

# The Mind of Christ

## The Resurrection

### Part Three

#### INTRODUCTION:

- I. The very foundation of our faith as Christians is the undisputable fact that Jesus Christ was BODILY resurrected from the dead.
  - A. For centuries, false teachers and skeptics have been trying to undermine the faith of Christians by claiming Jesus was NOT bodily resurrected from the dead.
    1. In fact, this heresy began soon after the establishment of the Lord's church nearly two thousand years ago.
  - B. Those who were at the forefront of DENYING the bodily resurrection of Jesus were the GNOSTICS.
    1. Gnosticism is based on the belief that God INTENDED to create a perfect world, but failed. Therefore, the world, and all that is in it is evil and corrupt.
    2. And this includes man.
      - a. The Gnostic belief is that our BODY and SOUL (life force) are evil, but WITHIN the soul is the SPIRIT of man that needs to

be awakened through divine knowledge – a divine knowledge that only the GNOSTICS have.

- b. And it is only when the spirit is ENLIGHTENED that we become GOD-like and have complete and perfect enlightenment.
  - c. Therefore, according to the Gnostic, the spirit needs to be FREED from the body and soul to attain ultimate perfection.
  - d. In essence, the Gnostic believes FREEING the spirit from the body is the ultimate and highest attainment.
3. Because of this, the Gnostics denied that Jesus was BODILY resurrected from the dead – meaning they deny that His body AND spirit were resurrected together from the dead.
  4. To them, the BODILY resurrection of Jesus is an ABSURDITY.
    - a. They believed the SPIRIT of Jesus was resurrected, but NOT the BODY.
    - b. As we said before, the GNOSTICS believe the PHYSICAL body is evil and corrupt, and FREEDOM from that body is the ultimate and highest attainment of mankind.
    - c. Therefore, to the GNOSTICS, it would be an ABSURDITY to believe that the SPIRIT of Jesus would somehow RE-ENTER His evil and corrupt body.

- C. Shades of Gnosticism were even prevalent as EARLY as the Day of Pentecost – when the apostle Peter EMPHATICALLY asserted that Jesus was NOT ONLY RESURRECTED from the dead, but that the resurrection was a BODILY resurrection – a bodily resurrection that left behind an EMPTY TOMB.
1. **Acts 2:22-24** – Peter begins his sermon on Pentecost with these words: *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know – 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.*
  2. **Acts 2:25-27** – Peter moves on to affirm the BODILY resurrection of Jesus by quoting from the Psalms of David – 25 *"For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my FLESH also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my SOUL in Hades, nor will You allow YOUR HOLY ONE to see CORRUPTION.*

3. **Acts 2:29-36** – Peter concludes affirming the BODILY resurrection of Jesus with these words: 29 "*Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both DEAD and BURIED, and his TOMB is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the FLESH, He would RAISE UP THE CHRIST to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the RESURRECTION OF THE CHRIST, that His SOUL was not left in Hades, NOR DID HIS FLESH SEE CORRUPTION. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*
- D. Even the apostle Paul had to confront the Gnostic heresy about a BODILY resurrection from the dead, and dedicated an entire chapter in 1st Corinthians to it.

1. **1 Corinthians 15:12-14** – The apostle Paul put it this way: *Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty* [your faith is also vain, useless, worthless].

**BODY:**

- I. You may not realize it, but the **BODILY RESURRECTION** of Jesus Christ makes the basis of our faith as Christians **TOTALLY UNIQUE** from **ALL** the major religions of the world.
  - A. What do we mean by this?
    1. We means, that with the exception of **ONLY FOUR** major world religions, **ALL** of the **OTHER** major world religions are based **ENTIRELY** on mere **PHILOSOPHICAL PROPOSITIONS** – teaching that are sometimes pragmatic or fundamental, or sometimes mystical and abstract.
      - a. This would include all the religious organizations and belief systems from Scientology to ancient eastern mysticism.
      - b. The **FOUR** world religions that are the **EXCEPTION** to this fact are Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. **THESE**

four world religions are not based solely on PHILOSOPHICAL PROPOSITIONS but on PERSONALITIES.

