to see his son again. He believed there would be life after death. Resurrection was sure a bet for him as well. Hence after the death of his infant son, he stopped fasting and pleading for God to spare his son. He moved on looking forward to the day of reunion with his son in the resurrection.

There were accounts of people coming back to life in the Old Testament. Elijah and Elisha also raised people from the dead. Daniel was told about the resurrection as well. **And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12:1-3)**

Perhaps it was this resurrection Martha was familiar with. No doubt the saints living during the Old Testament times believed in the resurrection. The question is when is this resurrection. The Old Testament does not give many indications about the resurrection as far as the time frame is concerned. In fact, the word “resurrection” does not even appear one time in the Old Testament. The prophets saw mountain peaks prophecies concerning the final exalted state for the nation of Israel but details of the valley experiences are often hidden. The resurrection is one such mystery. The saints in the past believed in the resurrection but the time frame was not revealed to them. It was a general resurrection they were familiar with and they look forward to the resurrection nonetheless. Thus, it was the resurrection of the last day!

So in the New Testament, Peter wrote about such revelation. **Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.** (1 Peter 1:9-12)

In other words, the Church Age in which we are living in right now is hidden. The saints in the Old Testament did not expect that there was a Church Age. Even the angels desire to look into the minute details of the redemption story of fallen men. The New Testament disciples expected the Kingdom of Israel to be established during their time when Christ was on earth. It was during this time that there was a lot of confusion. So when Christ told them about his crucifixion, they did not have a clue. **For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.** (John 20:9)

Peter bore the brunt of the Lord's scolding rebuke when he tried to go against the Lord on His suffering and eventual death on the cross. **From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.** (Matthew 16:21-23) This rebuke was no small matter. Peter was attributed to Satan who stood in the way of the cross. He was preventing the work of salvation and redemption of Adam's fallen race. Peter thought he could do something to stop the Lord from going to the cross. Perhaps he was tired of the constant reminder from the Lord about the sufferings and death of the Lord on the cross. This was not what Peter and the rest of the disciples expected when they followed the Lord. Why would they want to follow someone who was going to die a horrible and shameful death? Who would want to follow a loser?

Peter was even bold enough to demand to know what they would get in return for following the Lord. **Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? (Matthew 19:27)** We note that these disciples of Christ were pragmatic people. After all what do you expect men who walked with a future rising political star do? They believed they were following someone who would become King of Israel. They expected to be rewarded handsomely of course. They were expecting the Lord to be enthroned and they would rule and reign with Christ. This was the general sentiment and perception and they were already jostling for political dominance even before the Lord's suffering for sinners. These were men who walked in the corridors of power. They expected to be somebody in the day of the new era when their Messiah sat on the throne of David.

Even the mother of James and John were involved in getting her sons ahead of others. **Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. (Matthew 20:18)**

It is so unbelievable. When the Lord had just told them He would suffer, die and then rise again, this woman came to pull strings for her sons. Perhaps she indeed believed in the resurrection of Christ. But more likely, she was blinded by the power and glory of the future kingdom. Which mother would not want her children to be successful in life? This was a golden opportunity that would not strike twice. They all expected a short cut to power and glory. They expected to be somebody reigning with the Lord in the day of His coronation and no one looked forward to His death on that cruel cross.

No one liked to talk about suffering and death. So the apostles were already fighting among themselves to see who was the greatest among them. **And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. (Luke 22:24)** So obviously they were unhappy with these two brothers when their mother came to request for positions for

them from the Lord. Sad but true about their spiritual state back then. They had political acumen but they lack spiritual discernment. The doctrine of resurrection was furthest from their mind. They only wished to rule and reign with Christ on earth and that was all. Even a mother came along to support her sons in the day of power. Maybe she could live in comfort and luxury thereafter when her sons became important figures in the kingdom.

Do they expect to live forever in their bodies tainted with sin? Perhaps this had never crossed their mind. So far the Lord had been casting out devils, healing the sick, raising the dead and no one had been allowed to die in His holy presence. So what is the problem? But when the Lord kept telling them about His suffering and death, they would not want to hear any of such pessimistic talk. Not only the apostles were guilty of unbelief, other disciples were just as guilty for looking only on the immediate political ascendancy ignoring Old Testament scriptures concerning the sufferings of Christ. No one could look beyond the political landscape of their times. Everyone was only looking for deliverance from Roman bondage and a restoration of the kingdom during those days of their forefathers. They wanted an immediate solution to their earthly bondage and not a permanent solution to their Adamic bondage to sin and death. They missed the heavenly solution while looking for an earthly solution.

