

PROVING THE BIBLE

Lesson Twelve

Jesus' Resurrection

We spent the last while looking at the Creation. If this is the first and biggest miracle, how easy is it for us to believe and understand the other miracles that Jesus and the apostles did on earth? If something came from nothing, that is outside the known laws of nature and shown to be impossible by science, yet they admit it did happen, is it so hard to believe that Jesus walked on water, or turned water to wine? But to be sure, let's look at the proof of one of the other best-known miracles—the resurrection of Christ—so we can see that miracles are another way we can know the Bible is real and accurate.



A Miracle: is an event that defies natural laws and can only be accounted for by a supernatural explanation.

So for example the birth of a child is wonderful, but it follows natural laws and is not a miracle, but walking on water is a miracle.

There is nothing miraculous about helping someone who needs CPR. But bringing a man back from the dead who was dead for four days; that is a miracle.

We have shown God exists through valid evidence, and we will continue to see that miracles are not only possible, but reasonable. It makes sense that if there is a God, He would want to use the supernatural sometimes to get our attention.

Jesus claimed to be God and then used miracles to prove that claim. When Peter preached to the Jews, he said Jesus proved to be God because of the miracles he did.

Acts 2:22 – Peter is speaking to the people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost:

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

“As you yourselves know...” Remember from last time that the Bible didn’t stop right then and there because they took Peter and killed him for telling a lie?

Even Jesus’ enemies admitted He performed things that were miraculous and wonderful.



Do you know the story of Lazarus? He was a friend of Jesus, who had been dead four days before Jesus raised him? Let’s read about Jesus talking with the people who were mourning for Lazarus, who had been dead already four days.

John 11:40-48

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” ⁴³ Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” ⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

Question:

When Jesus’s enemies heard the witnesses, what did they admit in verse 47? This Man works many miracles, if we let Him alone everyone will believe in Him.

Speaking of Jesus it says:

John 11:53

Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

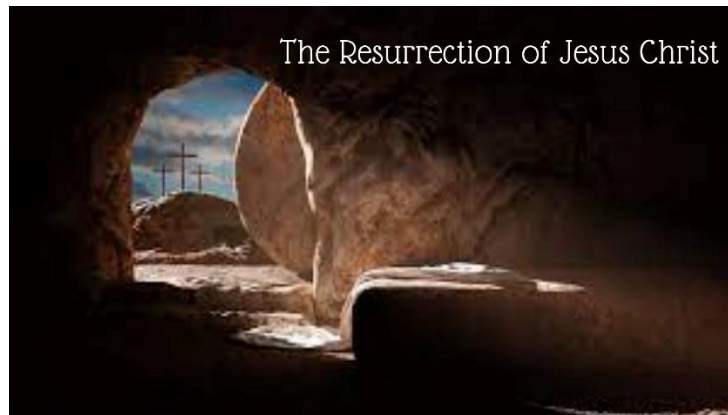
John 12:9-11

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.¹⁰ But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

Questions:

Who else were the chief priests going to kill besides Jesus? They said they needed to kill Lazarus

Why? Since He was proof of Jesus miracle... They didn't deny the miracle, but they decided to kill them both because of the result of the miracle – belief in Christ. They had direct evidence right in front of them and choose disbelief. It is not caused by lack of evidence but lack of sincerity. His miracles prove He was the Son of God.



Now we are going to look at the biggest miracle Jesus did, the one that makes Christianity what it is:

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ – Evidence from the Burial Tomb

Some will say it doesn't matter if Jesus died, but it does. Belief in the resurrection is essential.

If Jesus' body is still in the tomb, then how is he going to make good on his claim to raise you and me from the dead? Resurrection is not a side point; it is the main point.

1 Corinthians shows us the importance of Jesus' resurrection:

1 Corinthians 15:13-19

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.¹⁵ Yes, and we are

found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ And those in Christ who have already died are lost. If our hope in Christ is only for this life here on earth, then people should feel more sorry for us than for anyone else.

What are some things you notice about the consequences “If Christ has not been raised...”

- **Preaching about Jesus is Empty & Worthless.** There would be no power in just being nice with no good news of salvation and forgiveness.
- **Our Faith Is Empty & Worthless.** Why would you need faith in Jesus if you would not get more after you die? Belief in a powerless person of lies is empty.
- **The Apostles Are False Witnesses.** No reason to believe the message or the apostles.
- **We Are Still in Our Sins.** We are in big trouble – Jesus not only encourages people to live a good life – He tells us how to receive salvation from sin, death, and hell. If Jesus didn’t die, then we have no salvation. No hope!
- **Believers No Longer Exist at Their Deaths.** Those who died would no longer exist – along with everyone else who had already died. But death doesn’t get the last word thanks to Christ.
- **So, then People Should Feel Sad for Christians.** They denied themselves of “life” if it wasn’t true and they would be full of lies and falsehood. Why go through persecution, torture, etc. It would be foolish and sad as Paul says:

1 Corinthians 15:32

“If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

But are Christians foolish? Every New Testament promise either stands or fails on the resurrection of Christ.