2. This means that the four major world religions (Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity) all look to a SPECIFIC MAN who became the great teacher or lawgiver for each of these worldwide religions.
  - a. For example, BUDDHISM is based on the life and teachings of THE BUDDAH, a former prince-turned-monk by the name of Siddhartha Gautama (SID-dra-tha) (GAW-ta-mah), who is revered by MILLIONS throughout the world today as a DIVINE BEING – a god – although HE didn't consider himself to be divine, AND he never MADE that claim.
  - b. ISLAM, on the other hand, is based on the life of MUHAMMAD, held by millions of Moslems worldwide as the only TRUE prophet of Allah, and based on his writings in the Koran are revered as everlasting TRUTH and the FINAL revelation from God to mankind.
  - c. JUDAISM is largely based on the lives of the PATRIARCHS, and the life and writings of MOSES, the great lawgiver, AND on the writings of the inspired PROPHETS of Old Testament times.

- d. And finally, CHRISTIANITY is based on the life and teachings of JESUS CHRIST, and on the writings of His divinely inspired APOSTLES – all of which is contained in the New Testament.
- B. But, there are two other VITALLY UNIQUE characteristics that makes Christianity VASTLY different from Buddhism, Islam and even Judaism.
1. ONE of these is the fact that Jesus, the FOUNDER of Christianity, claimed to be GOD IN THE FLESH – God the SON, Who came from heaven and took upon Himself the form of man to live and die for the sins of mankind.
  2. The OTHER unique characteristic about Christianity is the fact that the DEITY of Jesus Christ was proven BECAUSE He was BODILY resurrected from the dead and left behind an EMPTY TOMB as proof.
- C. When you begin looking at the unique difference between Christianity and ALL OTHER major worldwide religions, it is the RESURRECTION that makes our faith one of SUBSTANCE, and not merely a BLIND faith.
1. For example, Buddhism doesn't even TEACH the concept of a BODILY RESURRECTION.

a. Marvin Harada (ha-RAW-dah), who ministers with one of the many Orange County California Buddhist churches, says this about the subject of the resurrection.

(1). "My feeling is that the *real* resurrection of Jesus does not rely on whether he rose from the dead or not. I would think that the *real* resurrection occurs when Christians receive the teachings of Jesus within their hearts and minds. When a Christian really and truly receives the teachings of Jesus in one's heart and mind, then Jesus truly *comes alive*. From a Buddhist perspective, isn't that the *real* meaning of resurrection? In the same manner, for Buddhists, when we receive the Buddha's teachings in our hearts and minds, then the Buddha comes *alive* for us. Of course the Buddha does not *literally* come alive or come back from the dead, but his teachings, his way of life of the Dharma (religious teachings of Buddhism), *comes alive* for us today."

b. In fact, Buddhists believe that following death, the soul journeys throughout the realm of the dead until it is REBORN in a NEW FORM through REINCARNATION.

(1). For Buddhists there are REINCARNATIONS but there is no RESURRECTION.

2. And consider the ISLAMIC belief about the resurrection.

a. Moslems CLEARLY believe in a resurrection from the dead, and have a concept about the resurrection that is quite

SIMILAR to our own.

b. In fact, a popular Islamic website says THIS about their belief in a resurrection.

(1). "We believe that Allah, the Exalted, will revive all people after their death on a certain day which he has promised them, and that He will then reward the obedient and punish the wrong-doers. In this simple form, this is what all the Divine religions and philosophies have accepted, but Muslims must believe in it because it is contained in the Quran which our Prophet brought, and one who believes in Allah and Muhammad, His Messenger, must also believe in what is related in the Quran... There is no reason to doubt it, unless one doubts Allah, His Power and His Messenger." (Exerts from an Islamic website *The Way of Truth – Discovering Islam*)

