

# The Word



MARCH 2021



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com) The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

All images are “no attribution required”, unless otherwise stated.

## The Word, March 2021



**Editor:** Becky Lewis



**Designer:** Julie Snobelen

# The Word: New Life

Welcome to our first issue of the magazine for 2021. As I write this, there is cautious hope that we might soon emerge from our extended year-long hibernation. Spring has always been a symbol of hope, when much of nature awakes from sleep. But this year more than ever, Spring feels like a new start. As the world wakes up, and we gradually reunite, there will be a lot of rebuilding work to do, and a sense of loss too. We have lost many people to the virus, and still others are battling long Covid. Our way of life will never be what it was at the start of 2020. But as we continue to adjust to what the 'new normal' involves, there will be some positives too. There are opportunities to change things for the better in the long-term, and many of us have re-evaluated what really matters in life.

In this issue we focus on new life – in particular, the new life that can be inspired by Jesus. His teaching, example and support have nurtured change and growth in people for over 2000 years, and his resurrection provides hope that we too can be raised from sleep one day, as he was.

Whatever Spring brings for you in these unusual circumstances, I hope you will have opportunity to appreciate the miracle of new life.

*Becky Lewis*

Contact us via [www.cssu.org.uk](http://www.cssu.org.uk)

We are trying out a dyslexia-friendly font for our longer sections of text. Please let us know whether or not you find it easier to read.

We want **YOU** to submit an illustration for our next issue  
So, what pictures come to your mind when you think of **the environment**?  
Email us your work by the start of May and we can hopefully include it.

# Why we can have confidence that **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD**

## **THE MISSING BODY**

Many powerful people wanted to prove that Jesus was dead, but no one could find the body.

In 1 Cor 15, Paul claims that hundreds of people saw the risen Jesus. Most of these eyewitnesses were still alive at the time of writing, so their stories could be checked.

## **THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE DISCIPLES & PAUL**

The radical message of the gospel spread rapidly, because the evidence was so convincing.

## **THE WITNESSES**

The disciples showed much more courage after the resurrection than before it. They preached boldly, even when threatened with beatings, imprisonment and death. On meeting Jesus, Saul completely changed his life, giving up his reputation, power and wealth to suffer for the gospel. This was not all just a trick so that they could be the centre of attention for a while.

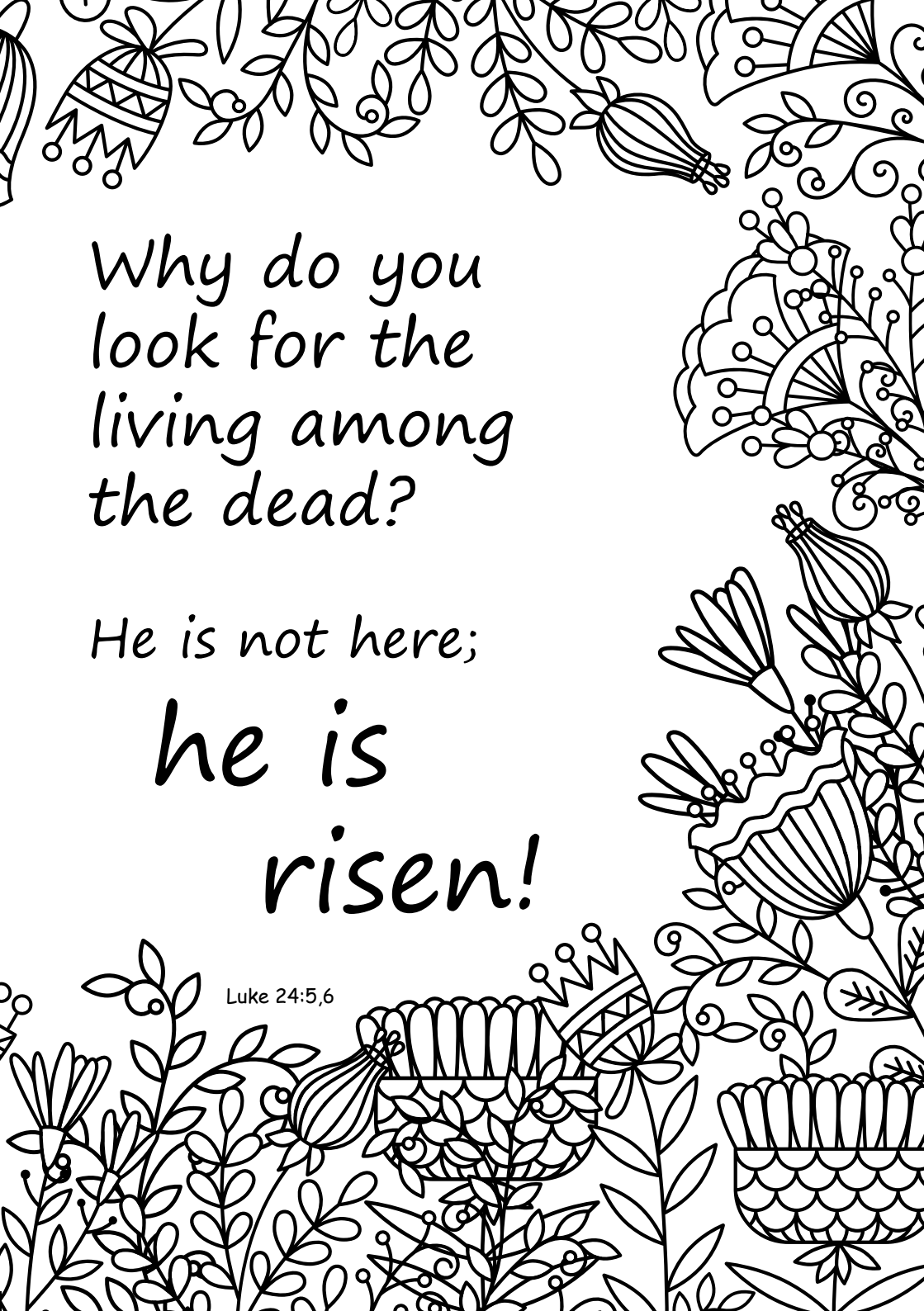
## **THE DRAMATIC GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY**



