

WHY I BELIEVE: JESUS CHRIST WAS RESURRECTED

Acts 13:30-38

I. INTRODUCTION

A. I BELIEVE GOD IS FATHER, ALMIGHTY, CREATOR

1. I BELIEVE—GOD IS ALMIGHTY CREATOR

- Evidence of—Biblical Record—Science—Nature
- Human—Logic—Conscience—Intuition

2. I BELIEVE—GOD IS FATHER

a. He chose to become OUR Father

- Gave us power to become Children of God—by receiving His Son—[Jn 1](#)
- Adopted us as His children—[Gal 4](#)

b. Personal Experience

- His Spirit comes to us—and enables us to call Him “Abba, Father”—[Gal 4](#)
- His Spirit bears witness to our Spirit—we are His children—[Rom 8](#)

B. I BELIEVE JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD AND LORD

1. SON OF GOD

a. Father gave us His Only Begotten Son—to save us

b. His identity

1. ‘Only begotten Son’

- o Eternal—co-equal with God the Father
- o Pre-incarnate glory—co-creator of universe
- o Poured Himself out—became Son of Man

2. Jesus Christ = Savior and Deliverer

2. JESUS IS LORD

a. God exalted Him as Lord

- For His obedience—death on cross
- Restored Son of Man—to pre-incarnate glory

b. We acknowledge Him as Lord—our key to salvation

3. I BELIEVE HE IS GOD’S SON AND LORD BECAUSE

a. Secular historical sources—tell me He lived

b. Biblical Record—identifies Him as God’s Son and Lord

c. Logical choice of faith—is ‘Lord’—not Lunatic or Liar

d. No human ‘lord’—king—or leader—has been able to save humanity

e. All other religious leaders/systems—have fallen short of salvation

f. Uniqueness—powerful miracles and teachings—sinless character

g. Testimony—martyrs—church—skeptics

4. I KNOW HE IS GOD'S SON AND LORD—BECAUSE HE HAS CHANGED ME
 - **II Cor 5:17**—*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, his is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*
 - Irrefutable—no argument can disprove what true believers experience in Christ

C. I BELIEVE GOD'S SON WAS VIRGIN-BORN

1. CHALLENGES FALL SHORT
 - Miracles are possible
 - Biblical accounts are reliable
 - Virgin birth is not a myth—but a historical event
2. BIBLICAL RECORD
 - Old Testament prophecy—verified by NT record
3. IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE
 - Full deity of Christ—supernaturally conceived by God
 - Full humanity of Christ—born of a woman
4. CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS—BASIS FOR HUMAN REDEMPTION
 - a. Perfect Man—inherently sinless
 - b. Divine sacrifice—infinite—paid for all sin
 - c. Our righteousness—comes from Him
 1. Perfect obedience—as Son of Man
 2. Perfect being—eternally righteous Son of God—unchanged by incarnation
 - d. Our Pardon—relies on this righteousness

D. I BELIEVE GOD'S SON DIED FOR ME

1. EVIDENCE
 - Secular accounts
 - Biblical record
2. DEMONSTRATES GOD'S WISDOM AND POWER
 - Defies human wisdom and power—revealed in God's foolishness and weakness
3. CHRIST'S DEATH NECESSARY
 - To vanquish death
 - To atone for sins
 - To reconcile us to the Father—and save us
 - To demonstrate God's love
 - To assure us of final victory
4. HOW I KNOW CHRIST DIED FOR ME
 - *Only to those being saved—the cross is the power of God—**I Cor 1:18***

E. I BELIEVE JESUS CHRIST WAS RESURRECTED

II. TEXT—ACTS 13:30-38—PAUL'S SERMON—PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

30 *But God raised Him from the dead; 31 and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people.*

32 And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, 33 that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.’ 34 As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I will give You the holy and sure blessings of David.’ 35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm, ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.’ 36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation fell asleep and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; 37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. 38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

