

Three Resurrections

Mark 16:1-7

By [Dr. James M. Baird](#)

Let's take our Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Mark, the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark, the 16th chapter. As you are opening your Bibles, the Bible says that there are three great resurrections. All three of these resurrections are linked together, and we celebrate all three on this day. Webster says, *Resurrection* is "the act of rising from decay, disuse, particularly the act of rising from the dead." That is what is meant by *resurrection*. There are three resurrections that are given to us in the Bible. We examine them today. Now the first and the key is the resurrection of Jesus Christ and we read in the Gospel of Mark, the 16th chapter, these words:

Mark 16:1-7:

1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. 3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? 4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. 5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

God give us understanding, first, of His word in terms of the resurrection of Christ.

I. The first resurrection: the resurrection of Jesus Christ

This is the story. On Friday, the day of crucifixion, He was crucified between two thieves. Present also were the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the scribes—those who had seen to it that He would be crucified. There were also the Roman soldiers who enacted the execution. Present also was a mob of people. Also there were

women, particularly the mother of Jesus Christ and a few others. Absent were all of His disciples except one. At the end of the day when He had died on the cross, His body was taken down, not by disciples but by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, one who had questioned Christ at the beginning. Now currently it is the women who follow them to the garden tomb. They are the last to leave. The next day is the Sabbath day. And early on the first day of the week, Sunday, when the sun is rising, they come to the tomb with spices to anoint the body and they find that the stone before the great tomb is rolled away. One of the women immediately leaves and goes to find the disciples to suggest to them that somebody has taken away the body of Christ. The others enter into the tomb. When they enter into the tomb, there is an angel there, and the angel says, 'You have come to seek the living among the dead. He's not here. He has raised. Go tell the disciples as He had already suggested to them.'

Would I be amiss to think that there is a mind here today that says, "I have a hard time believing that story"? Would you listen to me just a minute if I suggest to you that God is very patient with the honest seeker? Would you be amazed if I were to say that all of you who at one time or another had doubted the resurrection of Jesus Christ, stand; that in practically every pew up and down these aisles there would be people who would stand? God is very, very patient with the honest doubter.

Would you remember that there was one whose name was Thomas who said, "I will not believe until I thrust my hand into His side"? He was an apostle. Would you remember that the brother of Jesus, the physical half-brother of Jesus whose name was James, who wrote the book of James, with the rest of the family of Jesus, had honest doubts? Christ after the resurrection pays a special visit to James, and then it is that James believes. Would you remember that not a single apostle shows up at the tomb? When they first hear, none of them believe. They all had honest doubts. How patient God is with them! Would you remember that on that day they were all totally discouraged and ready to throw in the towel, until Christ comes to them and then everything changes? May I suggest to you that if there is an honest doubter here on this day...not the man who says, "It can never happen." Once we say, "It can never happen," then we are saying, "There cannot possibly be a God." If the first verse in the Bible is true, then the resurrection of Jesus Christ is no great difficulty.

I don't know if you ever read the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I pick it up every once and a while. We have some children in our day school who read it all the time for light reading. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, no great theological journal, gives to the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ 20,000 words: more words and more space to the life of Jesus Christ than to the combined lives of Aristotle, Cicero, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, and Napoleon Bonaparte all put together. More space given to Jesus of Nazareth than any of these combined. And it is no great spiritual journal. Why does it do that? Because they are historians and they recognize that this was a life that was

totally different than any other life that was ever lived on the face of this Earth in terms of influence.

In the first century, the greatest Roman historian was born: His name was Tacitus. Also the greatest Jewish historian: his name was Josephus. Both of them mentioned not only the crucifixion of Jesus Christ but the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They are not believers, but they say that somehow this was a fact in history, in the history of this world. Russo, who was no believer, said this, "It would have been a greater miracle to invent the life of Jesus Christ than to have lived it." Some folk would say, "That's just your Bible." No human being could invent the life of Jesus Christ and present it as a literary affair. It is so unbelievable and yet real, the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The whole life of Jesus Christ is built upon His resurrection. We know more details about the life and the resurrection of Jesus Christ than we do of any other ancient life in history.