After the resurrection of the Lord, the Lord approached two disciples and talked with them and asked them why they were sad. Their reply was one of sadness and disappointment. **But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. (Luke 24:21)** Hence, everyone was simply looking for deliverance from their Roman bondage and they expected this second Moses to come and free them from their enemies in their own homeland. **Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)**

So the golden era the apostles envisaged reigning with the Lord turned into a nightmare and became the golden error when Christ died. What an embarrassment? They betted on the wrong horse, figuratively speaking. So it was understandable they were disappointed and dejected after the shameful death of Christ on the cross of Calvary. The enemies crucified their King!

They even inscribed the title “King of the Jews” on the cross to mock them. There was nothing they could do about their open humiliation. They had no power to openly revolt against their Roman captors. Their hopes of glory and power vanished and they went back to their old trades. They were completely disillusioned when their King died and that ended their dreams of glory. Indeed, what a sad day it was to them! How could they be so blind to follow someone who would die such a horrible and shameful death? How could this man hanging on the cross be their Messiah and their King? It was a tragic mistake to follow this man for three over years now dead and buried within the cave.

Ironically, the enemies of Christ got the message. They were aware of the preaching of the resurrection by the Lord that the disciples failed to understand and believe. Power and glory had blinded them. They were at times behaving themselves like political thugs. They forbade people in need to approach the Lord and they even disallowed little children to come near Christ. But the enemies of Christ were more sensitive to what the Lord claimed He would do. Though these enemies might not believe in the resurrection, like any good old politicians, they took precaution just in case. After the crucifixion and burial of Christ, these enemies approached Pilate. **Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. (Matthew 27:62-64)**

These enemies of Christ were crafty politicians. They viewed the Lord Jesus Christ as their competitor in the political arena in the religious realm. Though these enemies held no real political powers in the Jewish homeland, their political influence through religion held considerable sway to the population of the Jews. They were willing to allow the Roman conquerors to put their own King to death to secure their own political survivor. They openly declared that they had no King but Caesar. They wanted a Messiah whom they approved to do their own bidding. Unfortunately, the Son of God was not such a compromising tactical politician who would share power with these men in robes holding religious power over the people in Israel. Hence to prevent another uprising by the followers of Christ jeopardizing their positions, they approached the governor to ensure that there would be no rumors of the resurrection of Christ though they managed to get the Roman authority to put Christ to death.

So how come these enemies remembered what the Lord claimed about His resurrection? How come the apostles and disciples all fled and became forlorn after the death and burial of Christ? How come none looked forward to His resurrection? How come the women still went to the tomb to look for His dead body? How come even after reports of sighting of the Lord over His resurrection the apostles reacted in disbelief? How come Thomas even openly claimed that he would not believe in the resurrection of the Lord unless he saw the Lord with his own eyes? This is simply too amazing for

words to express their deep infidelity to the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection after His crucifixion. They had not been paying attention to the preaching of the Lord on His suffering, death and resurrection. Their eyes were fixed on the reign of Christ and their days of power, honour and glory in the kingdom.

Since the day death was pronounced upon man when they first disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, death became a reality. No one knew what it would be like after death. People like to bet about things in this life. I can run 2.4 kilometers in under 9 minutes, want to bet? I can hold my breath under water for more than 10 minutes, want to bet? No one dare to bet about life after death. Have you come across anyone betting about coming back to life after death in his own body? Have you come across anyone dared to claim that after I am dead and buried for three days, I am going to come back to life? One man did, the man Christ Jesus came to prove who He really was. **Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (John 10:17&18)**

What audacity is this from a man to make such a claim? Can you imagine a man claiming that no man can take his life away from him? But this claim was not made by any ordinary man! This man is none other than the Son of God who came into this world to save sinners. Here the Lord claimed that no man could take His life away from Him. He claimed that He laid down His life on His own. No man born in Adam can make such a claim. When a man is dead, he is dead. What else can he do? Can he come back to life on his own? Not unless, he is God! So the Lord Jesus Christ made the claim that He would certainly come back to life again. The power of life and death is in His hands.

