

# **THINGS NOT DONE IN A CORNER: A SURVEY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

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Montgomery, AL 36117 U.S.A.  
334/272-8558  
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In the twenty-sixth chapter of Luke's account of the Acts of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul offered an "answer" (a "defense," from the Greek word *apologeomai*) before King Agrippa and Governor Festus. His piercing question to Agrippa in verse 8 should haunt every unbeliever: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" He then continued by announcing that God **had** indeed raised the dead—Jesus of Nazareth, called the Christ. Paul even claimed that he had been an eyewitness, having seen Christ Himself after the resurrection. Upon the basis of his having seen the resurrected Christ, Paul reformed his life, encountered hatred at the hands of the Jews, and began a lifelong mission of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Festus thought Paul was insane: "Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (8:24). Paul responded (in effect), "No, Festus, I am not mad. There is an abundance of evidence to support the claim of the resurrection. 'For this thing was not done in a corner'" (8:25-26).

Christianity is a religion of history and fact, not mysticism and "spiritualization." The religion of Jesus Christ is not one where "gurus" sit on their heads with their legs crossed, chanting gutturals, and trying to find nirvana. Christianity is rooted and grounded in **historical fact**. Alexander Campbell aptly wrote:

With us revelation has nothing to do with opinion or abstract reasonings; for it is founded wholly and entirely upon facts. There is not one abstract opinion, not one speculative view, asserted or communicated in Old Testament or New. Moses begins with asserting facts that had transpired in creation and providence; and John ends with asserting prophetic or prospective facts in the future displays of providence and redemption. Facts, then, are the **Alpha and the omega** of both Jewish and Christian revelations (1974, p. 89, emp. in orig.).

To disprove the Bible and Christianity, one must deal with facts and show them to be historically invalid. I fear that sometimes we forget that the Bible bases all its **spiritual truths** upon **historical events!** If we allow the Bible to speak, it does not propagate nebulous abstracts in the ethereal, but stubborn historical facts. It lays the evidence bare for all to see, challenges inspection and contradiction, and places

the responsibility directly upon man to reason and react properly to these facts. The character of the evidence given in support of these facts is so strong that Campbell once was emboldened to say: “I feel strongly disposed to show that this [the historical fact of the resurrection of Christ—MKL] is the best-attested fact in the annals of the world” (1957 reprint, pp. 312-313). Indeed, the nature of these facts is such that, if they are true, men have no option but to accept the authority of Jesus Christ; if they are false, Christianity crumbles into nothingness and we must begin anew our search for truth.

There is, however, one great fact upon which all others in Christianity stand. Every other fact, everything else Jesus did—even if true—would be worthless apart from the resurrection. As Paul pointedly informed us: “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14). Even Calvary loses all meaning if the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea is still occupied. This point is the center of history; all preceding and subsequent generations live in want of the knowledge of this fact—is it true or not? Was Jesus of Nazareth miraculously raised? Is the testimony credible? Christianity hinges on this one point. If it be disproved, let us file away our Bible; if it be proven true, let us flock to the throne of God for mercy. Campbell again is pertinent:

For I wish to have it placed upon record, and to be known as far as this work ever shall extend, either in time or place, that in our view, the shortest and best, because the most irrefragable way, to prove the whole truth and absolute certainty of the Christian religion, is to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This proved, and Deism, Atheism, and skepticism of every name, fall prostrate to the ground. The Atheist will himself say, let this be proved, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, walked upon this earth, ate, drank, and talked with men for **forty** days afterward, and, in the presence of many witnesses, ascended up into Heaven, and after his ascent thither, sent down infallible proofs that he was well received in the Heavenly world, and I will believe (1957, pp. 312-313, emp. in orig.).

Books could be, and have been, written producing the evidence that Christ arose. In this brief article, I shall glance at just a few of the proofs for this astounding event.

Our primary source must be eight writers, four of whom were Christ’s biographers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). What do **they** say about Jesus’ life, death, and subsequent resurrection? First of all, let us note that no rational intelligent human can deny that a person known as Jesus of Nazareth did live nearly 2,000 years ago on this planet. There have been those who have denied that He even existed, but I have no qualms in saying they are neither rational nor intelligent, but simply biased against Christianity, its Founder, and His disciples. The great historian, Will Durant, certainly no friend of Christianity, still

was **historian enough** to pen these words (and oh, how true they are!): “That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic, and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the gospel (1944, p. 557).

