

**REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON
NINETY-THREE**

7. What sixth aspect of the Jesus of History shall we now proceed to investigate?
8. On what outstanding miracle did Jesus stake all of His claims?
9. What is the fundamental truth of the Christian religion?
10. Upon what does this fundamental truth of the Christian religion rest?
11. What was the keynote of all apostolic preaching?
12. What is the significance of the Resurrection of Jesus to us?

Lesson Ninety-four

**THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS
(Concluded)**

Scripture Reading: I Cor. 15: 1-28.

Scriptures to Memorize: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15: 3-4). "For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. 15: 16-17). "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (I Cor. 15: 20).

13. Q. How shall we treat the Resurrection of Jesus?

A. We shall treat the Resurrection of Jesus as a historical event.

(1) That is, as we would treat the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Discovery of America, the Invention of the Printing Press, or any other event of history. Certainly the Resur-

rection, if it occurred, is an historical fact, and not a matter of theory or philosophy or speculation. It cannot be viewed in any other light than as an alleged historical fact. (2) Christianity, as we have learned, has a historical background. That historical background is the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. If the life and death of Jesus are historical facts, the Resurrection must also be so regarded. (3) In short, the Christian faith has not been built upon a scientific theory, nor upon an imaginative concept, nor upon a philosophic assumption, *but upon an event of history*: an event which is to be approached, investigated and tested, solely on the basis of the testimony presented to support its historicity.

14. Q. What are the generally accepted facts with regard to the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth?

A. The generally accepted facts with regard to the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth may be summarized as follows:

1. It is generally agreed that there was such a Person as Jesus of Nazareth. There is no more universally accepted fact in all human history than the fact that Jesus lived.
2. It is generally agreed that Jesus lived at the time indicated in the New Testament writings. This fact is attested by our chronology, according to which all time is reckoned as either "before Christ" or "in the year of our Lord." It is generally agreed that Jesus was born in the reign of Augustus Caesar; and that He died in the reign of his successor, Tiberius Caesar. (Luke 2:1, 3:1).
3. It is generally agreed that this Jesus lived in the country indicated in the New Testament writings, the country known in ancient times as Canaan and in modern times as Palestine, of which Jerusalem is the capital. It is agreed that Jesus grew up in Nazareth and hence came to be known as "the Nazarene." (See Luke 2:39; 2:51; Mark 16:6; Acts 24:5, etc.).
4. It is generally agreed that He was nailed to a Roman cross; that the form of His death was that of a crucifixion,

the most cruel and ignominious form of death known to the ancients. This fact is attested by all historians, sacred and profane. (See Mark 15:24-37; Matt. 27:35-50; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:18-30).

5. It is generally agreed that He died on the Cross (see Matt. 27:50, Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46, John 19:30). (1) Cf. *the Swoon-theory of Strauss*, that He did not really die on the Cross, but merely swooned, and was later revived by the ministrations of His disciples; in other words, a temporary "suspended animation." But: if He did not die on the Cross, When was life revived and restored in Him? Where did He go? What became of Him? When *did* He die? His not dying implies deceit on His own part and fraud on the part of His disciples. But the subsequent lives of the Apostles forbid the notion that they were deceivers. (2) Cf. *the Spirit-theory of Keim*, That Jesus really died, but only His spirit appeared afterward to the disciples. But: the tomb was empty and the linen cloths showed an orderly departure. Moreover, Jesus Himself denied that He was a bodiless spirit (a mere ghost or phantasm). Luke 24:39—"handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." Again the Old Testament prediction was that His *flesh* should not see corruption (Acts 2:31). The Scriptures expressly assert that the *body* of Jesus was raised (cf. Paul's argument in I Cor. 15:1-28). (3) Cf. *the Vision-theory of Renan*, that He died, and there were no further objective appearances, not even of His spirit. That Mary Magdalene was the victim of "subjective hallucination," and her hallucination spread among the disciples. But the disciples did not expect Jesus' resurrection in any sense of the term. They were intelligent men, moreover, not subject to hallucinations. Again, this theory does not account in any way for the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and his subsequent life of devotion ending in martyrdom. (4) Dr. Joseph Klausner of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, in his work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 357, (translated by

