

# **The Mind of Christ**

## **The Resurrection**

### **(The Resurrection - Part One)**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

I. We have been taking a long journey together in a series of lessons I've titled  
THE MIND OF CHRIST.

A. The PURPOSE of this study is very simple – it has been designed to  
deepen our understanding of WHO Jesus is, and WHY He said and did  
the things He did, and to help us better understand the SIGNIFICANCE  
of the life and teachings of Jesus.

1. And with a deeper understanding of THESE things, we should  
come away with a deeper FAITH.
2. It's been a long journey because we've been looking closely at the  
life and teachings of the GREATEST man to ever walk the face of  
the earth – Jesus the CHRIST (Jesus the ANOINTED), the very  
SON OF GOD.
3. And in this series of studies, I've tried to create series of lessons  
WITHIN our studies of the life and teachings of Jesus.
  - a. For example, we've just spent four lessons looking at the  
CROSS of Christ, and the significance of what happened  
there.

- b. And starting today we're going to spend some time together examining the very FOUNDATION of our faith – the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- B. Without a doubt, the message of a RISEN SAVIOR is that GOLDEN THREAD that weaves its way through EVERY PART of the ancient, first century, world.
1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the theme of EVERY GOSPEL SERMON preached beginning with the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, just as it is the theme of our preaching and teaching today.
  2. It was a message repeated OVER and OVER in the inspired writings of New Testament writers – men like John, Peter and Paul.
  3. The resurrection of Jesus became the BANNER that the soldiers of Christ bravely carried into battle against the principalities and powers of this world – the unseen forces of Satan.
  4. It was the HOPE to which every persecuted, suffering saint CLUNG as they boldly faced death for claiming to believe in a resurrected Christ.
  5. And the resurrection of Jesus is the basis of OUR assurance and hope that we will ALSO be resurrected from the dead someday.
- C. But why is the resurrection of Jesus so IMPORTANT?

1. Why should we spend time talking about something we all believe ANYWAY?
    - a. Isn't the FACT that Jesus was the Son of God ENOUGH?
    - b. Can't we simply look at the LIFE of Jesus and gather hope from THAT?
    - c. Or, can't we look at the DEATH of Jesus to learn about courage and humility?
  2. Aren't THESE things important ENOUGH? Why do we need to spend time examining the resurrection?
- D. The answer is very simple.
1. Without the RESURRECTION of Jesus, His claim of being the Son of God would be nothing but a LIE, our FAITH would be based on something that never happened, and there would be NO RESURRECTION for us.
  2. Therefore, over the next several Sunday's, we'll be looking at various aspects of the resurrection of our Lord.
    - a. We'll start by looking at the BIBLICAL account of the resurrection to understand the SEQUENCE of events, and in some instances, the IMPORTANCE of those events.
    - b. Next, we will examine the CLAIMS of Jesus that He would not ONLY be resurrected from the dead, but that it would occur EXACTLY three days FOLLOWING His crucifixion. To make

THIS claim, Jesus would either have to be a deceiver and a liar of the worst kind, or He would have to be a raving lunatic with delusions of grandeur, OR His claim is TRUE, and that would make Him the Son of God – King of kings and Lord of lords.

- c. We'll also examine the IMPORTANCE of the resurrection. While the four major religions of the world (Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity) are based on the TEACHINGS of their leaders, only Christianity claims it's leader was resurrected from the dead AND left behind an empty tomb.
- d. Then we will begin looking at the specific EVIDENCE that proves beyond a reasonable doubt Jesus was, in FACT, raised from the dead by the power of God, and that He appeared alive to many of His disciples – including one occasion where He appeared to more than 500 persons at the same time.
- e. We will also spend some time examining the various THEORIES skeptics have come up with over the years in an attempt to DENY the resurrection and explain away the significance of the empty tomb.

- f. We will ALSO take a close look at the specific APPEARANCES of Jesus after the resurrection and try to understand something about the CHARACTER of these persons, and their EMOTIONAL state of mind at the time, and perhaps understand why Jesus specifically chose to appear to THEM.
  - g. And FINALLY, we will look at the CONSEQUENCES we face as Christians if the resurrection of Jesus did NOT occur, and then examine the BENEFITS from knowing Jesus was IN FACT raised from the dead.
3. And so, let's begin by looking at the BIBLICAL account of the resurrection of Jesus by starting with His burial.

