

Resurrection and Easter Faith

Participant Notes for Classes and Groups

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/resurrection/resurrection-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find several questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

The notes include an outline and condensation of the lessons – particularly the scripture references – plus the discussion questions.

1. The Promise of Resurrection from the Dead
2. The Gospel Accounts of Christ's Resurrection from the Dead
3. Convincing Proofs of Christ's Bodily Resurrection
4. The Present-Day Significance of Christ's Resurrection
5. The Christian Hope of Resurrection at the Last Day

1. The Promise of Resurrection from the Dead

Resurrection Defined

Resurrection: Something more than a resuscitation after near death. Rather a raising up of the body after a period of being dead.

Old Testament Beginnings

Gathered to his fathers (Genesis 25:8)

Hebrew word *sheôl*, "the place of the dead," both good and bad. Seems to refer to the dark, deep regions, the land of forgetfulness ... a place of gloom and despair, a place where one can no longer enjoy life, and where the presence of Yahweh himself is withdrawn.

Psalm

6:5

Psalm 88:10-12

A Growing Hope of Resurrection

Progressive revelation.

Job 14:14

Job 19:25-27

Q1. How does Jobs vision of resurrection (Job 19:25-27) differ from the Jews former understanding of death as Sheol? What is progressive revelation?

Psalm 16:9-11

Hosea 13:14

Hosea 6:1-2

Isaiah 26:19

Isaiah 53:11

The phrase light of life (NIV) doesn't occur in the Masoretic Hebrew text, but is found in both the Greek Septuagint translation as well as the Hebrew text of the Isaiah scrolls found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Ezekiel 37:1-6

Daniel 12:1b-2

First Century Judaism

There were essentially three beliefs about the resurrection in Jesus' world.

1. Sadducees. Acts 5:17; Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:8
2. Pharisees
3. The Greeks and Romans (Acts 17:18, 32)

Jesus' Teaching on the Resurrection of the Dead

John 5:28-29

Acts 24:15

Luke 14:14

Q2. (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15) According to scripture, both the righteous and unrighteous will experience resurrection. What will be the result of resurrection for the righteous?

Luke 20:34-36

Luke 20:37-38

Jesus' as the Agent of Resurrection

John 11:23-25

John 5:25, 28-29

John 6:39-40, 54

Q3. (John 11:23-25) What do you think Jesus meant when he said, I am the resurrection and the life? What role will Jesus play in the resurrection of the dead?

Jesus' Promise of His Own Resurrection

Matthew 16:21

Matthew 17:22-23

Matthew 20:17-19

The Third Day, Three Days

John 2:18-22; remembered by his enemies. Matthew 27:40; Mark 14:58

Matthew 12:39-40

Matthew 27:62-64

Q4. Why did Jesus' enemies heed his prediction of being raised on the third day even more than his disciples? Did his enemies expect him to rise? Did his followers?

2. The Gospel Accounts of Christ's Resurrection from the Dead

Before beginning, read the Resurrection accounts in the Gospels. Try looking at them as for the first time. Ask yourself: What happened here that prompted these stories? Look for differences as well as similarities.

Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-14, Luke 24:1-44, John 20:1-29

If you like, print out an online version that shows the Gospel resurrection accounts in parallel (NIV). www.jesuswalk.com/resurrection/resurrection-parallels.htm

The Synoptic Problem

Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke

Q, which stands for the German word *Quelle*, meaning source.

Mark – earliest gospel, Mark 16:9-19, the so-called longer ending of Mark

Matthew – Palestinian Jews

Luke – Hellenistic audience

John – eyewitness

Resurrection Differences

1. *Women*. In the Synoptic Gospels, Mary Magdalene and other women go to the tomb. In John's account, Mary Magdalene goes alone.
2. *Appearance to the women*. In Matthew 28:9, Jesus appears to the women before they tell the disciples. In John 20:13-17, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene first (also in the longer ending of Mark) – after she reports to the disciples. In Mark, the women tell no one of what they had seen.
3. *Number of angels*. In Matthew and Mark one angel appears; in Luke and John there are two angels.
4. *Purpose of the women's visit*. In Matthew they go to look at the tomb. In Mark and Luke they bring spices to anoint Jesus' body. In John the anointing took place on Friday night and no purpose for Mary's visit is given.
5. *Grave clothes*. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus is wrapped in a large linen shroud (*sidrōn*). In John 19:40; 20:5-7 and Luke 24:12, Jesus is wrapped in strips of linen (*othonion*). See the discussion below.
6. *Location*. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus' resurrection appearances are in Galilee, while Luke only records appearances in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Eyewitness Accounts