Two months ago, I was in what I consider the grandest hotel in all of this world. On the upper floor a few years ago, a man had rented the whole upper floor. There were those who ministered to him. I spoke to some of them (they are Christians) and apparently he died in that upper room, in that upper floor but nobody knows for sure. His name was Howard Hughes. What a mystery—about his death, where he died, how he died—and here he is one of the most famous men in our generation! But we know more about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ than you do about Howard Hughes. It was a fact in history.

Many, many folk have begun to examine the resurrection to prove that it could have never happened and have come to the honest conclusion that it can be explained in no other way...the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of all of the biblical concepts of the kingdom of God, and if Jesus Christ and His life was the cornerstone, the cornerstone of His life was the resurrection. He built His whole life on the resurrection. In the upper room on the night before He was crucified, He tells His disciples very little. He is not concerned that they do not understand everything. He is not concerned because He'll see them again. He knows that in three days, after His death, He shall be raised from the dead. He is not concerned. All He offers to them is a brief explanation and the fact that He will give peace unto them. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of His life. He depends upon it, lives upon it, and believes upon it.

Jesus is unique in the truest sense of the word. There is no other figure like Jesus Christ. When He came to this earth, He came at Christmas in a unique way. When He ends His life, you are not surprised that He ends His life in a unique way, crucified on the cross, and on the third day, He rises from the dead, once and for all alive and alive forever. I wonder if there is an honest doubting heart who wonders, "Is it true?" Yes, it is true. Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead. That's the first resurrection.

II. The second resurrection: the resurrection of your own soul and spirit

The second resurrection is built upon it. Do you remember the description of the resurrection? The *resurrection* is “an act of rising from the dead.” There is a second resurrection and the second resurrection is linked to the resurrection of Jesus Christ; that is the resurrection of your own soul and spirit. The first resurrection is the resurrection of Christ, bodily. The second resurrection in the Scripture is the resurrection of your own soul and your own spirit. First of all, we examine man. We understand that man is more than just this kind of a body.

I remember a time when I was coming back from Israel, and as we were flying back, we were routed way above north Europe because there came on that day a great problem in France. It was the day when the students took over Paris. And they didn't know in Europe whether or not this was a rising, a communist rising. The man who led that rising was a young fellow called Danny the Red. And so all air flight was directed all the way up over Sweden, way up north. There were so many delays and delays and delays it was almost humorous. I never forgot Danny the Red. When Danny the Red led that great rebellion at the University of Paris, he stood in the great auditorium, outdoors, and he called out in the middle of his speech, “Man shall not live by bread alone.” It was a part of his speech. There was a pastor who attended, and suddenly that pastor among all those students stood up and the pastor cried out, “Finish the verse!” Danny didn't know what he meant. He said, “Finish the verse!” and he started coming down the aisle and he continued to cry. And to the credit of Danny the Red, he let him get to the microphone which was a mistake. And the pastor finished the verse, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.”

Beloved, you just don't live by bread. You're more than physical. You have an everlasting soul. You are a spirit. If today I should have an accident and they should remove both my legs above the thigh, would that mean that I would lose 1/4th of my life and my being? No. I have ministered to men who have lost both legs and one arm. I've been with them, ministered day after day, week after week. I did it for a whole year. They had just as much a mind as I had. They had as much emotion or more than I had, and they had a will as great as my will. They did not lose j or S of their being because they lost a good portion of their body.

You see, there is an inner man. There is an inner being. There is a foe. The Bible presents it like this: that “In the beginning, man was breathed into by the Spirit of God and man became a living being.” That is what is called the soul and the spirit of man. God, who was a Spirit, breathes into this flesh and that flesh becomes living Spirit. And the Bible says in the very next two chapters that man, who was in perfect communion with this holy God and righteous God, then in rebellion sins

against that God, and when he sins against that God there is a penalty called death.

