

WILL THE RESURRECTION CHANGE YOU?

He sat in the doctor's office listening to the words of the medical expert. He thought he had the world by the tail. He was rich and successful; he had an attractive wife and three healthy children. He was well liked, well traveled, and well invested. He drove a luxury car and lived in a 7000 square foot house. He thought to himself, "I don't really have to listen to this!" But he did. The doctor told the 50 year old man that he was overweight; had horrendous eating habits, drank too much, smoked too much, and worked too much. In fact about the only thing he did not do too much of was exercise. The doctor asked him, "Do you want to live to see your children marry and live long enough to enjoy your grand- children?" The man nodded. "Then," the doctor continued, "based on all your tests, my advice is that you change your life: eat better and eat less, cut out smoking, cut back on your drinking, relax more, and start a regular excise program. Or you'll never live to see your children get married or give you grandchildren!" Many people ignore medical facts; they're bull headed; they think they are the exception to the rule. They will write out a check for the co-pay and yet disregard the very advice they just paid for. They just will not change! Do you think this man will change? Would you?

Do you want to live, not just to see your grandchildren, but forever? Then it is time to change, my friends. **WILL THE RESURRECTION CHANGE YOU** or will you ignore the facts? What happened on the day of Jesus' resurrection? **One**, shortly after an earthquake at about 6:00 a.m. the women discovered that the tomb was open and empty. **Two**, when Peter and John came a little later the tomb was empty. **Three**, for an unspecified amount of silver, the Roman guards and Jewish Sanhedrin conspired to lie about the events that happened at the tomb. And **four**, Mary of Magdala saw Jesus in the garden and that evening 10 of the apostles and a few others saw Jesus in a locked room. In fact, over the next 40 days thousands witnessed the resurrected Jesus. These are the facts. The tomb was empty; **Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The resurrection brings us four wonderful blessings: It tells us that God accepted Jesus' blood sacrifice as the payment for all our sins. It assures us that Jesus is God. It proves Jesus' word is believable and true. And it gives us the certainty that just as Jesus rose someday we too will rise. These are the gifts that the resurrection of Jesus offers to you. Will you accept these

gifts? WILL THE RESURRECTION CHANGE YOU? Look how the resurrection of Jesus changed others. Consider the apostles. On that first Sunday they were all quivering cowards hiding in fear. But in a few weeks they suddenly all became bold and courageous preachers who traveled the known world proclaiming Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior who rose from the dead. What happened? They saw the resurrected Jesus. They changed! They became a new creation.

Or take the two biggest skeptics of the first century: Saul of Tarsus and James, Jesus' half brother. Saul, who later became St. Paul, hunted down and killed Christians in his Pharisaical fanaticism. Then on the road to Damascus he met the resurrected Jesus. The resurrection changed him into the greatest missionary in history. And there was James, Jesus' half brother. In the Gospels we see that he thought Jesus was crazy. But we read in 1 Corinthians 15 that he too saw his resurrected brother and changed. He became one of the leaders of the first century Christian Church and wrote one of the 27 New Testament books. The resurrection changed him as it did St. Paul. They both became a new creation.

Consider how the resurrection of Jesus changed the ways thousands of first century Hebrew believers. **First**, after centuries of offering animal sacrifices as the payment for their sins, they suddenly stopped it. They now believed that Jesus paid for their sins with His blood sacrificed on the Cross. **Second**, one thing that kept the Jews distinct from all other people in the Middle East was their strict adherence to the Mosaic laws. But suddenly within months of Jesus' resurrection they stopped forcing people to keep the ceremonial and sacrificial laws to be right with God. Now they believed one is made right with God through faith in the resurrected Jesus and not by works of the law. **Third**, after carefully protecting 1,500 years of Sabbath worship within a few years of the resurrection they changed the day of worship to Sunday. Why? That is the day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead. **Fourth**, since Abraham they believed in only one God. Daily they recited the words, **"Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is One. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."** But since the resurrection they still worshipped one God but now that took an extremely different meaning. They worshiped One God as the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And **fifth**, for centuries Jews looked for a political messiah who would free them from other nations and make Israel into a world power. But after the resurrection they accepted Jesus as the Messiah who freed them from the

worst enemies: sin, death, and satan. They were ordinary people like you. The resurrection of Jesus changed them. They had become a new creation. Will you?

You ask, “How do we know for sure Jesus, and not someone else, is the Messiah? Look at the messianic signs and promises in the Old Testament. Then compare them to the life and work of Jesus: from who was he descended, where was he born, what miracles did he do, how did he die, why did he die, and what happened on the third day after he died? There are over 400 messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. The odds of anyone fulfilling only 48 of the 400 messianic prophecies are one in **10** to the **157th** power. That’s 10 with 157 zeroes after it. No one else has even come close but Jesus fulfilled them all. The proof is obvious. **Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

What do you call someone in life that ignores the facts, refuses to make changes based on the evidence, and continues on the same old path, following misinformation, doing the wrong thing? Do the words dumb, idiot, stupid, ignoramus, or moron come to mind? Do you know what the Bible calls someone who ignores the truth and refuses to change? **Lost!**

St. Paul, one who both witnessed and was taught by the resurrected Jesus, wrote, “**If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation.**” Faith brings change. Paul writes of this change in Colossians 3:1, 5-8: “**Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above...not on earthly things...Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.**” *We are a new creation!* Note the change: we no longer live for ourselves. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-10: “**For by grace you are saved through faith ... for we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works ...**” To say we believe in Jesus and yet not change our lives makes us hypocrites! May our life say, “*I believe He died for me, so I believe I will live for Him!*”

My friends let the resurrection change you! Walk with Jesus and become a new creation. Make worship and the study of His Word a priority in life. No longer cling to sinful behaviors, addictions, and lifestyles, but live in a new

way that gives honor and glory to God. Reflect Christ's love in our love for others; give others the benefit of the doubt; encourage and build others up. Reconcile with others and forgive those with who you've struggled. Don't wait! Do it today! Don't wait 'til tomorrow to change. Jesus who rose from the dead is coming again soon. Be ready! Be in Christ! Be a new creation!

Are you struggling from the painful consequences of sin? **Look at the empty tomb!** Does the guilt of your sins haunt you? **Look at the empty tomb!** Has the downward economy caused you sleepless nights and anxious fears? **Look at the empty tomb!** Do the treasures and pleasures of this life fail to give you lasting happiness or satisfy your purpose for life? **Look at the empty tomb!** Are marital problems, family issues, or broken relationships filling your life with heartache and pain? **Look at the empty tomb!** Is your sense of self worth or self-esteem distorted or low? **Look at the empty tomb!** Has the recent loss of a loved one left you without purpose or the will to live? **Look at the empty tomb!** Has a recently diagnosed illness or the thought of death filled your life with fear? **Then look at the empty tomb!** Christ is not there! **Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!**
Alleluia!

Look at all that the risen Christ has done for you. Look at all the evidence! When you see with the eyes of faith the resurrected Jesus you can't help but say, "*I just saw Jesus and I'll never be the same again.*" **WILL THE RESURRECTION CHANGE YOU?** Will you become a new creation for Jesus? Amen!