**BODY:**

- I. It was shortly after three o'clock in the afternoon when Jesus finally died on the cross. **(See: Mark 15:34).**
  - A. The next day was the Sabbath, and the Sabbath would BEGIN at approximately 6:00 pm – less than three hours away.
    - 1. Jewish law prohibited a criminal's body from remaining on the cross over the Sabbath.
      - a. Therefore, the body of Jesus needed to be taken down and immediately prepared for burial.

2. **Mark 15:42-47** – *Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. 45 So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph observed where He was laid.*
3. There are only a few things we ACTUALLY KNOW about this man, Joseph of Arimathea.
  - a. We know he was a WEALTHY man ("*a rich man*" – **Matt 27:57**), and described as "*good and just,*" (**Luke 23:50**).
  - b. We also know he was a prominent member of the SANHEDRIN (the Council), but "*had not consented to their decision and deed*" in condemning Jesus to death, (**Luke 23:51**).
  - c. And we know he was, "*a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews,*" (**John 19:38**).

4. But perhaps the most SIGNIFICANT thing Joseph of Arimathea is known for is giving his own tomb as the burial place for the body of Jesus – a *"new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock."* (**Matt 27:60**)
  - a. In THOSE days, tombs of wealthy families were not graves in the ground, but rather CAVES or CAVERNS – some of which were NATURAL caves, while others were actually HEWN OUT of the sandstone so common to that area of Israel.
  - b. Inside these tombs, we would find shelves that were also cut out of the rock, and on which the bodies of the dead were carefully laid.
  - c. Later we will learn that Joseph of Arimathea's tomb was apparently located in a garden, not far from Calvary.
- B. John's account tells us that another prominent member of the Sanhedrin joined Joseph of Arimathea to assist in preparing the body of Jesus.
  1. **John 19:38-40** – Speaking of Joseph of Arimathea, John says, *"... he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury."*

2. And so, these two prominent men, BOTH of whom were members of the Great Sanhedrin, prepared the body of Jesus for burial.
  3. According to the CUSTOMS of the day, the body would have FIRST been thoroughly washed, and THEN wrapped in grave-cloths.
    - a. The grave-cloths were long strips of fine linen that would first be saturated in a wet paste-like mixture of fragrant spices of myrrh and aloes – in this instance, about a hundred pounds of spices, or more literally 100 litras (a Greek measurement), which equates to about 75 pounds by OUR standards.
    - b. The face of the deceased would be covered with a separate cloth, and then the head would then be wrapped mummy-style with long linen cloths until they reached the neck.
    - c. The rest of the body would also be tightly wrapped mummy-style with these same cloths, beginning with the neck and continuing all the way to the feet until the body was completely wrapped.
  4. Finally, the body of Jesus would have been laid carefully on one of the shelves in the rock tomb.
- C. The LAST act would be to CLOSE the tomb.
1. Tombs like this were not closed with a door, but rather with a large stone that resembled a huge stone wheel.

- a. Typically, there was a groove or trough in front of the door in which the stone door could be rolled down a slight incline until the tomb was closed.
  - b. According to Biblical scholars and historians, the average weight of these stone doors were between 1 ½ to 2 tons.
  - c. Since these stones rolled down a slight incline, the door to the tomb was relatively easy to close, but VERY difficult to open.
  - d. Why? To OPEN the tomb, you would have to roll a 1 ½ to 2 ton circular stone UP the incline.
  - e. In fact, there is a very interesting New Testament manuscript (Codex Bezae) in which a copyist made a marginal note saying the stone was so large that 20 men could not move it.
  - f. So, these stone doors were MASSIVE.
2. Finally, we're told that two women, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses, sat nearby to watch the entire burial process, and took SPECIAL NOTE of the tomb's LOCATIONS.
    - a. We're later told WHY they were careful to note the location of the tomb. The women had planned to RETURN to the tomb the day AFTER the Sabbath with ADDITIONAL spices to anoint the body of Jesus, and complete the burial process.

II. Meanwhile, the Scriptures tell us the Jewish religious authorities were still troubled over Jesus' claim that He would be resurrected from the dead in THREE DAYS.