Are you beginning to understand something about resurrection of soul? Death comes upon the soul. That death is a condition and the condition is that he is separated from God, and he is placed out of the garden, and he no longer has that communion and fellowship with God. That condition is the condition of death. The Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die." That is what is wrong with man: he has lost his God; he has lost his way.

G.K. Chesterton said, "Whatever else you say about man, this is surely obvious: he is not what he ought to be." All history will teach us that, not only ancient but current, and not only the history of other men but the history of my own life if I will simply look into it: I am not what I ought to be. If you would look at the history of the world today and explain to me Africa and what is occurring in Ethiopia which is unnecessary (and yet the solution is refused, and it will continue), and when you look at the Middle East and Lebanon and Beirut, the most beautiful city in the world, and you ask yourself, "Why and how?" And then you come closer home to Central America and to South America, and then you come to your own beloved nation and you ask yourself, "Why can we not deal with drugs? Why after everything that is being done, is a fortune that staggers the mind and the imagination being spent on drugs which everybody agrees is a killer? Why?" Why is it that some young boys will take three elderly men, as recently, and brutally murder them over nothing, and take one and take his scarf and stuff it in his mouth until he's asphyxiated and laugh over it? My wife came into me the other day and said, "I just saw Ethiopia, and then I saw child abuse, what fathers have done to daughters." She said, "This is inconceivable." And you don't have to leave Jackson, Mississippi.

And then you examine your own heart and you would say with the Apostle Paul, "The good that I would do, I do not; and the evil that I would not" the things that so often I abhor in others, "the evil that I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The physical description is the description of man. What a contrast: loving so often the things of this world, the beauty of nature, so often compassionate to his fellow man, and at the same time and the same person, hard and mean and abusive. How do you explain it?

Did you ever hear the story of the drunk, the man who was feeling no pain? He lost his wallet and he was under the streetlight, looking for his wallet and a passerby in compassion stopped and said, "May I help you?" and he said, "I have lost my wallet and everything." And the passerby said, "Well, let me help you search." And so they searched together and then the man said to the drunk, he said, "Is this where you lost your wallet?" He said, "No." He said, "I lost it way back there a couple of blocks." He said, "Well, why are we looking here?" He said, "There's no street light back there." Beloved, it is wonderful to search for the

things of life. but you've gotta search where you can find the solution.

Men search among the dead. There is a mausoleum with a crystal coffin. Millions every year, millions go by that coffin every year. And on that coffin, there is an inscription and the inscription goes like this, "He was the greatest leader of all people, of all kind. He was the lord of the new humanity. He was the savior of the world." That tomb, that mausoleum, that coffin—and when you look at the man, the embalming is done so perfectly that you can see the hairs on his fingers. That tomb is found in Red Square, Moscow; it's Lenin. Interestingly enough, the whole inscription is in the past tense: He *was*; he *was*; and he *was*. Somewhere between two-fifths of the people of the world believe that statement: what Lenin subscribed as the answer to the things of this world, they agree with. Two-fifths either agree with it or is under an enslavement of those who believe that Lenin was the answer. Some people will say, three-fifths of the world, a majority of the people of this world. What a contrast to Jesus Christ who says, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live." Nothing in the past tense. The angel says to those who come, "Why seek ye living among the dead? He's not here. He has risen." He is alive! The answer to the problems of mankind are not found out there; the answer to the problems of mankind are found right in your heart. That's what Jesus Christ said, right in your spirit, right in your own soul, that's where the problem is. And we're never going to solve any of our social problems. Those who honestly examine even the history of the United States and examine what is occurring in the United States, particularly in our larger cities...Did you know in the largest city in the United States in the last year, 56 percent of all births were illegitimate? Now you tell me what's going to happen in 15 years. And then, worst than that, a far greater percentage of babies were murdered before they were born. They had life and it was taken away from them.

