



Did Jesus Raise From The Dead?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Q&A NUMBER: 51

www.GodSaidSo.com/QA51

Did Jesus raise from the dead? The apostle Paul taught the importance of Jesus' resurrection from the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. Particularly, Paul accurately concluded that if there is no resurrection, then Christ is not risen. And, if Christ is not risen, his preaching and our faith is useless and we are still in our sins. Consequently, those who would have died living for Jesus Christ would have perished and those who live for Him are the most pitiable people to ever live on this earth. Then, verse 20 says, "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." But, how can we absolutely know that Jesus rose from the dead? Let's investigate.

God Said Jesus Rose From The Dead

If you believe in God and in the Bible, you must believe that Jesus rose from the dead. For, it is impossible to truly believe in God and in the Bible as His inspired word and then deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. To do so would be to call God a liar and claim that His word is not perfect. Then, if God is a liar, He is not completely holy and righteous. And, if God is not completely holy and righteous, then He has sinned and is in the same condemnation as all mankind is in! Furthermore, if God's word is not true in one point, it cannot be trusted at any point!

So, you must determine whether you truly believe in God and in the Bible or not. If you do, you will necessarily believe that what God said concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ is absolutely true. Consider a few significant points made in the Scriptures to demonstrate that God has raised Jesus from the dead.

First, God said Jesus *would* raise from the dead. Included in the many prophecies made by the Old Testament Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ, God revealed that Jesus would raise from the dead. Psalm 16:10 says, "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." Acts 2:22-36 makes it perfectly clear that David was not talking about himself in Psalm 16. Instead, he was foretelling the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Now, since

God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18), the things God revealed to His prophets would always come true!

Second, Jesus said He *would* raise from the dead. Matthew 16:21 says that Jesus began at that time to “show to 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 the third day.” Jesus, possessing the same holy nature as God, could not possibly say that He would be raised if it was not going to happen. Therefore, if Jesus did not raise from the dead, Jesus was not God!

Third, God’s book says that Jesus *did* raise from the dead – and it consistently does so. For instance, we have already considered the statement in 1 Corinthians 15:20 that says “Christ is risen from the dead.” Furthermore, four different writers who recorded the story of Jesus’ life and death each recorded Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. In fact, there are many passages in the New Testament that plainly state the truth that Jesus rose from the dead.

Jesus’ Tomb Was Empty

Certainly God and His word make very clear assertions that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. But, even if you are skeptical of the claims that are made in the Bible concerning Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, you can absolutely know that Jesus is risen! For one, you need to consider the fact that there was (and still is) an empty tomb.

Matthew 28:1-6 records how that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb of Jesus on the first day of the week (the third day Jesus’ body was in the tomb). And, there was a great earthquake, an angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb, sat on it, and declared that Jesus Christ was risen. His body was not there any more. In fact, they were even invited to go and examine the place where Jesus’ body had laid.

Interestingly, whether you accept the Biblical record or not, there is plenty of evidence for an empty tomb. Consider, as Matthew 28:11-15 describes, the guard who had been set to make Jesus’ tomb secure and make sure that no one would steal Jesus’ body away came and reported the events to the chief priests of the Jews. And, they had to decide what to do with the empty tomb of Jesus. Even these enemies of Jesus (who denied Him as the Son of God) could not deny the presence of an empty tomb. Instead, they chose to bribe the guards so that they would claim the body of Jesus had been stolen by His disciples.

Likewise, you must decide what to do with the empty tomb of Jesus. There are only four possible explanations as to why Jesus’ tomb was empty. (1) Jesus’ enemies stole His body. Yet, if they did, why would they not produce His body in order to stop Christianity from spreading (since Christianity is dependent upon the resurrection of Christ)? (2) Jesus’ friends stole His body. While this was the rumor that was spread initially, it certainly does not fit with other known facts. For instance, how could they have overcome the guards who had been placed at Jesus’ tomb to prevent that very thing from happening? And, why would those who would have been responsible for

stealing Jesus' body have suffered and died for Jesus – if they knew it was all a hoax? (3) Jesus was only unconscious when He was laid in the tomb. Yet, the Romans (who put Jesus to death by crucifixion) had refined the punishment of crucifixion. Jesus had been severely beaten, hung on the cross, and had a spear driven through His side. There can be no doubt that He was dead. Furthermore, how could a man as severely injured as Jesus possibly have rolled the stone away from the tomb by Himself and overcome the guards? (4) God raised Jesus from the dead. This is what God said would happen. This is what Jesus said would happen. This is even what the guards who had been at Jesus' tomb knew happened. This miracle is the only explanation for the empty tomb of Jesus that harmonizes with everything else we can know to be true!

