We are on lesson 19 as we are continuing in our study of Christology. And we’re talking about Christ’s resurrection, a fact of history well-attested, well-received on good accounts. And we’re looking at the section that has to do with the fact that it was attested. We’ve talked about the fact that it was very certain that Christ raised from the dead. There are various lines of evidence for the fact of the bodily resurrection. We indicated that it was anticipated in the Old Testament and in the New Testament being predicted many times. It was accomplished. The record in all four Gospels says it was the first day of the week and the third day after death, differences of details but amazing agreement and harmony. Now last time we mentioned that it was attested by two major lines of historical proof. Those two major lines are the empty tomb witnessed by the angels, the apostles, and the antagonists, the guards themselves, and the appearances of the resurrected Christ. There is no adequate explanation of the empty tomb. The only possible explanation is that Christ indeed was raised from the dead. An early explanation was that His disciples stole His body while the guards slept. But this is no testimony. Sleeping witnesses are no evidence in court. The empty tomb then stands as a witness to the resurrection of Christ. The complete lack of evidence for any alternative leads to the conclusion that the account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only plausible explanation.

The appearances of the resurrected Christ are another line of evidence. We mentioned that there were 17 in total, 11 before the ascension over a period of 40 days and then six after the ascension in glorified form. The 11 before the ascension are particularly interesting because they witness to the fact that there were witnesses on earth who saw Him before He ascended and then saw Him ascend. After that, the appearances ceased after 40 days.

Dr. Walvoord in his book *Jesus Christ Our Lord* on pages 193-195 treats the appearances of Christ. And he lists them here. The first
appearance of Christ was to Mary Magdalene, and then the second appearance of Christ was to other women who were returning to the tomb and saw Christ on the way. The third appearance was to Peter in the afternoon of resurrection day. The fourth appearance was to the disciples as they walked along the road to Emmaus. The fifth appearance was to 10 disciples. The sixth appearance was to 11 disciples a week after His resurrection, the seventh to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee. The eighth was to 500 at once, some of whom were alive in Paul’s day when he wrote 1 Corinthians 15. The ninth appearance was to James, the Lord’s half-brother. Evidently James wasn’t a believer prior to the resurrection. But immediately upon resurrection, he was a believer. The tenth appearance was to 11 disciples on the mountain in Galilee. The eleventh appearance occurred at His ascension from the Mount of Olives. The twelfth appearance was to Stephen, and the thirteenth to Paul. And the fourteenth seems to have been to Paul in Arabia. The fifteenth to Paul in the temple, the sixteenth to Paul while in prison in Caesarea, and the seventeenth appearance of Christ was given to the apostle John at the beginning of the book of Revelation recorded in Revelation 1. Now all these appearances are listed with reference in Walvoord’s book *Jesus Christ Our Lord* on pages 193-195 as we mentioned. I suggest also you might see Wilbur Smiths’ book *Therefore Stand*. There on pages 387-388, he also lists the appearances of Christ and their character.

Now these two major lines of evidence, the empty tomb and the appearances of Christ are complimentary. The empty tomb might be explained as just an empty tomb, and Christ’s body might have been taken elsewhere. Though indeed there is evidence that His body was missing in a supernatural way when the grave clothes were still wrapped there and His body was gone. But the appearances of the resurrected Christ identify Him as the one who was in the tomb. It’s quite obvious that He was the same one when we consider the likenesses of His resurrection body to His pre-resurrection body which we’ll be discussing a little bit later. The empty tomb and the appearances are complimentary evidences. The empty tomb witnessed to the absence of Christ, and the appearances witnessed to the presence of Christ outside of the tomb alive again.

