

THE STORY IS TRUE: CHRIST DID RISE FROM THE DEAD

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Introduction: Somebody coming up out of a grave sounds like some type of science fiction or ghost story. The story about Jesus Christ coming out of the tomb has been circulating for 2,000 years and in every century there have been those who have disbelieved it, those who have believed it and those who have tried to disapprove it. Something to notice though is that almost every person who set out to prove the resurrection of Jesus never happened and it is all a story, became a believer him/herself. After studying the scriptures and pouring over all the history of that time, almost every person doing this came to the same conclusion that believers have always know - the story is true. Jesus Christ did rise from the dead. Consider some of these truths/facts that have been studied through the centuries about the fact that Jesus did rise from the dead:

I. HIS DEATH BY EXECUTION WAS DONE IN PUBLIC

- Everything about the crucifixion of Jesus was done in public.
 - Jesus was publicly taken by soldiers and religious officials into a courtroom.
 - Pilate finally turned Jesus over to the crowd and the soldiers to be put to death.
 - Jesus was beaten and then forced to carry His own cross before the crowd.
 - Jesus was crucified in public along with two other men.
- Before the crowd that had gathered at the crosses, a Roman soldier pushed his spear into the side of Jesus to see if He was indeed dead, and He was.

II. A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SECURED THE GRAVESITE

- Pilate ordered that his official seal be attached to the tomb to put everyone on notice.
- Pilate ordered soldiers to stand guard at the tomb entrance.
 - The penalty for sleeping while on duty was death.
- The soldiers allowed no one to approach the tomb while they were on duty there.

III. IN SPITE OF THE GUARDS, THE TOMB WAS FOUND TO BE EMPTY

- When the women arrived early on that third morning, they found no guards at the tomb.
- The women found the tomb doorway stone removed and the body of Jesus was gone.
- What was left in the tomb were the wrappings Jesus' body had been wrapped in and those wrappings had been neatly placed aside.
- The guards had gone to their superiors, who contacted the religious leaders to tell them that something strange had taken place. They had been made unconscious and upon waking the stone had been rolled back and the body was gone.
- The guards were not punished but paid to keep silent and transferred to another area.

IV. MANY PEOPLE CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN JESUS ALIVE

- On that very morning of the third day, Mary of Magdala met Jesus.
- That same morning, later on, two other women also met Jesus.

- Jesus also appeared privately to Peter.
- Two disciples on their way back home to Emmaus were joined by Jesus.
- Ten of Jesus' disciples were together behind locked doors and were joined by Jesus.
- Jesus appeared to the 11 disciples later on one evening.
- At the Sea of Galilee Jesus met seven of His disciples returning from a fishing trip.
- Jesus appeared to over 500 of His followers as they met.
- Jesus' disciples had gathered on a mountain side and there they met Jesus as saw Him ascend.
- Paul said that Jesus had appeared to him more than once.
- At the age of almost 100 years, the last living disciple, John, had an all day meeting with Jesus when exiled on the isle of Patmos.
- Has Jesus appeared to others through the centuries? Who is to say?

V. JESUS' APOSTLES WERE DRAMATICALLY CHANGED

- When Jesus was taken prisoner, all of His disciples ran away, even boastful Peter.
- The disciples hid in fear of being caught.
- Through the following weeks the disciples went through a dramatic change. From fearing to fierceness for Jesus, speaking boldly in public places about the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- When forbidden to speak of Jesus they did so anyhow even when they were whipped and jailed.
- Once cowards, now the disciples didn't stop teaching and preaching about Jesus and they all gave their lives with the exception of John who died of old age.

VI. WITNESSES HAVE BEEN WILLING TO DIE FOR THEIR BELIEF IN JESUS

- History is full of men and women who died for their belief in the resurrection of Jesus.
- Very few will die for a lie, but many will die for what they believe to be the truth.
- Through the centuries people have been killed because they refused to give up their belief that Jesus was raised from the dead and that He died for their sins and for the sins of the world.

VII. JEWISH BELIEVERS CHANGED THEIR DAY OF WORSHIP

- For centuries the Sabbath (Saturday) was the day of rest and worship. Yet the Jewish believers in Jesus began to worship on Sunday, the first day of the week along with the Gentile believers, under the threat of punishment for breaking the Law of Moses.
- They believed that Jesus' resurrection on that first day of the week started something new with God, a new relationship.
- The new day and way of worship was not based on the Old Testament law of Moses, but upon what Jesus taught and did at the cross and the tomb.

VIII. IT WAS CLEARLY PREDICTED BUT IT WAS UNEXPECTED

- Everyone who followed Jesus expected Him, as King to restore Israel to its former greatness.
- Nobody listened when Jesus said over and over that He would die and rise again in three days.
- Nobody remembered the prophecies of a "suffering servant" or "the lamb of God."

IX. IT WAS AN APPROPRIATE CLIMAX TO HIS MIRACULOUS LIFE

- Jesus seemed helpless while on the cross. He did not try to help Himself in any way.
- During His ministry, Jesus was always doing things for others, miracles of all sorts.
- Given some thought, if what Jesus taught and what Jesus did with all the miracles He did, should anybody have been surprised that death and the tomb could not hold Him?

X. THOSE WHO TRUST JESUS HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH HIS RESURRECTION

- Paul said, *"If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."* (Romans 8:11)
- We who believe in the resurrected Christ have also "died" to our old earthly, fleshly ways and are allowing Jesus Christ to live through us with changed lives, just as the disciples did.
- We who trust Jesus have no question as to whether Jesus was raised from the dead or not. We know for a fact that it is true, for we have also met and encountered the living Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION:

1. The foundation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without it there is no such thing as the "Christian Faith."
2. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is no hope and those of us who cling to this belief are to be pitied for wasting our lives over such nonsense.
3. *"If Jesus be indeed resurrected from the dead, then those who believe in the resurrection and trust themselves to the one who was resurrected, shall indeed also be resurrected and follow Him to His place of Glory, sharing in all that He, the Son of God has."*
4. Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus?