

The Apostles' Creed: Week 8

...On the third day He rose again from the dead...

In the Scriptures:

1. The king rejoices in your strength, Lord.
How great is his joy in the victories you give!
You have granted him his heart's desire
and have not withheld the request of his lips.
You came to greet him with rich blessings
and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.
He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—
length of days, for ever and ever.
Through the victories you gave, his glory is great;
you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.
Surely you have granted him unending blessings
and made him glad with the joy of your presence.
For the king trusts in the Lord;
through the unfailing love of the Most High
he will not be shaken.

(Psalm 22:1-7)

2. After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

(Matthew 28:1-10)

...On the third day He rose again from the dead...

3. Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-11)

As described by Christian writers:

4. "O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

– John Chrysostom, “Paschal Sermon”

5. If the resurrection were only spiritual, it was requisite that He, in raising the dead, should show the body lying apart by itself, and the soul living apart by itself. But now He did not do so, but raised the body, confirming in it the promise of life. Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh? And wishing to confirm this, when His disciples did not know whether to believe He had truly risen in the body, and were looking upon Him and doubting, He said to them, You have not yet faith, see that it is I; and He let them handle Him, and showed them the prints of the nails in His hands. And when they were by every kind of proof persuaded that it was Himself, and in the body, they asked Him to eat with them, that they might thus still more accurately ascertain that He had in verity risen bodily; and He ate honey-comb and fish.

- Justin Martyr, "On the Resurrection"

6. I once imagined, to make this point, a fantasy Oxbridge scenario: a rich old member gives to a College a wonderful, glorious painting which simply won't fit any of the spaces available in College, and which is so magnificent that eventually the College decides to pull itself down and rebuild itself around this great and unexpected gift, discovering as it does so that all the best things about the College the way it was are thereby enhanced within the new structure, and all the problems of which people had been aware are thereby dealt with.

...The challenge is in fact the challenge of *new creation*. To put it at its most basic: the resurrection of Jesus offers itself, to the student of history or science no less than the Christian or the theologian, not as a very odd event within the world as it is, but the utterly characteristic, prototypical and foundational event within the world as it has begun to be. It is not an absurd event within the old world, but the symbol and starting-point of the new world. The claim advanced in Christianity is of that magnitude: that with Jesus of Nazareth there is not simply a new religious possibility, not simply a new ethic or a new way of salvation, but a new creation.

-N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*

Why we believe in Christ's Resurrection:

- In addition to the tomb being found empty, multiple authors describe several bodily appearances of Jesus, to various groups of people after his Resurrection. Some of the eyewitnesses were skeptical beforehand (like Thomas or James), or hostile (Paul), and yet the evidence fully convinced them. And if the story had been made up by Christians, they wouldn't have picked women to be the first witnesses, since the testimony of females was not regarded as reliable in the First Century AD. The only reasonable explanation is that it really happened.
- According to the book of Acts, the early Church proclaimed the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection from the very beginning. There is certainly no evidence of any previous stage of Christianity when this doctrine was missing. *Something* had to turn the disciples from grief and hiding, to joy and fearless proclamation. That was the triumph of Jesus Christ over death, the hope to which the Spirit of God testifies even today.