



Many Convincing Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Acts 1:3

This document is meant to supplement our study through the book of Acts.

In Acts 1:3 we read: *He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.*

During this time between his resurrection and his ascension Jesus presented himself alive. This was following his death by crucifixion, Jesus showed himself alive to his apostles and He did so with many “proofs” or as some of the other translations indicate: many **convincing or infallible proofs**.

Wait a minute, I thought the resurrection was something we received by faith, that there is no real “evidence” of the resurrection. According to Luke there are multiple or many lines of evidence. This paper will look at 12 different lines of evidence, convincing proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1) **Jesus was seen alive by many people including:**

Mary (Joh 20:11-17; Mar 16:9)

The other Mary and Salome (Mat 28:8-9; Mar 16:1)

Simon Peter (Luk 24:34; ICor 15:5)

The two disciples (one named Cleopas) walking on the road to Emmaus (Luk 24:13-32)

The 10 apostles less Thomas (Luk 24:33-49; Joh 20:19-24)

The 11 apostles (Joh 20:26-28)

More than 500 people at one time (I Cor 15:5-6)

James (the Lord’s half-brother) (I Cor 15:7)

The apostle Paul (I Cor 15:8)

If we add up the different people mentioned in the Bible as seeing Jesus alive following his passion we have over 518 people, who all lived in 33AD who saw Jesus alive following his passion!

“3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.” (1Co 15:3-8 ESV)

Of course, Paul is telling us about a number of different eyewitnesses, I chose this verse as just a sample of the available eyewitnesses. By the way scholars (Christian, agnostic, and atheistic) from this time period almost universally agree that a very large number of people believed they saw, heard, and in some cases touched the Lord Jesus following his death by crucifixion.

As you consider this, keep in mind that mass hallucinations are extremely rare. Mass hallucinations that involve multiple senses (hearing, seeing, and touching) are unheard of. These are multiple mass hallucinations over multiple days, involving multiple senses of multiple people!

Many claimed to have seen, heard, and in some cases touched the Lord Jesus following his death at Calvary. The number involved is overwhelming! What does this evidence point to?

2) **The resurrection IMMEDIATELY became the crown jewel, the focal point of the infant church’s preaching.** (Acts 2:1-41; 3:1-4:4; 4:5-14)

We looked at this last week in the first sermon preached by the infant church where Peter said:

“22 Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know — 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.” (Ac 2:22-24 ESV)

Further in his sermon Peter said:

“30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.” (Ac 2:30-32 ESV)

Maybe a week or so later, Peter and John were going to the temple and Peter healed a man who had been an invalid his whole life. Then the man followed them into the temple. As people began to flock around the lame man now walking, Peter took the opportunity to preach the gospel, here is a portion of his sermon: *“13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.” (Ac 3:13-15 ESV)*

How is it possible that the resurrection was immediately the central message of the infant church? The answer is obvious it was true and that was life changing!

By the way scholars (Christian, agnostic, and atheistic) from this time period agree with what we see in Acts, namely that the message of the risen Christ was an immediate part of the sermons of the early church.

- 3) **The apostles went from cowards to bold witnesses of the resurrection.** (Mar 14:27; Mar 14:48-50; Joh 16:32; Joh 20:19 and Acts 4:1-13; Acts 4:14-21; Acts 4:29-31)

What in the world could transform a group of men from hiding out in the upper room to proclaiming that Jesus is alive?

A couple of early snap-shots, on the night Jesus was betrayed and his apostles were with him, we read: *“48 And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." 50 And they all left him and fled.” (Mr 14:48-50 ESV)*

Or the evening after He had risen from the grave, and although word was swirling that He had risen, they were not ready to believe, in John 20 we read:

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."” (Joh 20:19 ESV)

Now, let’s look at the following the **resurrection** and the **outpouring** of the Spirit (truth and power), now we had just read the second sermon Peter preached and 5000 men (plus women and young people) got saved, but they arrested the apostles and we read in acts 4:

“5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of

Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead — by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." (Ac 4:5-13 ESV)

By the way scholars (Christian, agnostic, and atheistic) from this time period almost universally agree that the church launched with a unique boldness around their message.

