

RUF Bible Study – John  
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1 Corinthians 15 – Resurrection

The story is told of a man who went on vacation to the Holy Land with his wife and her mother. He wasn't having the greatest time, but he was glad to be there seeing the important biblical sites, even if it was with his mother-in-law. Then, tragically, his mother-in-law died unexpectedly.

He met with the local funeral director to figure out what to do.

"We can bury her here nearby in a beautiful garden. That will cost you \$150. Or we can ship her back to America with you. That will cost \$5000. Which would you prefer?"

Without batting an eye, the man said, "Ship her to America, please."

The funeral director asked why he would do that when it's so much cheaper and easier to bury her locally.

"Listen buddy," the man said in earnest. "About 2000 years ago a man died right around here and he came back to life. I'm not taking any chances."<sup>2</sup>

It's good to laugh when we talk about Easter and the resurrection, because it's about life. Life! We're looking at the resurrection again and why it matters to our Christian lives.

It matters because we live in hard times. There is bad news all around. Your families are breaking apart. Your relationships wax and wane. Your grades and scholarships are in jeopardy. Pirates from Somalia swirl around, waiting to attack. The economy is tanking all your plans. No one is hiring. Honestly, what hope do we have?

I think the resurrection gives Christians a tremendous hope. Let's see how it does that.

### ***The historicity of the resurrection***

1 Corinthians comes from the pen of Paul of Tarsus. We'll talk more about Paul, but he was a really smart educated Jewish man who hated Christians and Christianity. He converted to faith in Christ, and then became an apostle, the last apostle. He taught, wrote, traveled and preached the good news of Jesus Christ and its implications on the world.

This chapter is near the end of the first letter we have of his to the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth is a cosmopolitan, educated, messed up place. Instead of loving each other, they're all sleeping together. He's summarizing things and wrapping up his letter. He's been speaking at length about spiritual gifts. Paul has been rebuking them, correcting their understanding of love and life.

Now he turns to something new, something important, something theological. In the midst of talking to them about their behavior, Paul starts to make intellectual, factual, theological arguments. He's reasoning with your brain. He's connecting with your mind. He's using "if, then" statements which are logical.

He says: *that Christ died for our sins in accordance to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.* (1 Cor. 15:3-8)

Paul goes through this list of evidence for you to believe with your mind that Jesus was raised from the dead. The first piece of information is that Christ died for our sins. Jesus of Nazareth wasn't just some guy who walked around the countryside and gathered a following. He wasn't the Mick Huckabee of his time. He was the Christ, the Messiah, the one who was to come and redeem his people. The expected Savior, prophesied in the Scriptures. And he died for our sins. He didn't just die like everyone else, but his death was sacrificial. It was for the propitiation of sins. It appeased God's wrath and was accounted as an acceptable sacrifice and payment.

Jesus died. He spent a sleepless night, was arrested and tried. He was beaten, flogged, scourged and whipped to beyond recognition. He then had to drag a cross beam through the city to the edge of town. He was nailed to a cross by his wrists and feet, and then raised up to die a death of suffocation. The eyewitnesses said he breathed his last. Normally the professional executors would break the legs of the criminals to make them die faster, but they didn't do this with Jesus because he was already gone. To make sure, they pierced his heart with a spear, getting in far enough to puncture the sac so water would run out.

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**Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:** By Doug Serven, © Doug Serven, 2009, website: [www.ouruf.org](http://www.ouruf.org). For this series, I used commentaries on John from Boice, Skip Ryan, Gary Burge, D.A. Carson, Hughes, Wright, Calvin and Leon Morris and listened to sermons by as many people as I can find, especially Tim Keller, Ricky Jones, Fred Harrell and Scott Sherman. The reader should assume that none of the ideas expressed are original to me.

<sup>2</sup> I got that joke from listening to an Easter sermon by Fred Harrell.

They carried him to the grave and packed a hundred pounds of linens and spices around him and then they left him there for three days.