Can you imagine the Lord refused to die if He so wished even while hanging on the cross? The enemies were mocking Him below the cross for Him to come down from that cross to prove that He really was the Son of God. But He did not come down from that cross though He could. He could even summon twelve legions of angels to destroy all those enemies if He so wished. I am glad Christ did not react in the flesh like we often do. I am glad Christ did not come down from the cross. I am glad Christ gave up His life for me on that cruel cross. It should have been me who should be nailed to that cross to die that horrible shameful naked death. But Christ did it all for me! Praise the Lord!

So Christ gave up His life voluntarily for sinners. But most importantly He came back to life; otherwise, we all would have no hope who put our trust in Him. This resurrection power is so powerful and amazing

that Paul wished he could know more about it. **That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Philippians 3:10)** Therefore, the resurrection of Christ is real and authenticated by eyewitnesses and etched in the hearts and minds of every believer in Christ through the testimonies of Scriptures as taught by the Holy Ghost.

This resurrection is so real to those who lived with Christ for three over years, saw His sufferings and death and His eventual resurrection had turned them into suicide maniacs. The apostles and disciples lived their lives as though there was no tomorrow. They went everywhere preaching the gospel of Christ and were not afraid to be thrown into jails and to die. For they knew from first hand experience that there was life after death and they saw their Lord came back to life. Moreover, they saw with their very own eyes the Lord ascended back into heaven and promised them that He would likewise come again for them. Then who else is afraid to die? **For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (Romans 5:7)** The resurrection of Christ had turned these cowards and scheming political stakeholders into courageous life transforming missionaries preaching the gospel wherever they went. They no longer talked about power, honour and glory on earth. They shifted their focus on sufferings and suffering for Christ was their honour. They believed in a more glorious day of power, honour and glory in the future when the Lord comes back to rule this world with a rod of iron.

The resurrection is also real for many and they lived their lives by giving up their lives in exchange for a better resurrection. **Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: (Hebrews 11:35)** I wonder what kind of resurrection will I get in the future. What about you? Would you get just a normal resurrection? Would you get a better resurrection? You may ask what I mean. Remember what the Lord told Daniel? **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12:2&3)** Do you want a glorious resurrection and shine forever and ever? Then start living for the Lord. Or else what glory do you expect to get in the future?

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:25&26) Like the Lord asked Martha this question some two thousand years ago, are you able to answer this question? Do you believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ? If Christ is not alive today, our faith is indeed in vain. We are not just saved by the sufferings and death of Christ.

We are saved by His life according to Scriptures. **Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 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. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 5:9&10, 10:9&13)**

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. (John 14:19) Here is another unmistakable promise that our Lord is alive today. The Lord claims that because He lives, and that is why we live as well. If our Lord is dead and remains dead, then we have no hope. So what does the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ mean to you today? Would you be able to sing like this hymn writer?

**I serve a risen Saviour,
He's in the world today;
I know that He is living,
Whatever men may say;**

**I see His hand of mercy,
I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him
He's always near.**

Would you be able to rejoice with the writer of this hymn?

**Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian,
Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs
To Jesus Christ the King!**

**The hope of all who seek Him,
The help of all who find,
None other is so loving,
So good and kind.**

**He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and He talks with me
Along life's narrow way.**

**He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives:
He lives within my heart.**

Christ not only lives in our hearts, He is right now at the right hand of the Father interceding for us who serve Him here below. Are you walking and talking with our risen Saviour everyday? Try talking more with Him this day and a lot of our problems and troubles will seem so small in our risen Saviour. It is precisely because our Lord is alive today; that is why He can hear our prayers and solve all our problems. Not only that, He has promised He is coming back for us! **The disciples were told when they saw their Lord went back to heaven. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:10&11)**

Our Lord will come back one day. For the Lord has promised: **And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (Revelation 22:12&13)** May we always have the Lord's resurrection and promise of His return before our eyes of faith! May the Lord help us to walk and talk with our risen Saviour more often from this day onwards!

If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kjp-asia.com.