

THE RESURRECTION

Of Jesus Christ

Understanding The Bible

How Important is the resurrection
of Jesus Christ?

Did it actually happen?

How Can We Know?

EDITION ONE

Find the answer in this booklet

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The Bible that I have chosen to use for references in this book is the "World English Bible" (WEB)

Book Cover by Leslie Rendell

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Prelude

The greatest event to have ever happened in the entire world is undoubtedly the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. There has always been a great deal of controversy about the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians have many beliefs about this all important incident. Most Christians believe He was resurrected from the dead on the first day of the week, Sunday, and have used this belief to justify Sunday as the day they worship God.

With so many ideas on this topic, I will seek the truth of this matter from the only source that really matters, and that is the Holy Bible. The full story from the time of Christ's crucifixion until His resurrection from the dead has been recorded in great detail in this amazing book. You will need patience and be willing to search the scriptures to find the truth God has buried in this book. The answer will not be found in just one place, a careful study in several different books of the bible will be needed to find the truth.

The bible is the inspired word of God and must be what influences our thoughts on all things. Keep in mind the following scripture as you read this book. Also remember this verse is referring to the entire bible, not just the new testament. Jesus quoted the bible often, and every time He quoted only from the old testament. This is because none of the new testament was written while Jesus was alive on this earth. This part of the bible was written mostly by His disciples and after His crucifixion and resurrection.

2Ti 3:16 Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

It is my aim in this book to follow the scriptures that describe this amazing event, and find the truth that is buried in the scriptures. If you are just seeking the truth from God's words on this very important subject, then you may be surprised at some statements I make.

But please keep referring to your bible as you read this book. To come to the right conclusion, you will need to read with an open mind. If you already have an opinion on this topic, you may find it difficult to believe what I am writing. It is much harder to “unlearn” something that it is to learn a new thing. You are always influenced by your own understanding and to believe something that is contrary to your previously held beliefs may be difficult.

The secret to coming to the truth is always to listen to the word of God and accept what He is saying to you. You need to put man’s traditions out of your mind and allow the words of the bible to convince you of the truth. Remember, if the bible tells you something different to man’s teachings, then the bible is always right and should be your only source of consideration. If you accept the words of man over the words of God, then you will never learn the reality of Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

The Bible that I have used for references in this book is the “World English Bible” (WEB). If you have a different version of the bible that is perfectly OK. The wording may be different, but I am sure you will find the meaning of the verses to be the same. One excellent bible study tool that I have found to be of immense help is a program called “Esword”. It is free to download from the web and has many bible versions and other reference books. Well worth getting, as it will help with your own studies.

I pray that our amazing God will lead you into truth from His word, The Holy Bible. Remember, this is a controversial topic so you will need patience and time to find your own answers to this issue.

Who Is Jesus Christ?

When we are discussing anything from the bible, the first thing we must determine is the existence of God. There are only two possible answers to this question. Either yes, He exists, or no, He does not exist. There can be no half right or wrong. You cannot have a foot in both camps, so to speak. If you believe in God, then the rest is easy. Just believe what He will reveal about Himself and His creation in His amazing book, "The Bible".

If you believe in evolution as the way we came into being, then there are many things you must prove, beyond any shadow of doubt, that evolutionists will have you believe. As more science is revealing a Creator caused our existence, then the theory of evolution is becoming more difficult to prove every day.

The first thing we must do is to establish who Jesus Christ is. To do this, I will look into God's holy scriptures for an answer in the book of John. In the first eighteen verses of this book, we get a wonderful description of Jesus and just why we believe Him to be the Messiah, or the Son Of God.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has been made.

Joh 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Joh 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it.

Joh 1:6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.

Joh 1:7 The same came as a witness, that he might testify about the light, that all might believe through him.

Joh 1:8 He was not the light, but was sent that he might testify about the light.

Joh 1:9 The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world.

Joh 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognize him.

Joh 1:11 He came to his own, and those who were his own didn't receive him.

Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name:

Joh 1:13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Joh 1:14 The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Joh 1:15 John testified about him. He cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me, for he was before me.'"