Let me share with you one of my favorite Easter poems, one I found several years ago, by none other than John Updike:

***Seven Stanzas at Easter***

By John Updike

Make no mistake: if He rose at all  
it was as His body;  
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the molecules  
    reknit, the amino acids rekindle,  
the Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,  
each soft Spring recurrent;  
it was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled  
    eyes of the eleven apostles;  
it was as His Flesh: ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes,  
the same valved heart  
that — pierced — died, withered, paused, and then  
    regathered out of enduring Might  
new strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,  
analogy, sidestepping transcendence;  
making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the  
    faded credulity of earlier ages:  
let us walk through the door.

Let's not patronize this story with far-fetched theories. Some say that Jesus "swooned." He wasn't dead on the cross at all, but in shock. They took him down, laced him up with linens and spices and put him in the tomb. But while he was there, in the cool air, he revived. He got up and walked out and kept living. That is preposterous to the text and to medical science.

I remember when I was a freshman in college, and I saw a book about Jesus in the campus bookstore. I picked up, started reading and was started to find out that this pastor claimed that Jesus wouldn't have been buried at all. Since he was so broke and disregarded, his body would have been dumped outside the city, where it would have been eaten by dogs. These men (Borg and Crossan are the most prolific and famous) continue to promote this theory, and they say it doesn't matter if Jesus rose from the dead or not (which he most assuredly did not they say). This is standard fare for religious studies classes. Some will say Jesus just swooned. That he merely passed out and then came to a few days later and got out of the tomb. John's writing tells you that is impossible. You have to choose to believe such a theory in the face of the detailed accounts of the gospel writers and the other texts. Jesus died. He was dead, and he was buried in a tomb. He wasn't eaten by dogs on the outskirts of town.

But he wasn't just dead and buried. The tomb was empty. We reviewed this last time from John 20. Mary Magdalene went to work on Jesus' body, and she found an empty tomb. Assuming the body had been stolen, she went and retrieved Peter and John. When they got there, they realized the evidence didn't fit with either an escape or a heist. He had risen from the grave just like he had said he would. They believed in the resurrection, whereas to that point they had not believed.

Jesus then appeared to people. He wasn't just resurrected and hanging out somewhere on the beach in Aruba, which of course would have been totally impossible to prove. People saw him. Cephas is Peter. The other disciples saw him. Then he appeared to over 500 people. So here is the not-dead Jesus walking around and talking to people. He's in more than one place. He's talking to many people over the course of his forty days before he ascends. They all know he's previously died, and that he has been placed in the tomb, and that that tomb is now empty.

Think about that. If the tomb had been empty but Jesus hadn't made any appearances, they would have all thought the body had been stolen. But here's Jesus! He hadn't been stolen. If he had been making appearance but the tomb hadn't been empty, everyone would have thought they were hallucinating or just plain crazy. His body was in the grave, people! But the tomb was empty. And he was appearing.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mache,  
not a stone in a story,  
but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow  
    grinding of time will eclipse for each of us  
the wide light of day.

And if we will have an angel at the tomb,  
make it a real angel,  
weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair,  
    opaque in the dawn light, robed in real linen  
spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,  
for our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,  
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are  
    embarrassed by the miracle,  
and crushed by remonstrance.

*Telephone Poles and Other Poems* © 1961 by John Updike.

And Paul's point here is that you could go and check it out. These people were still around. You could talk to them. Paul wrote this book approximately 15-20 years after these events happened, so the eyewitnesses we're talking about would have still been alive.

James was the brother of Jesus, who didn't believe in him when he was alive. All of sudden, James believes his brother is God, and it transforms his life. James becomes a leader in the church. Finally, Jesus appears to Paul himself in Acts 9. If you have a red-letter edition Bible, then look at that chapter. The words of Jesus are in red. So there are red letters, Jesus talking, in Acts 9 – after he has ascended to heaven. The resurrected Jesus met Paul there.