- 4) The message of the resurrection became part of early creeds, confessions, and songs.** (Examples include: I Cor 15:3-7; Acts 2:22-36; Rom 4:25; Rom 10:9; Phil 2:8, I Tim 2:6, I Pet 3:18)

Scholars have uncovered many creeds, confessions, sayings, and/or songs, which are interwoven in the texts of the New Testament. Greek scholars have gotten good at spotting these the same way a college professor gets proficient at catching when a student quotes another source. Often the sentence structure and writing style changes and that makes it obvious.

What we are seeing is that the focus of many of these creeds, confessions and songs is the resurrection. **I would like us to briefly look at three:**

"3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles." (1Co 15:3-7 ESV)

"because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Ro 10:9 ESV)

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit," (1Pe 3:18 ESV)

Many people in Jesus' day were illiterate, and creeds, confessions, and sayings like these were very effective ways for a person to memorize truth even though they could not read. The resurrection was the focal point of these early creeds, confessions, and sayings that believers were memorizing and repeating.

By the way scholars (Christian, agnostic, and atheistic) agree, these confessions happened immediately, in a very short time frame and many focused on the resurrection.

- 5) While Jesus was alive his brothers did not believe on him. After his death, James and Jude both became followers of a man who was crucified. They did not simply start following his teaching, they placed faith in Him.** (Mar 3:20-21; Joh 7:2-5 & James and Jude)

Let's take a look at a few verses:

"20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind." (Mr 3:20-21 ESV)

"3 So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. 4 For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." 5 For not even his brothers believed in him." (Joh 7:3-5 ESV)

James, the letter opens with: *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.” (Jas 1:1 ESV)*

Jude – *“Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones,” (Jude 1:14 ESV)*

The evidence of two family members who rejected Jesus while he was alive and then became followers after his death only makes sense if the resurrection is true. This is strong evidence of the resurrection!

There is no level of unbelief that a resurrection from the dead cannot cure!

- 6) **Paul of Tarsus, was a Pharisee, a devout monotheistic Jew, a man who committed the latter part of his life to snuffing out this heresy that taught that Jesus was God and that he was alive from the grave, yet somehow he became the leading voice of Christianity.** (Act 22:1-4; Act 22:6-10; I Cor 15:3-4)

What in the world could cause this to happen? A few verses:

“1 ¶ “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.” 2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: 3 ¶ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,” (Ac 22:1-4 ESV)

What in the world caused such an ardent opposer of the gospel to believe in and declare alive a man who had been crucified?

“6 “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ 8 And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’” (Ac 22:6-10 ESV)

What would cause this man to now proclaim: *“Paul, an apostle — not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead — ” (Ga 1:1 ESV)*

A Hebrew of Hebrews, an ardent mono-theistic Jew changes from a persecutor of the church to the loudest voice that Jesus rose from the grave. This is again strong evidence of the resurrection of the crucified Jesus!

I do not know of a single scholar (Christian, agnostic, and atheistic) who disagrees that something radical changed with Paul.

There is no level of opposition, hatred, or unbelief that a good resurrection cannot fix!

- 7) **Before he was ever arrested, Jesus Himself proclaimed, on many occasions, that he would be killed, die, and rise again on the third day.** (Examples include: Mat 16:21-23; Mat 17:22-23; Mat 20:17-19; Mar 8:31-32; Mar 9:30-32; Mar 10:32-34; Luk 9:21-22; Luk 9:43-45; Luk 18:31-34; Luk 24:6-7; Joh 2:18-22; Joh 10:17-18. Consider lastly: Joh 14:28-29.

The number of times the gospel writers record this make it embarrassing that the disciples did not really see it.

