

Lesson 8: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

I. The Resurrection: At the HEART of the Gospel

Horrible Death

1. Heavy Loss of blood.
2. When His side was pierced, blood and water flowed out.
3. Soldiers didn't break His legs.
4. Pilate asked for assurance (from the centurion) that Jesus was dead.
5. He was wrapped completely in bandages and laid in a tomb.
6. Non-Christian sources confirm the Crucifixion of Jesus

Empty Tomb

1. The Jews through history have admitted that the tomb was empty. They only give reason for the tomb's vacancy—belief in the empty tomb is assumed.

Trypho, a Jew, said in the second century:

“One Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, ... we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb, where he laid when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven” (Dialogue with Trypho, by Justin Martyr).

2. Christianity could not have originated in Jerusalem within a few weeks of the supposed Resurrection if there were no empty tomb.

Why not? No one would have believed the Resurrection if there were no empty tomb, seeing the Resurrection was first preached in Jerusalem (the very city in which the body had lain) within a few weeks of the Crucifixion and burial.

3. Other explanations for the empty tomb are not reasonable.
 - a. The disciples stole the body (Matthew 28:11-15)

The disciples would have had to sneak by or overpower the Roman guard outside the tomb.

If the disciples stole the body, they died for what they knew was a lie.

Can we trust the apostles to have told the truth?

Peter, crucified
Andrew, crucified
Matthew, by the sword
James, son of Alpheus, crucified
Philip, crucified
Simon, crucified
Thaddaeus, killed by arrows
James, brother of Jesus, stoned
Thomas, Spear Thrust
Bartholomew, crucified
James, son of Zebedee, the sword

“Nothing in law so convinces courts and juries of the truthfulness of a story as the fact that a man’s life has been consistent with such story.” (Henry Barnett, attorney)

- b. Maybe the Jewish or Roman authorities removed the body.

But if they removed it, they would have produced it for everyone to see.

- c. Swoon THEORY

More Incredible than a resurrection.

Appearances after the Resurrection

1. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Paul gives a list of some of those who saw Christ:

Peter
The Twelve
500 brethren at once, most still alive when Paul wrote this.
James
Paul himself

2. The Gospels also record the testimony of others who saw Christ after he had been crucified.

Record of Woman at the First Witnesses

Transformation of Disciples

Peter: Transformed from cowardly denier of Christ to a courageous proclaimer of Christ

Paul: The greatest antagonist of Christianity became its greatest advocate.

James, Jesus' brother: James was skeptical of his half-brother until the resurrection; but afterwards he became the leader of the Jerusalem church.

II. **What Happens When One Examines the Evidence Objectively?**

A. Simon Greenleaf—professor of law at Harvard in the 1800s.

- ✓ His three-volume work *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence* has been considered by the Supreme Court to be the greatest single authority on legal evidence.
- ✓ He said, “If the evidence for the resurrection was set before any unbiased courtroom in the world it would be judged to be an historical fact—Jesus Christ rose from the dead!”

B. Lord Lyttleton and Gilbert West, Friends at Oxford.

- ✓ Lyttleton tried to prove Saul was never converted.
- ✓ West tried to prove Christ never rose from the dead.
- ✓ What happened after each independently looked at the evidence and then came back together?

III. **Other Evidence for the Resurrection**

Worship on Sunday by the early Christian Jews

Easter

Art of the early Christians

Resurrection is consistent with the life of Jesus

The Resurrection bonds remarkably well with all of Jesus' life.

Gospel Creed of 1 Cor. 15 dates very early.

The first few verses of 1 Cor. 15 are a creed that was given to Paul in the mid-thirties just a few years after the Resurrection. This creed presents the basic facts

of the death and resurrection of Christ, with a list of people who saw Him resurrected.

Unique exaltation of Jesus after the resurrection.

Immediately after the Resurrection, Jesus was worshipped as Lord of Life.

Existence of the Christian Church.

IV. **What does the Resurrection Prove?**

- ❖ That Jesus is who He claimed to be-the Son of God, God in the flesh.
- ❖ It also confirms the atonement.
- ❖ It shows that He can overcome death.