For more detail, see:

- [theholeinhistory.com](http://theholeinhistory.com)
- Gospel Online YouTube channel: "Why believe in Jesus – the resurrection"
- [gladtidingsmagazine.org/i-believe-in-the-resurrection-of-jesus](http://gladtidingsmagazine.org/i-believe-in-the-resurrection-of-jesus)

Template from [www.weareteachers.com](http://www.weareteachers.com)

A black and white line drawing of a decorative border featuring various flowers, leaves, and a crown-like element at the top right.

Why do you  
look for the  
living among  
the dead?

He is not here;

he is  
risen!

Luke 24:5,6





# He's Alive!

## The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus

by Richard Benson

This is an edited extract from a longer article, published in Faith Alive Magazine, July 2018.

Jesus Christ rose from the dead: this claim is central to the Gospel message. If Jesus rose from the dead, he must be who he said he was, God's promises must be true, and death is not our inevitable end. But if Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christianity is a false religion. As Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised,

then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:14,15,17). It's a bold claim: a dead man came to life and now lives forever. But the writers of the New Testament are bolder still – they make this a **falsifiable** claim. Let me explain. Imagine I claim that fairies are living at the bottom of the garden. "I haven't seen them!", you reply. "Ah, but only I can see them," I continue, "They are invisible to everyone

else". How can you disprove this claim? You know that I must be mad or lying, but I can dismiss all your arguments because "they are

---

Imagine I claim that fairies are living at the bottom of the garden.

---

invisible". This is a non-falsifiable claim – it cannot be proved false.

But the writers of the New Testament present the resurrection very differently. It wasn't something mystical or invisible, seen only by a few people. The early believers based their claim on evidence which was easy to prove false. For example, in focusing on the physical body, someone might have proved them wrong by producing the body of Jesus, or finding the sealed tomb. By claim-

ing that Jesus had been seen alive by hundreds of people (several of them named), they risked someone breaking ranks and admitting they hadn't seen Jesus after all.

So what do we conclude from this? Firstly, the disciples really did believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. They were witnesses to his resurrection, and were confident that their witness could not be undermined. Secondly, their enemies were unable to disprove their claim. Christianity could have been destroyed within weeks if contrary evidence had been presented. But it wasn't. In fact, when the priests and Sadducees brought Peter and John before the council because of their preaching of the resurrection, they did nothing to disprove their claim (Acts 4:1-22). When they saw the power that now lived within these men, "they had nothing to say in opposition" (verse 14).

Something did really happen – something which transformed people. Think of Peter, who denied his Lord, or Thomas who doubted, or the other disciples who "all left him and fled" (Mark 14:50). Weeks later, they were testifying to thousands that Jesus was alive (Acts 2). Think of Jesus' own family: "not even his brothers believed in him" (John 7:5). Yet after the resurrection, they joined the disciples (Acts 1:14). Think of Saul (later called Paul), who was so sure that

the Gospel message was a lie that he made it his mission to travel to Damascus to arrest any believers he could find (Acts 9:1,2). Yet when he got there, "he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God'" (Acts 9:20).

