

## LESSON 19

# Foundations Curriculum

## Jesus Rose from the Dead — Part 1

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### Introduction

#### Jesus Rose from the Dead — Part 1

In this nineteenth lesson, we will speak about the resurrection of Jesus, the foundation of our Christian faith. In addition, we will correctly understand the day and time of His death, in accordance with the Sabbath and the Jewish traditions of the era. Finally, we will also examine the facts and the evidence that support the resurrection of Jesus, and better organize the events, clarifying possible doubts or situations that seem like contradictions. Speaking about the resurrection of Jesus should fill our hearts with love and hope.

### 1) The Resurrection of Jesus Is the Foundation of Our Faith

***It is important to know the facts and the evidence that support the resurrection of Jesus***

Let us begin our study with the text: “God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit” (1 Timothy 3:16).

This text brings a very clear message: Jesus was declared innocent! As we discussed in the previous teaching — about Jesus having descended to Hades — God the Father raised Him from the dead. Death could not hold Him. The chains were broken. Jesus rose!

The question we must ask ourselves is: are we prepared to defend this truth?

We have learned over the years that a well-grounded person is one who is able to give a reason for his faith (1 Peter 3:15). It is for this reason that, in presenting the facts related to the resurrection, we want to help the Church be well-grounded in this truth — and, of course, be able to defend it with conviction and faith.

Without the resurrection of Jesus, it would not be possible to believe in Him. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, the claims He made about Himself would simply not be true. But if, in fact, Christ rose, everything He affirmed is true and, therefore, is legitimized before

the world. The resurrection proves that He is not merely a great teacher or prophet; it proves His authenticity as Messiah, as the Son of Man, as God.

***He is far, far more than a teacher or a prophet.***

The life and work of Jesus are so enigmatic to some that there are even those who deny that He actually died. We, however, as the Church, believe that He died, that He was buried, and that He rose before His body had even deteriorated in the tomb. This is the central point of the Christian faith, and this faith is not based on feelings, but on facts. And it is about these facts and the evidence that supports them that we will speak today.

## **2) The Day of the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus**

***How the sequence of events unfolded (dispelling some misconceptions)***

Before understanding what really occurred, we first need to dispel two historical myths:

### **✓ The first is that Jesus did not die on a Friday**

The Church has taught and believed this for hundreds of years, but this information does not match the facts narrated in the Scriptures.

### **✓ The second is that Jesus did not rise on a Sunday morning**

According to the account of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus remained in the tomb for three days and three nights, and this span of time does not fit between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. It is simply impossible.

*“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish,  
so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”*

**Matthew 12:40 (NKJV)**

When the other Gospels affirm that Jesus rose on the third day, they are not contradicting each other. In fact, they are referring to this same fact mentioned by Matthew.

To clarify this, it is important to know the sequence of events that best fits the evidence.

According to Mark 15:34, Jesus died at three o'clock in the afternoon, or at the ninth hour, on Wednesday — one day before Passover. This fact is extremely significant because thousands of lambs were sacrificed at three o'clock on the day before the Sabbath that preceded Passover — and Jesus died at exactly that time, which is why the New Testament refers to Him as our Passover Lamb, sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7).

*“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump,  
since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover,  
was sacrificed for us.”*

**1 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)**

When we affirm that Jesus did not rise on a Sunday morning, we need to keep in mind that, for the Jews, the day begins at sunset, at 6:00 PM, and ends at sunset of the following day. Thus, the weekly Sabbath begins on Friday and ends on Saturday at 6:00 PM.

The first day of the week, therefore, began at 6:00 PM on Saturday, and it is because of this fact that we can affirm that the resurrection of Jesus occurred between that time and midnight on Saturday itself.

It is important to remember that, for the Jews, this was the first day of the week. The proof of this is that the Bible tells us that the women went to the tomb in the early hours of the next day, before dawn, and the tomb was already empty.