There Were Many Eyewitnesses Of The Resurrected Christ

In addition to the testimony of the writers of the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there were many who saw the resurrected Christ. Examine, for instance, the end of each one of those four records of the life of Christ. And, listen to the declaration made by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” Therefore, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was not a closely guarded secret God required individuals to accept without any supporting evidence. Instead, there were many people who were living at the time who saw the resurrected Christ – and their testimony continues to be preserved for us today. Specifically, I want you to consider two eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection.

First, consider Thomas. John 20:24-29 records how that Thomas (one of Jesus' apostles) saw the resurrected Christ. However, Thomas did not initially believe the report the other disciples had given him about seeing the resurrected Christ. He said, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (verse 25). Then, at a later time, Jesus came to the place Thomas was. He invited Thomas to examine his body and know for certain that He was the one who had been crucified on the cross. And, after examining the resurrected body of Jesus, Thomas simply answered, “My Lord and my God” (verse 28)!

Second, consider Saul. Unlike Thomas (who had been an apostle of Jesus Christ), Saul was an enemy of Christ. He had nothing physical to gain by claiming that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead. In fact, it would cost Saul (later known as Paul) greatly to believe Jesus was risen from the dead. You see, Saul had been advancing in Judaism and was a well-known persecutor of those who claimed to follow the resurrected Jesus. Certainly, then, Saul would have been giving up his standing in the Jewish community and knew that following the resurrected Christ carried physical

consequences. Yet, when the resurrected Christ appeared to Saul while Saul was traveling to Damascus (see Acts 9, 22, and 26), his resulting conversion to Christ demonstrates that the evidence was so overwhelming that he completely changed the course of his life in order to follow Jesus Christ!

Those Who Claimed Jesus Rose From The Dead Were Willing To Suffer And Die For Him

A final point of evidence concerning the resurrected Jesus Christ for us to consider is the fact that there were many Christians who willingly suffered (and some who even died) in order to teach and follow the resurrected Christ. But, why would someone choose to suffer in these ways if he/she knew that Jesus did not raise from the dead?

Take the apostle Paul, for instance. 2 Corinthians 11:22-33 records some of the sufferings experienced by the apostle Paul during the course of his service for Jesus Christ. He was beaten and imprisoned frequently. He was stoned to the point people thought he was dead. He experienced shipwreck. He was in danger because of robbers, in danger because of Jews, in danger because of Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the sea, and in danger among false brethren. He experienced hunger and thirst. And, according to historical record, he was beheaded. Now, why would Paul have endured all these things (claiming to have seen the resurrected Christ) if he knew he had made the whole thing up?

In fact, the same point can be demonstrated with all of the apostles. It was required of all the apostles to have seen the resurrected Christ. And, all of the apostles suffered for Jesus Christ. In fact, between historical and Biblical records, all of Jesus' apostles are said to have experienced martyrdom – with the exception of John (who himself experienced many hardships for Jesus). What did any of these have to gain (physically) by deceiving others about the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Absolutely nothing! Instead, they all suffered greatly for Christ. So, why would they have been faithful to Christ to the point of physical death and sufferings – if they had not actually seen the resurrected Christ?

Conclusion

The Christian's faith and hope are dependent upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It should come as no surprise, then, that God has provided more than a sufficient amount of evidence for the resurrection of Christ. In fact, there is enough evidence that can lead you to dedicate your life entirely to Christ – even if it means dying for Him!

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: QA51

Written by Eric Krieg

Copyright: Copyright © 2018 GodSaidSo Press. Please use this material to God's glory and honor. Feel free to copy and distribute this material in any way that will bring God glory and help souls to be saved. However, you may not take any of the material out of context or change the material in any way. Please provide the author with the proper credit for the material.

Scripture quotations: Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.