None of these people were likely candidates to believe in the resurrection. Orthodox Jews were the least likely people to convert to a religion that would say that a person could be God (that would be blasphemous), and that an individual could be raised from the dead.

Yet instantly, overnight, hundreds and even thousands of them converted and the church grew in the face of opposition. It grew with a complete shift and change in worldview and doctrine. This wasn't a slow, gradual drift. It was a sudden, abrupt change.

How do you account for these things? If you don't believe in the resurrection, how and why did the church grow like this? What is your plausible explanation for how these least likely people believed this least likely thing? They believed in it enough to give their lives to it. Would they do that if they knew it was a lie? If they knew Jesus was a fraud? Why didn't they turn to the next Messiah in line and worship him like people had done hundreds of times before? Why didn't they anoint the next leader to be the new Messiah? How could they believe Jesus was GOD?

Did you hear this story from outside of Nashville? - A couple was trying out a new babysitter. After they had left for a night on the town, they realized they had not left their phone number with her, so they called back to give it to her. After the babysitter wrote down the number, she asked if she could watch their satellite tv in their bedroom. She had just put the kids down to bed and wanted to watch a particular show. The parents said, of course she could watch the show in their room.

The babysitter had one other request. Could she put a sheet over the clown statue that was in the downstairs in the kids' room? It made her nervous. The kids don't like it either, she said.

The parents said, "Take the children. Call the police. We don't have a clown statue." The police caught the man who was running through the neighborhood.

Have you heard this? It's not true. It's an urban legend. You can check it out at [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) for verification. I remember when I first heard it, I was chilled to the bone. It sounds so believable. It has just enough details to sound true. It has just enough plausibility, and I know of enough crazy people to think this is possible.

But it's made up.

Many people think Jesus' resurrection is like this. It has just enough to be believed, but really it's just wishful thinking. I submit to you that you should study the evidence. You should read good books about it. You should consider the scholarship surrounding this event, and you should try to think of an alternative explanation of the rise of the church. It wasn't a legend. There wasn't enough time for the legend to grow. There were enough people who could be contacted to verify if it were true or not. People who had been there and seen it were still living.

The resurrection is the linchpin to all of this. If Jesus really rose from the dead, then all the rest of it happened. If he didn't, then who cares about the rest of it? Worshipping an un-resurrected Jesus honestly doesn't interest me in the least. He would be no different than any other mistreated prophet. Paul says this same thing: *If Christ had not been raised, then our preaching is in van and your faith is in vain.*

"If Christ is not raised from the grave, he is dead; a dead Christ is unable to justify believers; and unjustified believers remain in their sins. We draw the inevitable conclusion that the justification of believers rests squarely on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the risen Christ there is no justification, without justification there is no living faith, and without living faith, there is no forgiveness of sin. Paul confronts the Corinthians who reject Christ's resurrection and in effect tells them: 'If you remain in your sins, your faith is worthless, you show no sign you belong to God's sanctified people, and you are not saved.'"<sup>3</sup>

If you're trying to figure out if you believe in Christianity, then don't get sidetracked with creation days or Old Testament laws or the ordination of women. Go to the main thing, go to the core. Was Jesus raised from the dead? Answer that question first? If you are going through doubt, go back to this question again and again in your mind – was Jesus raised from the dead. If the answer is yes, that will inform your faith.

If Jesus was not resurrected, then he is dead, and his sacrifice would be rejected by God. He would be proven not to be God like he said. He would be in the grave, turning to dust. *If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*

This text is true. Jesus did rise from the grave. The evidence for this is overwhelmingly for a resurrection. Do you believe this? Can you see this? Do you want to believe this?

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<sup>3</sup> Kistemaker, *1 Corinthians*, 545

### ***The “redemptivity” of the resurrection***

The resurrection happened. But it didn't just happen. It has a profound effect on people. It turned Peter from a coward to a courageous leader. It turned John from just a reported to a disciple and writer. It turned Thomas from a doubter to a missionary church planter. It turned James from the jealous, dismissive younger half brother to a pillar of the church.