What's the solution? There is no solution except there enters into the dead heart of man a new life, a different kind of life. There needs to be a resurrection in man's soul. Can it be? I'm going to read to you one of the most profound passages you will ever hear. This is a passage that links up the resurrection of Jesus Christ with the resurrection of man's soul. It says, "God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." "Just as surely," the Bible says, "as God raised Jesus Christ." Then it continues, "and you hath He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sin." He's talking about your spirit. "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love, wherein He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath made us alive together with Christ; by grace are you saved and He hath raised us up."

Do you see the language, the resurrection language. "He hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; so that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ. For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man

should boast.” God will raise you up from the dead. The way that He raised you up from the dead is by faith. You encounter the Lord Jesus Christ just as surely as you are listening to a person here; you listen to Him. He is alive. You encounter Him and the encounter begins with repentance. And you say unto Him, “Forgive me for my sins: my sins of doubt, my sins of indifference, my sins of open rebellion. Forgive me for sins and I have faith and trust in Thee. I place my faith and trust in Thee, and I promise to serve Thee forever.”

When someone has done that a resurrection has taken place in his heart. And the Bible says that kind of a transaction did not begin with you, it began with God. It was an act of God's grace. If these things have taken place in your life, it is that God has touched you and God has come to you. My prayer has been on this day that God would come to people who have had honest doubts, who have lived their lives apart from Him, and have wondered, “Why?” and “What is wrong?” and “What is wrong with the world?” and “What is wrong with me?” People who have sought the living among the dead in drugs, affluence, nationalism, sports, athletics, business, another human being, and have not found the answer to life. My prayer has been that God would come and encounter a human being here today and resurrect that soul by faith because of His grace.

III. The third resurrection: the resurrection of your body

And it leads us to the last and the third resurrection. The first resurrection is the act of rising from the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ. The second resurrection is the resurrection of my own soul from the dead and brought back to God and being alive with Him. And the third resurrection is the resurrection of my body. When Jesus Christ came forth from the grave, the Bible says that He had the marks in His hands. It was a bodily resurrection, and it was His body linked to the body that He had before He went into that grave. Not only that, that body ate fish. He was not a phantom. He was not a ghost. He ate fish. And then finally, He said, ‘This body had no, had no limitations such as the previous body He had.’ He could leave. He could come back. There were no limitations of time and space. A real body, it is almost more than the human mind can grasp and Jesus Christ says, ‘That body that I had, you will have one just like it.’

Suppose today I died, this afternoon, and they put my body in my grave tomorrow. I would still be alive. My soul by His grace because it is alive in Jesus Christ would go to Heaven and be with Him, but He's not through. I still have my body dead, and He's not going to let my body remain dead. There will come a day called the Day of Resurrection. On that Day of Resurrection my body shall be raised from the dead. You say, “Well, suppose it has returned to the dust.” Listen, my body changes every year. They used to say seven years. The molecules and everything in my body are completely transformed, I understand from scientists, every year. And somehow this body is linked with a body that I had when I was five-years-old. You wouldn't have recognized me, but I'm still the

same person in the same body. And on that day, my body shall be raised from the dead and my soul alive forever will be reunited with that body. And I'm going to then live on this earth, with Christ in His kingdom forever, a real body. Will I play golf? Yes, I believe that I will. Will I eat fish? Certainly. Will I be a preacher? I believe I will share things. What will we do? We're going to live. Go to the moon? Yes, and I won't need an oxygen mask. Who will I speak to? All the people I ever wanted to speak to. It will be absolutely fascinating. The kingdom will come.

