

Resurrection of Christ

I Cor. 15:1-3 "Now I make known to you brethren the gospel...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day..."

"There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived or that Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three." - Billy Graham

Most scholars believe that a man named Jesus was crucified by the Romans and that he made claims regarding divinity. Thus, almost all would say that Jesus was a historical character. The resurrection, however, is the crowning miracle and sets His claims apart from all others.

The resurrection is central to the religion of Christ. Paul stated that we are wasting our time if Jesus was not resurrected. (I Cor. 15:13-19)

It is the resurrection which declares Jesus to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4). It is where both His claims and the Father's claims were vindicated (Matt. 3:17, 17:5)

We need to consider the evidence for his resurrection.

- I. Jesus death/resurrection in prophecy.
 - a. It was foretold in the Old Testament – Luke 24:46, I Cor. 15:4 (note-rise 3rd day)
 - b. Jesus stated Jonah's experience with the great fish was foreshadowing his resurrection – Matt. 12:39-40
 - c. Will not see corruption – Ps 16:10. Fulfilled Acts 2:27, Acts 13:35

- II. Jesus claims – He claimed that he would die and rise from the dead Jn. 2:19-22, Matt. 12:39-40, Matt 20:19 and Matt. 26:32 among others

- III. Witnesses – Note that the witnesses who wrote about it were Matthew, Paul, Peter and John. The witnesses who are recorded are"
 - a. A group of women –
 - i. Joanna (wife of Chuza) Luke 24:10
 - ii. Mary Magdalene (John 20:1)
 - iii. Mary the mother of James (Mark 16:1)
 - iv. Salome (Mark 16:1)
 - b. The original apostles – Matt. 28:16-20
 - c. The apostle Paul – Acts 9:1-6

- d. More than 500 brethren at one appearance – I Cor. 15:6

Note that many of these were willing to die for their belief in Christ – would someone die for a lie?

IV. If He was not resurrected what happened to the body? -

Note that the tomb was new – there was no possibility of confusing Jesus body with another. (Lk. 23:53). The tomb was cut out of solid rock (Mark 15:46) and sealed with a great stone that three women could not move (Mark 16:3). The Romans also posted a guard at the tomb because the Jews were afraid that someone might steal the body (Matt. 27:62-66)

- a. He didn't really die but "swooned". He hung on the cross for 6 hours after being flogged. He was pronounced dead by the Romans, who were experts in death. His side was then pierced with a spear. Three days after this with no medical treatment and wrapped in grave clothes, he was to get himself out of the clothes, move the stone and overpower the Roman guards. This is simply impossible.
- b. The disciples stole the body – The disciples were convinced that he was dead and the movement Jesus led was over. They were slow to believe, even after Jesus had been reported alive by the women (Luke 24:1-12). They would have had to overpower a military unit guarding the tomb. They would have to be willing to die for the lie that they were preaching.
- c. The Jews stole the body – They were the ones who asked for the guard and were worried that the disciples would steal the body. If they had stolen the body, they could have brought it out during Peter's sermon in Acts 2 and stopped the church before it was started.
- d. The Romans stole the body – The penalty for a Roman who lost a prisoner was death (see Acts 16:27; Matt. 28:11-15). They would have no motive to steal it and had a great interest in seeing it was not stolen. They were paid a great deal of money for the soldiers to say that the body was stolen (Matt 28:11-15).

In conclusion, the evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead is very strong. This should be sufficient for us to say with Thomas "My Lord and my God"