In regards to the resurrection of Christ, the following facts may be found within the gospels:

(1) **Jesus died.** “When Jesus had therefore received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30; cf. also Luke 23:46; Mark 15:39; Matthew 27:50). We also have the testimony of secular history that Christ was put to death. The Roman historian Tacitus, in speaking of the accusation that the emperor Nero was responsible for the burning of Rome and thus was trying to lay the blame on others (namely, the Christians), wrote:

But neither all human help nor the liberality of the Emperor, nor all the atonements presented to the gods, availed to abate the infamy he (Nero) lay under of having ordered the city to be set on fire. To suppress, therefore, this common rumor, Nero procured others to be accused, and inflicted exquisite punishment upon those people, who were in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians. They had their denomination from Christus, who in the reign of Tiberius was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate (Campbell, n.d., p. 31).

Thus, there can be no reasonable question that Jesus of Nazareth was, as attested by His four biographers, crucified on a Roman cross.

(2) **He was buried in a borrowed tomb.** “When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed” (Matthew 27:57-60, cf. Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-53, and John 19:38-42). Thus, all four historians concur that Christ was buried in the tomb of the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. The Roman custom concerning crucifixion was to leave the victim hanging on the cross to become the prey for the birds and beasts (Sparrow-Simpson, 1968, p. 21). There were exceptions to this, however, and since Jewish law required the burial of the condemned, Joseph’s

request should only be questioned by those determined to oppose everything related to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

(3) **The tomb was sealed and a Roman guard was stationed before it.** Matthew adds this interesting (and, to the Jews, devastating) footnote to Jesus' burial:

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch (Matthew 27:62-66).

Albert Roper elaborated further:

They [the Jews who demanded the guard—MKL] went their way, attended by a guard of Roman soldiers numbering from ten to thirty who, under their direction, sealed the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea with the Imperial Seals of Rome, affirming thereto in wax the official stamp of the procurator himself which it would be a high crime even to deface. Thus did these zealous enemies of Jesus unwittingly prepare in advance an unanswerable challenge to their subsequent explanation of the resurrection—an explanation which did not, and could not, in the very nature of things explain [the disappearance of Christ's body—MKL] (1965, pp. 23-24).

Roper added another salient comment concerning the Roman guards and their attitude toward their duty:

It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that these representatives of the Emperor could have been trusted to perform their duty to guard a tomb quite as strictly and as faithfully as they had executed a crucifixion. They had not the slightest interest in the task to which they were assigned. Their sole purpose and obligation was rigidly to perform their duty as soldiers of the empire of Rome to which they had dedicated their allegiance. The Roman seal affixed to the stone before Joseph's tomb was far more sacred to them than all the philosophy of Israel or the sanctity of her ancient creed. Soldiers cold-blooded enough to gamble over a dying victim's cloak are not the kind of men to be hoodwinked by timid Galileans or to jeopardize their Roman necks by sleeping on their post (1965, pp. 23-24).

It must be remembered that, to this Roman guard, just another Jew was being crucified. They were totally devoid of understanding any eternal significance to Christ's crucifixion and burial. They were assigned a job, and they were going to perform that task. Understanding the attitude and psychology of the Roman guards is a key to a better understanding of the impossibility of the Jewish claim that Christ's body had been stolen by the disciples.