These believers maintained their claim that Jesus was alive, even in the face of imprisonment and

---

**It wasn't something mystical or invisible, seen only by a few people.**

---

death (Acts 12). Even people who had not themselves seen Jesus alive were sufficiently convinced by the evidence to remain faithful through persecution. Against all the odds, the message of the resurrection spread. Paul's letter to the Corinthians shows that these people weren't gullible. There were some who doubted – even in the ecclesia. But he reminded them to consider the evidence. There were witnesses to the resurrection, "most of whom are still alive" (1 Corinthians 15:6). There was no doubt: Jesus Christ was alive!

Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# Born Again

by Becky Lewis

When you were born, your body went through a massive, sudden change. Inside your mother's womb, you had lived inside a warm, watery sac, sustained by the oxygen and nutrients supplied through the umbilical cord. At birth, you changed from a being that lived in water, gaining oxygen from your mother, to a being that breathed air. Your skin colour changed (from blue-ish purple) as you did this. No longer connected to your mother by the cord, you had to learn to drink and digest milk. Having lived in darkness, experiencing only muffled sounds and kept at a constant temperature, you were suddenly exposed to light, noise, texture and cold.



Many of your body's systems had to adjust to this, almost in the blink of an eye. I witnessed this happen at the births of my three children, and each time, this adjustment from womb to the outside world seemed nothing short of miraculous.

After birth, you continued to grow and change - sometimes intensely, at other times much more slowly. During periods of intense growth, you may experience physical and emotional pain, and wonder if your body really knows what it's doing. But after that intense growth, you will usually emerge more capable and better-equipped for the challenges of life.

It is the same with spiritual growth. Jesus said that to see the kingdom we must be "born again" (John 3:3). Paul talks in Romans 6 about this in terms of the new start that baptism offers. In the water, we leave behind our old self, and emerge as a new being. We are no longer a child



of Adam, but a child of God. But our transformation does not stop there. We continue over our lifetime to learn and grow, with the guidance of our Father and the support of Jesus. This is not a steady, predictable growth, but it happens in fits and starts. Sometimes we will feel strong, at other times weak and doubting. Often, if we are listening to life's experiences and learning from God's wisdom, the process of growth is painful. But, to help us through, we have the comfort and support of our spiritual family, including our Father and His son.

At the resurrection, our physical body will be changed again, as it was during our natural birth. Paul says that this change, from a natural body to a spiritual one, will happen "in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). And this new body will just be the finishing touch to a lifetime of changes, experienced during our transformation into a new creation (Romans 12:2).

*"What you sow does not  
come to life unless it dies."*

*When you sow,  
you do not plant  
the body that will be,  
but just a seed...*



*So will it  
be with the  
resurrection  
of the  
dead."*

1 Corinthians 15:37,42

# Growth WORDSEARCH

Look up the missing words from these New Testament quotations, and then find them hidden in the wordsearch.

The quotations have been listed in the order they appear in the Bible so you can work your way through the New Testament from John to 1 Peter.

**John 15:4** Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear \_\_\_\_\_ by itself; it must remain in the vine.

**Romans 6:4** Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 12:2** Be \_\_\_\_\_ by the renewing of your mind.

**1 Corinthians 4:16** Inwardly we are being \_\_\_\_\_ day by day.

**Ephesians 4:23** Be made new in the \_\_\_\_\_ of your minds.

**Ephesians 4:15** We will grow to become in every respect the \_\_\_\_\_ body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

**Philippians 1:6** He who began a good work in your will carry it on to \_\_\_\_\_ until the day of Christ Jesus.

**Colossians 3:10** Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the \_\_\_\_\_ of its Creator.

**1 Peter 2:2** Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may \_\_\_\_\_ up in your salvation.

F	R	I	E	N	E	M	A	T	U	R	E	G	A
E	S	F	U	A	R	G	D	J	M	O	R	F	T
W	I	B	E	L	E	N	R	F	R	U	I	T	T
L	O	T	R	A	N	S	F	O	R	M	E	D	I
R	E	N	H	L	E	I	P	B	W	S	P	R	T
U	G	J	D	N	W	U	F	I	M	A	G	E	U
C	O	M	P	L	E	T	I	O	N	T	A	M	D
I	L	E	E	T	D	A	I	L	R	N	G	I	E

# Growth / Fixed Mindset

You may have already heard of 'growth mindset' (a term first used by Carol Dweck around 30 years ago). It is being taught in schools to help pupils embrace new challenges. This positive approach to life-long learning is woven throughout the Bible.