Q1. What differences do you find between the various resurrection accounts? How do you account for differences in eyewitness testimony? How might these differences add to the credibility of the witnesses?

Points of Agreement

1. Jesus was dead and buried.
2. The disciples were not prepared for Jesus' death. They were overcome with confusion.
3. The tomb was found on Easter morning to be empty. But this in itself didn't inspire faith. Mary thought the body was stolen.
4. The disciples encountered certain experiences which they took to be appearances of Jesus risen from the dead.
5. Contemporary Judaism had no concept of a dying and rising Messiah.
6. The disciples proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem, near where he had been buried

What Happened Easter Morning?

1. Mary Magdalene saw him first and spoke to him (Mark 16:9, longer ending; John 20:16)
2. Other women also saw him and touched him (Matthew 28:9).
3. Jesus appeared to Peter and the other apostles (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5; Mark 16:14 longer ending; Luke 24:36).
4. Jesus appeared to Thomas (John 20:26-28).
5. Later, Jesus appeared to more than 500 at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6).

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Q2. What similarities do you find in the resurrection accounts? Based on the agreements between the accounts, what seems to have happened?

The Grave Clothes

When you compare Luke 23:53 (*sindōn*) with Luke 24:12 (*othonion*) it appears that Luke, at least, is using the terms synonymously.

Luke 24:12, John 20:6-8

Q3. (Luke 24:12; John 20:6-8) What about the grave clothes brought Peter and John to faith? What was so peculiar about them?

What Was Jesus' Body Like?

1. Jesus described it as flesh and bones (Luke 24:39c).
2. He could eat (Luke 24:42-43; Acts 1:4)
3. His body could be touched and handled by others (Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:39b)
4. He could walk and talk (Luke 24:15), even cook (John 21:9), just as a normal human body.
5. Yet Jesus' wounds were still visible in his renewed body (Luke 24:39-40; John 20:20, 25-27)
6. Jesus could enter locked doors (John 20:19, 26) disappear (Luke 24:31) and appear (Luke 24:36) at will.

Q4. What do we know from the Gospels about the properties of Jesus' resurrection body? What was he capable of in this new body?

The Resurrection vs. the Ascension

Jesus' resurrection was when his body left the tomb and appeared alive to his disciples and others, never to die again.

Jesus' ascension occurred about 40 days after his resurrection and took place just outside of Jerusalem near Bethany:

Q5. What is the difference between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension? How do the two fit together? In what sense is the ascension the completion of the resurrection?

3. Convincing Evidence of Christ's Bodily Resurrection

Book blurb for *The Resurrection of Jesus* (1995) by Gerd Luedemann:

"What actually happened at the resurrection of Jesus? Using historical criticism and depth psychology, Luedemann reviews the accounts of witnesses, consults Pauline texts, and investigates Easter events, concluding that though the quickening of Christ cannot be believed in a literal and scientific sense, we can still be Christians."

People Just Don't Come Back to Life

Western scientific worldview

Experience from the beginning of civilization

Historically Accessible

- Unrepeatable. It is a one-of-a-kind event that can't be studied
- Incomparable. We have no analogies to which to compare it
- Lacks credible evidence. This isn't actually true, but these scholars often explain away or neglect the strong evidence that we do have

A Narrow View of Historicity

N.T. Wright says the idea of history can be used in five different ways:

1. History as an event. Something that happened, whether we can prove it or not.
2. History as significant event. An historic event is one which carries momentous consequences.
3. History as a provable event. X may have happened, but since we can't prove it, therefore it isn't really historical.
4. History as writing about events in the past. It is historical in sense that it was written about – or talked about, as in oral history.
5. History as what modern historians can say about a topic, that which can be demonstrated and written within the post-Enlightenment world view. This is what liberal scholars mean when they reject the historical Jesus.