Most dramatic of all, however, has to be Paul himself, the author of this letter. As we've said, Paul hated Christians. He actively pursued them to kill them. Paul murdered Christians. He did so because of his stance on Judaism, and he of course realized that Christians weren't just following Jesus as a teacher or rabbi, but they were worshipping him as God. This could not be. This must not be tolerated. This had to be stopped. So in some ways, Paul was a Jewish fundamentalist terrorist.

He didn't want to know Jesus. He wasn't looking for Jesus. He wasn't emotionally needy or suffering from any degree of self image problems. He hated Jesus, and he hated the people who loved Jesus. Paul knew all the stories. He knew the legends of Jesus' resurrection, but he dismissed them. It couldn't be true. People don't rise from the dead. Paul is talking about this, or making mention of this in 15:9 *Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

But then . . . But then Paul met the resurrected Jesus himself. *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me is not in vain.*

Paul met Jesus and his opinion was instantly changed. The course of his life was instantly redirected. He converted to, believed in and followed the very one he had previously hated.

Can you imagine the reception he must have gotten when he first walked into the Jerusalem Christian convention? It must have been chilling. But by then people had heard and they had seen the changes in Paul. He was a different man. He had met Jesus. Jesus had met him, and now he loved Christians and wanted more people to hear of the good news of Jesus Christ.

His heart was changed from stone to flesh. He was made alive. He was born again. He could finally hear the good news. The scales came from his eyes. He crossed over from death to life. Because he met Jesus.

Have you met the resurrected Jesus? Are you following the risen Messiah? Or are you trying to follow Jesus' teachings and be a good person? Is Jesus only doing the things you want him to do? Does he conform to your image of what he should be like, or does he do unexpected and outside-your-box things? Did he raise from the dead?

Have you been changed? Have you been renewed and have you been resurrected yourself? Has the old life gone away and the new life come to take over? Have you crossed from death to life yourself like Paul?

Sometimes this is instantaneous like for Paul. Other times it took a long time of realization like for Nicodemus.

Christ died for sins. He paid the price for Paul. Paul was able to write “Paid in full” across the due bill on the account of his life. He was not a good person. You are not a good person. You are filled with hate, envy, cruelty, jealousy, competitiveness, lust, greed and much much more. You are far worse than you think. You get up and try to put up a good show and generally behave according to the social norms. But your heart is foul and dark. How will it get light? How will it be nourished? Not by the works of the law. They only serve to condemn you.

You can write “paid in full” on your bill only if someone else pays it for you. You don't have enough money to pay it off. But Jesus does. He said, “It is finished” when he died on the cross. He paid the debt you owed to God. He lived the perfect life and then died for his people. He then was raised from the dead, thereby conquering death and proving he was who he said he was. He is now able to rule and reign over the world because he is not dead but is alive and seated with God.<sup>4</sup>

That is what you need. That is the power of the resurrected Christ who purchases his people for redemption. This is transformation, not merely behavior change. Do you want to believe that? Do you want that in your life?

### ***The applicability of the resurrection***

So Paul is preaching the resurrection of Jesus as the primary thing we must deal with. Paul is speaking to your mind. He's saying: Think! The resurrection should capture your mind, and fill your thoughts. It's reasonable and has testimony.

Paul is also speaking to your heart with his story of redemption. In fact, many of you do not believe because of your heart, not because of your mind. One commentator writes, “Acceptance of the truth is a matter of intelligent faith; whereas believers know whom they believe, those who do not wish to understand will never know him. This is because belief in the resurrection of the Lord reduces to a moral issue in that his resurrection demands repentance; if Jesus conquered death, he is unconquerable and hence must be obeyed. It is for this reason that many are unwilling to accept ‘proof.’”<sup>5</sup>

You see, your heart is bound up in this because you realize that if Jesus really did rise from the dead, then that changes everything. That means he is God. That means he is Lord. That means he is in control of your life. That means you have to give up control. That means “No way.” You don't want to give up control of your life. You've spent a lifetime controlling your life, because that's what we do.