## -----Attitude-----

Fixed mindset	Growth mindset	Biblical examples
I can't do it!	I can learn, with help. I can't do it, yet. I can try.	<i>I can do all this through him who gives me strength.</i> Philippians 4:13
I won't change!	I can change.	<i>Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.</i> Romans 12:2
My work must be perfect!	I will do my best. I can learn from my mistakes.	<i>Be diligent... so that everyone may see your progress.</i> 1 Timothy 4:15
I should know the answer!	It's ok to not know.	<i>What we will be has not yet been made known.</i> 1 John 3:2
I am not as good as other people!	I can do better than I did yesterday.	<i>Inwardly we are being renewed day by day.</i> 2 Corinthians 4:16
My gifts and abilities sum up my worth.	Every person is valuable... and has the potential to improve.	<i>Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh?</i> Jonah 4:10
I cannot control what happens to me.	I can choose how to respond to challenges.	<i>Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves.</i> Ephesians 4:14

**Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30.**

- How does the parable reflect the two mindsets?
- What can we learn from this in the way we live our lives?

**Can you think of any Old Testament characters who demonstrate either a fixed or growth mindset?**

Difference between

# The Old and New Creations

Old

VS

New

**"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!"  
2 Corinthians 5:17**

"As in Adam all die..." (1 Cor 15:22)

DEATH TO LIFE

"...even so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22)

"The first man Adam became a living being..." (1 Cor 15: 45)

TWO ADAMS

"... the last Adam, a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15: 45)

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1)

TWO CREATIONS

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (John 1:1)



Made of the dust -  
"earthly" (Gen 2:7; 1  
Cor 15:46-49)

## EARTH V HEAVEN

Born of water and spirit  
- "heavenly" (John 3:5; 1  
Cor 15:46-49)

Tended real garden  
of fruit (Gen 2:15-16)

## FRUIT

Tends spiritual  
garden of fruit (Gal  
5:22-23)

"Be fruitful and  
increase in number;  
fill the earth and  
subdue it" (Gen 1:28)

## MULTIPLYING

"Go into all the world  
and preach the  
gospel to all  
creation" (Mark  
16:15)

Actions of old self  
destroy (Col 3:5-9)

## ACTIONS

Actions of new self  
build up (Eph 4:16)

"Wages of sin is  
death" (Rom 6:23)

## WAGES V GIFT

"Gift of God is  
eternal life" (Rom  
6:23)

Old self ages day by  
day, but remains  
immature, lacks  
wisdom (2 Cor 4:16,  
Eph 4:14)

## DECAY V RENEWAL

New self is renewed  
day by day, continues  
to mature, grows in  
wisdom (2 Cor 4:16,  
Eph 4:12-15)

Slaves of sin (Rom  
6:6)

## SLAVES

Slaves of  
righteousness (Rom  
6:18)

God met humans in a  
physical holy space -  
Eden, tabernacle,  
temple (Exo 25:22)

## TEMPLES

God dwells in us - a  
spiritual house - a  
living temple (2 Cor  
6:16; Rev 21:3)





# Confidence

by Jessica Miller

This is an edited extract from a longer article: "Paul's transformed source of confidence and implications for us", published in The Christadelphian Tidings Magazine, January 2021.



Recognising our sins may begin with hanging our heads in shame, but it cannot end there if we want the kind of confidence God desires us to have. As the words to the song say, "Be bold! Be strong! For the Lord your God is with you!"<sup>1</sup>

The key to living out these words is the second part of the phrase. We can and should walk in confidence, but with a firm understanding of the source of it. Once we appreciate how much has been done for us, we shouldn't have less confidence, but more!

But it is a confidence coming from our position as loved, forgiven children of God, rather

than due to our own merit or hard work. Confidence which comes from our value to God and appreciation for Christ's sacrifice is so much more powerful than confidence in our own merits or abilities.

If our confidence is based on our achievements or our positive characteristics, eventually we will come face-to-face with the insufficiency of those qualities. There will always be someone more talented, more intelligent, more attractive; someone who is "more" of everything our self-confidence encourages us to take pride in.

But a confidence in God will stand the test of time and of our human failings and will allow us to be sure of our place in the world, and for eternity. Like the writer to the Hebrews, we can "draw near with confidence



to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16).<sup>2</sup>

Confidence in God can also lead us to live lives of purpose and courage now, just like those whose witness we read throughout the Bible.

Like Joshua and Caleb, we can have the confidence to claim what God has promised (Numbers 13-14); like David, we can face any self-confident giant who stands before us, threatening us or those we love (1 Samuel 16-17); like Mary Magdalene, we can bravely follow our Lord and proclaim him to those around us; and like Paul, we can “overwhelmingly conquer” any temporal trial, knowing that none of them “will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

“For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught” (Proverbs 3:26).

1. Words and music by Morris Chapman, based on Deuteronomy 31:6.

2. All scriptural quotations are from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. [www.lockman.org](http://www.lockman.org)

# Digital Detox

During the last year, through times of isolation, we have stayed connected (and educated) thanks to various digital platforms. However, it will hopefully not be long before we can spend more time with people in Real Life. So this might be a good time to cut down on our reliance on screens, connect with the real world, and take more control of our downtime.

