

# Colossians: Jesus is First | Week 15

## RESURRECTION SUNDAY

COLOSSIANS 2:13-15

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**13** And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14** by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. **15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

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### Introduction

Happy Easter, Wawasee!!!

Today is a great day. Today we celebrate the most important event in history, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ! God, become man, in the flesh, lived a sinless life, was crucified, died, and was buried. And on the third day, on Sunday, he ROSE AGAIN to conquer death, Satan, and power of sin, triumphing over them all in great victory, for his glory and our gain!!!

Today, we'll examine the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and its effects today as we continue studying through the New Testament book of Colossians.

Let me pray, and then we'll begin with the resurrection.

#### PRAYER

About two thousand years ago, a man walked the earth, declaring himself to be God he performed many signs and wonders, fulfilling prophecy, healing the sick, raising the dead... his name was Jesus.

After declaring himself to be God, the religious leaders of the day—the Pharisees—began to plot against Jesus. Why? Because like many religious leaders, they were highly insecure, and Jesus posed a huge threat to them. They plotted so far as to even have this Jesus, tried, tortured, and executed in an incredibly violent way on the cross.

They *thought* they had taken care of their problem, Jesus was dead and out of the way. Just to make sure, they guarded the tomb...

#### **Read Matthew 27:62-66**

But three days later, everything changed. On that day, on the Sunday after Passover, this man's followers began to declare to everyone that "He is RISEN!!!!"

#### **Read Matthew 28**

#### Preaching Notes – Colossians 2:13-15

Now, I'm one of the crazy people who believe that this account is absolutely true. But you may not buy it. You, and many others, or someone you know... have problems with it.

So before we go on this morning, let's just start with a couple things that pretty much everyone, every scholar and historian, EVERYONE agrees on... ok?

## TWO FACTS:

### 1) Jesus died.

See, there was no doubt that Jesus did in fact die. It's an undisputed historical fact that he was crucified, that he indeed DIED and was indeed buried. They didn't guard the tomb to fake people out that he died, they guarded it to make sure no one faked his resurrection. It's undisputed — JESUS DIED.

If you were here with us on Friday night, the Fellowship Hall was PACKED, and we laid out some gory details about how in fact Jesus died on the cross.

### 2) The tomb is Empty.

So many people, they get hung up on this idea that Jesus came back to life. That he was totally dead, and 3 days later, totally alive.

There is no dispute historically that the tomb is EMPTY!

Think about it...

***Muslims go to worship at Mecca → the tomb of Muhammad***  
***Many Jews go to the Grave of Abraham***  
***Buddhists go to worship at the tomb of Buddha***

***Christians don't flock to worship at Jesus' tomb, because he isn't there!***

Look, people in Jerusalem would have readily known where Jesus' tomb was at. And if he were still in it, they would never have believed the teaching of the apostles. It's like, a guy in your neighborhood, we'll call him... Mr. Rogers, passes away. And you, and everyone else who lived in Mr. Rogers' neighborhood, went to his funeral, you saw where he was buried, and you have seen the tombstone. Well, 3 days later, some other people show up at your door and they're like, "Mr. Rogers is alive!" → → → *Christianity would have gained zero hearing if the tomb wasn't empty.*

## THREE POSSIBILITIES TO ACCOUNT FOR THESE FACTS:

### 1) Jesus Never Really Died.

*Monty Python Theory* – "He's not dead, he's only mostly dead." This theory says that Jesus wasn't completely dead when he was removed from the cross. Once in the tomb, Jesus was revived and escaped, thus convincing the disciples of his resurrection...

**REALLY?**

- a. This is by far the most easily discredited, because numerous historical accounts, biblical and extra biblical refer to Jesus having been executed and

present it as historical fact. People who say he didn't really die, didn't really do their homework. He absolutely died. – Even from the Scriptural account, you're saying he took a spear that was shoved up through his gut and into his heart while on the cross (btw, after he was dead), but never really died? Ok, let's try that on you. – He died.

- b. It is unlikely that a half-dead man would have been capable of even getting up to walk, much less moving the stone that sealed the tomb, overpowering Roman guards, and fleeing from sight.
- c. This theory cannot account for the disciples' attribution of resurrection to Christ, for if they had seen him after he was revived, they would have merely thought he had never died.
- d. It is also foolish to think the Romans, who had perfected the art of killing people, would have let one slip by without ensuring he was dead.
- e. Finally, given the physical torture described in the Gospel accounts, it is highly unlikely that Jesus could have survived.

