

# Evidence for the Resurrection

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1 Corinthians 15:3–8

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Today we are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ
2. His resurrection is central to our faith and to our resurrection
3. Paul said in [1 Corinthians 15:14](#), “...if Christ has not been raised,...your faith also is vain.”
4. It’s of no purpose
5. Your faith is meaningless
6. But praise God that isn’t true!
7. Jesus did rise!
8. And we will be talking about that today as we look at 1 Corinthians chapter 15
9. So please take your Bible and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 15
10. This is the chapter on the bodily resurrection of believers and on Jesus’ resurrection
11. Our resurrection is based on His
12. If He arose, so will we
13. But if He didn’t then we have no hope and it all ends at the grave
14. Notice what Paul says beginning at verse 3 (read [1 Corinthians 15:3-8](#))
15. What Paul has written to the Corinthians is the “gospel” (v.1)
16. It is also the “Evidence for the Resurrection”
17. As we will see, this proves beyond a doubt the resurrection of Jesus Christ
18. There was a lawyer examining the resurrection and said this: “As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the events of the first Easter day. For me, the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the high court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling. Inference follows on evidence, and a truthful witness is always artless and disdains effect; the gospel evidence for the resurrection is of this class, and as a lawyer I accept it unreservedly as the testimony of truthful men to facts they were able to substantiate.” (Sir Edward Clarke)

19. The historian Thomas Arnold of Oxford wrote, “The evidence for our Lord’s life and death and resurrection may be and often has been shown to be satisfactory. It is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone through it piece by piece as carefully as every judge summing up on an important case. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is better proved by fuller evidence than the great sign that God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.” (John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 402–403).
20. Paul says this “gospel” is of “first importance” and it was “I make known to you” and “which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain” (vv.1-2)
21. So let’s consider that this morning

· The first evidence of the resurrection that Paul mentions in his “gospel” is...

## LESSON

### I. The Death of Christ (v.3)

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”

· Christ’s death...

a. It was foretold in the OT

- i. His hands and His feet would be pierced - [Psalm 22:16](#), “For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.”
- ii. His bones would not be broken - [Psalm 22:17](#), “I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;”
- iii. Men would cast lots for His clothing - [Psalm 22:18](#), “They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.”
- iv. More than 700 years before Jesus was born, Isaiah provided details about His life and death
  1. He would be rejected - [Isaiah 53:3](#), “He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”
  2. He would be silent in front of His accusers - [Isaiah 53:7](#), “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,

And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.”

3. He would be buried with the rich - [Isaiah 53:9](#), “His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.”

4. He would be with criminals at His death - [Isaiah 53:12](#), “Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.”

v. David said a 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus in [Psalm 16:10](#), “For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”

b. It was predicted by Jesus

i. After the feeding of the 5000 - [Matthew 16:21-23](#), “21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. 22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.””

ii. After the transfiguration - [Matthew 17:22-23](#), “22 And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; 23 and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.” And they were deeply grieved.”

iii. Before the passover - [Matthew 20:17-19](#), “17 As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.””

c. It was hinted at by Jesus to His disciples

i. [John 12:7-8](#), “7 Therefore Jesus said, “Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. 8 “For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.”

ii. [John 13:33](#), “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’”

iii. [John 14:25](#), “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.”

d. It’s mentioned by Paul in verse 3

i. He says, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”

