

## 22 How can one man's death and supposed resurrection 2000 years ago have any impact on my life?

*How can one man's death and supposed resurrection 2000 years ago have any impact on my life?* The fact that Christianity is tied to one person who entered history at one time is a real stumbling block for many people. This is especially true in the fast moving culture of today where history is just mystery.

It goes without saying that most of the world measures time before and after Jesus – he's the man placed at the centre of human history. Is that justified? Does the unique claim of Jesus to be God's Son made flesh and proved so by his resurrection stand up? Is Jesus alive? *No intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the Resurrection story is true* wrote former Chief Justice, Lord Darling.

How can *one* man, living in *one* age, matter to *all* people, in *all* ages? We know a lot more nowadays about how particular events can ripple across space and time. Chaos theory shows a butterfly over Peking can cause a rainstorm in New York. To say *'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever'* (Hebrews 13:8) is to extend this connecting philosophy across time as well.

The fact that Jesus impacts people today is linked to the way truth spreads. Jesus has an impact because God is truth and Jesus is the divine Son of God born to raise 'the sons of men' to become the sons and daughters of God.

Jesus has a right to impact everyone's life because everyone's life is held together by him in the first place (Colossians 1v17). This is something that's revealed and no invention. It's something that the Spirit of God keeps before us through scripture, Christian teaching and example through the ages.

The fourth century North African youth Augustine heard a child chanting *'tolle et lege'*, *'take up and read'* in the next door garden. He took up and read Romans Chapter 13v14: *put on the Lord Jesus Christ* – and he did so! Three centuries on the power of Jesus was manifested through the conversion of St. Augustine who became a fearless teacher of Christ.

*Can one man's death and supposed resurrection 2000 years ago have any impact?* How about John Newton, 18<sup>th</sup> century author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*? Here was the master of a slave ship who himself became a slave, a servant of Jesus. Newton is remembered for his work in the anti-slavery movement that occupied his later life. The impact of the cross and resurrection of Jesus meant a total turn around. In his own words: *I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see!*

A house was built in a forest clearing with six-foot concrete foundations. In time an oak sapling burst through the floor. Such is natural power! Christians see the risen Lord Jesus as having a similar supernatural power only in all ages and places. There are times when human beings build over Jesus and

forget he's there but he always breaks through. As he revealed himself in power to Augustine and Newton he waits to reveal himself to this generation.

For Christ to impact people today they need to turn from bad ways and welcome the Holy Spirit for 'no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:3).

The unique events that surround the coming, death and resurrection of Jesus ripple on through the centuries. Momentous events always have consequences. The selfish mismanagement of world finances has brought the consequence of punitive debt across the world. The unselfish life and death of Jesus is bringing people into credit – into a purpose for living and a reason for dying, into joy, peace and answered prayers.

*How can one man's death and supposed resurrection 2000 years ago have any impact on my life? What Jesus did for us he makes real to us by his Spirit through prayer, scripture and through bread and wine. To see Jesus is to see the universe has got a centre - and it isn't me! Only Jesus is to be the be all and end all! Only he is able to *gather up all things in himself* (Ephesians 1v10).*

When you walk up a hill your horizon gets opened up. When you walk with Jesus you get shown an eternal horizon. Your life gets opened up to a vision quite out of this world. Jesus who died in your place lives in your place. This is the best answer we can give - and the best good news in the world!