## 2) Jesus Never Really Rose Again. (**1 Corinthians 15:12ff**) *Reductio Ad Absurdum*

*Weekend at Bernie's Theory* – which says that the disciples stole the body of Jesus and continued to lie about his appearances to them. The resurrection was a hoax.

- a. This theory doesn't take into account that the disciples BELIEVED in the resurrection. It is highly unlikely that numerous disciples would have been willing to give their lives defending a fabrication.
- b. It's unlikely that the idea of resurrection would have entered the minds of the disciples, as such an event was not connected to the Jewish idea of a Messiah. Scholar William Lane Craig writes, "If your favorite Messiah got himself crucified, then you either went home or else you got yourself a new Messiah. But the idea of stealing Jesus' corpse and saying that God has raised him from the dead is hardly one that would have entered the minds of the disciples."
- c. This hypothesis cannot account for the post-resurrection appearances of Christ.

*Dude, Where's My Car? Theory* – This is the *wrong tomb* hypothesis. It suggests that the women got lost on their way to the empty tomb and accidentally stumbled upon the caretaker of an empty tomb. When the caretaker said, "Jesus is not here," the women were so disoriented they fled, their story later being developed into a resurrection myth.

- a. First, this theory does not explain the post-resurrection appearances, and it is spurious to think that such a simple mistake would have led a first-century Jew to think a resurrection had happened.
- b. In light of the early evidence that is available concerning the location of Jesus' tomb, it is almost impossible that the women would have confused its location.
- c. This hypothesis emphasizes that the caretaker of the tomb said that Christ was not there, but it passes over the next phrase: "He is risen!"

*Displaced Body Theory* – This theory says that Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus' body in his own tomb but later moved it to the criminal's graveyard. The disciples were not aware that Jesus' body had been moved and therefore wrongly inferred that he had risen from the dead.

- a. This theory cannot account for the post-resurrection appearances of Christ or the origin of the Christian faith.
- b. It is uncertain why Joseph would not have corrected the error of the disciples by simply showing them where he had moved the body of Jesus.
- c. The criminal graveyard, most likely, was quite close to the crucifixion site, so it would have made little sense why Joseph would not have simply buried Jesus there in the first place. In fact, it was against Jewish law to allow a body to be moved after it had already been buried.

3) Jesus DID IN FACT Rise From the Dead!!!

**1 Corinthians 15:20**

Go on into the Adam vs. Jesus argument of Paul???

>> LIKE JESUS WAS DEAD → ALL OF US WERE DEAD.

*Colossians 2:13... And you, who were dead in your trespasses...*

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## **You're DEAD.**

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 – *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Romans 3:23 says that we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

***Who, ever, would dare to say they have NEVER sinned? – even yet this morning?***

**Colossians 2:13** declares that all of us either were or are dead in our sin. – Because the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) So because of your sin, you deserve to die.

**Ephesians 2:1-3**

*1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

That's some crummy news.

Who's ready for some good news?

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## **God RAISES the dead.**

Read on in Colossians 2 with me...

*And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive together with him***

In 2 Corinthians 1, Paul was going through some intense trials, even to the point he wished himself dead. He was exhausted, tired, had been scourged like Jesus 3 times, shipwrecked twice, lost everything, single, no family... he wished to die. But he says in 2 Corinthians 1:9 that all of his suffering “*was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God **who raises the dead.***”

1 Corinthians 15:20 says that Jesus’ resurrection was the first of many... the **firstfruits**.

So how does God raise the dead? The wages of sin is *death*... so...

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## **Sin must be DEALT with.**

Read on in Colossians...

*And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, **having forgiven us all our trespasses.***

God forgives our sin.

But he doesn’t just gloss over it, he *deals with it*.

Instead of pouring his wrath out on us, he punishes his own son. He pours it out on Jesus.

Read on...

*Having forgiven us all our trespasses, **14 by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands***

This “record of debt”, it’s like a legal document... and IOU to God. You owe him for your sin. You owe a debt that *must* get paid. There are legal demands associated with it.

***This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.***

### **2 Corinthians 5:20-21**

**20** *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

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## **...either by YOU or by Jesus. It’s your choice.**

In the end, you won’t stand before a mirror to give an account of your life, you’ll stand before Almighty God. And his standard is perfection. It’s all or nothing.

If Jesus wasn't God, if he didn't rise from the dead – He wasn't just a good teacher, he was a charlatan. A liar. A fraud. He was wicked, evil, and a deceiver.