

## Week 9 | Jesus

### Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

“Did Jesus really rise from the dead?” This question is the most \_\_\_\_\_ of all questions.

As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15: 14, *“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”*

We have an empty f\_\_\_\_\_ if there isn’t an empty t\_\_\_\_\_. Paul goes on to say in v. 17, *“And if Christ has not been raised... you are still in your sins.”*

The resurrection of Jesus is crucial to our faith. That’s why Paul said in Romans 6:25 about Jesus, that He was “delivered for our trespasses and raised for our justification”. His death was the necessary \_\_\_\_\_ for sin, but it’s His resurrection that makes us \_\_\_\_\_ with God (“justified”).

So, how do we know if it’s true or not? Look at the EVIDENCE.

### James Kennedy quote from “Why I Believe”...

*“Christianity is the only religion in the world that is based upon historic evidences. The Bible never calls us to blind faith but always to a faith in those things that have been established by evidence. The evidence for Jesus Christ is absolutely overwhelming. No one can disbelieve in Christ because of a lack of evidence.”*

Let's look at "4 Evidences for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ"...

#1 The \_\_\_\_\_ Tomb. The tomb being empty three days after Jesus died is essential to Christianity-for if Christ's body was still there, then Christ did not rise from the dead.

It's clear from the Bible that all four gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) were in agreement that Christ's tomb was empty. Many other witnesses verified this fact as well (Matthew 28.5-6; Mark 16.6; Luke 24.1-3; John 20.1-2).

One of the oldest claims against the resurrection was that somebody \_\_\_\_\_ the body of Christ. The problem is that only two groups of people had real motives to steal the body, the followers of Christ and the enemies of Christ, and neither group were likely candidates.

The followers of Jesus didn't even believe Christ was going to rise from the dead. When the women reported to the disciples the resurrection, they said in the Scriptures, that it "*seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them*" (Luke 24.11).

It's highly unlikely that the disciples-who just three days earlier fled for their lives during His death-would have suddenly mustered up the courage to steal the body, risk their own lives and boldly proclaim that Jesus was alive.

The enemies of Christ had no motive to rob His grave. The leading priests and religious leaders put Christ to death because of His teaching and He and His disciples posed a threat to their religious system. The last thing they wanted was another Jesus movement.

These leaders took extreme measures to protect Christ's body from being stolen. They wanted to prove that Christ's promise of a resurrection was a lie. Stealing the body would have accomplished the opposite.

#2 The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Risen Lord. The eyewitness accounts also attest to the truth of the Resurrection. Jesus not only appeared to His disciples on a number of occasions, He also appeared to five hundred people at one time (I Corinthians 15.6).

Despite the historical documentation of these eyewitness accounts, some people still try to claim that they are mere fabrications. But when you inspect the accounts of Christ's appearances, they do not look like fabrications.

All four gospels agree that the women were the first people to receive the announcement of the resurrection. If you were fabricating a story about Christ, you would not have included the angelic announcement to the women.

Why? Because the traditional Jewish understanding of Jesus' time was that the testimony of women was not accepted in legal situations. So if the disciples wanted to create a story that would deceive society, choosing one based on the testimony of women would not have been it!

The fact that there was no body in the tomb and the numerous recorded witnesses of the risen Savior serves as compelling evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.



### **Whole Group Discussion**

*What reasons do people sometimes give for not believing in the resurrection?*

*Can you share the gospel without including the resurrection? Why or why not?*

There are two other important evidences to the resurrection of Jesus. #3 The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Apostles. If the resurrection of Christ was a lie, why would the apostles go to an early \_\_\_\_\_?

The apostles not only held to their stories, they even died for it! As we look over church history, every single apostle (with the exception of John) died a gruesome and painful death, because they confessed the truth of the resurrected Christ.

If it was indeed a lie, wouldn't you think at least one of the apostles would have said so in order to live? Who would die for a lie?

#4 The Absence of \_\_\_\_\_ Explanations. Over the years, numerous arguments have arisen against the validity of the resurrection. Here are a few of the most common ones:

The first one is "The Swoon Theory". This theory proposes that Jesus did not rise from the dead at all, because He actually did not die on the cross.

The Problem is that the Roman guards were experts at execution and would be put to death if they allowed a condemned man to escape death.

And when the spear they thrust into Jesus' side brought forth blood and water, they had the final proof of His death, for this occurs when the heart stops beating.

Another argument is known as "The No Burial Theory". This theory says that Christ was never put in the tomb to begin with. He was thrown into a mass grave for criminals, according to Roman custom.

Another argument is "The Mass Hallucination Theory". This theory proposes that everyone who claimed to see the risen Lord was hallucinating out of an earnest desire to see Jesus alive again.

The Problem is that the Bible says that He appeared to \_\_\_\_\_ people on one occasion (I Corinthians 15.6). It is one matter for one person to hallucinate, but a completely different thing for all five hundred people to have the identical hallucination simultaneously.

To believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a step of faith. But it's not a "b\_\_\_\_\_ faith". In fact, the evidence would suggest it is a most reasonable faith. How about you? The evidence demands a verdict. What is yours?



## **Small Group Discussion**

*Which of the 4 evidences for the resurrection was most compelling to you, and why?*

*Briefly read through 1 Corinthians 15. Go around and share how these verses are helpful and challenging as it relates to the resurrection of Jesus.*

*How could today's teachings on Jesus help you in sharing Christ with someone and/or in discipling a younger Christian in your life?*



## **Prayer Focus**

The resurrection of Jesus gives us power to overcome the Evil One. Take time to pray for things you need power to overcome.