- b. In fact, the ISLAMIC belief in a bodily resurrection is based SOLELY on the fact that the KORAN teaches it. The Koran teaches that the compassionate nature of God and His love and mercy toward mankind REQUIRES a resurrection, and that the ONLY WAY God can fulfill the longings and desires of mankind would BE through a resurrection from the dead into an eternal existence.
- c. Islamic belief in the resurrection is NOT based on the bodily resurrection of Muhammad from the dead – because that never happened.
  - (4). While there is a popular belief that Muhammad ascended to heaven on a winged donkey-like creature with a woman's face and the tail of a Peacock, he came back, lived another year, and was finally poisoned and died at the age of 80 after being poisoned.
  - (5). His tomb remains in the city of Medina to this day.
- d. And so, ISLAMIC belief in the resurrection is NOT based on someone BEING resurrected from the dead, but based SOLELY upon the fact that the resurrection is only TAUGHT by Muhammad in the Koran.
  - (1). THAT, my friend, is BLIND FAITH.

3. JUDAISM, in the days of Jesus, was sharply DIVIDED over the question of the resurrection. While the scribes and Pharisees believed in the resurrection, the Sadducees did NOT.
  - a. But anyone who examines the FACTS would discover that the OLD TESTAMENT is FILLED with allusions to the fact of a bodily resurrection from the dead, and even provides some ACTUAL INSTANCES when someone WAS resurrected from the dead.
    - (1). The son of the widow of Zarephath. **(1 Kings 17:17-23)**
    - (2). The Shunammite woman's son. **(2 Kings 4:32-37)**
    - (3). The young man laid in Elisha's grave. **(2 Kings 31:21)**
  - b. But neither MOSES nor any of the PROPHETS were resurrected from the dead.
4. But, it's ONLY when we come to CHRISTIANITY that we find OVERWHELMING evidence of JESUS being bodily resurrected from the dead, but ALSO the promise that WE will LIKEWISE be resurrected from the dead BECAUSE OF our faith in Jesus Christ.
  - a. **1 Corinthians 6:14** – ...*God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.*
  - b. **2 Corinthians 4:14** – *knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus,*

c. **Philippians 3:10-11** – *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

C. THIS is what makes CHRISTIANITY so UNIQUELY DIFFERENT from all the OTHER religions of the world.

1. It is the ONLY worldwide religion who's FOUNDER, Jesus Christ, claimed to be GOD THE SON, and as PROOF of that claim He DIED, was BURIED, and was BODILY RESURRECTED from the dead, AND left an EMPTY TOMB behind as PROOF.
2. Those are claims that NONE of the other world religions make – NOT EVEN BUDDHISM, ISLAM or JUDAISM.

II. All this is why the BODILY resurrection of Jesus Christ is the VERY BASIS of the Christian's faith.

A. In the tenth chapter of John, Jesus confronted some of His most severe critics – the Pharisees, who incidentally, BELIEVED in a bodily resurrection someday.

1. But in the midst of this confrontation, Jesus said TWO THINGS that literally SHOCKED these proud religious leaders.

- a. **John 10:17-18** – *"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."*
2. Jesus not ONLY called God His Father – which was heresy as far as the Pharisees were concerned – BUT Jesus went ON to say He had the power to lay down His life (to give up His life), AND the power to TAKE IT AGAIN (to be RESURRECTED from the dead).
  - a. This doesn't contradict the fact that Jesus was resurrected by the power of GOD.
  - b. Rather, this claim shows that Jesus was CLEARLY CLAIMING TO BE DIVINE (DEITY) – He was claiming to have the SAME power as God the Father.
3. THIS is why the resurrection is so CRUCIAL to our faith.
  - a. If Jesus had REMAINED under the power of death (remained in the grave), He would have been PROVEN to be a FALSE savior – a FALSE messiah.
  - b. However, if Jesus WAS resurrected from the dead, then He PROVED His claim to deity BEYOND ANY DOUBT that He is God the Son – BY His bodily resurrection from the dead.

