

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

by Lorri MacGregor

Jehovah's Witnesses deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. They teach that He was out of existence for three days, and then Jehovah recreated him as the archangel Michael. The simple Bible truth that Jesus Christ died, and rose again has been redefined by Jehovah's Witnesses to become a re-creation, not a rising. They explain that perhaps Christ's body was dissolved into gases by Jehovah. [*The Time is at Hand*, p.129]. We might well ask at this point, "What about all those witnesses who saw Christ after he rose from the dead and before his ascension?"

The Jehovah's Witnesses publication "Make Sure of all Things, Hold Fast to What is Fine" [1953 edition, p. 314] states: "Jesus' Resurrection Not of Same Body; He Merely Materialized Flesh and Blood to Be Seen and Believed."

Can you picture it? Here we have Jesus Christ materializing a fake body complete with fake nail prints to fool his disciples into believing He had risen from the dead! The Jehovah's Witnesses claim this is so since Jesus was not recognized on occasion. In doing this, they ignore the context of the scriptures in question.

For example, on the road to Emmaus referred, to in Luke Chapter 24, when Jesus walked with two disciples, verse 16 says, "...their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him." Jesus then revealed Himself to them as their "eyes were opened" (verse 31).

Jehovah's Witnesses also claim that, "He [Jesus] appeared to Mary as a gardener" [*The Time is at Hand*, p.128]. Jesus never appeared "as a gardener." Mary was in great grief over Jesus' death, and John 20:15 says, "She, supposing him to be the gardener...." As she turned, Mary recognized Him.

CHRIST IS RISEN! [A SPIRIT CREATURE?]

Jehovah's Witnesses use 1 Peter 3:18 which says Jesus was "made alive in the Spirit," to support their doctrine that He rose a spirit creature. However, the term "in the Spirit" does not mean "a spirit" as Jehovah's Witnesses are taught. We need to find further Scriptures where the phrase "in the spirit" is used to clarify this matter.

The apostle John was "in the spirit" in Revelation 1:10. Are we to assume that John lost his body and became a spirit? Hardly. Romans 8:9 tells us that the whole congregation was "in the spirit." Does this mean that the whole congregation lost their bodies and became spirits? No, of course not. Jesus was made alive in the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:11 says this:

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

A SPIRIT EATS FISH??!!

The account in Luke, Chapter 24, is devastating to Jehovah's Witness doctrine on the resurrection. In this account Jesus Himself appeared in the midst of his believers. Verse 37 records, "But they were startled and frightened and thought they were seeing 'A SPIRIT'" [Jehovah's Witness doctrine exactly]. Jesus then said to them in verse 39, "See

My hands and My feet that it is I MYSELF; touch me and see, for a SPIRIT DOES NOT HAVE FLESH AND BONES as you see that I HAVE” (emphasis ours).

Notice also, in Luke 24:42,43 that the risen Jesus proceeded to ask for something to eat. “And he took and ate it in their sight.” A “spirit creature” could hardly do this, even in a “materialized body.”

Now we have established two things about Jesus’ resurrection—He was not “a spirit,” and his resurrection body was of flesh and bone. Notice that Jesus’ body was flesh and BONE, not flesh and BLOOD, which brings us to another distortion of the Jehovah’s Witnesses on the resurrection of Christ.

Another favorite Scripture of the Jehovah’s Witnesses to try and prove Jesus was raised a “spirit creature” is 1 Corinthians 15:50, which states, “...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Since Jesus has inherited the kingdom, they argue, He can’t be “flesh and blood,, so he must be “a spirit” by default.

Again we must check the context by looking up the term “flesh and blood” wherever it occurs in the New Testament. There are four other places, namely Matthew 16:17, Galatians 1:16, Hebrews 2:14, and Ephesians 6:12. Upon examining these Scriptures in their context, it becomes clear that in each case the writer is speaking of “natural man,” or man in his sinful nature.

Truly, sinful, natural man “cannot inherit the kingdom,” but needs to be reborn. The Apostle John stated in John 3, that unless a man be “born again” he could not “see the kingdom” [verse 3], nor could he “enter the kingdom” [verse 5]. Natural man, “flesh and blood” man needs to be spiritually reborn to be in God’s Kingdom. Jesus well said, “Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again” [verse 7].

THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Yes, Jesus died and rose again and appeared to many witnesses in His resurrection body. This fulfilled a prophecy Jesus gave to the Jews. John 2:19-22 records this encounter:

Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews therefore said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His BODY. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that he said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Yes, Jesus rose as HE said He would, in His own body. 1 Corinthians 15:35 asks the question, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” After some further comments, verse 42 continues, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;” Verse 44 continues, “it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” After these many references to a resurrection body, verse 45 concludes with this remark, “The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

Again, does this one phrase nullify all the preceding ones regarding the resurrection body, and make Jesus a spirit creature in His resurrection? Let us consider the entire Scripture.

First Corinthians 15:45 says: “So also it is written, The first Man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam [became] a life-giving spirit.” Yes, Adam became a living soul. Did this mean he was minus a body? No! So also Christ imparts life to us through the Spirit, but that does not mean He is minus His resurrection body!

RESURRECTION “TWISTING” A SERIOUS MATTER

Romans 10:9 states a great truth: “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Yes we need to believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ in order to really confess Jesus as Lord.

“Resurrection” is not “re-creation” as the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach. Christ died and rose again on the third day, and we live because He lives. Our faith is centered on the fact that Christ conquered death. He is the only one who has ever walked out of the grave alive and remained so for all eternity. He has the keys of death and of Hades. We can trust completely in the hour of our death, knowing that we will live even as He lives.

“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” [1Cor. 15:17].

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