A. **Matthew 27:62-66** – *On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' 64 Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.*

1. Obviously, these men were concerned that the disciples of Jesus would STEAL the body of Jesus and claim that He HAD been resurrected from the dead.
  - a. These religious leaders knew an empty tomb would certainly be difficult to explain – ESPECIALLY since Jesus' claim that He would be resurrected in three days was apparently widely known.
2. The LAST thing Pilate needed at this point in his troubled career was an uprising caused by the theft of the body of Jesus.

- a. He certainly saw the WISDOM of guarding the tomb until the three days had passed.
  - b. Therefore, he ordered that the tomb be SEALED and that a GUARD be posted to secure the tomb from potential grave robbers.
- B. There has been a lot of debate over the years as to whether the GUARD were ROMAN SOLDIERS or merely Jewish TEMPLE POLICE.
1. The REASON for knowing this is simply because there is a VAST difference in the professionalism and discipline between ROMAN SOLDIERS and JEWISH TEMPLE POLICE.
  2. We'll talk more about this later, but to settle the question all we need to do is look at the word Matthew chose to describe this guard.
    - a. The word is the LATIN word, "koustoodia," which, according to Strong means a "Roman sentry."
    - b. Furthermore, this detachment of ROMAN soldiers would have consisted of anywhere from 4 to 12 or more fully armed, highly trained, combat-ready soldiers, who would defend to the death whatever they had been commanded to guard.
    - c. But add to this the fact that the tomb was "SEALED," which means a cord was stretched across the entrance of the tomb,

secured at each end with sealing clay, and finally the clay was embossed with the seal of the Emperor of Rome.

d. In essence, THESE soldiers were guarding property that had NOW come under the protection of the Roman Empire.

C. All during the Sabbath (Saturday) the body of Jesus lay in the tomb.

1. There were no visitors to the tomb that day.
2. Because it WAS the Sabbath, it was not ONLY a day of REST, but a day in which no Jew could travel MORE than a Sabbath day's journey – about 7/10 ths of a mile.
3. The only ones PRESENT at the tomb would be the detachment of Roman Soldiers.

III. Finally, as the first day of the week began to dawn, a whole series of events took place that would change the course of human history for an eternity.

A. In the early morning twilight, while the sky was still mostly dark, a few faithful women arose and made their way to the tomb.

1. They were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Joanna, and perhaps others whose names we don't have.
2. As we've already seen, they were coming to the tomb to finish applying spices and perfumes to the body of Jesus.
  - a. However, there was a problem – who would they get to roll the large stone away from the entrance of the tomb.



- c. In fact, THEIR accounts begin when the women ARRIVE at the tomb to find the stone ALREADY rolled away, and the body of Jesus GONE.
  - d. And, while Matthew's account DOES tell the story of the angel removing the stone in the presence of the soldiers, and of them becoming like dead men (Barnes' commentary says they probably fainted from fear), Matthew doesn't go into any more detail than that.
3. None of the gospel accounts attempt to SENSATIONALIZE or EMBELLISH the story of the resurrection.
- a. They don't attempt to DRAMATIZE the most dramatic event in the history of the WORLD.
4. However, in the centuries that followed, all KINDS of legends began to thrive about the actual moment Jesus walked out of the tomb.
- a. One of the most elaborate legends says the guards put up a tent at the tomb to keep watch.
  - b. The story says, suddenly there was a great sound from heaven and the guards saw two men descending from heaven, clothed in dazzling light, and approaching the tomb.
  - c. The stone was rolled away and knocked over on its side and the two men entered the tomb.

- d. The legend goes on to say, three men slowly emerged from the tomb – two of them supporting the third – and as they came out, a glowing cross followed them.
  - e. Suddenly, the figures began to grow until the heads of the two reached up to heaven, but the head of the one man who was brought OUT of the tomb reached ABOVE the heavens.
5. So, quite unlike the elaborate tales that began to flourish into legends, and unfortunately into some later manuscripts, the gospel accounts simply state the facts.
- C. According to John's account, Mary Magdalene was the first to arrive at the tomb, found it empty, then left to bring the news of the empty tomb to Peter and John.
1. **John 20:1-2** – *Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."*
- a. At THAT moment, Mary Magdalene couldn't grasp the SIGNIFICANCE of the empty tomb – she thought someone had MOVED the body of Jesus.