(4) **On Sunday morning, according to the Bible historians, Jesus' tomb was empty.** At least three women (Mark 16:1) came to Jesus' tomb early Sunday morning to do what they had not been able to do earlier because of the interference of the Sabbath, i.e., anoint and give final preparation to the dead

body. But they found no Jesus; the sepulchre was empty. That the tomb was empty is foolish to deny; **why** it was empty will be taken be taken up shortly. Even Christ's enemies admitted that the tomb was **bodiless**. Matthew, of course, tells us that immediately the Jewish leaders began spreading the tale that "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while [the guards] slept" (Matthew 28:13)—a preposterous claim on the very face of it. Yet even later enemies repeated the story. Justin Martyr (second century A.D.) debated the Jew, Trypho, who made this claim. Tertullian (later second/early third century A.D.) wrote of the "stolen body" theory. Apparently, Jewish medieval literature still was making the same claim (Thorburn, 1910, pp. 191-92). John Chrysostom of Antioch, an early Christian writer (A.D. 347-407), added a powerful point:

For indeed even this establishes the resurrection, the fact I mean of their saying that the disciples stole him. For this is the language of men confessing that the body was not there. When therefore they confess the body was not there, but the stealing it is shown to be false and incredible, by their watching by it, and by the seals, and by the timidity of the disciples, the proof of the resurrection even hence appears incontrovertible (as quoted in McDowell, 1972, p. 248).

Thus, even secular history records that the "stolen body" theory was the most prominent, thereby confirming the message of Matthew.

We have, therefore, presented the crucial testimony of the biographers of Jesus, confirmed where possible by additional sources, and otherwise by reason. Christ died and was buried and sealed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea with a squadron of guards keeping watch to prevent pilferage. But, come Sunday morning, the tomb was empty! Christ's body either was stolen or resurrected. No other viable option remains. [For further information on the "swoon" theory (which states that Christ did not die on the cross but merely "swooned" and then later left the tomb on His own), see Josh McDowell's book, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (1972, p. 248).] Let us consider both possibilities—stolen or resurrected.

Was the body stolen? The Roman guards claimed that while they slept, the disciples came and stole the body (Matthew 28:13). This testimony can be dismissed quickly, for if they were asleep **how would they know what happened to the body?** What court would accept the testimony of a man who testifies to an event that happens while he is asleep? Even at that, Roman soldiers, under penalty of death, did not

fall asleep at the post. We already have noted the indifference of the Roman soldiers to this particular assignment. Thus, they would have carried out their job with the same proficiency and alertness as had marked their previous service. (We may deduce that their previous service to the Emperor was marked by “proficiency” and “alertness” for if it were not, they would not have been alive at this juncture to guard the tomb!) So the Roman soldiers’ story certainly is ludicrous.

It has been suggested that perhaps the Jews stole the body, but this hypothesis, too, can be dismissed by simply asking: If they **did** steal it, why did they not produce it when the disciples started crying “resurrection”? One easily could imagine the consternation Peter and the eleven would have felt on the Day of Pentecost if, while they were preaching a resurrected Christ, certain Jews stood up and said, “Sorry, but here is the body. Now let’s hear no more of this resurrection nonsense.” The very fact of the non-production of the body proved conclusively that the enemies of Christ did not steal it. (The non-production of the body also deals a death blow to the only other theory with even an iota of plausibility—i.e., the theory that on Sunday following the crucifixion the women went to the wrong tomb. But again, if the women **did** go to the wrong tomb, and if they convinced Peter and John and the rest of the disciples, including Joseph of Arimathea, to go to the wrong tomb, why didn’t the Jews go to the **right** tomb, get the body on Pentecost, and crush Christianity before it ever got started? No, that tomb—the **correct** one—was empty.)

Did the **disciples** steal the body? We already have noted the impossibility of that task, due to their own timidity and the squadron of guards assigned to prevent that very thing, but let us add more weight to this already strong testimony by demonstrating that a resurrection (or a pilfering of the body) **was the farthest thing from their mind!** A correct understanding of the disciples’ expectations of the Messiah will show this to be true. Alexander Campbell eloquently picked up the tale:

But with regard to the testimony of the twelve original witnesses, I have to remark, that not one of them understood for years either the nature or design of the mission of Jesus. This fact, if correctly understood, and applied, is of immense importance to the Christian public...and it gives very great additional weight to the testimony of the apostles, respecting the capital item in the Record, viz., the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. They all, without exception, expected the Messiah would found an earthly kingdom, and reign over it forever. ...they, one and all, expected an all-conquering king, in the person of Jesus. Hence so much of the war spirit in some of the apostles, and so much worldly ambition in the mother of Zebe-

dee's sons. "Let my two sons, said she, sit, good master, one on your right and the other on your left, when you ascend the throne" (1957, p. 312).