Danby), dismisses the whole crucial problem of the Resurrection with the following bald statements: "We must assume that the owner of the tomb, Joseph of Arimathea, thought it unfitting that one who had been crucified should remain in his own ancestral tomb. Matthew alone tells us that the tomb was new, hewn out of the rock specially for Jesus the Messiah (just as the ass's colt on which Jesus rode was one on which none other had ever sat). Joseph of Arimathea, therefore, secretly removed the body at the close of the Sabbath and buried it in an unknown grave." Obviously, these statements are without benefit of one iota of support from either external or internal evidence. (5) Attempts to equate the Resurrection of Christ with pagan legends of "dying and rising gods," e.g., those of Osiris, Attis, Adonis, etc., are utter nonsense. In all such legends, associated as they were with the Cult of Fertility, and its indecencies and orgies, that flourished in pagan temples, (a) the motif was strictly procreative, (b) the principal role was taken by a female consort, and (c) and any such spiritual changes as redemption, regeneration, and sanctification, as prerequisites of the attainment of immortality, are conspicuous by their absence. In all these pagan cults and rituals, moral purity was simply not a factor. To even put them in the same class with the life, ministry and resurrection of Jesus is to manifest the inability to distinguish sheer profanity from moral discernment. (6) Finally, it is impossible to explain the Christian church, the Christian ordinances, the Lord's Day, even Christianity itself, if Jesus did not rise from the dead. *These theories are all contrary to the testimony presented, and too farfetched in every respect to merit serious consideration.*

6. It is generally agreed that the body of Jesus was given to Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy friend, for interment, after Joseph had obtained permission from Pontius Pilate to bury it. (See Matt. 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:31-42).

7. It is generally agreed that Joseph buried the body in his own new tomb. According to the testimony, this tomb had been hewn out of a natural rock, was one which had not yet been used, and was not far from the place of the Crucifixion. (See Matt. 27:60, Mark 15:45-47, Luke 23:53, John 19:40-42).

8. It is generally agreed that a huge stone was rolled in front of the entrance to the tomb, that an armed guard of soldiers was stationed around it to keep watch both day and night, and that the stone was itself sealed with a Roman seal, the breaking of which would have incurred the death penalty for the offender. (See Matt. 27:60-66, Mark 15:46).

9. It is generally agreed that the reason for these elaborate precautions was, that the enemies of Jesus recalled His saying that He would rise from the dead and hence caused these precautions to be taken against the possibility of His disciples stealing the body and then going before the world to proclaim a fraudulent resurrection. (See Matt. 27:62-66).

10. It is generally admitted—in fact it has to be admitted—that early on the morning of the first day of the week (the death and burial having obviously taken place either on Wednesday or Thursday), *the body was gone from the tomb. Here we arrive at the outstanding phenomenon in the history of revealed religion; in fact the outstanding phenomenon in all the history of mankind.*

15. Q. What is the outstanding issue in connection with the Christian religion?

A. The outstanding issue in connection with the Christian religion is that of what became of the body of Jesus that was buried in Joseph's tomb.

Not only was His body gone when the women arrived at the sepulchre on that memorable first day of the week (Matt. 28:5-8, Mark 16:2-8, Luke 24:1-8, John 20:1-10), *but His physical body has not been seen from that day to this. What, then, became of the body of Jesus that was*

buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea? “A dilemma for those who deny the fact of Christ’s resurrection: Either His body remained in the hands of His disciples, or it was given up to the Jews. If the disciples retained it, they were impostors; but this is not maintained by modern rationalists. If the Jews retained it, why did they not produce it as conclusive evidence against the disciples?” (Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 131). If infidelity could answer this question satisfactorily, and on a purely naturalistic basis—*What became of the body of Jesus that was buried in Joseph’s tomb?*—then it would be able to wipe out the Christian religion in short order. This is the question, however, before which infidelity in all ages has stood *absolutely abashed and mute as the earth itself*.

16. Q. What are the only three solutions that could be offered to the problem of the disappearance of the body of Jesus from Joseph’s tomb?

A. The only three solutions that could be offered are: (1) that the body was stolen from the tomb and secretly disposed of by His friends; (2) that the body was stolen from the tomb and secretly disposed of by His enemies; or (3) that the body was quickened and raised up from the dead.

There is no other hypothesis that could be advanced in explanation of the disappearance of the body. Therefore the truth must lie in one of these three solutions.

17. Q. For what reasons do we reject the supposition that the body of Jesus was stolen from the tomb and secretly disposed of by His friends?

