

The Resurrection: Fact or Fiction?

John 20:1-31

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”
56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.
57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again
to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the
dead,

- 1 Peter 1:3

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

- 1 Corinthians 15:16-19

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- John 20:30-31

John has two big questions s in John 20:

- What evidence do we have for the resurrection? (an apologetic)
- What does it mean if it is true? (an appeal)

One: The empty tomb: was discovered by a group of women on the Sunday following the crucifixion.

Two: Post resurrection encounters: The disciples had real experiences with the risen Jesus.

Three: The central Message and Establishment of the church: The preaching of these disciples, with the resurrection at its center, established and grew the Christian church.

The Historical Method: "inference to the best explanation method":

an approach where we "begin with the evidence available to us and then infer what would, if true, provide the best explanation of that evidence." - William Lane Craig, "Reasonable Faith"

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” . . . 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. . . .18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord” —and that he had said these things to her.

- John 20:1, 11, 18

"positive evidence from a hostile source. In essence, if a source admits a fact that is decidedly not in its favor, the fact is genuine."

- Paul Maier

“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world- and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.”

- Chuck Colson “My Testimony”



After his death [Jesus] rose again and showed the marks of his punishment and how his hands had been pierced. But who saw this? A hysterical female, deluded by sorcery.”

- Celsus, “Against Christianity”

4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

- John 20:4-8

24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” 26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” 28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

- John 20:24-29



Post-Resurrection Appearances

- Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)
- The other Mary, Salome, Joanna, and at least one other woman (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10)
- Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5)
- Cleopas and another disciple on road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35)
- The eleven disciples minus Thomas (Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–25)
- The eleven disciples (John 20:26–29)
- Seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1–23)
- Disciples at a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16–17)
- James (1 Corinthians 15:7)
- 500 others at once (1 Corinthians 15:1)

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. . . we are to be pitied more than all men.”

- 1 Corinthians 15

Problems with the Hallucination Theory:

- **One:** The physical nature of these appearances.
- **Secondly:** Hallucinations and visions are highly individual.
- **Thirdly:** How do you explain Paul?
- **Fourthly:** The Empty Tomb

Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

- John 20:19-23

46 and (He) said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

- Luke 24:46-48

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-John 20:28-31

“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

- John 11:25-26