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<sup>4</sup> “If a person denies the resurrection, Paul informs his readers, the logical implication is that those who have died in Christ are lost. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then God condemns people to everlasting punishment because of their sins; they never enter heaven to be in God's presence; and last, their bodies remain forever in the grave. Cut off from the living God, they have perished. If the Corinthians who deny the resurrection doctrine say that those who have died are with Jesus, then they contradict themselves. A denial of the resurrection would mean that all have perished, including Jesus.” Kistemaker, 545

<sup>5</sup> Peter Naylor, *1 Corinthians*, 425

Many of you are also Christians, and you're trying to control your life too. You want things to go a certain way, you worry about everything, you find it hard to trust. At some level, you are not believing in the resurrection. You don't want Jesus to die and be raised again. You want him before death. You want him teaching and walking around and doing miracles. Those you understand. The disciples tried to control him too. He made more sense then. He was a prophet, a powerful one that said crazy things, but they had a category for that.

But when he dies... and when he comes back to life. That is power. That is lordship. That is kingly. That is way past our comfort zone. And we struggle with Jesus over this. His resurrection has implications for our hearts. We must submit to him and trust him with our lives, our pasts and our futures. We must follow his teachings in light of his resurrection, not in spite of it. The resurrection means that Jesus has a power in our lives that rules us. Much like Aslan in the Narnia Chronicles. It's not okay to think he's just a cool lion who shows up now and then. He makes everything happen. He is to be listened to and followed. He is the king.

But there's another thing – our bodies. The resurrection has an implication for our bodies, and I also think for all physical things. It means that our bodies are not meaningless. They're not a random collection of atoms, molecules, synapses and neurons.

If you have a naturalistic worldview, then you think this. You think evolution has produced this body, this brain, this world. And this thought. And this one. So how can you trust your thought to be real and true and not just the culmination of certain firings? How can you believe that this thought or this action actually matters? Does it matter more than the next one or the last one or matter more than mine?

Think of it this way<sup>6</sup>: What if I divided you into two groups to take a long test. To the first group I said, "This test doesn't matter. After you take the test I'm going to rip it up and throw it away." To the second group I said, "This test matters. This test will be very important for your future and will establish what you'll be doing a long time from now."

Which group of students do you think will do better on the test? Surely the second group. Sure, I could also create another group where I put a ton of pressure on the students and made them want to commit suicide if they don't do well. But that's not the question. The question is – does what I do matter any longer than this moment or after my life? I think it does. I think the resurrection says it does.

If you don't believe this, then when you die that's it. There's nothing else. So then why not just get as much as you can in this life? Why not eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we will die? (15:32) Why not use people to get what you want? Survival of the fittest tells us it is okay to dominate the weak and propagate the strong. So do that. Medicate yourself. Numb yourself. Eat. Drink. Work out. Take drugs. Have sex. It's all meaningless anyway.

Paul says it's not meaningless. There is a purpose. There is a creator. There is a judgment day when everything will be set right. When the things of this world will be judged and redeemed and recreated. That day is coming. Your body will be resurrected, and all your hurts will go away for they will be set to right. Right now your hurts pile up, and you don't get justice for them. But that day is coming and will come. You will have a resurrected body in glory. You will reign victoriously for ever of God's restored, regained creation.

That is a huge difference. That means this life matters. This world matters. Christianity cares about this world. It believes that God is active and present even in a hurting world. It says that justice, peace, righteousness and truth have a rootedness in something that will last; they aren't just manmade constructions for a time.

Paul says that he thinks this way, and because he does, he "dies daily." (15:31) We don't really understand what Paul is talking about when he says he faced wild beasts in Ephesus (and no one understands what his baptism of the dead discussion is about). But he says he dies daily. I think this is a gospel statement in his life. Because of the gospel, Paul is able to live a new life in Christ every day.