Now at this point, having discussed the certainty of the resurrection, let’s note its cause. Who raised Christ from the dead? Well the Scripture tells us that the Father raised Him from the dead, according to Acts 2:24. “Men slew Him and God raised Him from the dead.” And in Acts 2, we read also that “Jesus hath
God raised up whereof we are all witnesses,” Acts 2:32. In fact, Paul says the same thing as well as Peter’s words there in Acts. Paul says in Ephesians 1:19-20 that “God raised Him, and He exalted Him and gave Him glory.” However, the Son Himself was involved in the resurrection. In John 2:19, Jesus said, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it.” This was a reference to His body which the disciples, later on, understood. In John 10:17-18, He says, “I lay down my life of myself...No one takes it from Me.” And He also said “I take it again.” I lay down My life, and I will take it up. And so Christ raised Himself from the dead. Was the Holy Spirit involved in Christ’s resurrection? Well, that’s the question. The best reference along this line that most closely says this is Romans 8:11. And though this statement does not directly say that the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead, it seems to come pretty close to it. In Romans 8:11 “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit who dwells in you.” Notice this phase “the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus” (if He dwells in you). The “Him” in this case could refer to the Father. In other words, if the Spirit sent by the Father who raised up Jesus, if that Spirit dwells in you. It could be taken that way, and it probably should be taken that way. Then it does not directly say that the Spirit raised the Son, but it says the Father raised the Son. And the Father sent the Spirit. However, there’s a parallel here. The last part of the verse says “God shall quicken our mortal bodies” or make them alive “by His Spirit who dwells in us.” In other words, the Holy Spirit is involved in the believer’s resurrection. We may argue then from the parallel in 1 Corinthians 15 and the analogy between the believer’s resurrection and Christ’s resurrection that if the Holy Spirit is involved in human resurrection, He’s also involved in Christ’s human resurrection. That’s the best we can do as far as evidence is concerned with the Holy Spirit being involved biblically. Theologically, I think we can say that the principle of the Trinity’s operation in the major events and aspects of the life of Christ argue for the fact that the Holy Spirit was also involved in the resurrection. Who caused Christ’s resurrection, the Father, the Son, and most likely also the Holy Spirit.

Now we come to a section, called “The Character of the Resurrection.” What type of body did Christ have? Well under this we want to refer to a central passage, 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Now this chapter is not written specifically to describe Christ’s resurrection body, but it is written specifically to show that there is resurrection for the believer. In the process Paul lays down the
principle that Christ’s human resurrection is the pattern and the cause of the believer’s resurrection. The things that are true then of the human resurrection of believers are also true concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. So if we’ll turn to 1 Corinthians 15, we’ll see what’s involved here.

I would remind you that there are some evidences in the gospel also and though they’re not here in 1 Corinthians 15, it’s good to remember them. Consider the similarities now of Christ’s resurrection body to His pre-resurrection body. His appearance seemed to be the same. In the book of Luke as He journeyed along with the disciples in chapter 24, it says “It came to pass that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.” In other words, it took supernatural withholding of their recognition that they should not know who Jesus was. Otherwise they would have known Him. And then it says in Luke 24:31, “When their eyes were opened, they knew Him.” They recognized Him, “and He vanished out of their sight.” So He was recognizable. Evidently His voice was much the same. When He met Mary in the garden, she first thought Him to be the gardener until He spoke. He spoke her name “Mary” and she evidently recognized His voice and turned and recognized Him as Jesus. He could eat just like He did before also. In Luke 24:41-43 we read that, “The Lord Jesus took a broiled fish and a honeycomb and ate it before them” to show that He indeed was real and He was not a Spirit. In John 20:25-27, He invited Thomas to look at the wounds indeed to feel them. They were still there. That was to identify Him as the same one who was crucified. In Luke 24:39, He says, “Behold My hands and My feet. It is I Myself. Handle Me and see for a Spirit has not flesh and bones as you see Me have.” His structure was still the same, flesh and bones. Now there were some modifications of His structure, but that much was the same showing that He was not a spirit or an apparition. But He was indeed genuinely human with flesh and bones. So these are similarities to His pre-resurrection body.

