

## THE RESURRECTION PROMISE LUKE 24:1-12

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Psychologists tell us that people fall for conspiracy theories, particularly in times of uncertainty. We want answers and we want security and control. Therefore, we seek answers that fit our worldview and give us that sense of certainty. They are a source of comfort.

Most of us when we read of a conspiracy theory have a fair degree of scepticism. It does not sound right. It is just too outrageous. The account of the resurrection in the first part of Ch. 24 shows a high degree of scepticism by the disciples. The women told the men what had happened but the story sounded like nonsense. Word used is medical term for delirious ramblings. The fact is was the women who told them would not have helped. Women were not considered reliable witnesses at this time. They could not give evidence in court. If this was a made up story, you would never put this fact in.

It is interesting because they disciples had seen three people raised from the dead by Jesus. However, this was just too much. They were highly sceptical. Even when Peter saw the empty tomb, he is not totally convinced.

In fact, Jesus has to appear to the disciples numerous times before they are convinced. He has to eat with them to show he is not a ghost. They have to touch him. V41 he is standing before them and it says they doubt. They are not easily convinced.

It is worth remembering this when we are sharing out faith. If the people who had Jesus standing before them were not convinced, then we should not expect people 2000 year later to easily belief that Jesus is alive. The finality of death is ground into us from the young age. People do not come back from the dead. It is OK to be sceptical about the resurrection. Outrageous claim. Yet this is what the Christian faith totally stands or falls on. There is no debate that Jesus died. Secular historians do not debate this. In fact, they attest to it. But the resurrection is a different story.

It's worth noting that while it took them quite some time to truly believe this, when they did it transformed them into fearless evangelists. Ten of the twelve gave their lives for this fact that Jesus was alive. It transformed these men and women from fearful disciples to radically sold out believers. This in itself is a powerful witness to the truth of their accounts.

We have to study the evidence and come to a conclusion. Are these accounts credible. Do they stack up? If they do, then that is a life altering fact. We cannot remain the same and of course, when we accept the resurrection then we can encounter personally Jesus ourselves.

Second thing that stands out in this passage is the angels saying these things MUST happen. They tell them to remember what Jesus told them. What is Luke stressing is that this was not an accident, it was God's plan.

God keeps his word. He is a promise keeper. The OT prophesies this. Jesus said this would happen. God can be trusted. He does what he says he will. Jesus is the fulfilment of the promises of God. God often says things that appear unbelievable and outrageous. However, God will fulfil his word.

In addition, as we celebrate Jesus resurrection today, it is important we remember this. God has promised those who believe that we will receive new bodies. God has promised he will return to renew and restore this earth. God has promised that there will be a day when no more death, crying, God has promised that we will bring justice to every injustice. All of these are huge claims.

However, with the resurrection of Jesus, God is saying, "This is my divine plan." In addition, if Jesus is raised from the dead, then you can trust me to fulfil my plan. God keeps his word. The resurrection is so important to us right now. Around the world, we see people dying and economies falling over. We see fear and uncertainty. However, the resurrection screams to us that God is a promise keeper. He raised Christ from the dead. He is working out his purposes. We might not understand everything but we can live with uncertainty because we know that he keeps his word. Jesus resurrection is proof of this. We can have absolute certainty that the promises of God will be fulfilled.

Therefore, as we come to celebrating communion this morning, I want us to particularly focus on the future promise. We remember the resurrection, which is historical. However, the historical event holds out a promise for us. Listen again to some extracts from one Corinthians 15:12-58

## REFLECTION + DISCUSSION

Why do you believe the resurrection to be true? How would you defend it to someone who said it was unbelievable?

How have you encountered the risen Christ? How would you explain this to someone who was not a believer?

Do the promises of God regarding the future sometimes seem "unbelievable"? Do you ever have doubts?

Paul says that the resurrection gives him courage in the face of danger (1 Cor 15:30-31). How can we take courage from the resurrection in the face of the current crisis?





**CENTRAL BAPTIST**

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