

Infallible Proofs



Acts 1:3 “To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:”

The resurrection is central to the Christian narrative. Did Jesus really arise from the dead?

If He did not, He will just be another false prophet. He claimed that He will raise up the temple of his body after three days (John 2:19), so if He did not, he would be found a liar.

But if He really did, then all that He claimed to be is true. He is the way, the truth and the life, and no man comes to the Father except by Him. If He rose from the dead, He really is the Promised Messiah; He is before Abraham; He is the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13, and He is the Son of God, the manifestation of God in human form. He is also the Resurrection and the life, the bread of life, and all He said about the kingdom of God and the end times is true. We can completely rely in everything He said, because His resurrection from the dead makes it all valid and sure.

In our lives, it also has tremendous effect. If Christ did not rise up from the dead, then our preaching is in vain and our faith is also in vain, and we are yet in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:14,17). But because he rose from the dead, we now *should walk in newness of life, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father*, (Romans 6:4). Also, if the Spirit of God dwells in you, the same Spirit who rose up Jesus from the dead will also quicken your mortal body.(Romans 8:11)

The Uniqueness of the Resurrection of Jesus

In the Old Testament, there had been incidents of people being resurrected from the dead. In 1 Kings 17:17-24, we can find Elijah bringing back to life the son of the widow of Zarephath. In 2 Kings 4:18-37, Elisha also resurrected the son of the Shunammite woman. Also, a dead man was raised back to life when his carcass touched the bones of Elisha in 2 Kings 13:20-21.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus rose Lazarus from the dead. There were also some saints that were resurrected when the Lord died (Matthew 27:52-53). We also hear about a testimony or two where people were declared dead for some time, and then were brought back to life miraculously. But how is the resurrection of the Lord different from them?

All of the other resurrections were just *temporal resurrections*. Meaning, those who were raised back to life was only raised temporarily, as they eventually died again. They were resurrected to the same bodies, earthly bodies which were still subject to sickness, aging and corruption. So they eventually died again because the bodies they were raised to is the same mortal bodies that we all have.

But not with the Lord Jesus Christ. He rose into an incorruptible body, a glorified body, and He is alive forevermore.

Revelation 1:18 "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

We will also be receiving the same kind of body, when the Lord returns for the church. He is called the firstfruit of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20), first begotten of the dead (Revelation 1:5), because He was the first risen from the dead to the incorruptible, glorified body, and later on we will be receiving the same when He comes;

1 John 3:2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality."

Romans 8:23 "And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. "

Who Rose Jesus from the Dead?

This will be confusing for someone who believes God is a Trinity, or One God in essence, but three in persons. The Bible says, it is God who rose him from the dead;

Acts 2:24 “Whom **God hath raised up**, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

Who is God here that rose Jesus from the dead? Is it the whole trinity, the whole Godhead who rose Him? Or is it the Father? Or is it the Son? Or maybe the Holy Ghost?

Let us just say that God here is the Father. So the Father rose Jesus from the dead, just as in Romans 6:4;

Romans 6:4 “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that **like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father**, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

But why in Romans 8:11, it is the Spirit which raised up Jesus?

Romans 8:11 “But if **the Spirit** of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

While in the book of John, Jesus said that He Himself would raise him up from the dead, pertaining to His body as the temple;

John 2:19-22 “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three **days I will raise it up**. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

So who raised Jesus from the dead? Is it the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost? If one believes in three persons in the Godhead, this is such a problem, as these Scriptures would contradict themselves. But believing in the Oneness of God, that is God is one – in essence and in person, numerical and indivisible One, this would be consistent with the whole Scriptures. Jesus saying, “Destroy this temple and I will raise it up”, would completely make sense, because He and the Father are one(John 10:10), and the Holy Spirit is not a third person, but God in Spirit form, so the Holy Ghost can also be called the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9), and Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2, 1 Corinthians 3:16).

The belief on the Resurrection of Jesus is Essential to One’s Salvation

Romans 10:9 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

We know that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16), and the gospel is the death, burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Therefore, believing His resurrection from the dead is part of that good news that we received and obeyed, as the gospel needed to be obeyed (2 Thessalonians 1:8). His resurrection applied to our lives is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which will enable us to walk in the newness of life (Romans 6:4).

Objections on the Resurrection

Many people throughout the ages have rejected the good news that someone who died on the cross, and was buried, rose again after three days. This would really be impossible for men, but not with God. The One who died is no ordinary man, and His death and resurrection was already prophesied by the Old Testament. But the unbelieving heart would always find some reasons to doubt this despite of the compelling evidences. These are some of the most common objections to the Resurrection:

1. That Jesus' body was stolen by the Apostles:

This claim is the most common, even circulating in the times of the Apostles. This is because it is the easiest way to explain away the empty tomb. Why is the tomb empty? Where is the dead body? If they were able to produce and show the people the dead body of Jesus of Nazareth, the claim of the resurrection would have been easily shunned. His dead body could have been their trophy, the ultimate sign of their victory over the One who claimed divinity and authority. But they could not show His body. How would they explain it? By putting the blame on the disciples. The religious leaders paid the soldiers that watched the grave to fabricate the story that the apostles stole His body the night before;

Matthew 28:11-15 "Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. "

These soldiers who were witnesses of how an angel from heaven descended to roll away the stone from the mouth of the grave told a different story, a not so plausible one, because they were paid a large sum. The Apostles were in hiding since the Lord was captured (except for John who was there during the crucifixion). They were afraid for their own lives, and it was very unlikely that these frightened men would go the grave to steal the body, when they knew soldiers were there to guard it.

