

PROOF FOR THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS

by Willie Ramsey

The unbelieving world denies the resurrection of Christ. Here we present the Bible's declaration of Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead (Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6; John 20:11-14; Acts 17:30-31; Acts 2:32), along with the unassailable evidences for its proof.

The Bible Only Affirms A *Literal Bodily Resurrection Of Christ*

In John 2:19 Jesus declared: "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*". So that everyone would understand what He meant, the Bible then plainly informs us: "*But He spake of the temple of His body*" (vs. 21).

This is the only resurrection of Christ which the Bible teaches and defends. It would therefore be error for anyone to allege or suggest any resurrection other than that of the *body* of Jesus:

For example, Jesus did not mean it would be His *teachings* that would be resurrected after He died, as some want us to believe.

Neither did He mean His *religious cause* was what would be resurrected.

Neither did He mean it would be a *resurrection of Christ in our thoughts*, which would be *only an imaginary resurrection* motivated by our fondness for Him.

His friends, the wicked mob, the soldiers, and Pilate were not deceived, thinking Christ was dead when He was not; meaning that Christ only fainted and revived in the coolness of the tomb, so that when He came out it *only appeared to be a resurrection*. His resurrection was *not a fabrication, a lie*, for the tomb was *empty*.

What Jesus declared and meant is that He would miraculously resurrect His Own body—*on that basis His tomb would be empty!* Since His literal bodily resurrection is the only resurrection of Christ taught by the Bible, this means all other resurrection ideas taught or imagined about Christ have therefore come from unbelievers or ignorant people.

The Problem Christ's Resurrection Presents For Some

The resurrection of Christ's body presents a problem for those who deny that the Bible was authored by God. For if they were to accept the facts that His resurrection occurred, to be consistent they must also accept the reality of all the Bible miracles, the Bible's Divine authority, and also obey It's teachings (Acts 17:30-31; I Thess. 2:13; John 20:30-31; John 12:48). Instead they make the impossible claim that science can disprove Christ's resurrection.

The problem for them is *the Scientific Method of determination* pertains only to matters which can be duplicated as in a laboratory setting. Thus it is impossible for science to prove, or disprove, that any historical event occurred, whether it be the resurrection of Christ or that you were even born. Both can be proven, but not by the Scientific Method of determination.

Only *The Historical Method Of Determination* Can Prove Or Disprove Christ's Resurrection

The resurrection of Christ's body back to life after being dead for three days is an historical event, thus can only be proved or disproved by *the Historical Method of determination*. And like all actual historical events, Christ's resurrection is established to be true by eyewitness testimony.

Depending upon how long in the past since an event occurred, eyewitness testimony is preserved in either oral or written form depending upon whether the eyewitnesses are still living or are dead.

In those cases where the historical event is reported by an abundance and diversity of sources (as from both enemies as well as friends), as well as reported in an abundance and diversity of locations, the evidence is presumed to be true. For the possibility in such cases that something reported never actually happened, or that it happened, but in a manner different than reported, because of fraud or otherwise, is beyond the realm of credibility.

The problem for unbelievers here is that all the miracles of the Bible, including the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead, were both seen and recorded by credible witnesses (Acts 2:32; Acts 10:38-41; Acts 13:29-31; John 20:30-31; I Cor. 15:3-8). They always maintained that their eyewitness accounts of them were true throughout years of personal persecution, torture, and even violent death which was brought upon them because they made such bold claim.

Their eyewitness accounts of them are also supported by the unassailable proofs for the Divine origin and authority of the Bible, as well as by secular histories, documents, and quotations from ancient times which affirm the events to be true.

While all of us living today must honestly admit that we have never seen the risen Christ, we also must honestly admit that we have never seen Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Alexander the Great, or Julius Caesar. Yet all of us, except only the most unreasonable among us, believe without the slightest hesitation or doubt that all of them were real, because they have been attested to by credible witnesses, both numerous and diverse as to source and location, so that to disbelieve in them would be the incredible response to the evidence.

Similarly, only the most unreasonable or uncaring among men deny the eyewitness evidence that Christ is risen.

Facts And Examination: "What Happened To The Body Of Jesus?"

The Bible accounts of the death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record:

1. That His body was placed in a new tomb cut in solid rock (Luke 23:53; Matt. 27:60).
2. That it was sealed with a great stone (Matt. 27:60); Mark 16:4).
3. It was then guarded against theft by Roman soldiers (Matt. 27:62-66).
4. In addition to the Bible, it is also admitted by leading skeptics of both that time and today, that Jesus actually died and was buried.
5. It is also admitted that after three Jewish days His body was gone from the tomb.
6. It is also admitted that His disciples came to believe without doubt that He arose from the dead.

The exact issue here before all of us has reference to the last two facts, and may be expressed thus: “*Did Christ’s body disappear by miraculous resurrection, or in some other way?*” And, “*Did the belief of the disciples originate from the reality of His resurrection, or from some other cause?*” (see J. W. McGarvey, “*Evidences Of Christianity*”, Part III, pages 117-118)

What the evidence proves

1. *The Roman soldiers would not have removed Christ’s body, for it could have cost them their lives.* But they did lie to save themselves when the tomb they were guarding was found empty, the Jewish leaders scheming with them and creating this fraud in order to blame Christ’s disciples (Matt. 28:4,11-15).

2. *But Christ’s disciples could not have removed His body.* It would have been a physical, moral, and psychological impossibility.

Physically, the Roman guards had certainly prevented its removal with their presence.

Morally, the morality of Christ required of them would not permit them to remove the body and then invent a lie that it was a miracle instead.

Psychologically, it would have been impossible for such people to have removed the body themselves, then invent a lie of it being a miracle instead, and then live out their lives despised and rejected among men as His disciples, many of them receiving a martyr’s death, all for the purpose of their lie. Dishonest men do not lie so they may suffer, they lie that they might find some kind of gain, or to remove themselves from undesirable punishments, circumstances, etc.

3. *The Jews would not have stolen Christ’s body.* The last thing they wanted was for anything to make it appear that His body had been resurrected (Matthew 27:62-64). Yet certainly if they had stolen His body, they would have produced it at some point in order that they might disprove the claims of His eyewitnesses and thereby destroy the religious order Christ established and which they hated.

The fact that the Jews, the enemies of Christ, could not deny His empty tomb, but had to bribe the Roman guards to lie about His body, and then use political influence to keep them out of trouble (Matt. 28:4, 11-15), is proof positive that they could not account for His empty tomb by any natural means.

Conclusion

In keeping with the facts admitted by both the Bible and leading skeptics both then and now, concerning the death, the burial, and the empty tomb of Christ after three Jewish days; and also in keeping with the Bible’s affirmations (Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6; John 20:11-14; Acts 17:30-31; Acts 2:32) and the eyewitness testimony of credible witnesses of Christ’s bodily resurrection (Acts 2:32; Acts 10:38-41; Acts 13:29-31; I Corinthians 15:1-8; John 20:18-20 & 24-28; Luke 24:36-40); the only logical conclusion is that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead (Acts 2:32).

We thereby have conclusive evidence of His claims that He is both “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Christ is therefore worthy of our trust and worship (Revelation 5:12-14). And we must give Him our obedience that we might be saved from our sins (Matthew 16:24; Matthew 7:21; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9; Acts 2:38; Revelation 2:10; I Corinthians 15:58).

Let us all therefore faithfully acknowledge and obey our holy risen Savior at all times! (Matthew 7:21; John 12:48)