**How do we prove that the resurrection (a miracle) really did occur?
Belief in Jesus’ Resurrection is based on evidence**

The resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God.

Romans 1:3-4

The Good News is about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a human, he was born from the family of David, but through the Holy Spirit he was shown to be God's powerful Son when he was raised from death.

If Jesus rose, it proves he can and is the Son of God. This is also another instance of prophetic prophecy. Jesus predicted accurately that he would die.

Now some will say they don't believe in the resurrection because they know how serious the consequences are or because they don't believe in miracles. But, all of us believe in things we haven't seen. Even evolutionists when asked, "Have you ever seen life evolve?" will say, "No." "Have you ever seen life come from non-life?" They will say, "No." If you ask, "Where did the big bang come from? And the explosion... Have you ever seen an explosion that can do that?" And they will say, "No."

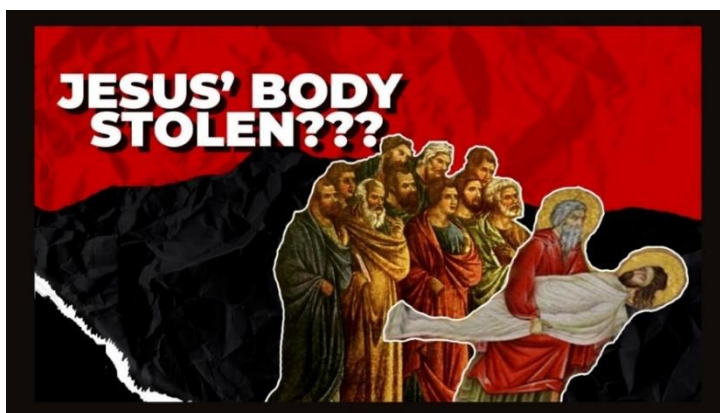
The skeptic believes things they have never seen. So just because you have never seen a resurrection, does it mean it is impossible to do that? No! Even skeptics can't follow through with their logic.

As we saw earlier, the New Testament documents are the most historically documented words ever written, along with the Old Testament.

Let's look at the facts about Jesus' resurrection:

The Tomb Was Open and Empty

In regards to Jesus' resurrection, it has to be one of three things: Someone took Jesus' body (either the disciples, Jews or Romans and it is a fraud); it was superhuman, or Jesus walked out on his own and he never even died.



Did Someone Take the Body?

1) Was it the Disciples of Christ?

Matthew 27:62-66

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

⁶⁵“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.”

⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

The Jews and Romans set the stone in place with guards, so the disciples couldn't steal the body. Pilate gives a guard (4-16 trained soldiers), and they seal the stone and make it secure. These guards would take the responsibility seriously as their lives were at risk. These were trained guards with weapons. They know there is supposed to be some action on day three because the Jewish leaders told them that was what Jesus had said!

Matthew 28:11-15

While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ ¹⁴If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Here we read the guards reported the body is gone! That the Jews gave money to the soldiers.

Question:

What did the Jews say the guards were to say if questioned? You are to say His disciples came and stole Him while you were asleep. Bribe – and told what to say – story is disciples came – while guards? While seal? Weapons, while sleeping – all of you? If you are asleep how can you witness who took the body? Move a large stone really quietly? The Bible states there was a severe earthquake – even an earthquake?

The evidence states: the body is not there!

1. Sleeping men make for poor eye-witnesses. How many times have you slept and been able to make an eye-witness testimony about what had happened

accurately? You wouldn't even be awake to know what did happen, let alone testify to it. Yet, the guards said what happened while they slept.

2. The Jews said the disciples stole the body while the guards slept. Yet the guards knew who stole the body... if they knew who stole the body, it would have been easy to arrest those people for stealing a body that was under Roman guard and was sealed.
3. The disciples would have immediately been arrested and killed for doing such a thing.
4. Pretty amazing that the guards were sleeping when their life depended on it. Also that **all** of them slept and yet they still knew who it was who took the body.
5. The whole time the people were supposedly carrying a heavy stiff body away, not one of the soldiers who saw it (while supposedly sleeping) chased after them?
6. If the gospel accounts weren't true, because the resurrection didn't happen, would the church have preserved them as true when they knew it wasn't? And we saw earlier that the church not only kept the accounts but made copies. If they knew that the disciples stole the body why would people continue to die for their faith and risk persecution during the 1st and 2nd centuries? We saw in an earlier study that Christians were persecuted and tortured for their belief. If the disciples did take the body, they all knew they were dying for a lie.

Conclusion

So far we have seen that the most logical account for the creation story is that God did a pretty awesome miracle. We saw also that Jesus' enemies didn't deny He raised Lazarus but believed it so much they decided to kill Jesus and Lazarus because of the attention Lazarus was getting. We saw that Jesus could indeed raise people from the dead.

Finally, we have begun to look at the resurrection. The fact that without the resurrection our Christian faith is pointless and even full of lies. But with the resurrection it proves Jesus is the Son of God. By looking at the options provided so far, we see it is not reasonable to think someone could have stolen the body with trained guards standing watch. Next time we will look at even more evidence of Jesus' resurrection.

What was the most interesting facts we studied so far?

Any thoughts or questions?

