

The Resurrection

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Compiled by Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

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From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

As to the resurrection of the body of Christ three days subsequent to His departure: This signifies the divine teachings and spiritual religion of His Holiness Christ, which constitute His spiritual body, which is living and perpetual forevermore.

By the “three days” of His death is meant that after the great martyrdom, the penetration of the divine teachings and the spread of the spiritual law became relaxed on account of the crucifixion of Christ. For the disciples were somewhat troubled by the violence of divine tests. But when they become firm, that divine spirit resurrected and that body - which signifies the divine word - arose.

Likewise the address of the angels to the people of Galilee, “That this Christ will return in the same way and that He will descend from heaven,” is a spiritual address. For when Christ appeared, he came from heaven, although He was outwardly born from the womb of Mary. For He said: “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven.”

He said: “I came down from heaven and likewise will go to heaven.” By “Heaven” is not meant this infinite phenomenal space, but “heaven” signifies the world of the divine kingdom which is the supreme station and seat of the Sun of Truth.

“Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas”, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Society), p. 192

...Thou hast written concerning the meeting of His Highness Christ after the crucifixion

and that some of the apostles perceived Him but did not recognize Him; but that they did recognize Him after the breaking of bread.

Know thou that the Messianic Spirit and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is always manifest, but capacity and ability (to receive it) is more in some and less in others. After the crucifixion the apostles had not in the beginning the capacity and ability of witnessing the Messianic reality. For they were agitated. But when they found firmness and steadfastness, their inner sight became opened, and they saw the reality of the Messiah as manifest. For the body of Christ was crucified and vanished, but the Spirit of Christ is always pouring upon the contingent world, and is manifest before the insight of the people of assurance.

"Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas", Vol. 1 (Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Society), p. 193-194

...The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared; His religion found life; His teachings and His admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.

Such is the meaning of the resurrection of Christ, and this was a true resurrection....

"Some Answered Questions", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), p. 104

From letters written on behalf of the Guardian

We do not believe that there was a bodily resurrection after the Crucifixion of Christ, but that there was a time after His Ascension when His disciples perceived spiritually His true greatness and realized He was eternal in being. This is what has been reported symbolically in the New Testament and been misunderstood. His eating with His disciples after resurrection is the same thing.

9 October 1947 to an individual believer

The two Biblical verses you had enclosed for explanation on behalf of Dr. ...; the Guardian wishes you to explain to him that these passages are allegorical, and should not be taken literally. They indicate the reality of the presence of the Spirit of Christ and not His bodily resurrection....

14 August 1937 to an individual believer in response to a request for an explanation of the Biblical verses Luke 24:39 and John 20:24-29 for a person who was investigating the Teachings of the Faith.