A. We reject this supposition of the following grounds: (1) the disciples had no reason for stealing the body; (2) they were astounded when they found that the body was no longer in the tomb; (3) they could not have stolen it had they so desired; and (4) their subsequent lives of devotion forbid the notion that they were proclaiming what they knew to be a falsehood.

(1) *The disciples had no reason for stealing the body.* What did they hope to gain by stealing it? What incentive could they have had for proclaiming a fraud? As it turned out, they suffered hardship, persecution and even martyrdom, for preaching what they obviously held as a truth, viz., that Jesus had risen. Why should they have voluntarily subjected themselves to such sufferings for the sake of a known (to them) falsehood? The notion is absurd on the face of it. (2) *Again, it is quite evident that the disciples left the Cross in utter dejection.* They straggled away from the spot with their hopes as dead as the body which hung upon that middle cross, saying one to another, "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). They were amazed when the first reports reached their ears that the body was gone from the tomb (John 20:1-10). Thomas absolutely refused to believe it, when the other disciples reported to him that they had seen the risen Lord (John 20:24-29). No fact is more evident than that the disciples left the Cross expecting nothing but the utter oblivion that always followed a death by crucifixion. They were absolutely astounded, later, to discover that Jesus had actually risen. (3) *Again, it would have been a sheer impossibility for the disciples to have stolen the body.* How could they have gotten past that military guard that kept watch day and night? How could they have broken the seal and rolled away the great stone? How and where could they have concealed the body—and for what purpose? The notion is absurd. (4) *Still again, the subsequent lives of the Apostles forbid the assumption that they were proclaiming what they knew to be a fraud.* If the disciples stole the body, it is obvious that they entered into a conspiracy of deceit and perjury. Can we imagine for one moment that Simon Peter, in that great sermon he preached in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, was proclaiming what he knew in his own heart was a lie! Moreover, the Apostles all suffered martyrdom, according to

well-authenticated tradition. And for what? Primarily for proclaiming that Jesus had risen from the dead. Are men in the habit of dying for what they themselves know to be lies? (5) Finally, *how shall we account for the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and his subsequent life of devotion*, except on the ground of his own testimony that the risen Lord had appeared to him on the way to Damascus? That Saul's experience changed the whole course of his life, is obvious. That this change was occasioned solely by the manifestation of the risen Lord to him personally, is his own express testimony. If this testimony is not true, there is no explanation of his later life of devotion to the Gospel, ending as it did in martyrdom. As a matter of fact the most convincing proof of the resurrection of Jesus that can be adduced is Paul's long and faithful career as an ambassador of Christ.

18. Q. For what reasons do we reject the supposition that the body of Jesus was stolen from the tomb and secretly disposed of by his enemies?

A. We reject this supposition of the following grounds: (1) the enemies of Jesus had no reason for stealing the body; (2) they took every possible precaution to make sure that it remain in the tomb; and (3) if they had stolen the body, and knew where it was, why did they not produce it on the day of Pentecost and thus confute the apostolic testimony?

(1) Why should the enemies of Jesus have stolen His body? They had caused His arrest. They had forced His crucifixion. They had seen Him die. They had seen His body buried in Joseph's tomb. They had induced Pilate to seal the great stone with a Roman seal and to station a military guard around the tomb. For what purpose? *To keep the body from being stolen!* (See Matt. 27:62-66). *It is obvious that the enemies of Jesus wanted His body to remain in the tomb. It is equally obvious that if it had remained in the tomb, there would be no Christian religion today.* (2) Some fifty days later it was boldly an-

nounced by the Apostles, in Jerusalem, that Jesus had been raised up from the dead. When this message was first proclaimed, on the day of Pentecost, some three thousand people immediately abandoned Judaism for the new faith (Acts 2:41); and on the following day the number of converts was increased to five thousand men (Acts 4:4) not counting the women, and children of accountable age. Many Jewish priests became obedient to the new faith, we are told (Acts 6:7). Thus the lines became closely drawn, between those who proclaimed the Resurrection a fact and those who denounced it as a fraud. *But right there before their eyes was the empty tomb.* No doubt the people were all visiting the tomb itself. They well knew that the body of Jesus had been interred there—and now it was gone! They could see with their own eyes that the tomb was empty! Then—*what had happened to the body? If the enemies of Jesus had stolen it, why did they not produce it then and there? Why did they not bring forth the body and show it to all the people, and thus confute the apostolic testimony?* From all these considerations, it is obvious that they had no idea what had become of it. (3) Every sermon that was preached from that day on was in effect a challenge to the enemies of Christianity to either produce the body of Jesus or admit that it had been raised up from the dead. *Nothing is more obvious than the fact that if the body of Jesus could have been produced or accounted for, on the day of Pentecost, or at any time during the apostolic era, the Christian religion would not have made any headway in the world.* Because the enemies of Jesus, however, had not stolen the body, they had no idea what had become of it. They were unable to account for its disappearance. Hence they were powerless to stem the onrushing tide of Christian evangelism and conquest.