The old Paul is dead and dying. The new Paul is alive and living. You need to be dying and living. In one sense you are alive or dead spiritually depending on whether Jesus is your savior and king or not. If you are in sin, you are dead. If you are in Christ, you are alive. Which are you?

But in another sense, the old you still hangs around. She still talks to you and rules you. You still live for yourself and for your own interests. You're still touchy, grouchy or needy. You're defensive. You try to get love a certain way. You give love a certain way. These are vestiges of the old you. But the new you needs to get more space to grow. You need to let the old you die so the new you can be resurrected. So Jesus' work in you can carry on to completion until his day arrives. So you can love differently. So you can forgive more quickly and more deeply. So you can handle things, people and situations in a more honest, loving, gentle, gracious truthful way.

That new you is possible because of the gospel and because of the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus shows there is a power of transformation living in the world that has a real time application to you – now. Do you have this power? Are you seeing this change? Are you seeing yourself die and come to life anew?

Another application of the gospel goes hand in hand with that one. We do not have to fear death any more. Paul is bursting forth when he discusses this. We are not ruled by death any more! We are victorious over death! We almost mock death – where is your sting?! Bring it on!

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<sup>6</sup> Keller illustration

This doesn't mean that death doesn't happen to us or that we are now immune to bad things. Some have taken it that way, and that's a wrong interpretation – just look at Paul and the rest of the disciples. Most of them came to rather gruesome ends. Their faith didn't save them from death.

It also doesn't mean that we're impervious to the feelings death brings. We aren't stoic in the face of death, uncaring and unmoved. Look at Jesus at Lazarus' tomb. He wept furiously. He was so mad at death. Death should make us angry. It should hurt to the core of who we are. This is not how it's supposed to be!

But we're not fearful of death. Death is not the final answer. There is so much more to come. Jesus has conquered death, and he will finally and fully conquer death. Death will not reign but Jesus will reign.

Tim Keller shares a helpful illustration. I think it was Donald Barnhouse who was trying to explain to his children when their mother, his wife, died. He was riding in the car with them and a trucked passed. He asked his daughter, "Do you see that truck? Do you see its shadow?" She answered yes to both questions. "Would you rather be hit by that truck or by the shadow of that truck." She said the shadow. "Jesus was hit by the truck of death so your mommy would only be hit by the shadow of death."

This means that we can have so much more confidence. If death cannot ultimately destroy us, then we cannot be destroyed. We can be hurt. We can be moved. We can be swayed. But we cannot be killed to the core. We are loved and not abandoned.

That allows us to move into places of brokenness in the world *and in our own hearts*. We do not have to be getting life and avoiding death at all costs. We can choose to do the right thing. We can be hurt because ultimately Christ gets the hurt. We can take pain because ultimately Jesus gets the pain.

As Keller writes in *Reason for God*, "If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching, but whether or not he rose from the dead.' That is how first hearers felt who heard reports of the resurrection. They knew that if it were true it meant we can't live our lives any way we want. It also meant we don't have to be afraid of anything, not Roman swords, not cancer, nothing. If Jesus rose from the dead, it changes everything."<sup>7</sup>

It changes everything. It changes our minds and what we think. It changes our hearts and what we have faith in. It changes our lives and bodies. Things matter and we cannot be destroyed so easily.

Paul writes that we are to be steadfast and work hard because of these truths. We are to stand in the gospel, to be steadfast and immovable. This resurrection motivates us to go into the world with humility and confidence. Humility because we know it's by grace we are saved. It is not from ourselves. It is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. We also have confidence because we are God's. He saved us. He loved us. Jesus died for us. He cared for us that much. If he meets you, then you know you will not be forsaken.

Stand in the gospel today. Stand in the resurrection today. Stand in Jesus today.