Alternate Theories of the Resurrection

Q1. What do you think motivates liberal Christian scholars to explain away the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ? Why would they claim that it is unhistorical more than some other event in the first century?

1. Theft Theory

Matthew

28:11-15.

Motive, soldiers penalty of execution for sleeping, disciples face martyrdom for a lie

Q2. On the theft theory, what motive might the disciples have to take Jesus' body? What motive might the Romans have? The Jews? Joseph of Arimathea?

2. Swoon Theory

Heinrich Paulus (1828). Hugh J. Schonfield, *The Passover Plot* (1965).

3. Wrong Tomb Theory

Kirsopp Lake, *Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1907)

Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47

4. Vision Theory

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), demythologize the gospel to make it believable to modern man. He wrote in 1941 of the incredibility of a mythical event like the resuscitation of a corpse – for that is what resurrection means. The historian can perhaps to some extent account for that faith [in the resurrection] from the personal intimacy which the disciples had enjoyed with Jesus during his earthly life and so reduce the resurrection appearances to a series of subjective visions.

To refute this, Jesus' enemies could produce the body.

Also known as the Personality Influence Theory or Hallucination Theory

Inconsistent with the disciples' mental state. Doesn't explain Jesus' appearance to 500 persons at once.

5. Spiritual Metaphor Theory

Early Christians used terms such as dying and rising as a kind of metaphor to communicate their faith. When they said, Jesus was raised from the dead, so this view goes, they meant something like, He is alive in a spiritual, non-bodily sense, and we give him our allegiance as our lord. Only later did the church begin to take such expressions literally, according to this theory, and then penned the gospel accounts as a kind of secondary reinforcement of this belief.

Five Important Facts of Easter Morning

1. The Empty Tomb

2. The Undisturbed Grave Clothes

3. The Disciples' Psychological State

- That they weren't inclined to concoct a story of Jesus' resurrection.
- They weren't inclined to mistake Jesus' missing body for resurrection.
- They didn't expect any resurrection
- They weren't inclined to steal Jesus' body.

Q3. How does the disciples' psychological state after the crucifixion provide excellent support for belief in the resurrection?

4. The Post-Resurrection Appearances of Jesus

1. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 was written 53-55 AD.
2. Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-17; Matthew 28:9-10; Mark 16:9)
3. The other Mary (Matthew 28:9-10)
4. Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5)
5. Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus Sunday afternoon (Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12)
6. Disciples in Jerusalem Sunday evening (Luke 24:36-43; Acts 1:4; John 20:19-23; Mark 16:14; 1 Corinthians 15:5)
7. Thomas and the other disciples, a week later (John 20:24-29)
8. Disciples in Galilee (Matthew 28:17)
9. Disciples (Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two others) while fishing on the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23)
10. 500 at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6)

11. James, Jesus' brother, who later became the leader of the Jerusalem congregation (1 Corinthians 15:7)P14 P
12. Disciples at the ascension (Matthew 28:51-52)
13. Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8), much later

5. The Spread of Christianity

Declaring the resurrection in Jerusalem: Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10, 33; 5:30

Growth of church in Jerusalem: Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7

Declaring the resurrection elsewhere: Acts 10:39-40; 13:29-30; 17:3, 31; 26:23

Arguments from Silence

- Lack of Biblical quotations
- Lack of Christ appearing first to male disciples
- Lack of emphasis on personal hope
- Lack of a portrait of Jesus

The Sufficiency of the Evidence

Q4. Which of the various proofs for the resurrection seems the most compelling to you? Why? If you had a friend who wasn't sure about the resurrection, could you explain why you're sure that Jesus was raised from the dead?

4. The Present-Day Significance of Christ's Resurrection

1. Jesus' Resurrection Is God's Seal of Approval on Jesus

Acts 2:32, 36; 5:30-31; 17:31; Romans 1:4

Q1. What kind of credibility would Jesus' ministry have had if he was not raised from the dead, especially when he predicted it ahead of time? In what way is the resurrection God's seal of approval on him?