It is interesting that the enemies of Christ more clearly understood His language than the apostles.

The brilliant Campbell concluded this argument in a masterful fashion:

When he told them, without a figure, that he would be crucified, they could not believe it, so contrary was the issue of his life to their expectations. And when the Roman soldiers and the chief priests came to take him before the Sanhedrin, Peter was more disposed to fight than to surrender. In a word, the whole company of the disciples of Jesus, male and female, were **disappointed** when Jesus was crucified. Fear and consternation seized them all. Peter acted the coward and they all fled. Even on the day of his resurrection, while two of them were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus, they spoke of his demise as a complete frustration of all their hopes. "We **expected**," said they, "**that he would have redeemed—Israel.**" But, alas, we are disappointed. He has not redeemed Israel, was their conviction at that moment. A temporal redemption was their expectation. And as for his resurrection from the dead, so far from plotting any story about it, it was the farthest thought from their mind; the female disciples were preparing to embalm the body, when they found the grave empty; and when they told the disciples that "**the Lord was risen indeed**" their "words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."

Now this being the expectation of these witnesses, as every document on earth proves—to suppose them capable of plotting and executing such a fraud, as the stealing of the body, betrays the grossest ignorance of the whole history of the times, of the nation, and of the apostles. Nothing can be more plain than that when Joseph the Senator petitioned the Governor for the body, and interred it, the hopes and prospects of the disciples, as respected worldly objects, were buried in the same grave with it (1957, p. 312, emp. in orig.).

Thus, the overwhelming weight of testimony argues not only the **impossibility** of the apostles stealing the body, but also that the **very idea** was far removed from their minds. There remains, therefore, only one other option: just as the apostles claimed, the body of Jesus was raised and He lived again!

Having proved that the only alternative to a resurrection is false, we know that the body **had** to be raised. We thus have established the apostles' case. But now, rather than discontinuing our efforts here, let us proceed to the positive evidence and see if the "resurrection theory" can stand on its own merits.

If the body was not stolen, then was Christ raised from the dead? We now summon the witnesses to the fact of the resurrection. Christ made (at least) **eleven** post-resurrection appearances. As James Orr aptly put it: "It was not 'appearances' simply, but prolonged interviews, that were alleged" (n.d., p. 145).

Jesus appeared to the following:

- (1) The three women at the tomb (Matthew 28:9-10)
- (2) Mary Magdalene alone (John 20:14-18)
- (3) Two disciples on Emmaus road (Luke 24:13ff.)
- (4) Ten Apostles, Thomas absent (John 20:19-25)

- (5) Eleven apostles, Thomas present (John 20:26-29)
- (6) Several disciples fishing (John 21:lff.)
- (7) “He was seen of Cephas (Peter)” (1 Corinthians 15:5)
- (8) Over **500** brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15:6)
- (9) James, the Lord’s brother (1 Corinthians 15:7)
- (10) Eleven apostles, just prior to His ascension (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; Acts 1)
- (11) Finally, Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1 Corinthians 15:8).

Over **500** people saw Christ at some juncture after His resurrection! This testimony, coupled with the empty sepulchre, cannot be dismissed lightly. To illustrate, let us suppose that I robbed a local bank. If 500 or more witnesses could be summoned to the courtroom and could testify that they saw me rob the bank, what would the verdict be? Conviction, of course! Could I perchance convince the court that **all** of the witnesses were hallucinating—**particularly if I had no alternate alibi?** Hardly! Having **500** witnesses to **any** event produces strong, irrefutable evidence. But in regard to the resurrection several other matters must be considered as well: (1) the Old Testament prophets, from Genesis 3:15 on, taught, both implicitly and explicitly, the resurrection of the Messiah; (2) Jesus Himself said He would be raised; (3) “Why should it be thought a thing incredible...that God should raise the dead?” Granted, we are not dealing with an ordinary human affair here (a resurrection); but **we also are not dealing with an ordinary human either!** If only one or two had claimed to have seen Him, then we might be suspicious, since we are dealing with the miraculous; but over **500** witnesses?! These must be heard.