*“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.”*

**John 20:1 (NKJV)**

**To make it clearer, let us review what we have understood so far:**

Jesus died at 3:00 PM on the Wednesday that preceded the Passover Sabbath, and He rose between 6:00 PM and midnight on that Saturday.

This information is important because, for the Jew, it was the first day of the week. What we call Sunday (in our Western calendar) does not begin at midnight for the Jew, but at sunset of the previous day.

First, let us address a point that may raise doubt: the myth that Jesus died on Friday.

The reason for this myth appears in Mark 15:42. Here, the burial of Jesus is described as being on the day before the Sabbath. With this, it is obvious that everyone would conclude that the day before the Sabbath is Friday (the reference we have). In light of this, how could Jesus have died on Wednesday and not on Friday?

The explanation is simple: this Sabbath described here was not the weekly Sabbath.

When we read Exodus 12, we see that the date of the Passover Sabbath varied in day according to the year. Passover was set on a fixed date of the year. The day of preparation was the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. That is, it was fixed within the year, meaning it varied from year to year. Sometimes it fell on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and so on, depending on the year.

So, in that year, the Sabbath fell precisely on Thursday, and Jesus died on the day of preparation, which was the day the Jews prepared the lamb that was to be eaten afterward.

If we combine the texts of Exodus 12 with Mark 15:42, it becomes simple to understand. What they indicate is that Jesus died on Wednesday of the week, but it was the day before the Passover Sabbath.

The origin of this understanding is in Genesis 1. For us, a complete day consists of morning, afternoon, and night. But the Bible presents it differently: "So the evening and the morning were the first day," and to this day the Jews understand that the day runs from one sunset to another, as recorded in the Scriptures.

The resurrection of Jesus, therefore, took place on the first day of the week, and that day had begun at sunset on Saturday. Some believe that Jesus rose shortly before the Sunday morning worship service. But in truth, it was not quite like that.

According to the Bible, He left the tomb long before dawn, as we can verify with the text of John, chapter 20. In this way, everything fits perfectly. Let us see:

- It is consistent with the statement "on the third day";
- From 6:00 PM on Wednesday until 6:00 PM on Saturday is three days;
- If we consider the Roman calendar, from midnight on Wednesday to midnight on Saturday also corresponds to three days;
- He Himself said that He would be dead for three days and three nights.

### **3) The Evidence for the Resurrection of Christ**

#### ***What kind of evidence can we present to unbelievers about the resurrection of Christ?***

It is very important to understand the resurrection of Jesus as a historical fact and the way in which we can present this proof to people. We need this evidence to convince them that the resurrection truly happened.

First, we must say that there is no visible proof. We do not have the evidence of the living body of Jesus and we cannot produce it. The skeptics/unbelievers likewise cannot present the evidence of the corpse (mortal remains) of Jesus; therefore, there is no way out.

If Christians could present, before everyone, a living body, it would be possible to convince the unbelievers. And if they, in turn, could also present a corpse, or at least bones found somewhere in the Middle East, they would prove their thesis. The truth is that neither party can find anything.

That being so, what kind of evidence can we present?

**The answer is clear:**

Legal evidence — or historical evidence — just as is used in all judicial proceedings when there are no witnesses to what occurred.

**As an example, let us consider a murder case:**

None of those present in the courtroom witnessed the crime. How do they know, then, that it actually occurred? Legal evidence must be produced. And there are two types of evidence:

**01** The first is the testimony of eyewitnesses. If this type of evidence does not convince the jury, then the second alternative arises.

**02** Circumstantial evidence: it is presented and can convince the jury, in an incontestable way, that the crime in fact occurred and that the defendant is the murderer, is guilty. Every legal proceeding must gather this type of evidence.

In the resurrection of Jesus, we have both types of evidence.

→ On one hand, there are the eyewitnesses;

→ On the other, a striking characteristic of the accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: they are not unanimous, and for this reason their content constitutes circumstantial evidence.

There are small divergent details, and it is precisely this aspect that convinces lawyers that these are eyewitness testimonies.

