

# 10 Good Reasons to Believe in the Resurrection

## 1. Prophesied in the Old Testament:

It is clear that the Old Testament clearly predicted the resurrection of the Messiah. In Isaiah 53 after describing the suffering, death and burial of the Messiah (53:5,9), the text then says, *“He shall prolong His days”* (53:10). David, in the 16<sup>th</sup> Psalm describes an individual, a Holy One, whose soul was not left in Sheol, nor did His body suffer decay (16:10). Clearly the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah is a truth found in the Old Testament and not merely something Christians have invented (Luke 24:45-46). In addition, Jesus plainly predicted His own death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21). This prediction was given so clearly and publically that even the enemies of Jesus understood what He was claiming and thus wanted His tomb guarded (Matthew 27:63).

## 2. The Number of Witnesses.

In First Corinthians chapter 15 Paul gives a list of those who saw Jesus after He was raised from the dead. Far from mentioning two or even ten people, there were over 514 witnesses of the resurrected Christ! Any event that is witnessed by over 500 people must be taken seriously. In addition, this does not include all the people who saw the events on Pentecost (Acts 2) or the miracles of the apostles (Acts 3) which are likewise proofs that Jesus was raised, was seated at the right hand of God and sent the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33).

## 3. The Honesty in the Accounts.

Far from making things up or trying to make themselves look good, the men who wrote the gospels were very truthful. They clearly admit:

- The apostles all fled when Jesus was arrested: 26:56
- Jesus first appeared to women—not them: John 20:1,18
- They refused to believe and were rebuked for it: Mark 16:11-14
- They were fearful and not courageous: John 20:19

#### **4. All The Historical Details:**

From the gospel accounts we learn that:

- The authorities confirmed the fact that Jesus had died before they released the body for burial: Mark 15:43-45
- People handled the body, preparing it with spices and wrapped it—yet detected no life: John 19:40-41
- The location of the tomb was well known: Mark 15:46-47; Matt. 27:61; John 19:41
- The only entrance into the tomb was blocked by a large stone: Matthew 27:60
- The tomb was sealed the authorities and guarded: Matthew 27:65-66
- No one had ever been buried in this tomb, so there could be no mistake concerning which remains were Jesus': Mark 15:46
- Both the Romans and Jewish authorities wanted the body to remain in the tomb and yet their vigilance could not even begin to prevent the resurrection.

#### **5. The Failure of A Decent Alternative Explanation:**

There are arguments against the resurrection of Jesus, but these arguments are so very weak, they only tend to only strengthen the conclusion that He was raised.

- The first and original argument was that the disciples had taken the body while the guards slept: Matthew 28:13. Yet it is a sorry excuse, for if the guards were truly sleeping then they could not have known who took the body. It also fails to account for question of why these guards, who were

professional soldiers on a serious watch and under threat of death if someone took the body, would fall asleep!

- Some say the women went to the wrong tomb. Yet the tomb was not out in the middle of nowhere and they had been present at the burial. And even if they did—the body would still be in the tomb and such evidence could have easily been available.
- Some say that someone else took the body, but this was impossible: It was a guarded tomb! Furthermore, if the enemies of Jesus took the body—then why was the body never produced after the apostles started to aggressively preach Jesus and the resurrection?
- I find it very telling, that in the book of Acts, both the Jewish and Roman authorities have no argument or answer against the claim that Jesus was raised. The only thing they do is threaten the truth tellers (Acts 4:2,17). It would be a strange strategy to simply threaten— if they had clear evidence against the resurrection, but never used it.

Thus, all the *feeble* arguments against the resurrection, or others such as Jesus never really did die on the cross, or that the apostles only imagined they saw Him—are, as God would have it, powerful arguments in favor of the resurrection.

## **6. What the Arguments Admit:**

Unbelievers need to be careful when they try to form an argument against the resurrection, for many of the above arguments clearly admit:

- Jesus really did die on the cross and was buried.
- The Jewish/Roman authorities had power and control over the tomb.
- On the third day that tomb was empty.
- The authorities never produced the body even in the face of a rapidly growing Christianity that threatened their influence and power: Acts 6:7

## **7. The Changed Lives of the Apostles:**

Something significant must have happened between the burial of Jesus and the day of Pentecost in Acts 2— a period of about 50 days. On the one hand we have the disciples hiding out because they are afraid of the authorities (John 20:19). Yet some 50 days later, the same group of men are courageously preaching Jesus and the resurrection, defying the authorities (Acts 4:19), willing to be beaten (Acts 5:41), working miracles (Acts 2:43), and giving arguments for the resurrection based Old Testament Scripture (Acts 2:24-32). Most of these men would die for preaching Jesus, yet they never looked back or backed down.

## **8. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus:**

How does one explain the 180 ° conversion to Christianity of one of the most ardent persecutors of the church? At first Paul is breathing out threats and slaughter (Acts 9:1), and on his way to arrest as many Christians as he could find. Then shortly thereafter, he is instead preaching Jesus (Acts 9:22), and not only preaching, but being very affective in proving that Jesus was the Christ.

## **9. The Events on Pentecost/Establishment of the Church**

Without Jesus, and with just a band of uneducated (Acts 4:13) Galilean disciples, how did Christianity even get off the ground? Their leader was dead. He had died the death of a criminal. Yet all of a sudden the church has 3000 members (Acts 2:41), then over 5000 just counting the men (Acts 4:4), and then multitudes of men and women (Acts 5:14), even including many former Jewish priests (Acts 6:7). This is not a movement that took centuries to form and spread, rather, within 30 years of Jesus' death there are organized churches all over the Roman Empire teaching all the same doctrine. Neither does it take centuries for the doctrine to form, rather it was all there right in the First Century (Jude 3).

## **10. The Only Alternative Left: Jesus was Raised!**

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