But there are some dissimilar features. He was not limited by physical barriers as He was before. In Luke 24:36 as they were speaking, “Jesus Himself suddenly stood in the midst of them and said, ‘Peace be unto you.’” The same thing is recorded in John 20:19. They were assembled in the upper room, the doors being locked for fear of the Jews, and suddenly Jesus appeared. Now it’s not said He came in through the doors or the walls, but He appeared somehow. Perhaps the molecular structure of His body was modified that He was not limited by physical barriers. But
in some way a physical body appeared suddenly. Now this seems strange to the scientific mind. But perhaps if we knew more about science and if we knew more about the Creator who invented science, I suppose that we might find it less difficult to believe what the Scripture says. However, believing God and believing God’s Word, we have no difficulty understanding that Jesus was not limited by physical barriers. He did not have the same kind of flesh evidently. In 1 Corinthians, remember that’s our central passage, 1 Corinthians 15. In 1 Corinthians 15:50 we read that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” In other words, there must be a change. This corruptible body must be changed to incorruptible. And evidently He had a different kind of flesh that did not decay.

That brings us to the next point. He was not subject to death or decay. In 1 Corinthians 15:42, it says, “This is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption. It is raised in incorruption.” And Romans 6:9 says “Christ having died is not subject to death anymore.” We read about the fact that the resurrection body has new outward glory. In 1 Corinthians 15:43, “the body is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory.” And afterwards, of course, when Christ appeared, He seemed to have a glorious form, particularly in His post-ascension appearances, those last six that we mentioned when He appeared to the apostle Paul and John. His body is powerful. He seems to have a new inner power. This is according to 1 Corinthians 15:43, “It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power.” There’s no need for sleep, and there is no hunger. This is seen also from the book of Revelation in the eternal state. The people are described as not having night and no hunger. So evidently the body is not in such a situation that it needs to repair itself through eating and sleeping. It is a powerful body. It is also called a spiritual body adapted to a new life principle, governed by the Spirit. First Corinthians 15:44, “it is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body.” And Paul hastens to say there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. He doesn’t mean “spirit” but he means spiritual body, a body governed by the Spirit. So that it’s different in its manifestations and its activities.

There are some illustrations as to the character of the resurrection body in 1 Corinthians 15. The apostle Paul writes these illustrations as he continues the discussion. He answers the question, “But how are the dead raised up? With what body do they come?” He says “Thou fool. That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body but to bear grain. It may chance be of wheat or some
other grain. But God gives it a body as it pleases Him to every seed his own body.” Here he uses plant life to show that there is the same life but different form in the resurrection. He also uses the illustration of flesh life. “All flesh (verse 39) is not the same flesh. But there is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts, another of birds.” There are different kinds of flesh. And the point here is that we may have the same body, but a different kind of flesh. Paul also uses the illustration of heavenly bodies. In verse 40 and 41, “There are celestial bodies, bodies terrestrial. But the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars. For one star differs from another star in glory.” The idea here is that in the resurrection, we have the same body but there’s a different kind of glory. So with these three illustrations, Paul helps us to understand our resurrection body and Christ’s resurrection body. So Christ’s body was similar to what it was before His resurrection. And it was dissimilar. It was evidently the same body and yet different.

Now let’s talk about the consequences of His resurrection. Concerning the consequences, we might ask, what’s the significance or so what? Well, the resurrection proved His person. It declares His deity. According to Romans 1:4, He’s the Son of God with power declared so by the resurrection from the dead. If Jesus hadn’t been raised from the dead, we couldn’t have believed His claims. He said I am the Son of God. “I and the Father are one.” And He said, “I lay down my life, and I will take it up. I lay down my life for My sheep. I give unto them eternal life.” But without the resurrection which He also predicted, we could believe none of His statements. But His resurrection having come to pass, we can believe that God put His stamp of approval on all that Christ said and did. The resurrection is God’s final approval of the Lord Jesus as He walked on earth.