1. “died” (apothnesko, aor.act.ind.), refers to a cessation of life, whether human, plant or animal
  - a. It was used of Abraham’s and the prophets physical death in [John 8:52](#), “The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’”
  - b. It was used of the physical death of Lazarus in [John 11:21](#), “Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”
  - c. It was used of the death of pigs in [Matthew 8:32](#), “And He said to them, “Go!” And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.”
  - d. It was used of autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead in [Jude 1:12](#), “These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;”
  - e. According to [Philippians 2:8](#), Jesus “...humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
  - f. Some have suggested that Jesus never died--
  - g. That He actually survived the cross
  - h. Dr. Alexander Metherell, who has a medical degree from the University of Miami and a doctorate in engineering from the University of Bristol in England. He is board-certified in diagnosis by the American Board of Radiology and a consultant to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health of Bethesda, Maryland, tells us about Jesus’ condition leading up to crucifixion:
    - i. When Jesus went with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed all night
    - j. “Since He knew the amount of suffering he was going to have to endure, he was quite naturally experiencing a great deal of psychological stress.”
    - k. This psychological stress would have produced a rare medical condition called hematidrosis, which is “associated with a high degree of psychological stress.”
    - l. “What happens is that severe anxiety causes the release of chemicals that break down the capillaries in the sweat glands. As a result, there’s a small amount of bleeding into these glands, and the sweat comes out tinged with blood. We’re not talking about a lot of blood; it’s just a very, very small amount.”
    - m. “What this did was set up the skin to be extremely fragile so that when Jesus was flogged by the Roman soldier the next day, his skin would be very, very

- sensitive.”
- n. “Roman floggings were known to be terribly brutal. They usually consisted of thirty-nine lashes but frequently were a lot more than that, depending on the mood of the soldier applying the blows. “The soldier would use a whip of braided leather thongs with metal balls woven into them. When the whip would strike the flesh, these balls would cause deep bruises or contusions, which would break open with further blows. And the whip had pieces of sharp bone as well, which would cut the flesh severely. “The back would be so shredded that part of the spine was sometimes exposed by the deep, deep cuts. The whipping would have gone all the way from the shoulders down to the back, the buttocks, and the back of the legs. It was just terrible.”
  - o. “One physician who has studied Roman beatings said, ‘As the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh.’ A third-century historian by the name of Eusebius described a flogging by saying, ‘The sufferer’s veins were laid bare, and the very muscles, sinews, and bowels of the victim were open to exposure.’
  - p. “We know that many people would die from this kind of beating even before they could be crucified. At the least, the victim would experience tremendous pain and go into hypovolemic shock.”
  - q. Hypovolemic shock comes from “Hypo means ‘low,’ vol refers to volume, and emic means ‘blood,’ so hypovolemic shock means the person is suffering the effects of losing a large amount of blood.”
  - r. “This does four things. First, the heart races to try to pump blood that isn’t there; second, the blood pressure drops, causing fainting or collapse; third, the kidneys stop producing urine to maintain what volume is left; and fourth, the person becomes very thirsty as the body craves fluids to replace the lost blood volume.”
  - s. There is evidence of this in the gospels
  - t. “Jesus was in hypovolemic shock as he staggered up the road to the execution site at Calvary, carrying the horizontal beam of the cross. Finally Jesus collapsed, and the Roman soldier ordered Simon to carry the cross for him. Later we read that Jesus said, ‘I thirst,’ at which point a sip of vinegar was offered to him. “Because of the terrible effects of this beating, there’s no question that Jesus was already in serious to critical condition even before the nails were driven through his hands and feet.” (Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Easter* (pp. 16-17). Zondervan. Kindle Edition).
  - u. If you take His condition after the flogging and then His crucifixion on the cross, “There was absolutely no doubt that Jesus was dead.”

