



MESSAGE GUIDE

MARCH 31, 2024

WHAT ABOUT? - PART 1: MIRACLES AND THE RESURRECTION



Ephesians 2:4-6

**RICK GROVER,
LEAD PASTOR**

Today marks the most significant day in history—not just in the Christian calendar, but in all the world, because if Jesus actually rose from the dead, then everything we know about reality, life, death, the afterlife, centers in Him, in Jesus and His story. And if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Jesus was not the Son of God, God's Word is not true, and this world is ultimately spinning towards no end, no purpose, no design, and “meaningless, meaningless, all is meaningless.”

But every Easter we are faced with a choice between three options:

- **Study and determine the Resurrection is false (and accept the consequences).**
- **Study and determine the Resurrection is true (and accept the consequences).**
- **We continue to bury our heads in the sand and go on with “business as usual” (and accept the consequences).**

We start with miracles, because if our worldview doesn't allow for miracles, then the resurrection is a pointless, erudite discussion of what was believed in a pre-scientific age and can now be dismissed as myth and has no relevance to our lives.

What is a miracle? The Oxford dictionary defines a miracle like this: miracle: “a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency” (Oxford English Dictionary).

1. BASED ON THIS DEFINITION OF A MIRACLE, HAVE YOU SEEN OR EXPERIENCED A MIRACLE?

2. NOW, HOW ABOUT A MIRACLE YOU HEARD ABOUT? DO YOU TAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPERIENCE AS FACE VALUE, OR DO YOU NEED SOME EVIDENCE TO BELIEVE THEIR STORY OF A MIRACLE HAPPENING?



MESSAGE GUIDE

MARCH 31, 2024

There are two positions we can take regarding miracles:

- **Scientific Realism:** There is no such thing as miracles because all of reality is relegated by natural, scientific laws. If something appears to be outside the confines of natural/scientific law, it is only because we have not yet discovered the scientific explanation.
- **Supernatural Realism:** Reality includes the natural and the supernatural. The God of the Hebrew/Christian Scriptures permeates and is active in all of reality. God created the natural realm and can operate within it as He chooses. Such as resurrecting someone from the dead.

When we talk about this day, the most significant of days for all the world, the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, we need to remember that there are multiple resurrection accounts in the Bible (Elijah raised a widow's son in **1 Kings 17**, Jesus raised a widow's son in **Luke 7**, Jesus raised his friend, Lazarus, in **John 11**.)

So, what makes Jesus' resurrection unique? No other person resurrected made the claim to be the Son of God. All other resurrection stories are beautiful accounts of new life that come in the physical world. But Jesus' resurrection is about the New Resurrection that leads us into eternal life.

He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything" (**Colossians 1:18, CSB**).

"And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood" (**Revelation 1:5, CSB**).

3. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER WAYS JESUS' RESURRECTION IS UNIQUE?

Everything we've been talking about today boils down to this: Jesus' resurrection is not only the central event of history, but also the promise of our future. It's why we have hope in the midst of suffering or death. It's why we can rejoice even when everything around us seems to be in chaos. It's why we can love and work and live in this life with joyful expectation.

Do you accept the worldview that says miracles can't exist, because there's no room in your understanding of reality for anything to exist beyond the natural, physical realm? If so, you are missing out on the vast majority of what is truly true!

But if you accept a supernatural worldview that believes in miracles and, more importantly, the source behind those miracles, then you can accept the possibility of the resurrection of Jesus as the confirmation of who He claimed to be. Look at these Scriptures:



MESSAGE GUIDE

MARCH 31, 2024

But if you accept a supernatural worldview that believes in miracles and, more importantly, the source behind those miracles, then you can accept the possibility of the resurrection of Jesus as the confirmation of who He claimed to be. Look at these Scriptures:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (**John 6:51, CSB**).

"I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life" (**John 8:12, CSB**).

"You are from below," he told them, "I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world" (**JOHN 8:23, CSB**).

"Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am" (**John 8:58, CSB**).

"I am the light of the world" (**John 9:5, CSB**).

"I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture" (**John 10:9, CSB**).

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (**John 10:11, CSB**).

"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live" (**John 11:25, CSB**).

But anyone can come along and make these claims, right? True, but no one who ever made such radical claims ever got up and walked out of a grave. The Apostle Paul wrote: "Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead" (**Romans 1:3-4, CSB**).

How can we be certain that Jesus actually rose from the dead? And what difference does it make for us? Here's the clincher according to the Apostle Paul: "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (**1 Corinthians 15:17, CSB**).

If we don't believe we have sins, if we don't believe there is a right or wrong, then no problem, right? But we all know deep down inside, fundamentally, that there is something wrong, deeply wrong, with this world. And we know there is something deeply wrong inside of us. We have been wronged and hurt and wounded. And we have wronged and hurt and wounded others. And we have experienced far too many times the guilt that weighs us down, and it's not from some antiquated puritanical moral system from which we need liberation.



MESSAGE GUIDE

MARCH 31, 2024

4. IF YOU BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS RESURRECTED, WHY DOES IT MATTER? HOW HAS IT CHANGED YOU?

5. EVEN IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OR ARE UNSURE, DO YOU AT LEAST ACKNOWLEDGE THE PROBLEM? AND IF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUR LIFE, WOULD YOU BE OPEN TO BELIEVING AND TRUSTING IN A GOD WHO CREATED THE PHYSICAL REALM, WHO LOVES YOU AND LONGS FOR YOU TO KNOW HIM, THE GIVER OF LIFE?

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus” (**Ephesians 2:4-6, CSB**).

Did you notice the verbs in these verses are past tense? He “made” us alive with Christ. You “are saved” by grace. He also “raised” us up with him and “seated” us with him. Even though we may not be seated with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus physically right now—I mean, you are seated here in this auditorium or in your home or wherever you may be—but remember, reality is more than just this physical, material, natural realm. The reality is that we are made alive with Christ. We are seated with Him in the heavens in Christ Jesus. Our reality is a both/and, just as an heir or heiress whose father or mother still lives is an heir in position and have already received their title, though they have yet to receive their full inheritance. We are “heirs of God and coheirs with Christ” (**Romans 8:17**) living in the “dual citizenship” (**Philippians 3:20**) of this world and heaven.

And so, as an ambassador for Christ, as Paul wrote in **2 Cor. 5:20**, since God is making his appeal through me right now, I plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God.” “Now is the day of salvation” (**2 Cor. 6:2**), and we can all step into the Resurrected Life through the Firstborn from the dead, Jesus the Christ.

NEXT STEPS:

- If you’re ready to step into the resurrected life of Jesus text **“FOLLOW”** to 317-707-6462, and we’ll reach out to you. Or, if you’re ready to talk with someone today about following Jesus, we encourage you to stop by the Next Steps Room, where people will gladly talk and pray with you.
- If you would like to learn more about the resurrection of Jesus, text **“JESUS”** to the same number on the screen, and we will send you a link to one of the best resources available.