The resurrection also attests to Christ’s death. It attests the sufficiency of the death for our justification. In Romans 4:25, we read that “Christ was delivered because of our offenses and was raised again because of our justification.” Now the King James says “for” but the actual Greek word is “because.” In other words, the cause of Christ’s death was our sin. And the cause of Christ’s resurrection was our justification. The only way this can be understood as far as I can see is that the death of Christ was sufficient as a basis for our justification. And this was proved and evidenced by His resurrection from the dead. First Corinthians 15:17 says, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain or empty
and ye are yet in your sins.” And so the gospel hinges upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As far as His message is concerned, the resurrection confirms Christ’s message and all His claims. Jesus said that His works would testify to His message and His person. Matthew 12:40 records the fact that Jesus said, “No more signs will be given to a sinful and adulterous generation except the sign of Jonah; for as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so Christ will be in the earth.” And He was raised a sign to a sinful and adulterous generation that He is indeed the one that they should not reject but receive as their Savior the Son of God.

A fourth consequence is that He entered His present ministries. In Hebrews 4:14 we have a High Priest who passed through the heavens. Raised from the dead, He sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 8:1). And so the resurrection marks the beginning of His present work in heaven. Another consequence of the resurrection is the expectation of His return. According to Acts 1, when He ascended into heaven the angel said, “This same Jesus shall come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go.” In fact, in Acts 2, Peter said “God raised Him from the dead to sit on David’s throne. And He will sit upon David’s throne when He returns again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” He could not return in the body unless He was raised in the body. And so we expect His return. The resurrection also certifies the Scriptures, the Word of Christ. The Lord Jesus was the center of Old Testament prophecies, and He’s the center of the New Testament stories. And so the resurrection being part and parcel of Scripture attests to the fact that Scripture is indeed the Word of God and can be depended upon.

A final thing the resurrection speaks of is our own resurrection. We may anticipate our resurrection because Christ overcame death. In 1 Corinthians 15:20 “Now is Christ risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of them that slept. For by man came death, and by man comes also the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam, all die. Even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” The point here is this, that since Christ has experienced human resurrection and is the one who saves us from all effects of sin including death, He guarantees by His resurrection our resurrection. Hebrews 2:15 says that “Christ through death destroyed him who had the power of death and delivered those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Having died and being raised again, Jesus is the one who is the resurrection and the life. And He said I will raise those who believe on Me (John 11:25). “I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes on Me, though he
were dead, yet shall he live. And He that lives and believes on Me shall never die” speaking about transformation at His coming. Our resurrection is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

One final consideration in the matter of the resurrection of Christ is its centrality in the gospel message. The resurrection is an essential part in the gospel message as Paul says “I delivered the gospel unto you (1 Corinthians 15:2). You are saved if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you unless you believed in vain. For I delivered (verse 3) unto you first of all that which I received how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures and was seen.” And then he lists several who saw Him. The point here is this that the resurrection is a unique evidence of a unique Savior. Romans 1:4 tells us He’s declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, and that is a central part of the gospel. Christ is not on the cross. He is not being re-sacrificed. He is one who died once and for all and now lives forever at the right hand of God.

Another point is that He is central in the apostolic preaching. Not only is the resurrection evidence of a unique Savior, but He is expounded in the apostles’ preaching. In Acts 2 and Acts 13 are good evidences of how Peter and Paul both preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection is a key to the preaching of the gospel. It gives reality and attestation to what we’re saying, because Christ’s resurrection is a key apologetic or evidence for the truth of the gospel. A third thing, the resurrection is the essence of our new life. In Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive. “As we’ve borne the image of the earthly, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly,” 1 Corinthians 15:49. In Ephesians 2:5, we were quickened with Christ. We share His resurrection life. Finally, the resurrection gives us expectation of a new destiny. We look for the Savior from heaven, for our citizenship is in heaven. And when He comes from heaven, He shall change our bodies of humiliation to be like unto His glorious body (Philippians 3:21). The resurrection is central to the gospel message. Do you believe it? Are you preaching it?