- b. And so, deeply troubled over the disappearance of the body of Jesus, Mary Magdalene rushed back to bring news to Peter and John.
2. Shortly after Mary Magdalene ran back to the city, the OTHER WOMEN arrived at the tomb to ALSO find it open.
  - a. **Matthew 28:5-7** – *But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."*
  - b. And so, these women ALSO returned to the city, but on the WAY Jesus appeared to them, and repeated the same message given at the tomb by the angel.
  - c. **Matthew 28:9-10** – *And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."*
3. Meanwhile, Peter and John raced to the tomb with Mary Magdalene following behind.

- a. **John 20:4-8** – *So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.*
  - b. John was **FIRST** to arrive, and looked into the tomb, but didn't go in.
  - c. Peter arrived a moment later and **IMMEDIATELY** went **INTO** the empty tomb.
  - d. When John joined Peter inside, the things they saw convinced them **BOTH** that Jesus had been raised from the dead.
  - e. The significance of the **HEAD CLOTH** laying aside, neatly rolled up or folded, shows there had **NOT** been a hurried theft of the body.
  - f. Rather, it suggests that it had been carefully removed, folded and laid aside.
4. John's account says that after Mary Magdalene arrived back at the tomb, she stayed in the garden after Peter and John left. However,

she was confused and sad, still thinking someone had taken the body.

- a. **John 20:11-18** – *But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.*

5. There were OTHER appearances that same day.
  - a. Jesus personally appeared to Peter, to comfort and console the disciple who had denied Him. **(cf Luke 24:34; Mark 16:7)**
  - b. Jesus also appeared to two men after having walked with them on the road leading to the small village of Emmaus. **(cf Luke 24:13-35)**
  
6. In the days that followed, there were a number of OTHER appearances of Jesus.
  - a. He appeared to His disciples in the upper room, ONCE when Thomas was ABSENT, and the SECOND time when Thomas was PRESENT. **(cf Luke 24:44-49; John 20:24-29)**
  - b. He also appeared to the disciples as they were fishing on the sea of Galilee. **(cf John 21)**
  - c. Then He appeared to the disciples on a hilltop in Galilee as He commissioned His disciples to go preach the gospel. **(cf. Matthew 28:16-20)**
  - d. And then there's the list given by the apostle Paul of those who saw the resurrected Jesus, including more than 500 people at one time. **(cf. 1 Corinthians 15:5-8)**

## CONCLUSION:

- I. That first day of the week, two thousand years ago, BEGAN in HEAVINESS and DEEP SORROW, but the day ENDED in INEXPRESSIBLE JOY and THANKSGIVING.
  - A. Now there was NO DOUBT in the minds of the disciples of Jesus.
    1. They KNEW Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
    2. In fact, the apostle Paul later began his letter to the church in Rome with the words, "*...Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*" **(Romans 1:3-4)**
  - B. The victory was now complete – Jesus had gained the victory over death, and NOW promises to give US the same victory.
    1. Listen to the words of the apostle Paul.
      - a. **1 Corinthians 15:51-58** – *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – 52 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. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 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."  
55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your  
victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is  
the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 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.*

2. Paul's message to first century saints was simple.
  - a. Keep on laboring in the Lord.
  - b. Stay faithful – don't lose heart and fall back from the confidence you have in Jesus Christ.
  - c. Your labor – your struggle, hardship, difficult times, trials and tribulations, and all those seemingly impossible situations – WILL NOT be in vain in the Lord.
  
3. But did you catch those final words – the words, *"your labor is not in vain in the Lord?"*
  - a. Paul says all we go through in life will have a meaning and a purpose AS LONG AS we are IN THE LORD.
  - b. Are YOU in the Lord? Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ and thus have been baptized INTO Christ? And if you HAVE, are you still WALKING in the Lord as a faithful Christian?

- c. If not, don't you think it's time to GET INTO that relationship with the Lord as your Savior – after all, He has ALREADY paid the price for your sins on the cross, and has PROVEN Himself to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead.
- d. So, ARE you in the Lord? If not, why not come to Christ now?