Let's look at a couple:

“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 on the third day be raised. (Mt 16:21 ESV)

“22 ¶ As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about 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 greatly distressed.” (Mt 17:22-23 ESV)

Let's be honest, Jesus made this claim so many times that when you see it fulfilled it is embarrassing the apostles did not understand when it was happening. But it is also amazing that the Lord fulfilled his word, just like He said. **He has risen from the grave as he promised on many occasions!**

Again, this is strong evidence, especially when combined with the other lines of evidence!

- 8) **The apostles, gave their welfare and their lives in proclaiming a living Savior.** (Acts 12:1-3; various historical references). Keep in mind, if the resurrection was fabricated by them, they would of course know that. Yet other than John, tradition tells us they all gave their lives for Christ and the gospel:
- **James the son of Zebedee** - Killed by the sword by King Herod (Acts 12:1-3).
 - **Simon Peter** – Tradition says that he was crucified upside down.
 - **Andrew** – Tradition says crucified.
 - **Philip** – Tradition says died by hanging.
 - **Bartholomew** – Tradition says flayed alive and then crucified.
 - **Matthew** – One tradition says he did not die a martyr's death while others indicate he was killed by a sword or speared.
 - **Thomas** – Tradition indicates speared.
 - **James** – Tradition indicates stoned to death.
 - **Thaddaeus** – Tradition indicates killed by the sword or arrows.
 - **Simon the Zealot** – Tradition indicates crucified.
 - **John** – Tradition says he died a natural death.

The resurrection (truth) and the power of the Holy Spirit, drove these men to give their lives proclaiming a message they believed with every fiber of their beings was true!

If his appearances were a lie, fabricated by these men, they would of course know it! Yet it is these men who gave their welfare and their lives proclaiming it! Again, this is VERY strong evidence of the resurrection.

- 9) **The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would rise from the grave!** (Examples Include: (Ps 2:7-8; Is 53:8-10; Ps 22:12-22; Ps 16:8-10; Ps 118:16-18; Jon 1:17-2:10).

“7 ¶ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.” (Ps 2:7-8 ESV)

“32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, 33 this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” (Ac 13:32-33 ESV)

This, like Jesus proclaiming while he was alive that he would be killed and rise from the grave is strong evidence that Jesus rose from the grave.

10) The tomb was guarded and yet His body went missing! (Mat 27:62-66)

“62 The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ 64 Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” 65 Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” 66 So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.” (Mt 27:62-66 ESV)

While it is true the lack of a body does not prove the resurrection, it is clear from all four gospel writers that the body was missing and his followers never found it nor did it ever turn up.

The fact that the tomb was guarded and the body still ended up missing is strong evidence of the resurrection.

11) A rumor was started that someone stole His body. (Mat 28:11-15)

“11 ¶ While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers 13 and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ 14 And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” 15 So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.” (Mt 28:11-15 ESV)

This rumor, as recorded by Matthew, is just another piece of evidence in a **sea of evidence** the resurrection really happened. Unless you are proposing that Matthew made up a story, to counter a rumor that was not being circulated.

By the way he did this while there were many people living who knew what occurred. Do you see how non-sensical that position sounds?

12) The tomb was found empty on Sunday morning and we have multiple eyewitnesses. (Mat 28:1-8; Mar 16:1-7; Luk 24:1-9; Joh 20:1-10)

“1 ¶ When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back — it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 6 And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”” (Mr 16:1-7 ESV)

I will not give this up! It is attested by all **four gospel writers**. Mary saw the empty tomb, the other Mary saw the empty tomb, Salome saw the empty tomb. Peter and John saw the empty tomb. We can be sure over the weeks following his resurrection many others came and saw the empty tomb. **The empty tomb is one of a long line of pieces of evidence that point to the reality of the resurrection.**

As amazing as this is to us today. Hundreds saw Him alive. Indeed, as the angel said, ***“He is not here, but is risen...”*** and there is a trove of evidence that all points to this amazing truth!