If all of them had told exactly the same story, they could have “arranged” it among themselves, constituting a conspiracy or fraud to harm others and propagate a lie. In their accounts, there are always small “differences.”

**Observe:**

One Gospel, for example, states that there was one angel at the tomb, and another Gospel reports that there were two angels. A contradiction? No. One witness saw only one angel, and the other saw two — and it is these discrepancies among the eyewitness testimonies that convince a lawyer that these are independent accounts.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John did not meet together to prepare a story. If they had done so, there would have been perfect agreement, and the version of all of them would have been identical.

With this, we have real evidence. We have eyewitnesses. All of them witnessed the facts and described them — each one in their own words.

There are divergences in the details, but this does not prove that the testimonies are doubtful — rather, that they are reliable.

**Let us see more evidence:**

→ The disciples themselves, previously cowering after the death of Jesus, hiding behind closed doors and afraid of being caught, went out and publicly accused the murderers of Jesus. This action cost them dearly and led them to the death penalty. They endured hunger, persecution, abandonment, imprisonment, torture, and death. Eleven of the twelve apostles were killed (John was the only one who died in old age), and this happened because they preached that Christ, risen from the dead, is the King — not only of the Jews, but of the whole world.

It is worth remembering that in the Roman Empire, governed by the feared Caesar, to rise up and affirm the existence of another King was treason punished with death.

→ Another piece of circumstantial evidence is the fact that the Jews who believed in the resurrection of Jesus began to worship on Sunday and no longer on Saturday, as had been their custom.

These worship gatherings they held became known among them as “little Passovers.” Never had such a willingness been heard of — a religion changing its day of worship. It would be as if all the Muslims in the world changed their day of worship to a Wednesday. Something unimaginable.

Now, there were, however, Jews who worshiped on Sunday, the first day of the week. Since it was a workday, they needed to rise very early for the worship gathering or else hold their worship much later, after working hours. Why would they make this change unless something revolutionary had occurred?

→ Lives that are still transformed today, people who find healing for their illnesses, wicked people who become godly solely because they believe that Jesus is alive — this constitutes evidence and proof.

The faith professed by millions of people may not be sufficient to prove the resurrection, but it undoubtedly contributes as circumstantial evidence.

In summary, we have eyewitness testimony and circumstantial evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

In the face of all this, why are there still many who refuse to be convinced?

The answer is simple: because they do not evaluate the evidence.

And why do they not evaluate the evidence? Because they are driven by pride. The problem for those who refuse to believe in the resurrection of Jesus is that, if the evidence confirms the truth, they will be obliged to change their lives, to acknowledge their errors and their miserable condition. If the evidence is true, then everything Jesus affirmed is the truth, and this is capable of producing significant change in any heart.

According to the biblical account, around 500 people witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. And, in Paul's time, some of them were still alive, as can be verified in chapter 15 of the first letter to the Corinthians.

*“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”*

**1 Corinthians 15:1–20 (NKJV)**

***Continue worshiping Jesus because He rose from the dead! He is alive and He reigns over us!***

## **CONCLUSION**

In this nineteenth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we spoke about the resurrection of Jesus, the foundation of the Christian faith — after all, no other “teacher or religious

leader” rose as Jesus did. We also presented the eyewitness and circumstantial evidence that confirms the resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, we clarified some doubts or apparent contradictions about the day of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Many people saw the risen Christ, and many Jews were converted after that. The disciples proclaimed truths to the world about Jesus being alive, after three days dead, and preached this faith to many. The consequence of this was the loss of their own lives. But they would not have done this if Jesus had not risen.

## CONSIDER CAREFULLY

- 01** Are you able to give a reason for your faith regarding the resurrection of Jesus? Can you explain it clearly?
- 02** What are the two myths that need to be dispelled regarding the death of Jesus?
- 03** How many days did Jesus remain in the tomb?
- 04** Is it possible to identify the day and time of His death?
- 05** What types of evidence exist that confirm the resurrection?
- 06** For what reason are there still people who refuse to believe in the resurrection of Jesus?

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

**Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)**