III. CHRIST’S RESURRECTION—AN ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

A. UNIQUENESS OF DOCTRINE

1. MANY WORLD RELIGIONS ARE JUST PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS
2. ONLY FOUR MAJOR RELIGIONS—TRACE FOUNDATIONS TO ONE PERSON
3. CHRISTIANITY THE ONLY ONE—GROUNDED IN IN PERSON FOUNDING IT
4. CHRISTIANITY THE ONLY ONE—FOUNDER DIED AND WAS RESURRECTED
 - Judaism—**Abraham**—died age 175
 - Buddhism—**Siddhartha Gautama**—died about 400 BC—age 80
 - Islam—**Mohammed**—died 8 June 632—age 61

B. IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE

1. PROPHETIC IMPORTANCE—BIBLICAL TRUTH VERIFIED BY FULFILLMENT
 - a. Old Testament—specific prophecies
 - o **Psalm 16:10**—promised the ‘Holy One’ would not suffer decay
 - o **Hosea 6:1-2**—predicted resurrection on third day
 - b. Fulfilled Jesus’ own predictions—six times
2. THEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE
 - a. Proved Jesus was Son of God—Messiah—Savior
 - b. Shows that God conquered sin and death—and *how* He did it
 - c. Demonstrated God’s supernatural power
 - d. Provides hope—of eternal life—not only hope in this life
 - e. Foundational doctrine for establishing Church

f. Central doctrine validating truth of Christianity

I Cor 15:13-19—*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

IV. RELIABILITY OF BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS

A. EIGHT ACCOUNTS—RESURRECTION & POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

1. FOUR GOSPEL ACCOUNTS—Mt 27-28—Mk 15-16—Lk 23-24—Jn 20-21
2. THREE ACCOUNTS—RISEN CHRIST APPEARING TO SAUL—Acts—9—22—26
3. PAUL'S SUMMARY ACCOUNT—I Cor 15

B. THREE CRITICISMS AGAINST ACCOUNTS

1. MIRACLES ARE IMPOSSIBLE
2. FACTUAL INACCURACIES AND THEOLOGICAL INCONSISTENCIES
 - e.g.—Gospels say Mary was first to see Jesus—Paul says Peter was first
 - e.g.—Matthew/Mark say there was one angel at tomb—Luke/John say two men
3. ACCOUNTS WRITTEN LATE—2-3RD CENTURIES—CONTAIN LEGENDS

C. RESPONSES TO CRITICISMS

1. MIRACLES IMPOSSIBLE
 - God is Supernatural—He can and does intervene and change history
2. INACCURACIES AND INCONSISTENCIES
 - a. Slight difference should be expected—hallmark of different eyewitness accounts
 - b. Exact uniformity—would suggest collusion between authors to fabricate text
 - c. Remarkable consistency of accounts—considering so many eyewitness accounts
 - d. Harmony achieved—with narrative comments and links—done by apologists like Geisler
3. LATE ACCOUNTS—WITH LEGENDS
 - a. **Gospel accounts** are early—and reliable
 1. Early dating—before 70 Ad
 - Simple style—language—knowledge of 1st century Jerusalem

2. Accuracy
 - Include accounts of Jesus' weakness and disciples' faults
3. Trustworthiness of Gospel authors
 - a. Challenge—disciples were deceived
 - No—they were well-qualified to recognize Jesus—knew Him well
 - No—they personally witnessed events over 40-day period
 - No—too many eyewitness accounts—they could not *all* be mistaken
 - No—they touched Him and ate with Him—physically encountered Him
 - No—if they were deceived—officials would have produced body to silence them
 - b. Challenge—disciples were dishonest—tried to deceive everyone else
 - No—they were willing to suffer martyrdom—based on this belief—risked it all!
 - No—simple, common, honorable men—nothing to gain by fabricating a myth
 - No—if writings were fraudulent—they would have been exposed by officials
 - No—conspiracy was by officials—when exposed, did not defend themselves
 - No—disciples change of attitude—to hope and boldness—proved them truthful
- b. **Paul's account—I Cor 15**—was early—and reliable
 1. He got facts when he went to Jerusalem
 - 3 years after his own conversion (**Gal 1:18-20**)
 - About 4 years after Resurrection—about 35 AD
 - Probably from James and Peter—eyewitnesses
 2. Written only about 25 years after Resurrection
 3. **vv 3-4** were probably a very early confessional statement