Joh 1:16 From his fullness we all received grace upon grace.

Joh 1:17 For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

Joh 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.

What does this section of scripture tell us? Starting in verse one, we see "The Word" was with God and He was God. Then we learn "The Word" was responsible for the creation of all things. There is nothing in all the vast universe that He did not bring into existence. This "Word" then became flesh and dwelt among us and made God The Father known to everyone who will believe.

Whoever "The Word" may be, is obviously a powerful person and we can deduce from the scriptures above that "The Word" is, in fact, Jesus Christ. This thought is reinforced in Joh 1:29.

Joh 1:29 The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Now John, known as "John the Baptist," sees Jesus coming to be baptised by Him in the river and declares Jesus to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

This same Jesus Christ is the one who was crucified, buried and resurrected as I will explain in the rest of this book. By proving Jesus was in reality resurrected from the dead, we are also proving the divinity of Jesus Christ. We also prove the validity of those first eighteen verses of the book of John.

Jesus Christ in Prophecy

There are many people in the world who do not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and therefore do not believe that He ever rose from the dead. How can we prove firstly that He even existed? Well, it is a well-known fact that even the Jewish Rabbis from the time of Jesus did not like Him or His followers. They hated Him so much they had Him crucified on a Roman cross. A terrible form of execution that caused as much pain and suffering as possible. They accused Him of being a magician and of leading people away from their religion. But the one thing that they never did was to claim that He never existed. There is enough proof in history books that will prove that Jesus Christ was an actual person.

Then there are the many prophecies in the Old Testament of the Bible that point directly to Jesus. Some are a little obscure, but some also clearly point to the man Jesus Christ. Look at what the Prophet Isaiah wrote about this amazing man about seven hundred years before Jesus was even born. His description of Jesus in chapter fifty-three is remarkable and is a perfect description of the life and death of Jesus. He told of a man who would die for the sins of the world. Read Isaiah fifty-three and see the amazing resemblance to the life of Jesus Christ as has been recorded for us in the bible.

Isa 53:1 Who has believed our message? To whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?

Isa 53:2 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no good looks or majesty. When we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Isa 53:3 He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of suffering, and acquainted with disease. He was despised as one from whom men hide their face; and we didn't respect him.

Isa 53:4 Surely he has borne our sickness, and carried our suffering; yet we considered him plagued, struck by God, and afflicted.

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed.

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way; and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he didn't open his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he didn't open his mouth.

Isa 53:8 He was taken away by oppression and judgement; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living and stricken for the disobedience of my people?

Isa 53:9 They made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Isa 53:10 Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him. He has caused him to suffer. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he will see his offspring. He will prolong his days, and Yahweh's pleasure will prosper in his hand.

Isa 53:11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied. My righteous servant will justify many by the knowledge of himself; and he will bear their iniquities.

Isa 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion with the great, and he will divide the plunder with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was counted with the transgressors; yet he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

When you realize that this passage of scripture was written about seven hundred years before Jesus came on the scene, you see a very accurate portrayal of the life and death of our Lord. There are many other prophecies recorded for us in the Bible, but I think this one gives us the most vivid picture of Jesus Christ.

It is my belief that when you combine the historical facts with prophecies, there can be very little doubt about whether Jesus Christ was a real person. To claim Jesus never existed is to ignore the evidence in both the history books and the revelations found about Him in the bible.

Once you come to believe Jesus was, and still is, real today, you are well on the road to accepting Him as your Lord and God. Jesus made some amazing claims in the

approximately three and a half years He was spreading the gospel. His greatest claim was that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. He even predicted He would be arrested, betrayed, spit upon, scourged and then killed. The similarities between His life and the prophecy of Isaiah are absolutely unmistakable. Jesus also told the leaders of the synagogue and His disciples that He would be raised to life after three days. This incredible prediction has been recorded for us in the book of Mark, chapter ten and verses thirty-two through to verse thirty-four.

Mar 10:32 They were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going in front of them, and they were amazed; and those who followed were afraid. He again took the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to him.

Mar 10:33 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles.

Mar 10:34 They will mock him, spit on him, scourge him, and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."