19. Q. What, then, is Christianity's great challenge to infidelity?

A. Christianity's great challenge to infidelity is, to

either account for the body of Jesus which was buried in Joseph's tomb, or admit that God raised it from the dead.

Before this great challenge infidelity in all ages has stood mute and helpless. The Resurrection of Jesus is, therefore, the final and convincing proof of His divine Sonship and Messiahship.

20. Q. What, then, must be our conclusion with respect to the body of Jesus that was interred in Joseph's tomb?

A. Our conclusion obviously must be that God raised it from the dead.

Acts 2:24—"whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Acts 2:32—"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." Acts 3:14,15—"But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." I Cor. 15:20—"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep."

21. Q. What additional evidence do we have of the Resurrection of Jesus?

A. We have the additional evidence of His numerous appearances after His Resurrection, which may be listed as follows:

(1) He appeared first to Mary Magdalene on the morning of the Resurrection (Mark 16:9-11, John 20:1-18). (2) He appeared to Mary the mother of James, Salome, and Joanna, on their return to the city (Matt. 28:9-10; cf. Luke 24:8-10, Mark 16:8). (3) He appeared to Simon Peter by himself (I Cor. 15:5; cf. Luke 24:34). These first three appearances were all during the forenoon of the Resurrection day. (4) He appeared that same day to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-35). (5) He appeared, on the evening of that day, to ten of the disciples, Thomas having been absent at the time (John 20:19-23). (6) On the following Lord's Day,

He appeared to the Eleven, with Thomas present (John 20:24-29). (7) He appeared later to certain disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and conversed with them. Those present on this occasion were Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two others whose names are not given (John 21:1-24). (8) He appeared to "above five hundred brethren at one time" (I Cor. 15:6). (9) He appeared to James, then to all the Apostles (I Cor. 15:7). (10) He appeared to the Eleven by appointment, on a mountain top in Galilee, at which time He gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-18). (11) Finally, He appeared to Saul or Tarsus on the way to Damascus and called him to the apostleship (I Cor. 15:8). On this last occasion He appeared in His *glorified* body (cf. Luke 24:39-40), the radiance of which outshone the brightness of the noon-day sun (Acts 26:13). (12) Cf. Acts 1:2,3—"unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God," etc. (The distinguished French writer, Daniel Rops, in his recent book, *Jesus and His Times* (translated by Ruby Millar), states the "conclusion of the whole matter" (p. 573) in these words: "To those who cannot allow the supernatural a place in the order of things, the dogma of the Resurrection is a scandal and a fable, nothing more nor less. But to those who can understand that the ultimate explanation of the universe does not lie in the realm of how or why, it is the sign of signs, it sums up and justifies the mystery of our being." Again, p. 610: "Jesus is a mystery, the mystery of God incarnate. Jesus is God made flesh: if this be accepted, everything else is clear. To those who reject this explanation, it is an incomprehensible puzzle, surrounded with every kind of complication which the human imagination can devise.")

22. Q. In view of all this irrefutable evidence concerning

His Resurrection, what do we conclude with respect to Jesus Himself?

A. We conclude, and we confess, that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Rom. 10:9,10—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON
NINETY-FOUR

13. How shall we treat the Resurrection of Jesus?
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17. For what reasons do we reject the supposition that the body of Jesus was stolen from the tomb and secretly disposed of by His friends?
18. For what reasons do we reject the supposition that the body of Jesus was stolen from the tomb and secretly disposed of by His enemies?
19. What, then, is Christianity's great challenge to infidelity?
20. What, then, must be our conclusion with respect to the body of Jesus that was interred in Joseph's tomb?
21. What additional evidence do we have of the Resurrection of Jesus?
22. In view of all this irrefutable evidence concerning His Resurrection, what do we conclude with respect to Jesus Himself?