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ dies for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

 - Already current within 4 years after Resurrection
 - Paul uses technical terms—'received'—'delivered'
 4. Written early enough—if not true—living witnesses would have challenged it
 5. Paul's credibility—God used most *unlikely* person to do this
 - Arch-enemy of Christians—why switch in mid-stream?
 - Faced initial resistance from Christians—why fight for credibility?
 - Imprisoned, beaten, and mistreated by opponents—why endure this?
 - **Answer**—He was convinced and compelled by the Resurrection

THREE KEY FACTS PROVE CHRIST'S RESURRECTION WAS FACTUALLY TRUE

1. THE EMPTY TOMB

2. JESUS' POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

3. WITNESS OF EARLY CHURCH

IV EVIDENCE OF EMPTY TOMB

A. FIVE THEORIES CHALLENGE TRUTH OF EMPTY TOMB

1. CONSPIRACY THEORY

- a. **Argument**—disciples stole body—to deceive everyone
- b. **Response**—impossible—tomb in solid rock—covered—sealed—guarded!

2. AUTHORITIES MOVED BODY THEORY

- a. **Argument**—after removal disciples assumed Jesus was raised
- b. **Response**
 - o Neither Roman nor Jewish officials had anything to gain by doing so!
 - o Why did Jewish officials accuse *apostles* of stealing body?
 - o Why did officials not produce Jesus' body—to refute apostles?

3. TOMB WAS NOT EMPTY

- a. **Argument**—Jesus was still in tomb—and disciples lied
- b. **Response**
 - o Why didn't officials produce the body?
 - o Officials' accusation that disciples stole body—proves tomb was empty!

4. WRONG TOMB THEORY

- a. **Argument**—women lost their way and went to wrong tomb
- b. **Response**
 - o Mark's account—says they knew where the tomb was
 - o Why would the angels be at the wrong tomb?
 - o Yes—angel *did* say “He is not here!”
 - o But—angel *also* said “He is risen!”—and—“See the place where they laid him!”

5. TOMB WAS NEVER VISITED THEORY

- a. **Argument**—Jesus visited disciples in spiritual form—but body still dead in tomb
- b. **Response**
 - o Multiple accounts of visitations to tomb—and people entering it
 - o Why did guards report to Sanhedrin—“all that had happened” in Matthew's account

B. TWO THEORIES SAY JESUS NEVER DIED

1. SUBSTITUTION THEORY

a. Argument

- o Jesus was translated like Enoch and Elijah
- o Someone else died in his place—probably Judas Iscariot
- o God made substitute look like Jesus
- o One billion Muslims believe this theory

b. Response

- o *Ad hoc* argument—no historical evidence—no written record
- o Jewish officials clearly identified Jesus before crucifixion
- o Jesus' family and friends witnessed death—recognized Him
- o Theory implicates God in deception—but God never lies

2. SWOON THEORY

a. Argument

- o Jesus never died—resuscitated—by fresh air in cool tomb—aroma-therapy of spices
- o Earthquake moved stone—and Jesus escaped
- o Supported by naturalists—who oppose miracles
- o Some Muslim theologians—use it as back-up to 'substitution theory'

b. Response

- o Ignores centurion's testimony to Pilate
- o Tomb was sealed and guarded *after* earthquake
- o Spear thrust into His side—proved He was dead
- o Romans would never have removed Him from cross alive
- o When Jesus appeared—He was not weak—but strong and vigorous
- o First and second century secular accounts—say Jesus died!

