

Morning Sermon April 12, 2020

“Evidence for Christ’s Resurrection” 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

If a person’s goal were to destroy Christianity, the best way would be to disprove or at least discredit Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

The resurrection is evidence itself to us that Jesus Christ is:

1. The Son of God –

²⁶ ... Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, “**My Lord and my God!**” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” John 20:26–29 (NKJV)

2. Lord and Christ –

³² This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Acts 2:32 (NKJV)

³⁶ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36 (NKJV)

3. The Forgiver of sins –

³⁰ But God raised Him from the dead. Acts 13:30 (NKJV) ...

³⁸ Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Acts 13:38–39 (NKJV)

4. The Judge of all the world –

³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” Acts 17:31 (NKJV)

Without the resurrection Paul says our faith would be in vain. We would be most miserable of men –

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 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 1 Corinthians 15:14–19 (NKJV)

What evidence do we have for Christ’s resurrection?

I. We have the continued existence of a thriving church more than 2000 years after the time of Christ -

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, Revelation 5:9 (NKJV)

Would the church have been so successful if Christ’s dead body was produced?

1. Consider, Peter, Christ’s contemporary, was preaching Christ’s resurrection just forty days after His ascension and many believed him –

³² This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Acts 2:32 (NKJV)

⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to *them*. Acts 2:41 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:47 (NKJV)

2. Note this preaching started in Jerusalem and was noticed by Christ’s enemies ... They were close to Christ tomb... Problem for them it was empty -

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to go

aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. ¹⁷ But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.” Acts 4:13–17 (NKJV)

3. *The early Christian leaders, those who taught the faith, died for the faith –*

A. *James was killed by Herod –*

12 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church. ² Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. Acts 12:1–2 (NKJV)

B. *The rest of the Apostles, all except John were killed for their faith: Non biblical accounts tells us: Peter was crucified upside down, Andrew, Bartholomew and Philip were crucified. James the son of Alpheas was thrown from the temple, stoned and beaten with a club. Thomas was killed with a spear...*

4. *The Church thrived despite persecution –*

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ As it is written: “*For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*” ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Romans 8:35–37 (NKJV)

The Letter to the Romans was written about the same time as Nero gained power, it speaks of persecution and we know Nero persecuted the church. The time of this was as early as 60 something AD. Just 30 years after Christ’s death and resurrection ... Which meant belief in Christ’s resurrection had reached Rome and to the point an emperor noticed it and to the point Romans were willing to die for it!

Proof of this, the Roman Catacombs are filled with tombs of Christians, marked with Christian symbols, at least a half-million Christians were buried there. Their bodies were burned by Nero and used to light Rome’s streets at night, later believers were fed to wild animals ... These points disproved the modern Myth theory, belief in Christ’s resurrection did not develop slowly over time -

“the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.”
Tertullian, 2nd Century Church Father

II. *The evidence of Scripture, especially many manuscripts –*

1. *A super abundance of manuscripts, people were WRITING, excitedly, energetically, in an un-match way*

Manuscript Evidence for Ancient Writings

Author	Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	#Mss
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs	10
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs	7
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs	8
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000 yrs	20
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643
New Testament	400-100 A.D.	125 A.D.	25-50 yrs	24,000

2. *Just as Emperors persecuted Christians, so they outlawed and tried to destroy Scripture, HA!*

3. *The Scripture is accurate in the way it describes things*

III. *The weakness of other explanations*

1. *The swoon theory / Jesus didn’t really die*

2. *The conspiracy theory / Disciples agreed to lie*

3. *The hallucination theory -*

⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, ... 1 Corinthians 15:6 (NKJV)

4. *Myth theory / the idea built up over time –*

A. *New Testament not written like a myth*

B. *Gospel not responded to like a myth*

C. *Writing to close to events to be a myth*

D. *Would you die for a myth?*

Arnold Brevick