



Christians Believe Jesus Physically Rose From The Dead – Right?

By

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We should not be surprised that atheists, agnostics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and other non-Christians do not believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ — but how can Christians say they do not believe Jesus physically rose from the dead? They can't, right?

A [poll conducted for the BBC in 2017](#) found that a quarter of British people who identified as Christians do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Another 5% said they “don't know.” How can it be that almost one-third of people identifying as Christians in the UK either don't know or don't believe that Jesus rose bodily from the dead?

How about Christians in the United States? The numbers may be a little better than the UK, but it still raises the question of how anyone who identifies as a Christian could possibly doubt or dismiss the resurrection of Jesus Christ as being true. Isn't the physical crucifixion and physical resurrection of Jesus at the very core of the Christian Gospel?

Maybe we need to look at who is “feeding” God's flock.

We've written about leaders of "Progressive Christianity" denying both the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Jesus. If you haven't read our article, [you can see it here](#).

Barna did research in 2000 on the number of U.S. church leaders who believed in the resurrection of Jesus. 33% of the church leaders said they believed Jesus was crucified but not physically resurrected. 33% of church lay leaders also said they believed in the crucifixion but not the physical resurrection.

Results of a 1998 survey(*) of thousands of Protestant ministers showed that many of the clergy doubted that Jesus had physically risen from the dead:

- Methodists – 51%
- Episcopalians – 35%
- American Baptists – 33%
- Presbyterians – 30%

(* Jeffrey Hadden, results of a survey of 7,441 Protestant ministers published in *PrayerNet Newsletter*, 1998-NOV-13, Page 1. Cited in *Current Thoughts & Trends*, 1999-MAR, Page 19.)

A 2002 survey found that a third of Church of England clergy either doubted or disbelieved in the physical resurrection of Jesus.

Does the fact that so many clergy and lay leaders either doubt or disbelieve in the physical resurrection of Christ have any impact on what people believe? Of course it does.

A **2012 Rasmussen survey** of 1,000 American adults found that 77% believed Jesus rose from the dead.

A **2013 Rasmussen survey** of 1,000 American adults found that 64% believed Jesus rose from the dead.

That's a decrease of 13% in just one year. Why?

Research by LifeWay in 2016 of 3,000 American adults found that while 64% agree strongly or somewhat that Jesus physically rose from the dead, 36% disagree strongly or somewhat or are not sure. Similar numbers to the Rasmussen survey three years earlier.

Why is the percentage of Americans who believe Jesus rose from the dead declining?

In Defense of the Resurrection

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.” 2 Peter 2:1

“For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jude 4

“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” Acts 20:29-30

The **problem of false teachers** has been a challenge in the Christian Church since the beginning of the Church. We are looking at many of the problems of the early church in our **Reading Plan For Christian Apologists series** that included the doctrine of Christ’s physical resurrection from the grave.

I'd like to ask and answer three important questions:

1. How do we prove with certainty that Jesus rose from the dead?
2. What does Jesus' resurrection mean to Christians?
3. What does Jesus' resurrection mean to the world?

Q 1 – How do we prove with certainty that Jesus rose from the dead?

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Q 2 – What does Jesus' resurrection mean to Christians?

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Q 3 – What does Jesus' resurrection mean to the world?

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:11-14

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book

of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:11-15

Reference Materials

We invite you to read more about our defense of the Resurrection –

[In Defense of the Resurrection](#)

[The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ](#)

[Three Weeks Until Easter](#)

[The Importance of Christ's Death and Resurrection](#)

Arguments for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1. [Part One](#)
2. [Part Two](#)
3. [Part Three](#)
4. [Part Four](#)
5. [Part Five](#)
6. [Part Six](#)
7. [Part Seven](#)
8. [Part Eight](#)
9. [Part Nine](#)

[Evangelistic Apologetics: The Church Under Attack](#)

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