However, before we proceed further in an examination of the type of evidence and testimony with which we are dealing, let us answer an objection. The charge of “conspiracy” might be raised. The objector says, “Have you not heard of a conspiracy? Do you not realize that men conspire together for hope of gain or reward or fame? Certainly a well-planned conspiracy by 11 or 12 intelligent men could be successful in a backward culture given to mysticism anyway.” Campbell disposed of this notion when he wrote:

Singular conspiracy indeed! A conspiracy to make mankind just, merciful, pure, forgiving, and affectionate to one another; to teach them to live in accordance with human nature, its origin, and its destiny; to fix all their supreme hopes upon objects unseen and future; and to deny themselves of all unhallowed gratifications! Singular conspiracy on the part of the conspirators, to forsake all earth born interests, to expose

themselves to shame, persecution, and death, for making mankind pure and happy; to court infamy with those in power, and to render themselves obnoxious to the indignation of all the reputed wise, religious, and honorable among men! Astonishing conspiracy, which promises to the conspirators the absence of all worldly goods and the presence of all temporal evils, in proportion as they would be successful in accomplishing the objects for which they had conspired (n.d., p. 309).

No, we are forced to admit the sincerity of the apostles; these men unwaveringly believed what they preached. Not a one, after Pentecost, ever expressed the slightest doubt of the veracity of the resurrection (unlike the three “witnesses” of the *Book of Mormon*, all of whom wavered in and out of Mormonism, and were morally and mentally suspicious anyway). Men simply do not die for that which they **know to be** a lie. The apostles had nothing (earthly) to gain by preaching the resurrection, and everything to lose. Thus, a conspiracy is a preposterous charge.

Contrary to such a charge, we simply must insist that there is no stronger evidence to be had for **historical facts** than the kind of which the apostles testified. The apostle John (an eye-witness of Jesus after His resurrection) wrote: “That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we have **looked upon**, and our **hands have** handled the Word of Life” (1 John 1:1). John says, “Look, we saw Him, and **touched** Him, and **talked** with Him.” What further evidence is needed? What further evidence would it take to convince? For example, let us say that on a certain morning John Doe spoke before an audience of exactly 100 people in Los Angeles, California. If someone (who was absent from that assembly) endeavored to prove to someone (who was there) that, no, John Doe was in Sacramento and not in Los Angeles at that time, what would be the reaction? The one who was in the gathering would say, “You are mistaken. John Doe was in Los Angeles at that time. You see, I **saw him, I heard him, I shook his hand (touched him)**. And I can bring 99 other witnesses who will testify of the same thing!” It could be proven firmly that John Doe was in Los Angeles. John (and the rest of the apostles) based the claim for Christ’s resurrection upon that very same type of evidence. If someone in the first century came to John and said, “No, Christ was not raised,” John would have responded simply, “I’m sorry, but I must dissent. You see, we saw Him, heard Him, and touched Him. **And over 500 others will testify to the same thing!**” How simple, profound, and yet powerful is the evidence for Christ’s resurrec-

tion! Truly, Luke was correct when he spoke of the “many infallible proofs” of Christ’s resurrection (Acts 1:1-3).

But let us carry this further. Someone might wonder, “Well, that sort of proof is fine for the apostles, but **we** weren’t there. **We** didn’t see Him, hear Him, touch Him, etc. How can **we** know? Let us illustrate how absoluteness can be attained from history and then apply it to our problem. How many readers would deny that George Washington was the first President of the United States? Is there one who might read these lines that would deny this fact? No. But, how do you **know** this is true of George Washington? “Well, the history books so affirm. Men who lived at that time saw him, heard him, touched him, worked with him, ate with him....” Indeed. Note this point: We have exactly the same type of evidence for the resurrection of Christ as we have for the existence and presidency of George Washington! No one living today ever saw, heard, or touched George Washington; yet the evidence is such that no one denies the above mentioned facts about him. So it is with Jesus’ resurrection. Every historical fact is proved this way. Absolute certainty can be reached in historical matters. And in regard to Christ’s resurrection, when the sensory experiences with Jesus by the apostles are supplemented with additional evidence—the prophecies of the Old Testament, the miracles of Christ, the empty tomb, the close proximity of the first preaching of the resurrection (in the very town in which He was crucified—we tend to agree with Campbell that the resurrection of Christ **is the best attested fact in all of history**. No other historical fact has **so many** lines of evidence. Let us just briefly list the various proofs of Christ’s resurrection (I have not investigated, nor in this limited essay can I investigate, all of them. But I will list them here to encourage further study by the reader).

