

# EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

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Many today say that Jesus did not rise from the dead and they try to disprove the resurrection with their biased arguments. Why can't they examine the evidence and see that the Christian faith is rooted in solid evidence? This is because they come to the evidence with presuppositions. You say, "a Presuppo . . . what?" I said, "A presupposition." This is what they presuppose to be true when they examine the evidence. They assume that miracles are impossible. They start out examining the evidence with their minds made up.

Normally we would start off arguing from the point of atheistic arguments and if we could show that the atheistic arguments fail then we could move on to show that there is evidence for God and the Bible is God's word and from there we would show that Jesus is who He says He is and that is that He is God. Then we would move on to show that Jesus rose from the dead and proved His claim to deity with His resurrection.

We are going to start out with the presupposition that the atheistic arguments do fail, there is evidence for God, the Bible is His word and Jesus is who He says He is and that is, that He is God.

Now first I want to start out with the fact that the Christian faith is not irrational, nor illogical. It is a rational, logical faith. Some teach that there is no evidence for the Christian faith, but you just have got to believe. You have got to take a blind leap of faith into the land of irrationality and just believe that the Bible is true. This is called Fideism. Fideism teaches that there is no objective evidence for the Christian faith, but you have just got to take a blind leap of faith and believe that Christianity is true.

This is not so. Christianity is like no other belief system on earth. It is rooted in history. All other belief systems on the earth ask you to believe in a system of religion that is based upon a subjective experience and is not rooted in any historical event. Christianity does not ask you to believe in a belief system, but in a person. We must believe that Jesus is who He says He is and died as the Bible tells us He did and believe that He rose from the dead as eyewitnesses say he did.

Now to examine the resurrection we have got to examine the question, "Are miracles possible?" A man named David Hume lived from 1711-1776 and he

did not think so. He argued like this:

1. Miracles are a violation of the laws of nature
2. The laws of nature cannot be violated
3. Therefore miracles cannot occur.

In order to answer that we must understand what the laws of nature are. What are the laws of nature? The laws of nature are descriptive and not prescriptive. In other words they describe what is possible but do not always have to occur like that. They are the usual way things operate under observation. In other words the law of gravity says that you cannot keep any thing heavy in the air.

What is a miracle? A miracle is God performing a supernatural work in the natural realm. He does something to supersede or transcend the laws of nature. See every time an airplane goes up it is not violating the laws of nature. The laws of gravity say that something heavy will not stay in the air. The airplane is not violating the laws of nature, just superseding them. So if God exist and we could present good evidence that He does, then miracles are possible.

So if there is a miracle claim then we ought to investigate it. This is what we will do this with this essay.

Now I am holding a newspaper from last Easter. In it is an article on the resurrection. There are two sides here. One argument is that Jesus only rose spiritually and of course the Jehovah's witnesses say this same thing. Did Jesus only rise spiritually? Let's examine this:

*Mat 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

Now if He only rose spiritually then they would not have been asked to examine the place where Jesus lay. The body would still be there.

*John 2:19-21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.*

Jesus told them that he would rise bodily.

*John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

Now either God made a fake body and wounds to deceive the apostles or it was the same body.

Read Luke 24:36-43. In verse 39 Jesus says:

*Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

Here He even eats fish with the disciples.

But the debate comes from 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

*1 Cor. 15:42-44 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

Notice the word “it” here. It is buried, it is raised.

We do not have supernatural powers within the natural body, but the spiritual body will be able to do things we do not normally do.

Are miracles possible? Yes. If God exists then miracles are possible and as I have said I can show good evidence that God exists. Every miracle claim should be investigated. Have you ever noticed though that every skeptic attacks the resurrection? Why? Because even the skeptics realize that the truth claims of Christianity rests on the resurrection. This is why the “Tomb of Jesus” theory came out a month or two ago. Do you know that the tomb that they claimed belonged to Jesus’ family was found in 1980? Why are we just now hearing about it? It all has to do with money. Those propagating the “Tomb of Jesus” theory want to be rich. They saw the money the Davinci Code brought in and they want some of it.

