

# Jerusalem (Part 2)

## Many Convincing Proofs

Of all the questions one may ask, the most vital, the most significant, the most powerful one is whether life extends beyond the scope of this existence. No other but Jesus answers this question from beyond the grave, and only those who appeal to him in faith may hope of life beyond the now. In his first volume, Luke recounts how perplexed disciples stumble about trying to figure out what happened to Jesus' body that fateful Sunday morning (Luke 24). A message from angels, the missing body and reports of "Jesus sightings" confuse rather than deepen their faith. Only when Jesus bursts into one of their gatherings showing his pierced hands, feet and side do disciples come to faith. Yet, these claim to believe in resurrection but cannot believe it even when they see the evidence standing right in front of them.

Why is resurrection so important? *"But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied"* (1 Corinthians 15:13-19). If this is all that there is, then why should I care how I live now? Why should I sacrifice my comfort for someone else? Humanity is after all just an animal. So why should any of this matter? In essence, only Jesus' resurrection gives meaning to living now. We live in anticipation that one day God will right every wrong, and we will realize the full extent of living in his promises.

## The Message

Peter lays out his case that the long-anticipated kingdom has arrived. Peter begins with a prophecy from Joel (Acts 2:15-21). This is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. The kingdom of God and his Christ are here. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. He reminds them of the miracles wrought by Jesus of Nazareth, which demands that conclusion that he was accredited by God (Acts 2:22). God handed him over to you according to his plan to save humanity. Although with the help of lawless (the Romans) men you crucified him, God raised him from the dead (Acts 2:23-24). David foresaw Christ's resurrection. *"I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand"* (Psalm 16:8-11). Peter points out that David could not have spoken of himself since the Jews of this time knew David's burial. God raised Christ from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this fact. This Jesus, whom you crucified, is both Lord and Christ.

## Impact of the Message

Three thousand commit to following a dead Nazarene that these twelve seeming lunatics claim to be alive. Mass hysteria cannot explain the occasion as Jews from all over the empire gather to celebrate this special holiday. The pure logic and outright forthrightness disembowels all opposition except to the close-minded and the hard of heart. Intense devotion follows (Acts 2:41-47). Peter's logic cuts straight to the heart as many ask what they must do to be saved. They take in the apostle's teaching with daily feeding for the soul so they can fine-tune their lives to work God's will. They fellowship each other—they hold everything in common as they partner with fellow Christians and with Christ. This is especially significant in a culture where table fellowship matter very seriously. They welcome each other into their homes and regard each other as family even though they are not blood kin. They break bread with each other both in common meals and in table fellowship at the Lord's Table. They pray seeking God's guidance and letting him know their needs. Thus, they take in God's will, work it throughout their lives and communicate back with God—by this, Christianity takes on the full range of living.

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