

# By the Resurrection From the Dead

by G.W. North

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*The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the key to the gospel, proving His divinity and power, and guaranteeing the effectiveness of the cross.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:6, Luke 24:6-7, John 11:25-26, Acts 2:24, Acts 4:33, Romans 1:4, Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 15:14, Philippians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:3

**Topics:** "Resurrection", "Gospel Truth"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in his sermon 'By the Resurrection From the Dead.' He explains that while the Romans were unfamiliar with Jewish traditions, the resurrection was a groundbreaking event that proved Jesus to be the Son of God with power. North highlights that the resurrection was essential for the gospel, as it validated the effectiveness of the cross and confirmed Jesus' identity as the Savior. He argues that without the resurrection, there would be no gospel, and it was this event that sparked the growth of the early church, even in Rome. Ultimately, the resurrection serves as God's public testimony of Jesus' perfection and divinity, assuring believers of the truth of the gospel.

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## Transcript

Paul was nominated the apostle to the gentiles. When writing to the Romans he was writing to a people without any Jewish traditions; his reference to Jesus' birth was therefore comparatively infinitesimal, certainly minimal: 'Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh' -- that is all. Other than this there is no direct mention of the Lord's birth throughout the length of the whole epistle. One of the reasons, if not the greatest reason for this, is that these Romans had never felt the need to have anything proved to them from the Old Testament scriptures -- they had none. This letter from Paul was possibly the very first manuscript of either Old or New Testament scriptures they had ever seen. When they read it they certainly did not know it was to become one of the most important of all New Testament documents. Paul had no need to write a Gospel to them or to anyone else; recording genealogies and seeking to establish claims that Jesus Christ was indeed the seed of David or of Abraham would have been entirely superfluous; to the gentile world those were not vital issues. Further, had they heard that He had been crucified, they would have been no more impressed either; it was quite usual to hear such news -- but the resurrection -- that was new.

The Roman method of capital punishment was practised wherever Roman law and justice was applied the world over; nation after nation knew its power, but only at Jerusalem had any of its victims risen from the dead; that became international news. The Romans had certainly heard of that. The Church knew the power and uniqueness of this, and seized on it; this was the most outstanding of all world events, and wherever its heralds went they preached it. From the day of Pentecost onwards the apostles majored on it with power, witnessing to the resurrection at every opportunity; so effective was their testimony that churches soon sprang up all over the middle east. Rome proved no exception to this; there too the gospel was preached, and many hearts responded to God's call. To them the message of the resurrection was good and effective news indeed; it was all the proof they needed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God with power; no-one else had ever risen from the dead. He was different; there was no other conclusion. For them everything commenced there, and for us, no less than for them, everything commences there also. It was only in retrospect that the power of the cross was seen. Paul himself said 'Jesus was crucified in weakness', and the other apostles themselves, who observed the event, sorrowed beyond measure because of it, and thought it was the end. We now know that, in respect of glory and power, the miracle of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ is the greatest thing that He ever did; it far outshone the resurrection, for death was foreign to His nature. Resurrection was the most logical and natural of events; He was and is the Resurrection and the Life.

It just had to be of course; if there had been no resurrection there would have been no gospel, for there would have been no guarantee of the effectiveness of the cross, or proof that Christ had died, and therefore there would have been no Saviour. Other men besides Jesus have lived and done good things and spoken fine words and died and stayed dead -- death had dominion over them. Jesus had to rise from the dead; there was no other way of proving to men that He is the exclusive Son of God and also our Saviour. His birth did not prove it, neither did His life and work as a carpenter; neither did His unparalleled ministry among men, and neither did His death. There were a few that believed on Him in Jewry, to them He appeared to be the Son of God; some even confessed it, but not many. We know also that at least one Roman thought the events of Calvary proved Him to be the Son of God, that was all. All together they were only a mere handful of people; the world knew nothing of Him. He gained a little fame among His own people as a preacher; He was a great teacher and miracle worker, and He attracted a somewhat wider notoriety at the cross. But it was the resurrection that proved beyond doubt that he was the Son of God with power.

The resurrection was a world-startling miracle. There had been leaders and teachers and miracle workers among the Jews before; some of their number were always looking for a Messiah, someone who would champion their cause, a world conqueror who would deliver them from the Roman yoke. It had never happened though, so the might of Rome continued unchallenged and unchallengeable in all the earth. Much to the Jews' disappointment Jesus of Nazareth did not ever pose a threat to Rome; the 'powers that be' had never been seriously disturbed by Him. He was not an insurrectionist, far from it; He had always taught the people to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. He was the friend of government, the Romans had nothing to fear from Him. He was a pacifist, completely tolerant of Rome's dominance. Under examination Pilate could find no fault in Him at all, and for this reason was afraid of Him. None the less he acted contrary to justice, and in the end capitulated to the will of the Jews and delivered Him to them to be crucified to death. But Jesus rose from the dead -- it was impossible for Him to be held by the grave; the resurrection proved everything. It also demonstrated that Rome's man was wrong, and that he was party to a Jewish murder-plot, and had been manipulated by unscrupulous men. It might not seem the judicious thing to do, but that is where Paul started with the Romans; it was perfect wisdom and utter fearlessness,

but besides being brave logic for Romans, it was perfect righteousness for all men. It was also absolute truth and honesty on God's part; it proved God's trustworthiness -- it was the gospel of God of which no sane man can possibly be ashamed.

The resurrection was God's absolute guarantee to all mankind that Jesus of Nazareth was His Son, the Christ of God. It was God's public testimony that, from the manger to the grave, He had kept the man Jesus under surveillance all His life and that beyond anything Pilate had said about His character and activities, He Himself had carefully scrutinized Jesus' person and life every minute of the day, and had found Him faultless. The greater judge than Pilate, and the greater king than either Herod or Caesar, and the greater priest than both Annas and Caiaphas had examined and found Jesus perfect on every charge on which He had been or could ever possibly be brought to trial. God had tried Him on counts and according to standards unknown to humans, and on every one of them had found Him faultless; men need have no fear, Jesus is God's Son, the gospel is true.

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