

EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

“Christianity does not hold the resurrection to be one among many tenets of belief. Without faith in the resurrection there would be no Christianity at all. The Christian church would never have begun and the Christianity would have fizzled. Christianity stands or falls with the truth of the resurrection. If you can disprove it, you have disposed of Christianity.” Michael Green in *Man Alive*.

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.” The Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:14)

1. THE EVIDENCE OF THE EMPTY TOMB

“He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: `The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’” Luke 24:4-7

Objections to the Resurrection

• **Objection # 1. “He Didn’t Really Die.” The Swoon Theory**

First proposed in the 1800’s, this theory states that Christ never really died - that the reason He got out of the grave was because He was never really dead to begin with. Shock from the loss of blood on the cross, His wounds and all that He suffered sent Him into a semi-coma. And when they took Him off the cross and put Him in the tomb, the aroma of the spices and the coolness of the tomb revived Him. When He came out of the grave, the disciples assumed that He was resurrected.

If this theory is true, it means that Jesus successfully survived severe beating and loss of blood, crucifixion and further loss of blood, the spear thrust into His side, again draining the blood out of His body through a gaping wound. He survived entombment with 75 pounds of spices on His already weakened body. He survived three days with no food or water. Woke up without any medical assistance having lost most of His blood, stood up in his mummy-like grave clothes which by now would have hardened around the body like plaster, moved the stone, overpowered four highly trained Roman guards carrying shields, daggers, and javelins, walked seven miles to Emmaus on feet that had been pierced with

nails and convinced everyone that He was fine and alive from the dead. *Any questions?*

• **Objection # 2. “The Body Was Stolen.” The Stolen Body Theory**

When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day. Matthew 28:12-15

Possibilities.

#1 The Roman Government

#2 The Jewish Authorities

They have absolutely no motive. In fact, they have the opposite motive! They would have loved to produce the body - it would have crushed the growing movement of Christianity, which they desperately wanted to put out of existence, and would have saved a lot of time, money and effort on the part of the Roman government in terms of persecution.

#3 The Disciples

“We’re going to steal the body and then we’re going to lie and claim the body was resurrected. Then, we’re going to have the unspeakable privilege of living as penniless evangelists, wandering around the rest of our lives, being beaten, whipped, thrown in jail and put to death.”

But you say, “People die for their faith all the time” – what’s the difference? People will die for their faith if they believe that it is true. But, people will not die for their faith if they know it’s false.

• **Objection # 3 “The Hallucination Theory”**

These people had such an anticipation of resurrection and were so excited about Jesus rising that they actually projected their own hallucinations because of this strong desire. They thought they saw Jesus because they wanted to see Him so badly.

However,

#1 Hallucinations are not group events!

#2 They weren't expecting the resurrection!

#3 Jesus appeared to believers and unbelievers alike!

. Objection # 4 The Wrong Tomb Theory

What if the disciples all simply went to the wrong tomb? After all it was early in the morning when these exhausted, emotionally drained, psychologically jaded disciples saw a tomb, which looked, like Jesus' tomb. It was empty, they jumped for joy, thought that he was alive and the rest is history.

However,

#1 This was not a little execution. This was the biggest execution in history, with crowds of people. Scripture tells us the name of the person, Joseph of Aramathea, whose tomb it was. He would have certainly pointed out that they had gone to the wrong tomb.

#2 If this was the wrong tomb, that means there was a right tomb - that means there was a body somewhere - that means the Roman authorities and Jewish leaders could have easily produced this body and crushed the growing movement.

SO WHAT ARE YOU LEFT WITH?

Over 500 witnesses recorded in the Bible who saw Jesus alive. A faith with a resurrection message at its core that spread like wildfire -- timid fishermen and accountants, who are suddenly and radically changed -- refusing to back down on their claims even in the face of horrific torture! The very same disciples who three days before backed down and denied Jesus Christ when challenged by a servant girl.

2. THE EVIDENCE OF FULFILLED PROPHECIES

"I am the Son of God. Don't believe me unless I do miracles of God". John 10:36-37

***Some of the Many Prophecies about Jesus. Death and Resurrection:**

He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)

He would enter the temple (Malachi 3:1)

He would be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9)

He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12)

The silver would be thrown into the temple (Zechariah 11:13)

The silver would be used for potter's field (Zechariah 11:13)

He would be forsaken by his disciples (Zechariah 13:7)

He would be accused by false witnesses (Psalm 35:11)

He would remain silent before accusers (Isaiah 53:7)

He would be wounded and bruised (Isaiah 53:5)

He would be whipped and spit upon (Isaiah 50:6, Micah 5:1)

He would be mocked (Psalm 22:7,8)

His hands and feet would be pierced (Psalm 22:16)

He would be crucified with thieves (Isaiah 53:12)

People would shake their heads at him (Psalm 109:25)

His clothes would be divided and lots cast for them (Psalm 22:18)

He would be offered gall and vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:21)

The exact words of his death cry were predicted (Psalm 22:1)

Not one of his bones would be broken (Psalm 34:20)

His heart would literally burst (Psalm 22:14)

His side would be pierced (Zechariah 12:10)

Darkness would fall in broad daylight (Amos 8:9)

He would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)

He would be resurrected from the dead (Psalm 16:10, 30:3, 41:10. 118:17, Hosea 6:2)

***These are only a few of the 300 prophecies about Jesus!**

3. THE EVIDENCE OF EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers

at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”
1 Corinthians 15:3-8

"After his suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive!" Acts 1:3

. Objection

These are biased writers. It's like taking the coach of the Sacramento Kings and letting him referee the game. Answer: Just because the disciples were followers of Jesus Christ doesn't mean they're inaccurate historians.

4. THE EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION'S IMPACT

The Fact of the Christian Church.

It is worldwide in scope. Its history can be traced back to Palestine around A.D. 32. Did it just happen or was there a cause for it? These people who were first called Christians at Antioch turned the world of their time upside-down. They constantly referred to the resurrection as the basis for their teaching, preaching, living and most significantly, dying.

The Fact of the Christian Day.

Sunday is the day of worship for Christians. It's history can also be traced back to the year A.D.32. Such a shift in the calendar was monumental, and something cataclysmic must have happened to change the day of worship from the Jewish Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day. Christians said the shift came because of their desire to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

The Fact of the Christian Book - the New Testament.

In its pages are contained six independent testimonies to the fact of the resurrection. Three of them are by eyewitnesses: John, Peter, and Matthew. Paul, writing to the churches at an early date, referred to the resurrection in such a way that it is obvious that to him and his readers the event was well known and accepted without question. Are these men, who helped transform the moral structure

of society, consummate liars or deluded madmen? These alternatives are harder to believe than the fact of the resurrection, and there is no shred of evidence to support them.

5. THE EVIDENCE OF THE CHANGED LIVES!

"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:32

"Indeed, taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it." - Canon Westcott, Cambridge University

The above information was compiled by an unknown author.

Simon Greenleaf, one of the principle founders of the Harvard Law School (and an atheist at that time), originally set out to disprove the biblical testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was certain that a careful examination of the internal witness of the Gospels would dispel all the myths at the heart of Christianity. But this legal scholar came to the conclusion that the witnesses were reliable, and that the resurrection did in fact happen. ([Read more.](#)) Greenleaf wrote a book on his findings as he used the "legal rules of evidence" to disprove the resurrection. (Turns out, and he admitted, that his findings proved the resurrection.) That book is currently available [here](#). ISBN 13 – 9780825427473.