- c. As we saw in our LAST lesson, if Jesus was NOT resurrected from the dead, then we have to conclude that He either KNEW He wouldn't be resurrected (which would make Him a LIAR), OR He was DELUDED into believing He would be resurrected (which would make Him a LUNATIC).
  - d. But the fact that Jesus WAS resurrected from the dead PROVES His claim of being God the Son, and makes Him LORD.
- B. This, by the way, is the FUNDAMENTAL difference between Christianity and Islam.
- 1. ISLAM says: "That the resurrection will come is beyond doubt, because Allah, Who is Omniscient and Omnipotent, has announced it [through His Holy Prophet Muhammad]." (Exerts from an Islamic website *The Way of Truth – Discovering Islam*)
  - 2. And yet, the apostle Paul told the saints in Rome: **Romans 1:3-4** *"...concerning His Son 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."*
    - a. To believe in the ISLAMIC concept of resurrection, you have to accept the teachings of the KORAN.

- b. And to accept the teachings of the Koran, you have to accept that Muhammad WAS the last prophet of God.
  - c. And to accept that Muhammad was the last prophet of God, you would have to believe Muhammad was INSPIRED of God.
  - d. But there's a problem with that. Because, if you believe that Muhammad was INSPIRED of God, then you're going to have to explain all the HISTORICAL and SCIENTIFIC ERRORS found in the Koran.
  - e. To put it in simple words. There simply is NO BASIS for believing in the ISLAMIC concept of a resurrection.
2. However, the apostle Paul said Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power BY the resurrection of the dead.
- a. And so, you can believe what the BIBLE says about the resurrection because Jesus IS the Son of God as He claimed.
  - b. And you can believe Jesus IS the Son of God as He claimed because Jesus died, was buried, and WAS resurrected from the dead – all you need to do is look inside the EMPTY TOMB.
  - c. So, there IS evidence for believing in the BIBLICAL account of the resurrection.
3. THAT'S what makes this study SO IMPORTANT.

- a. If YOUR faith as a Christian is based on believing what your PARENTS taught you, or what SOMEONE ELSE told you about Jesus – you don't really HAVE a faith.
- b. But if your faith is based on examining and accepting the BIBLICAL and HISTORICAL EVIDENCE that Jesus was resurrected from the dead – then you HAVE a faith that will stand FOREVER.

## CONCLUSION:

- I. Do YOU believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? And if you DO, what do you BASE that faith on?
  - A. The FOUNDATION of YOUR faith is either ROCK SOLID, or it's completely WORTHLESS, and will crumble under even the SLIGHTEST challenge.
    1. The apostle Peter put it this way: **1 Peter 3:15** – *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always** be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear...*
    2. Can YOU defend YOUR faith? And if your faith in Jesus Christ were put to a life-or-death-kind of test – where you LIVE if you

DENY Christ, or DIE if you DON'T – would your faith STAND or FALL?

- a. Let me put it as plain and simply as I can. The DEPTH of your faith in Jesus Christ is in DIRECT PROPORTION to your FAITHFULNESS to Him as Lord and Christ.
  - b. If you're having a problem with FAITHFULNESS, you're having a problem with your FAITH. It's as simple as that.
  - c. And the level of your FAITH determines whether or not you have truly been saved by God's grace through faith.
  - d. You may have simply gone through the MOTIONS of becoming a Christian, without your heart EVER being COMPLETELY COMMITTED to the Lord.
- B. Do you TRULY believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He came to this earth to die on a cross for YOUR sins, and was bodily RESURRECTED from the dead and ascended to heaven?
1. If you DON'T FULLY and COMPLETELY believe that, then we need to spend some time examining all the evidence that proves the deity of Jesus.
  2. But if you DO FULLY and COMPLETELY believe Jesus is the Son of God, and that He shed His blood of the cross to obtain the

forgiveness of YOUR sins, then have you GIVEN your heart to the Lord in return?

- a. Is your faith in Jesus strong enough to motivate you to repent of your past sins, and openly confess your faith in Him before others, and then be buried with Him in baptism for the remission of your sins?
  - b. And is your faith sufficient to keep you faithfully following Him all the days of your life as a TRUE disciple of His?
3. If you TRULY believe in Jesus and haven't come to Him in complete obedience, then that's where you need to begin.
  4. And if you TRULY believe in Jesus, and have surrendered your life to Him, but somewhere along the way got sidetracked and are no longer faithfully following Him as a true disciple, then it's time to come back and let the Lord cleanse you once again from all those sins.