- v. Dr. Metherell further says, “Once a person is hanging in the vertical position, crucifixion is essentially an agonizingly slow death by asphyxiation.”
- w. “The reason is that the stresses on the muscles and diaphragm put the chest into the inhaled position; basically, in order to exhale, the individual must push up on his feet so the tension on the muscles would be eased for a moment. In doing so, the nail would tear through the foot, eventually locking up against the tarsal bones.
- x. “After managing to exhale, the person would then be able to relax down and take another breath in. Again he’d have to push himself up to exhale, scraping his bloodied back against the coarse wood of the cross. This would go on and on until complete exhaustion would take over, and the person wouldn’t be able to push up and breathe anymore.
- y. “As the person slows down his breathing, he goes into what is called respiratory acidosis—the carbon dioxide in the blood is dissolved as carbonic acid, causing the acidity of the blood to increase. This eventually leads to an irregular heartbeat. In fact, with his heart beating erratically, Jesus would have known that he was at the moment of death, which is when he was able to say, ‘Lord, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ And then he died of cardiac arrest.” (Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Easter* (pp. 20-21). Zondervan. Kindle Edition).
- z. Jesus could not have come down from the cross alive
  - aa. “Remember that he was already in hypovolemic shock from the massive blood loss even before the crucifixion started. He couldn’t possibly have faked his death, because you can’t fake the inability to breathe for long. Besides, the spear thrust into his heart would have settled the issue once and for all. And the Romans weren’t about to risk their own death by allowing him to walk away alive.” (Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Easter* (pp. 24-25). Zondervan. Kindle Edition).

› Jesus went through this agonizing death...

- 1. “for our sins”
  - a. [Romans 4:25](#), “He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”
  - b. [Romans 5:6](#), “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”
  - c. [Galatians 1:4](#), “who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,”
  - d. [1 Peter 2:24](#), “and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”

e. He also did this because of what Jesus told His disciples in [John 15:13](#), “13 “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

› Paul says, “Christ died for our sins...”

## 2. “according to the Scriptures”

Paul puts the testimony of Scripture above that of those who saw the Lord after His resurrection. (Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible), 2:292.

- a. [Luke 24:25-27](#), “25 And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”
- b. The “Scripture” is the authoritative Word of God
  - i. We have over 24,533 copies of the original writings of Scripture
  - ii. The earliest copy dating 125 A.D., the whole NT dating 200 A.D. (25 years after the original)
  - iii. We do not have any other ancient document in antiquity that gets that close to the original
    1. The histories of Cornelius Tacitus were considered very accurate accounts of events that occurred in the Roman Empire during the first century A.D.
      - a. Currently there are 20 copies of his major work (Annals) and only 1 copy of a collection of his minor works
      - b. The earliest copy of Annals was made 1000 years after the original was written
      - c. The single copy of his minor works was made around 900 years after the originals
    2. The works of Pliny the Younger, who lived in the first century A.D., has 7 different copies of his history made 750 years after the original
    3. The works of Homer boasts 643 copies of his work
      - a. His work “Illiad” was written in 800 B.C.
      - b. The earliest copies date 400 B.C. (400 years after the original)
    4. The earliest copies of the NT date 25 years after the original!
  - iv. As for the OT, prior to 1947, the earliest existing copy of parts of the Hebrew OT came from the Cairo Codex which was written around 895 A.D.



- v. The last events of the OT occurred approximately 450 B.C.
- vi. But in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered
- vii. These scrolls contained copies of parts of at least 500 ancient books
- viii. One of the scrolls contained a complete copy of the OT book of Isaiah
- ix. The scroll was dated by archaeologists as having been written in 125 B.C.
- x. This version of Isaiah provided to be word for word identical with the standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text
- xi. The 5% of variation consisted mostly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling
- xii. William Green writes, "...It may be safely said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted" (General Introduction to the OT, p.181)
- c. Paul says his "gospel" was that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures"
- d. Those statements are historically reliable and true
- e. Since that is the case what does this say about your salvation?

· The second evidence of the resurrection is...

## II. The Empty Tomb (v.4)

"And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures"

· To further emphasize Jesus' death, Paul says he was...

- a. "buried" (thapto, aor.pass.ind.)
- b. The word for "buried" is used in [Matthew 14:12](#) to speak of the death of John the Baptist. After he was beheaded, he was "buried"
- c. It's also used in [Luke 16:22](#) of the rich man that died and was "buried"
- d. [Isaiah 53:9](#), "His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth."
- e. Burial signifies the confirmation and finality of death. (Faithlife Study Bible)
- f. Lenski said, "This addition is necessary; first, because it attests the reality of Christ's death, and secondly, because it shows that his death was like ours, for we, too, are buried after death." (The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 631–632.)



