

WHY THE RESURRECTION MATTERS

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the other Disciples. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have since died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, his brother, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NIV)

❖ The Easter Story Revisited:

1. The tomb is EMPTY.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" ³So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. ⁸Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their home.

John 20:1-10 (NIV)

2. Jesus is ALIVE.

But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵"Woman," he said, "Why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (meaning Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20:11-18 (NIV)

3. The disciples are COMMISSIONED.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

John 20:19-23 (NIV)

4. The skeptics are CONVINCED.

"Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.'²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!'²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'²⁸ Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'²⁹ Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"

John 20:24-29 (NIV)

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Acts 2:36 (NIV)

Concerning Jesus, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 1:3-4 (NIV)

"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the Man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

Acts 17:30-31 (NIV)