

Acts 1:1-3 He is alive!

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This morning we are back in the book of Acts and we are going to look at the resurrection of Jesus.

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Acts 1:1-3

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,

2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

3 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.

Christianity is the only major world faith that claims that their founder not only died but was miraculously resurrected from the dead.

Luke who wrote the book of Acts says that Jesus presented himself alive to the 12 disciples by **many** proofs.

So what are some of these proofs?

First of all when attempting to prove that Jesus was raised from the dead you will not be able to prove it scientifically as the scientific method requires three things to take place.

The Scientific method

- Repeatable events in a controlled environment
- Observable measurable data for collection
- So that you can prove or disprove the theories

This is something that we cannot do with historical events.

We need a different sort of evidence that will provide proof that an event in history actually took place and for that we need **reliable** historical records.

And we have the New Testament documents which include all 4 gospel accounts, the book of Acts and the letters to the early Christian churches.

These documents were written by nine different authors and all affirm that Jesus was raised from the dead - not one of them denies this. It was either a huge conspiracy that all these guys agreed with each other or it was simply the truth.

Now we could go into that in a lot more detail regarding this, but this morning I want to quickly look at some of these proofs that Luke speaks of and some that he more than likely wouldn't have had in mind.

When considering whether Jesus was raised from the dead you first have to establish that he in fact did die because we have a number of different people who say that he didn't die on the cross but rather fainted and still had enough life in him to be revived.

Also from Matthew's gospel we see that the Roman guards were bribed to say that the disciples came at night and stole his body. Neither of these arguments holds any weight as we'll soon see.

So let's look at 7 proofs.

Proof #1

He was severely whipped, almost to the point of death.

Matthew 27:26

Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

This was not like getting the strap in school for those who can remember. Whippings or scourging like this almost brought the person to the point of death and then was followed by crucifixion

It consisted of a handle, to which several cords or leather thongs were affixed, which were weighted with jagged pieces of bone or metal, to make the blow more painful and effective. International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia

It is recognised that 40 lashes was the limit a person could bear without dying.

So, Jesus already was in pretty bad shape and still had the crucifixion to suffer.

Proof #2**Crucifixion - Slow and Painful Death**

As I said a few weeks ago, crucifixion would have to be one of the world's cruellest torture and death machines.

Not only were large pegs driven through the persons hands and feet, but the position they were in left them put enormous pressure on their lungs depriving them of oxygen.

This meant that they needed to push themselves up to get air and if the soldiers needed to hasten death as they needed to in the two criminals who were crucified with Jesus they would break their legs and the victim would die within minutes.

In Jesus case however, he had already died and given his spirit up so that the soldiers instead of breaking his legs, shoved a spear into his side to make sure he was dead.

Jesus surely died.

Proof #3

The tomb was secure and heavily protected

Matthew 27:57-65

57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus.

58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.

59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud

60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

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.”

The tomb of Jesus was incredibly secure and the soldiers made it as secure as they could. Not only was there a huge stone that was rolled over the entrance of the tomb, but it was also securely guarded by Roman soldiers. There was no way anyone could have naturally escaped from this tomb, let alone someone in Jesus’ condition.

Proof #4

His appearances over a 40 day period, to more than 500 people in different places and at different times were and are undeniable proof that Jesus was raised from the dead. He appeared to:

- Mary Magdalene outside the tomb (John 20:10-17)
- Two unknowns on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32)
- Simon Peter (Luke 24:34)
- Ten of the disciples and others (John 20:19-24, Luke 24:33-39)
- Thomas and the other disciples (John 20:24-29)
- The disciples by the sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-25)
- The disciples and around 500 others when he went into heaven (Acts 1:4-9, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8)
- James the half brother of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7)
- Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19)

Proof #5

Over 8,000 people become disciples shortly after the resurrection and this was in Jerusalem the very place where these events took place and could have easily been disproven. (Acts 2:40-41, 4:1-4)

Proof #6

The willingness for all the disciples including Paul to risk their lives and for many of them die defending that Jesus was God in the flesh and that he is alive.

Paul even went so far as to say that:

1 Corinthians 15:14

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

Proof #7

And finally all the millions of people whose lives have been changed around the world beginning 2000 years ago all the way to the present time, including us.

John 20:24-29

24 Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

What about you this morning - do you believe?

For those of you who are still doubting Jesus said the following.

John 11:25-26

25b "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

So how do we accept this promise of eternal life that Jesus said you can have if you would simply believe?

Romans 10:9-13

9 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.

10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

This is how you know - by believing in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confessing that with your mouth.

If you believe in your heart you need to then simply tell Jesus, I believe you are alive and are willing to save me and give me eternal life with you.

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Let's pray.