- g. [Matthew 27:57-60](#) tells us that he was buried in a borrow tomb. It says, “57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.”
- h. So Jesus “died...and...was buried” but He was also “raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”
- i. The word “raised” (egeiro, perf.pass.ind.), means “to cause someone to live again after having once died” (Louw-Nida)
  - ii. Paul uses this word in the perfect tense to describe a completed action which produced results which are still in effect all the way up to the present
  - iii. In other words, it’s like saying, He was raised (past completed action) and still lives (present results)
  - iv. [1 Corinthians 15:20](#), “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”
  - v. [Matthew 28:5-6](#), “5 The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 “He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.”
  - vi. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the theme of Scripture and of preaching
    1. Peter said in toward the end of his sermon, [Acts 2:22-24](#), “22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”
    2. This was the theme of their preaching
    3. Paul emphasized the resurrection when he said in [Romans 6:4](#), “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”
    4. He said in [Romans 6:9](#), “knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.”
    5. He said to the Thessalonians in [1 Thessalonians 1:9-10](#), “9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.”

6. He also said in Timothy in [2 Timothy 2:8](#), “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel.”

· The third evidence of the resurrection is...

### III. The Eyewitnesses (vv.5-8)

“5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.”

James Warwick Montgomery comments: “Note that when the disciples of Jesus proclaimed the resurrection, they did so as eyewitnesses and they did so while people were still alive who had had contact with the events they spoke of. In 56 A.D. Paul wrote that over 500 people had seen the risen Jesus and that most of them were still alive ([1 Cor.15:6ff.](#)). It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians could have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by producing the body of Jesus.”

#### a. Cephas (v.5a)

- i. This is a reference to Peter - [John 1:40-42](#), “40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).”
- ii. There are only 3 references of Jesus’ appearance to Peter after His resurrection ([1 Cor.15:5](#); [Jn.21:14-25](#); [Lk.24:34](#))
- iii. [Luke 24:34](#), “The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.””

#### b. The twelve (v.5b)

- i. It was actually the eleven but often they were still referred to as the twelve before Jesus was replaced
- ii. Three references are given ([Lk.24:33-36](#), Thomas absent; [Jn.20:24-26](#), Thomas present; [21:14-25](#))

#### c. More than 500 brethren (v.6)

Scripture gives no indication of who these people were or where Jesus appeared to them

#### d. James (v.7a)

- i. We are not told which James Jesus appeared to. It was “either one of the two so-named apostles (Son of Zebedee or son of Alphaeus; cf., [Mk.3:17-18](#)) or even James the half-brother of the Lord” (The MacArthur Study Bible).

- ii. It is very probable that it was James the Lord's half brother because before Jesus' resurrection he and his brothers did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah (cf. [Jn.7:5](#)).
- e. The apostles (v.7b)
  - i. Calling the twelve or eleven "apostles" speaks of their commission
  - ii. The first appearance was to confirm to them His resurrection ([Lk.24:33-36](#))
  - iii. The second appearance was to commission them ([Lk.24:46-49](#); [Acts 1:1-9](#))
- f. Paul (v.8)
  - i. Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus ([Acts 9:3-6](#))
  - ii. Paul was saved and commissioned to preach the Gospel to the "Jew first" and then to the "Greek" ([Acts 9:6](#))

## **CONCLUSION**

1. This is the Gospel
2. Jesus "died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" ([1 Cor.15:3-4](#)).
3. Do you believe this?
4. This is the message of the church
5. And it's God's message to you today
6. If you have never embraced the gospel of Jesus, I urge you to do so right now
7. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved
8. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord
9. Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead
10. Call upon Him to save you
11. You have offended a holy God with your sin
12. He will only forgive you and grant you eternal life with Him if you believe and turn from your sin
13. Turn to Him now
14. Let's pray