*1. Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!  
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!  
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!*

*2. Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!  
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!  
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!*

*3. Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!  
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!  
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!  
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!*

*4. Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!  
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!  
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!*

*5. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!  
Praise to thee by both be given, Alleluia!  
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!  
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!*

*6. King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia!  
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!  
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia!  
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!*

### ***Biblical Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection***<sup>8</sup>

1. Jesus' resurrection was prophesied in advance.
2. Jesus predicted his own resurrection.
3. Jesus died on the cross.  
Went through a sleepless night, trials and beatings  
Was scourged and flogged to the brink of death

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<sup>7</sup> Keller, *Reason for God*, 202

<sup>8</sup> From *Vintage Church*, by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, 2007

- Was crucified and a public executioner declared him dead
- Had a spear thrust in his side to ensure he was dead
- Was wrapped with 100 pounds of linens and spices
- Went three days without food or water in a tomb
- 4. Jesus was buried in a tomb that was easy to find.
- 5. Jesus appeared physically alive three days after his death.
  - People saw and touched him
- 6. Jesus' resurrection was recorded as scripture shortly after it occurred.
  - Early dating
- 7. Jesus' resurrection was celebrated in the earliest church creeds.
  - 1 Cor. 15:3-4, creed began circulating as early as 30-36 AD
  - witnesses were alive and could be questioned about it
- 8. Jesus' resurrection convinced his family to worship him as God.
  - Mary, James, Jude
- 9. Jesus' resurrection was confirmed by his most bitter enemies, such as Paul.

***Circumstantial evidence for Jesus' resurrection:***

1. The transformation of the disciples
  - Why would they persist for no gain for something they knew was not true? Pascal wrote, "I believe those witnesses that get their throats cut." Virtually all of the apostles and early Christian leaders died for their faith, and it is hard to believe that this kind of powerful self-sacrifice would be done to support a hoax.<sup>9</sup>
2. The disciples' loyalty to their messiah
  - They did not give up hope that there was truly a real Messiah. They didn't switch allegiances to someone else.
3. The character of the disciples
  - Do we have evidence to challenge their character to show they were liars and deluding people?
4. The day of worship
  - Why would they do that when the Sabbath was considered sacred? Because it happened.
5. The object of worship
  - A devout Jew would not conceive of worshipping anything but the one true God without proof of Jesus' resurrection. If Jesus died in shame on a cross like thousands of other men in his day and had not risen from the dead, why would people shortly thereafter begin worshipping him as God?
6. Theological changes in the church
  - The church went through a huge shift in theology and doctrine almost instantaneously, changing many things that had been held for over 1000 years. These shifts normally take place to a group of people over a long period of time. The Christian view of resurrection, absolutely unprecedented in human history, sprang up full-blown immediately after the death of Jesus. There was no process or development. His followers said that their beliefs did not come from debating and discussing. They were just telling others what they had seen themselves. No one has come up with any plausible alternative to this claim.<sup>10</sup>
7. Women discovered the empty tomb.
  - They were mentioned by name and could be questioned. Women's testimony was not highly regarded so it would have been more "convincing" to have men discover it. There would have been pressure to remove the women as the finder of the empty tomb. This wasn't done because it wasn't how it happened – women found the tomb so that's what was written.
8. Early church preaching
  - The early disciples did not reason with the skeptics of their day about this because it was widely regarded as factual already. They didn't argue whether it was empty but why it was empty.
9. The tomb not enshrined
  - No trace of any veneration of the tomb because Jesus wasn't there.
10. The growth of the church
  - What is the explanation for the rapid growth an extraordinary level of commitment to the early church? What could have caused the commitment, perseverance and rapid expansion of the early church other than Jesus' resurrection.
11. People didn't believe in personal, bodily resurrection.

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<sup>9</sup> Keller, *Reason for God*, 210

<sup>10</sup> Keller, *Reason for God*, 209

Why would a group of people start to believe in this if it didn't happen? The Jews were the least likely people to believe that a) a person would be God and b) that a person would rise from the dead. Yet they did believe this and so did many, many others.