The resurrection is important for two reasons:

1. Christianity rests on the resurrection.
2. You cannot be saved if you reject the resurrection.

One day I will teach on basic Christian beliefs that one must believe in order

to be saved.

You must believe in the resurrection.

**1 Cor. 15:12-19** *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

**Rom 10:8-9** *But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

If you do not believe, that Jesus rose from the dead bodily, you cannot be saved.

Let's examine some evidence for the resurrection.

### **1.** The evidence of the Roman guards.

First we see that even the Jews expected Christ to resurrect.

**Mat 27:62-66** *Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.*

Some believe that this was the regular temple guard. This does not fit. The

word here in the Greek is *koustodià*, from Latin *custodia*. This is where we get our word custodian from. It has changed meaning a lot since then. But this is not the regular temple guard because they ask Pilate to command that the grave be made secure until the third day. Pilate told them, “You have a guard, now go.” God’s Word translation says, “Pilate told them, “You have the soldiers you want for guard duty. Go and make the tomb as secure as you know how.”

The Message Bible says, “Pilate told them, “You will have a guard. Go ahead and secure it the best you can.”

Also the fact that they put a Roman seal on the tomb proves that the Roman government was in charge of guarding that tomb.

This fact helps us see how the resurrection was a supernatural act. No one would have overpowered these Roman soldiers. They were the mightiest killing force on earth at the time. Think about it, would these soldiers have fallen asleep? Absolutely not! They claimed to have fallen asleep and the Jews were to secure them before the governor. Why? So they would not die. I believe they were put to death any way. If you were in the Roman army you did not fall asleep while on duty.

Also think about the implications of this seal being broken. This would have brought out the FBI, CIA, and Secret Service of the day. This would have been fully investigated.

The only way to account for the rolled away stone under the circumstances is the resurrection.

2. The next piece of evidence we will give in this essay comes from Matthew.

*Mat 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*

Some would ask why Mary Magdalene and the other Mary was going to the tomb when a guard was guarding it? This is because they buried Him at the dawn of the High Sabbath and they did not get to see the sepulchre. They were hoping the guards might allow them to see Jesus' grave.

Then in Matthew they see an angel and then saw Jesus and was commanded to go and tell the disciples that He was risen. During this time women were

not allowed to testify. This proves that the resurrection took place and was not a myth. The disciples would not have used the testimony of a woman if they were trying to invent a false religion.

**3.** The fact of the empty tomb and the silence of Christ enemies for 200 years are proof for the resurrection. There are many theories put forth that the disciples stole the body — this is not possible with the armed guard. The disciples went to the wrong tomb — why didn't the Jews take them to the right tomb?

No, if the Jews could have produced the body they would have.

**4.** The fact that Paul writes during the same generation and says that many saw Him alive after the resurrection is proof for the resurrection.

*1 Cor. 15:3-8 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

Paul said that Peter had seen Christ and then 500 bretheren at the same time saw Christ. No one would write this during the same generation of the events if it were not true. To many people would have been able to dispute these facts had they been false.

Also why did James the Lord's brother start believing in Him? What changed this? Remember in John 7:5 it states, "For neither did his brethren believe in him." Also we have got to account for Paul. Why would Paul start believing in Christ? He wanted to annihilate this belief. He wanted to stop this heresy as he called it.

**5.** What changed Peter from a scared denier of Jesus to a Holy Ghost filled bold proclaimer of the resurrection on the day of Pentecost?

The only thing that can account for this is that he saw the Lord.

**6.** The last piece of evidence I will give is the fact that these disciples were willing to die for their belief. Men might die for what they think is true, but



they will not die for what they know to be a lie. If the disciples had made this up then one of them would have cracked under pressure.

I hope and pray this helps someone today in their defense of the faith. God bless you.