

## *Eleutheros Newsletter*

**March 2019**

As the Easter season approaches, we would do well to ponder the amazing truths about the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ.

With that in mind, the next few newsletters will focus on the New Testament's revelation about the greatest event in all of history!

Our Lord's resurrection from the dead would be an indisputable fact if all the evidence we had about it came from the prophecies of the Old Testament and the clear revelation from the Gospel accounts.

On the one hand, these accounts have never been successfully proven false even though many sceptics have attempted to discredit them.

On the other hand, it is important for those who *do* believe in His resurrection to understand and appreciate *further* emphasis and explanation that came after He had ascended to the Father.

We can learn much about the *significance* of the resurrection of Jesus Christ by surveying New Testament truth.

The following is an attempt to expound on that body of truth.

**[Acts 1:3](#)**. *To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

Luke, "the beloved physician" ([Colossians 4:14](#)), having written the Gospel bearing his name, wrote the book of Acts to a believer named Theophilus ([Acts 1:1](#)).

It is interesting to note that the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write about our Lord's resurrection so quickly.

*He shewed Himself alive!* Not only did Jesus leave behind an empty tomb and His grave clothes neatly wrapped in that tomb; not only did He commission "two men" (no doubt they were angels) to explain to the women who came to the grave site that He was already risen ([Luke 24:1-10](#)); but He also presented Himself alive!

We have already listed His post-resurrection appearances. Consider how He did these things. He approached Mary individually; He walked with two Emmaus disciples; He came to the upper room *twice* (the second time to restore "doubting Thomas"); He restored Peter; He appeared to over five hundred; He met with the disciples just before He ascended to the Father.

Legal experts readily admit that evidence that is presented over a period of time (“forty days”) and to many people is very difficult to refute. Adding to the evidence is the fact that He did it in different places, in different ways, and with different intent.

He was encouraging; He was teaching; He was commissioning.

To put it another way, our Lord was simply continuing the work He had done throughout His earthly ministry. He was alive and showing His love, His submission to the will of His Father, His passion to train His disciples, and demonstrating to many that He surely is the *risen* Son of God!

The nail prints in His hands and feet were among the “infallible proofs.”

The evidence for His bodily resurrection was (and still is) overwhelming! Luke makes that clear in this important verse.

**Acts 1:22.** *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.*

In this verse Peter, the man who had so seriously failed His Lord about three months before, is now the Apostle who is leading the early church.

He stood up and spoke about Judas ([Acts 1:15f](#)), emphasizing that there needed to be a replacement for him.

It was required that the replacement be “a witness with us of His resurrection.” Paul makes it clear ([I Corinthians 9:1](#)) that *an apostle* must be one who has seen the risen Lord and be appointed by Him to service.

The other Apostles “appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Matthias was “numbered among the eleven Apostles ([Acts 1:26](#)).

The significance of this choice is that an Apostle needed to be an eyewitness of Jesus’ resurrection. These men (and Paul, who later became an Apostle) were called to reach the entire world to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Keep in mind, these men were called to serve in the first century! They did not have automobiles, trains, or airplanes in which to travel. They did not have printing presses, telephones, or computers to spread the message.

Surely, these men needed *assurance* and a powerful *motivation* to take on such a ministry! God’s answer to these great needs was their eyewitness of our resurrected Lord!

**Acts 2:24.** *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.*

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come” the Apostle Peter “lifted up his voice” ([Acts 2:14](#)) and delivered a very powerful message.

He had the boldness to tell thousands of Jews, even Jewish leaders, that they had crucified Jesus Who had done “miracles and wonders and signs” ([Acts 2:22](#)) to prove His deity.

Then He unapologetically declared that “God hath raised Him up,” fulfilling a prophecy made by David in the Psalms ([16:10](#)).

Beside demonstrating an eagerness to call out the people for their sin and a great conviction that Jesus is their risen Savior, he made points that we can take from this verse.

1. “Whom God hath raised up” tells us that the Father was involved in His Son’s resurrection. Surely, it was the Father’s will that Jesus come to life again!
2. “It was not possible that He should be holden of it” tells us there was *no way* that He would remain lifeless in the tomb. Peter was so aware of Jesus’ deity, prophecies, and mission that He made this amazing assertion in his first sermon. He spoke these words and thousands believed.

[Acts 2:31-32](#). *He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.*

These words in the Pentecost message were spoken to Jews who had a great respect for David, their second king. David live about a thousand years before Jesus and received this great message. No doubt many of the people assembled there, especially the religious leaders, knew this passage in the Psalms. This is why “when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.”

The combination of resurrection truth, powerful boldness to speak up, and reference to a passage from the Word of God made a major difference in the hearts of “about three thousand souls” ([Acts 2:41](#)) that day!

Notice also that Peter said it was not just *his* opinion, but rather the testimony of all the Apostles who stood there in front of the crowd.

[Acts 3:15](#). *And killed the Prince of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses.*

Earlier in Acts 3 Peter healed a lame man by “at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful.” Jesus had healed many; now Peter was doing something similar.

There were many people nearby and Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to deliver a second powerful Gospel message to them.

He referred to Jesus as “the Prince of life.” That description was amazing! The Source of all life (see [John 1:4](#)) had been crucified, yet He lives again!

Further, Peter was able to heal that lame man by resurrection power and more than willing to declare the resurrection message again!

The story continues in Acts 4. “The priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees” were grieved at Peter’s message and “put them in hold unto the next day” ([Acts 4:3](#)).

Peter and John were persecuted for their faith but because of resurrection power (after being threatened by a number of religious leaders), they said, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” ([Acts 4:19-20](#)). These two men were tested, but they would not deny Jesus!

What character and boldness Peter and John showed that day because they were serving a risen Savior!

In [Acts 4:4](#) we are told that about five thousand people believed in the resurrection message and its power.

In [Acts 4:10](#) Peter explained to all who would listen that the miracle of healing was by the name of Jesus “Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.”

The power that the early church had come from the work of the Holy Spirit and the message of the resurrection.

We will continue these thoughts in future newsletters.