

THE DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
Part VIII: The Validity Of Christ's Bodily Resurrection From The Dead

I. Introduction

- A. The Gospel we preach is that Christ died for our sins, was buried and arose bodily from the dead, 1 Cor. 15:1-11. Thus, for anyone to **deny** this resurrection is for him to deny the foundation of our faith!
- B. But therein lies a problem for the natural mind -- the challenge of believing in a **miracle** of Christ's **resurrection** from the **dead!** Accordingly, we examine this important topic for the truth (as follows):

II. The Validity Of Christ's Bodily Resurrection From The Dead.

- A. The New Testament and Old Testament certify that Jesus of Nazareth bodily arose from the dead:
 - 1. Isaiah 53:10 predicts that after Messiah offers Himself as an atonement for sin that his days would be prolonged. This could occur only with a bodily resurrection following His death **by** that sin sacrifice.
 - 2. Jesus appeared bodily to witnesses following His resurrection: He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11-17), to the other women (Mtt. 28:9-10), to Peter (1 Cor. 15:5), to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35), to the ten disciples (Lk. 24:36-43), to the eleven disciples (Jn. 20:26-29), to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23), to more than 500 disciples at a time (1 Cor. 15:6) and to the eleven at His ascension into heaven (Mtt. 28:16-20).
- B. External evidence abounds that Jesus of Nazareth bodily arose from the dead:
 - 1. Christ's followers were even willing to be tortured and killed for this belief. Simon Greenleaf, one of two men responsible for the rise of the Harvard Law School to its eminent position among such schools, "concludes: 'It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not know this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact. The annals of military warfare afford scarcely an example of the like heroic constancy, patience, and unflinching courage.'" (Simon Greenleaf, An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice, 1965 reprint of the 1874 ed., p. 29 as quoted in Josh McDowell's, A Ready Defense, p. 239-240)
 - 2. Besides, according to Greenleaf, "according to the laws of legal evidence used in courts of law, there is more evidence for the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ than for just about any other event in history." (Ibid. , McDowell, p. 217) McDowell lists some important ones as follows:
 - a. The broken Roman Seal, the consequences of which meant crucifixion upside down for the guilty.
 - b. The failure of the authorities to produce a body which would have stopped rumors of a resurrection.
 - c. An elite Roman guard gone AWOL **and unpunished!**
 - d. The presence of the graveclothes still in a cocoon shape **but with no body in them**, Jn. 20:7 and *entetuligmenon* for "wrapped together" (KJV) (NIV = "folded up"), Ibid., p. 231-235!
 - 3. Two New Testament eyewitnesses give evidence to **hostile** readers in a subtle **challenge** to be **challenged**:
 - a. Matthew, a former despised tax collector who was used to being disbelieved, tells his readers that to the **day** of his writing his Gospel, Jerusalem's authorities claimed that the disciples had stolen Christ's body, Mtt. 28:15! This saying is remarkable as soldiers saying this would have been crucified, so the **fact** it was said shows that Christ's body was nowhere to be found! Matthew simply makes the statement as a subtle challenge to be discredited by detractors of Christianity!
 - b. Paul claimed to some who **denied** resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12) that Jesus was seen alive after His crucifixion by 500 people at one time, the greater of whom **still** remained alive at Paul's writing, 1 Cor. 15:6. Dr. Ewin M. Yamauchi, Assistant Professor of history at Miami University says of this: "Paul says in effect, 'If you do not believe me, you can ask them.'" (Yamauchi, "Easter-- Myth, Hallucination or History?" Christianity Today, Mar. 29, '74 as quoted in McDowell, Ibid., p. 236)
 - c. Since Christianity was open to being discredited were detractors to have taken on these challenges by Paul and Matthew, and since there were so many willing detractors around at the time, the **fact** that these challenges went **undefeated** argues for the credibility the claim that Jesus indeed arose!

Lesson: From (1) the internal evidence of Scripture itself, Jesus bodily arose from the dead. From (2) the external evidences of history, "there is more evidence for the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ than for just about any other event in history." Jesus truly bodily arose from the dead!