C. SUMMARY EVIDENCE FROM EMPTY TOMB

1. **Consistent witness**—all Gospels say tomb was empty—and Paul's account implies it

2. **Early dating**

- Mark's language and style—give evidence his source is from very early date
- Maybe within seven years of Resurrection
- Far too early for legendary development

3. **Testimony of the women**

- Mentioned in all Gospel accounts.
- Lowly status—remarkable their accounts are in the Bible
- If legendary—they would have been given more lowly roles

4. **Preaching of Apostles**

- Could not have been done in Jerusalem—if tomb were not empty.
- Officials would have produced proof to stop them

5. Collusion of officials

- They conspired to spread rumor the disciples had stolen Jesus' body.
- In doing so, they confirmed tomb was empty.

V. EVIDENCE OF JESUS' POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

A. FOUR ARGUMENTS AGAINST HIS POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

1. DISCIPLES HALLUCINATED—OR SAW AN APPARITION

- Hallucinations are individualized events—no such thing as mass/series hallucinations
- Still does not account for empty tomb!

2. APPEARANCES WERE CASES OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

- Builds on first accounts they did not initially recognize Jesus
 - o Mary thought He as a gardener
 - o Disciples on road to Emmaus did not recognize Him
 - o Jesus appeared in a 'different form' to them

b. But confusion was temporary—and for divine purposes

c. Later—disciples would not have sacrificed their lives for an *imposter*

3. THEY WERE 'THEOPHANIES'—LIKE OLD TESTAMENT ANGELIC APPEARANCES

a. This makes Jesus a liar—who promised His *same* body would be raised

b. It opposes—Jesus' showing His bodily scars to disciples—in Upper Room—**Jn 20**

c. It opposes apostolic testimony—of Peter—in Pentecost Sermon

Acts 2:31-32—[David] *looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that "He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.*

4. THEY WERE SPIRITUAL APPEARANCES—BUT HIS BODY WAS DEAD

Jesus showed disciples His resurrection body was flesh and blood

Lk 24:36-39—*He Himself stood in their midst and said to them "Peace be to you." But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hand and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.*

B. SUMMARY EVIDENCE FOR JESUS' APPEARANCES

1. SCRIPTURE—GIVES 12 ACCOUNTS OF 10 APPEARANCES OVER 40 DAYS

2. SUMMARY OF APPEARANCES

- a. During 40 days—He appeared to over 500 people
- b. Every time—Jesus was seen and heard—they recognized Him and His voice
- c. Four times he offered Himself to be touched—at least twice touched by human hands
- d. He showed His crucifixion scars twice
- e. Four accounts of empty tomb—twice describing empty grave clothes
- f. Four times He ate with disciples—[Lk 24](#) (twice)—[Jn 21](#)—[Acts 1](#)
- g. PROOF: Jesus arose with same visible/physical body He possessed before crucifixion

VI. EVIDENCE FROM EARLY CHURCH

A. TRANSFORMED LIVES

1. BEFORE RESURRECTION—DISCIPLES FEARFUL—DOUBTFUL—DEFEATED
2. AFTERWARD—FEARLESS—HOPEFUL—PREACHED GOSPEL BOLDLY

B. ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY

1. BASED ON THIS BELIEF—GOD HAD RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD
2. CHURCH FOUNDED ON BASIS OF TWO ESSENTIAL MESSAGES—[ACTS 4:2](#)
... they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead
 - a. *kerygma*—proclamation of the Good News of the Resurrected Jesus Christ
 - b. *didache*—teachings of the Apostles
3. RESURRECTION—IS AT CENTER OF BOTH *KERYGMA* AND *DIDACHE*

C. GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY

1. CHURCH GREW RAPIDLY
 - 3000 on the first day ([Acts 2:41](#))
 - More were added daily ([Acts 2:47](#))
 - 2000 more a few days later ([Acts 4:4](#))
 - Numbers steadily increased ([Acts 6:1](#)), even included several priests ([Acts 6:7](#)).
2. GROWTH DUE TO TWO THINGS
 - Power of Resurrection message
 - Giving and power of the Holy Spirit.
3. MARTYRDOM
 - a. Christians willing to die for their faith—attracted many new believers

- b. Tertullian said—the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church
- c. Willing to die because they believed in power of Christ's resurrection

II Cor 4:14—*knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you*

VII. INVITATION

IN CHRIST ALONE

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

**There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