2. That the Apostles and other witnesses were hallucinating

Some would say that maybe they really saw Jesus after His death. But maybe they were hallucinating. When a person would like to see something, sometimes our brains play a trick on us, showing us illusions because of our wishful thinking and that great desire makes people deluded. Maybe that is what happened to those who saw Him?

If that is the case, the apostles and the other witnesses would not pass the criteria of hallucination because of their desire to see Jesus again. They had no expectation to see Him. They totally forgot about what the Lord told them about Him resurrecting. Also, some of the witnesses were not believers of Jesus. For example, James, believed to be Jesus' brother (or half-brother, since Joseph was not Jesus' real father), was not a believer of the Lord when He was alive, but after the Resurrection and Jesus showing Himself to him, he became a believer. But before the Lord appeared to him, he had no expectation nor desire to see Him again, because He was not even convinced that He is the Messiah when Jesus was alive.

Also, there were more than 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus alive. While hallucination is a proven phenomenon by science, mass hallucination is not. Not even two persons would hallucinate exactly the same thing at once, how much more 500? Lee Strobel said,

“I went to a psychologist friend and said if 500 people claimed to see Jesus after he died, it was just a hallucination. He said hallucinations are an individual event. If 500 people have the same hallucination, that's a bigger miracle than the resurrection.”

So it is impossible for more than 500 people to be hallucinating at the same time, about the same thing, so this theory of mass hallucination is not plausible. If they all saw the same thing, and not everyone where of the same disposition, mindset and feeling towards the Lord Jesus, then they must have seen a real thing, and not something imaginary.

3. That the one crucified was not Jesus

Another objection made against the resurrection was that Jesus did not die at the cross in the first place, that He was replaced by another man who looked like Him and was made to appear to be Him. For example, the Koran teaches that Jesus was not killed nor crucified, but so it was made to appear to them (Surah 4:157). If it was not Jesus who died at the cross, then appearing to the people later and deceiving them to believe He was resurrected would be possible.

This objection would be hard to prove for the reason that the Romans were experts in killing and would be hard to deceive. Jesus was well known by everyone by those times, and to have Him replaced is not very probable. Also, the crucifixion of Jesus is one of the most reliably attested facts in the ancient world. Historians, even those who would object to the Resurrection, would still attest to His death. This theory is highly speculative and very unnatural, even more unnatural than the Resurrection itself.

We see, the Koran teaches Jesus was just some prophet, that He was just a man and not God. Jesus being rose from the dead would prove Him to be more than just a man, and therefore greater than the founder of Islam, Mohammad, who himself died in 632 AD. So their teaching that Jesus did not die on the cross is an attempt to negate the Resurrection claim, so Jesus would be put in the level of just a good man, a moral teacher.

That somebody died on the cross that day, and that He was called the King of the Jews, and He was some teacher, is something that cannot be refuted. It was the talk of the town, and no one could have missed it, that Cleopas thought only a stranger would not know about it;

Luke 24:18 “And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.”

Even the well-known Jewish historian Josephus, in his writing *Antiquities*, mentioned about Jesus;

Antiquities 18:63 "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon their loyalty to him. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the Prophets have recounted wonders."

Though Josephus was a non-Christian Jew, he attests to the death of Jesus on the cross by the hands of Pilate, and he is regarded as an authoritative historian of the nation Israel, being born a few years after the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

What are the infallible proofs that He was risen, as mentioned by Acts 1:3?

Infallible proof #1: The Empty Tomb

The tomb where the Lord was buried lies just inside or near Jerusalem. Today, there were two possible sites of the grave where He laid; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Garden Tomb (the first one inside the Old City of Jerusalem, the other outside the Old City). But during the times of the Lord and the apostles, this tomb can easily be located by any skeptic. The tomb being empty is the reason why the priests needed to come up with the story of the body being stolen, because the dead body was nowhere to be found.

Matthew 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

This was what the angel told the women who were there first on the first Resurrection Sunday. But it was also an invitation for everyone who could pay a visit to the grave. That angel descended and rolled the stone away (Matthew 28:2). Why did He roll it away? Was it so that Jesus could come out? No. Jesus could come out of the grave without the angel's help in rolling away the stone. The angel rolled it away for all the world to see it is empty!

Infallible proof #2: Eye witnesses

There were more than 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus alive.

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

Maybe it was just someone who looked like Him? Or maybe they have seen His Spirit? Or maybe a vision? This may have been the objection in the mind of Thomas. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25) But we know the Lord appeared to him also, even letting him touch his nail-

pierced hands and His side thrust with spear. To make sure He is not a ghost or a spirit, and it was really Him. He even ate with them (John 21:31). He was resurrected bodily, and showed Himself to these witnesses in different places and situations for forty days. He even showed Himself to Paul later, someone who was persecuting the believers.