(1) **The sensory experience of the apostles, reported to us by them.** This is the only proof we have of most historical facts—the testimony of those who experienced the events reported. Thus, the resurrection of Christ, by virtue of this type of evidence alone, is at least as strongly proven as most historical facts we take for granted.

(2) **The Old Testament prophecies.** See Psalm 16:8-10. In fact, this is even stronger testimony than the above. Humans **can** be mistaken (though 500 witnesses remove all reasonable doubt), but God **cannot**

lie. God said in the Old Testament that Christ would be raised; this line of evidence makes the resurrection incontrovertible. There is much wise philosophy in Peter's statement "We have a **more sure** word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1:19). Prophecy **is more sure** than man's word, because it is **God's Word!**

(3) **The miracles of Jesus and the apostles.** Christ's miracles, though not directly performed to prove His resurrection, **were** done to prove His Deity, and thus, implicitly His resurrection. The miracles that the apostles performed served to confirm their message, which was about a risen Lord.

(4) **The empty tomb.** We have discussed, at great length, this vital proof of Christ's resurrection.

(5) **The first proclamations of the resurrection.** The gospel was preached first in the very town where Christ was crucified, thereby challenging skepticism and unbelief. This is a powerful argument.

There exists also the possibility that archaeological evidence now confirms, implicitly, the resurrection of Christ. I am referring to the so-called "Nazareth Decree." For further information on this, see Wayne Jackson's book, *Biblical Studies in the Light of Archaeology* (1982). No fact of history has **so many** lines of evidence in support. We absolutely affirm that the resurrection of Jesus is confirmed and proven.

But, there is one more intriguing objection that might be heard. Campbell eloquently stated and refuted it:

Granted, for the moment, says some skeptic, that you have fairly made out the fact of Christ's resurrection by the testimony of his friends; still there is a suspicion resting upon that testimony, just from the fact that all the witnesses were Christians. Let us have some skeptical Jew, or some skeptical Greek affirming the fact—produce some respectable Roman author, like Tacitus or Seutonius, who affirms the same fact, and then you may claim our assent with more reason. Strange illusion this, which compels a person to reject the better, and to believe the worst testimony. Now, why prefer the testimony of a man who will assert a great practical truth, and not accord with it in his behavior, to the testimony of another, who espouses the same truth and lives conformably to it? Does the fact of a person's living conformably to what he testifies discredit his testimony? Yet this is precisely the logic of this objection. The man who cries fire, and sits in the burning house, is more to be believed, than the man who cries fire, and runs out of it!

...Nay, indeed, we have infinitely better testimony than that of Tacitus, or a thousand such—for we have the testimony of Paul, and myriads of Jews and Greeks who lived in those times and places, and had access to the evidence, who were as hostile to Christians and Christianity as any skeptic now can be; and yet, so overpowering was the evidence, that from enemies, they became friends (1957, pp. 320-321).

Those who honestly weigh the evidence today also will become friends. The evidence is simply too strong.

Though we certainly have not been exhaustive in our treatment of this subject, the case is certain. On the basis of the evidence at hand, we can draw only one conclusion—Jesus’ body was not stolen, but was raised miraculously from the dead by the power of God. We have summoned over 500 witnesses who attest to this fact. And the evidence and testimony of these 500 is made all the more powerful when we consider that for 4,000+ years the prophets of God had been predicting such and that Jesus Himself stated, during His ministry, that He would be raised. It therefore is possible to draw four implications from the resurrection:

- (1) Jesus Christ is the Son of God;
- (2) His death, as He claimed, was effective for the purpose of bringing man back to a covenant relationship with God;
- (3) Since He is God, we are obligated to submit to Him;
- (4) One day we ourselves will be raised.

Indeed, this thing was not “done in a corner”!

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