May I suggest to you something else, about the resurrection? Your body is going to be resurrected too. May I suggest to you that every person alive who's ever lived in the city of Jackson, his body is going to be resurrected. May I suggest to you that everybody in Mississippi, everybody who has ever lived in the United States, everybody who has ever lived in Uganda, every man who ever lived on the face of this Earth—on the Day of Resurrection, every body shall be resurrected and reunited to that soul. Once again, I read to you from the word of God, and I link up again the three resurrections. As I read to you, listen to the first two resurrections in this fifth chapter of the gospel of John:

John 5:21-29:

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming [Dr. Baird: Now the resurrection changes from the resurrection of the soul to the resurrection of the body.] and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

On the Day of Resurrection, every body is going to be reunited to his soul. Then, shall come the everlasting separation. There are three resurrections. The resurrection of Christ, the resurrection of all men's bodies, everybody is involved in those two resurrections. But the third resurrection is the resurrection of the soul, not everybody has that resurrection. Not everybody has that resurrection. And the everlasting place of living is determined by that resurrection of our soul. Some will be resurrected to be set aside from God forever, a true human being.

The description of how they live is awful. It is apart from everything and everybody, loneliness. The resurrection of those who believe in Jesus Christ, by His grace, is a resurrection unto life forever, here.

Aldous Huxley, a brilliant unbeliever in England on an Easter in the 1930's, said to a group of people who were at a weekend retreat in a beautiful castle as they got ready to leave for church on Easter Sunday, he said, "Will someone please remain with me?" All said, "I want to go to church," and he turned to one man whose life he respected as a Christian and he said, "You come stay with me and tell me what you believe." He said, "I cannot argue with you." He said, "I won't argue with you. Just tell me." And for an hour, as the rest left to go to church, this man poured out the life of Jesus Christ and His own resurrection and his hope for the future, for one hour. And at the end of that hour, Huxley dropped his head and said, "I would to God that I could believe that." The Bible says the Spirit of God will not always strive with a man. There are some people who say, "I'll never believe." Huxley died with an un-resurrected soul. Is there a person here today who says, "I'll never believe"?

I look forward to the day when I shall see my grandparents whom I have never seen on the face of this earth but who believed. I want to see my mother and my father. I want my sons to be there, the one who is already dead, and I want my wife there. I want a happy ending. And by His grace, He says, 'You already have it.' And I have on this Earth, but the best is yet to come, because of today, because Jesus rose from the dead. There are a lot of things I don't understand about heaven and all of the relationships. I don't know how it's all going to be put together. All I know is, he says, 'It's glory. It's glory.'

As we pray together, Our beloved heavenly Father, we thank Thee that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is proof that our sins are forgiven and that there is nothing between us, that our sins and the penalty has been paid by our beloved Savior out of His love on the cross. We thank You that the resurrection proves, dear Father, that evil shall not win the day, that even when the death of Christ was enacted on the cross you brought Him back. We thank You that You have proven to us that death is not the end. We thank You that You have proven to us that You are God, that there is a world to come, that You will give us life now, that we serve a risen Savior, and the best is yet to come. We thank You for the hope and the glory we have and the life that we have right now. We wish to praise Thee and thank Thee. We believe and trust in Thee because of Your grace and mercy and we thank Thee. Forgive us for our sins. Thou knowest that we wish to serve Thee always. When we fail Thee, forgive us. But Lord, how we praise Thee for the way that you have changed our lives. We know that we're not perfect (we will be on that day), but Lord how Thy hast changed our lives, and how different we are from unbelievers. We thank Thee and praise Thee. And as we leave that Thy benediction would come from Heaven just as surely as Christ did, and that Thy benediction would rest upon believing hearts, every heart believing. For it is now unto the Lord Jesus Christ who is able to keep you from

falling; it is now unto the Lord Jesus Christ who is able at your death to present you sinless, forgiven before His throne of grace in heaven with exceeding great joy. To the only wise God who is our Savior, unto Him in our hearts let there be majesty and let there be glory. Unto Him, in our innermost being, let there be dominion, and let Him have power both now and forevermore. Amen.

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