In some cases where there was only one witness to a crime or event, that one testimony needs to be examined and scrutinized, but still, it cannot be disregarded totally. Two or more corroborating testimonies would be strong enough to prove something. Even the Bible only requires two or more witnesses to establish a testimony or accusation (Deuteronomy 17:6, Hebrews 10:28). How much more 500 plus witnesses at once? How strong evidence this is! Even before the letter was written by Paul to the Corinthians (AD 53-57), scholars agree that this statement in 1 Corinthians 15 about the Resurrection was already being recited orally as some creed among the believers from earlier years.

Paul even wrote that although some of these witnesses already died, some of them were still alive at the time the letter was written (verse 6). Meaning to say, if the Corinthians (some of which did not believe in the resurrection of the dead), should they wish to, could have gone and asked the eyewitnesses of the resurrection themselves, since they were still alive during those times. They could have gone and interviewed them and have a personal account on the events of the Lord Jesus showing forth to them.

Simon Greenleaf, a Professor of Law at Harvard University from 1833-48, and whose work, *A Treatise on The Law of Evidence*, is considered a classic of American jurisprudence, said regarding weighing testimonies;

“In trials of fact, by oral testimony, the proper inquiry is not whether it is possible that the testimony may be false, but whether there is sufficient probability that it is true.”

What would these 500 plus witnesses gain for making such a story of a man condemned to death being rose again? Did they become wealthy, or powerful and influential because of this testimony? Not everyone was a follower of Jesus by that time, so they would not be having the same interest. And what would they intend to accomplish if they were just lying? Nothing beneficial for them, as far as we know, as they were beaten, persecuted and even killed because of the truth.

Infallible proof #3: The change in the apostles

Before the resurrection, they were afraid, self conscious and without direction. Peter, the one who could be considered to be their leader, even denied the Lord three times and was nowhere to be found during the crucifixion. They were nothing like the Apostles who were willing to die for the gospel after the resurrection. What could account to the sudden change in these people? Why did they become willing to die to testify that Jesus died, was buried, and was raised from the dead?

There could only be two reasons:

1) **They really have seen Jesus alive.** A man will be willing to die for something that he knows to be truth. This is the truth that they could not deny, even under the threat of persecution and death. If the

apostles just conspired to make a false story about Jesus resurrecting from the dead, at least one of them should have renounced their claim when threatened, because **a man will not be willing to die for something he knows to be a lie**. But we know, that all of them did not recant what they declared - Jesus is alive, he rose from the dead, and they were witnesses.

2)**They received the Holy Ghost. Acts 1:8** “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”. It is one thing to know the truth, but the power to become a witness, or from the original Greek of the word, */marthos/*, meaning martyrs, they received it when they were baptized by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. With the truth they know, and the power of the Holy Ghost, they became fearless witnesses even unto death.

Charles Coson said this famous quote, comparing the Resurrection and the Watergate scandal, which led to the resignation of the late US President Richard Nixon;

“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.”

Infallible proof #4: The Growth of Christianity

Christianity has grown and have overthrown and outlived many kingdoms. How would that be possible if the Resurrection, the single most profound foundation of the Christian doctrine is based on a lie?

One of the most respected Pharisee in the times of the New Testament was Gamaliel, and we can note what he said when he warned the other religious leaders in their endeavor to persecute the Apostles;

Acts 5:34-39 “Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

So Gamaliel was telling the priests that would like to kill the apostles to back down, to refrain, because if this movement is made of men only, based on a lie, it will die eventually, as other groups have emerged and died off after their leader was killed. But if this movement, this group really is of God, then they could not overthrow it, and they may even be found fighting against God.

The explosion of Christianity even up to our days, although stemmed to different denominations, could only be explained by the truth it was founded. Its founder, has prophesied His own death and resurrection. This truth held by those who told this news to everyone they met was the reason behind the sacrifices they endured for the propagation of this doctrine.

Hallelujah! Jesus is alive!

And now two thousand years after the event that shocked the whole world, that death which reigned over man since the fall of Adam, hath been overcome by the Son of Man! No good man can do it, as He is not just a teacher, a prophet, a king, He is not just a good man, He is the God-Man, God itself robed with flesh, who came to destroy the devil who had the power over death, and to free those who by the fear of death were enslaved (Hebrews 2:14-15). He is the One who liveth, and He died, and behold He lives forevermore, and He holds the keys of death and hell (Revelation 1:18)!

Although we were not there to be eyewitnesses to the very event, a promise was declared upon us by Him:

John 20:29 "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed."

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus should remain very true in each one of us. This is the foundation of our faith, and also the foundation of our hope. That though we live right now in a fallen world, creation gone wrong because of sin; even in bodies that were subjected to corruption, and even the whole creation subjected to vanity not willingly (Romans 8:20), we have this assurance that He will redeem us completely, until the redemption of the purchased possession (Ephesians 1:14). So even we are right now groaning within our spirits for the redemption of our bodies, we are all waiting and looking for our blessed Hope, which is the glorious appearing of our risen Lord.