

Why Jesus Rose

A Newsweek poll, taken sometime ago, revealed that 88 percent of Christians and 32 percent of non-Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead. What?! Shouldn't that be 100 percent of Christians and zero percent of non-Christians? If 12 percent of "Christians" do not believe Jesus rose, why do they call themselves Christians? And what about those non-Christians who do believe? Why aren't they Christians?

Maybe some of these "believers" were caught up in the spirit of the religious season, at the time of the poll, yet do not give a second thought to the resurrection of Jesus any other day of the year. But Jesus did not rise to amuse us with another fun holiday. He rose to declare with power that he is the Son of God, thereby making freedom from sin and death possible for all believers (Romans 1:4; 4:24-25; etc.). The resurrection of Jesus is the core of the Christian belief system, and without it that whole system would be empty and meaningless. It would collapse (1 Corinthians 15).

Jesus' resurrection is what makes Christianity unique among the religions of the world. Most belief systems are rooted in human wisdom or some vague mystical idea of "enlightenment." There are no empty tombs to credibly offer everlasting life to followers. However, the Judeo-Christian belief system is rooted in revelation from God, confirmed by the evidence of history. Central to that evidence is the risen Messiah claiming to be God's Son in whom "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). Jesus' bodily resurrection is a space-time event that can be verified historically, thereby credibly offering everlasting life to those who follow him. That is why he rose, and that is reason enough.