

Video Transcript: Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?

1.

Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead? This is surely one of the most important questions anyone could ask. If it is true, then the resurrection of Christ has significant implications for each of us, not only in regard to the next life, but for this life as well.

In this video, I will show that there is strong historical evidence to support the resurrection of Christ.

2.

It has often been said that the resurrection of Christ is the best attested fact in history. For example:

I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead – Thomas Arnold.

As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. To 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 ... The Gospel evidence for the resurrection ... I accept unreservedly as the testimony of truthful people to facts they were able to substantiate – Sir Edward Clarke K.C.

3.

Taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no single historical incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection – B. F. Westcott.

It is certainly the case that it takes more faith to believe, against the evidence, that the resurrection did not occur, than it does to believe that it has occurred – Richard Riss.

Given its significance for our lives and our eternal destiny, surely the resurrection of Christ is a subject worthy of careful consideration.

4.

There are three key areas of evidence for the resurrection:

1. **Bible prophecy.** Referring to the life, death and resurrection of Christ, Luke wrote:

Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days (Acts 3:24).

2. **Eyewitness accounts.** In regard to the resurrection, Luke wrote:

After his suffering, [Jesus] showed himself to [the apostles] and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive (Acts 1:3).

3. **The growth of the Church.** It is not the size of the Church that is important here, but the difficult circumstances in which it flourished. Luke wrote that, in spite of terrible persecution:

Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number (Acts 5:14).

5.

Jesus himself pointed to his fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies in support of his claim to be the Messiah (i.e., the Saviour of the world) (e.g., Luke 24:13-27).

There are four Old Testament prophecies that relate directly to Christ's resurrection from the dead:

Psalm 16:10 foretold that his body would not see decay (cf. Acts 2:13; 13:32-37).

Psalm 110:4 foretold that he would be a priest forever and, hence, live forever (cf. Hebrews 7:17, 23-24).

Isaiah 53:10-11 predicted his sacrificial death and resurrection to eternal life (cf. Luke 24:45-47).

And Hosea 6:1-2 alludes to his resurrection after three days (cf. Acts 10:39-40).

6.

Jesus also pointed to the experience of Jonah as a foreshadowing of his death and resurrection:

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40).

He also spoke plainly to his disciples about his imminent death and resurrection on several occasions (e.g., Matthew 16:21).

No other religious leader has ever done this; nor could they, because only God knows the future (cf. Isaiah 41:21-24).

7.

The writers of the gospels and epistles that make up the New Testament are all witnesses to the resurrection of Christ.

According to Luke, the resurrected Christ appeared to his disciples “over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

The apostle Paul claimed that the resurrected Christ appeared to over 500 of his disciples at the same time (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

But can we trust these accounts?

An honest study of the New Testament writings reveals them to be authentic and reliable eyewitness accounts.

8.

The literary scholar, Archibald Rutledge, wrote:

For more than 30 years it was my chief business in life to study and try to teach literature. To anyone earnestly so engaged there naturally comes a certain ability to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, the authentic from the invented. Every time I read the Gospels I am pressed more deeply with the conviction that the narratives concerning Christ do not belong to the realms of fancy, tradition or folklore ... The incidents are such that they could never have been invented; and their effect on the world for 2000 years has been such as no inventions could have produced. These stories possess that patent transparent validity that belongs only to truth – Archibald Rutledge.

9.

After the crucifixion of Christ, the large crowds that followed him had melted away, the apostles were hiding behind locked doors for fear of their lives, and his disciples were dispirited and defeated.

The one they had hoped was the long awaited Messiah, whose coming had been forecast by all the great Old Testament prophets, who had taught such powerful truths and had demonstrated his authority with many miraculous proofs, was dead.

Of the twelve apostles, Judas had betrayed Jesus and then hanged himself, Peter had denied Jesus, and Thomas still had doubts. James, the brother of Jesus, had always been sceptical.

What was it, then, that transformed this tiny band of unschooled, ordinary men and women within a few days of the crucifixion, into the fearless and effective leaders of a new religious movement?

10.

Peter now boldly confronted the crowds and the Pharisees proclaiming that Jesus was the promised Messiah and risen Lord.

Thomas was now fully convinced that Jesus was his “Lord and God” (John 20:28).

James became a believer, and would later become the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Mary, who had watched her son die a cruel death on a cross, instead of mourning her loss, was now praying with the disciples and worshipping Jesus.

And according to Luke, “a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 5:7 cf. John 12:42).

11.

No less impressive is the conversion of Paul. Before his conversion, Paul was a zealous Pharisee and merciless persecutor of the early Church.

According to Luke, Paul “began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison” (Acts 8:3).

But after his dramatic encounter with the risen Christ, Paul at once “began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20).

His conviction was such that no amount of hardship could deter him. He was frequently flogged and beaten, once stoned, and three times shipwrecked. He was constantly in danger from the elements, from bandits, from the Gentiles and from the Jews.

12.

Over the last two thousand years, this same conviction has enabled ordinary men, women and children to endure great hardships and persecution.

Their strength has come from their belief that death, “the last enemy to be destroyed”, has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20-28).

One final point is worth noting. It was the Jewish custom to venerate the tombs of religious leaders and other dignitaries, but the early Christians showed no interest in Christ’s tomb. They showed no interest, because he was not there!

13.

There can be no doubt that the resurrection of Christ was the mainstay of the early church.

It is the theme that underpins everything else in the Christian message, and the guarantee of every promise, especially the promise of eternal life for those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour (John 5:24; 11:25).

The resurrection of Christ is supported by the fulfilment of Bible prophecy, reliable eyewitness accounts, and the remarkable growth of the Church.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies (John 11:25). This is clearly a promise that we can trust.