2. Jesus' Resurrection Validates our Salvation

Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:13-19

Basis of our confidence: Romans 8:33-34; 1 Peter 1:21; Hebrews 4:14, 16

Q2. In what way does Christ's resurrection somehow validate that we are saved and forgiven by God? If we didn't believe Christ had been actually raised from the dead, how might we have doubts about our salvation?

3. Jesus' Resurrection Typifies our Spiritual Union with Him

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|---|
| Christ | Death and burial | Resurrection |
| Baptism | Immersed in the water | Brought out of the water |
| Believers | United with him in his death | Shall be united with him (in the future) in his resurrection |

Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12. 1 Peter 1:3; Romans 6:6, 8, 11; Galatians 5:20; Colossians 3:1-4; Ephesians 1:19b-20; 2:1, 4b-6

Q3. How does Christ's death and resurrection provide an analogy for baptism according to Romans 6:3-5 and Colossians 2:12? According to Ephesians 2:4-6, while being raised with Christ is still spiritual, not physical, in what way does this union impart real spiritual power?

4. Jesus' Resurrection Is the Harbinger of our Resurrection on the Last Day

1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:20; Revelation 1:18)

Q4. What assurance do you have that you will be physically resurrected rather than experience disembodied immortality? What does it mean that Jesus is the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20) and firstborn (Revelation 1:5) of the dead?

Q5. (1 Corinthians 15:58) What does being steadfast and immovable have to do with the hope of the resurrection? Why is our labor not in vain in the Lord?

5. The Christian Hope of Resurrection at the Last Day

Read again 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Rapture vs. Resurrection

Rapture from the Latin noun *raptus*, which means, a carrying off (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

The order of events:

1. The **appearance** of Christ in the heavens,
2. The **angels trumpet** call summoning all God's people,
3. **Gathering** of his people, dead and alive (the quick and the dead) (Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43, 47-50; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:1)
 - a. **Resurrection** of those who are dead and
 - b. **Changing** into resurrection bodies of those alive at that time.
4. Appearing before God's **judgment** (Revelation 20:11-13)
5. Entering into **glory**

Study Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:11-13
See also Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10

Q1. What is the word used in the Bible instead of rapture? When will the resurrection take place in relation to Christ's return? In relation to judgment? In relation to glory? (This is *not* the place to debate various theories of the rapture and the millennium. Be kind and loving!)

In Heaven Prior to the Resurrection

In 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Philippians 1:23-24; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9, 14; John 14:2-3

Q2. (Philippians 1:23-24; 2 Corinthians 5:8) According to these verses, where will Christians be immediately after death? Where do we await the resurrection?

Redemption and Glorification

Redemption. Romans 8:23-24a

Glorification. *Believers resurrection:* 1 Corinthians 15:43; also Romans 8:17, 30; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:17; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 1:27; 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 2:10

Jesus' resurrection: Luke 24:26; John 7:39; 12:16, 23; 13:31; Acts 3:13; Colossians 3:4; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 1:11, 21

Corruptible vs. Incorruptible, Natural vs. Spiritual Bodies

1 Corinthians 15:35, 42-44

- Corruptible - Incorruptible
- Dishonor - Glory. Glory, *doxa*, "the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendor, radiance."
- Weakness - Power
- Natural - Spiritual

Q3. What does the phrase redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23-24) tell us about our resurrection? What words in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 describe our resurrection bodies?

What Is Our Resurrection Body Going to Be Like?

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1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:49

Incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:42), glorified (1 Corinthians 15:43a), powerful (1 Corinthians 15:43b), able to navigate in the spiritual realm (1 Corinthians 15:44).

Luke 20:34-36

Why Will We Have Resurrection Bodies?

2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1, 5; Revelation 5:10

Q4. What will our resurrection bodies be like? Why do you think we will be given resurrection bodies? What is the point?

Getting All the Right Molecules Restored

Death Is Not the Victor

1 Corinthians 15:26; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1, 5; Isaiah 65:17-19; 66:22; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 57

Q5. Why should Christians look forward to the events surrounding our resurrection? Why do you think Christians have largely lost this as their active expectation and hope? What should be done to reclaim these truths?