It would be a very brave man indeed to make such a claim if he was not absolutely sure of his facts. Until this time, no one had ever come back from the dead.

The Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees knew their old testament scriptures very well. Many of them could recite the scriptures by heart. Some prophecies about the coming of their Messiah were very clear, so at about the time Jesus came on the scene, they were already expecting Him to come. They read and understood from the prophecies that their Messiah was due to arrive on the earth. The problem for them is that they did not see Him coming as a suffering servant who was going to die for them to save everyone from their sins. No, what they were expecting was a conquering King who would overpower the Romans. They totally missed the reason for His coming, so they refused to acknowledge that Jesus could be the Messiah. Their dream of freedom from the Romans hung on the arriving of their Messiah.

These Jewish leaders demanded a sign from Jesus to prove He was the Messiah they were looking for. Read Mat 16:1-4 and see these Pharisees and the Sadducees challenging Jesus to prove He was who He claimed to be.

Mat 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, "Teacher, we

want to see a sign from you.”

Mat 12:39 But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.

Mat 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The answer Jesus gave to these Pharisees, and the Sadducees, was a prophecy about His soon coming death and resurrection. Here Jesus plainly tells them He would be three days and three nights in the tomb the exact time Jonah was in the whale's belly. It is important to note one thing from this section of scripture. Jesus told them the “ONLY SIGN” He would give them was the sign of Jonah that we read above in verse forty.

Everything that Jesus taught, and the claim that He was the Messiah, all hinged on Him fulfilling exactly the sign of Jonah. He was to be exactly three days and three nights in the tomb. If He was more or less that this period in the tomb, then He must be a fraud and an impostor. This was going to be the ultimate test of the authenticity of Jesus Christ. If you can prove that He got it wrong and that He was not in the tomb for this exact amount of time, then He is a fraud. But then if we can prove that He was in the tomb for exactly three days and three nights, fulfilling exactly the “sign of Jonah”, then we have found our Messiah!

The resurrection from the dead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is one of the most important of all Christian beliefs. For all Christian's today must believe that Jesus was resurrected from the dead, otherwise they have nothing to base their faith in Him upon. It is only by his defeating the last enemy, and that is death, that we can have any genuine hope of a future with Him.

There is only one way to prove if Jesus is who He claims to be, and that is to search the scriptures for the answer and accept what we learn from these sacred words as the truth. Did He fulfil this sign He gave to the Jewish leaders of His day, or did He fail this test or sign?

There is one thing that is for certain and I hope anyone, regardless of what they believe, will agree upon. If Jesus rose from the dead as He claimed, He would. Then how can He possibly not be the Son Of God, and if He is the Son of God, then what is stopping people from accepting Him into their lives?

If He did not rise from the dead, then He is obviously a fake and an impostor and therefore someone we should not follow or worship. Since there is so much depending on the truthful answer to this question, we need to be thorough and believe only what God has revealed to us.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, made the importance of answering this question correctly when he said the following in 1Co 15:19.

1Co 15:19 If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.

The Apostle Paul really put it very well here. If Jesus is a fake, then the disciples who followed Jesus, and right down to the millions of Christians who follow Him today, have been fed a massive lie. We have no future in God's Kingdom and therefore no hope in all the world. That is why it is vital to study carefully this topic and come to the right conclusion.

One thing I still find amazing is the disciples who were with Jesus for just over three years did not fully understand what Jesus had told them about His death, and the amazing event that was going to follow in three days. By this time, they had seen many miracles and they certainly understood Jesus was "The Christ" and we read this in Luke chapter nine and verses eighteen through twenty.

Luk 9:18 As he was praying alone, the disciples were with him, and he asked them, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?"

Luk 9:19 They answered, "'John the Baptizer,' but others say, 'Elijah,' and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again."

Luk 9:20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

So the disciples understood who Jesus was, and we see in the next two verses where Jesus has told them he must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders. But even though the disciples heard these words, they could not truly believe them. They also, like the Jewish leaders, failed to see why Jesus had come down from heaven.

Luk 9:21 But he warned them, and commanded them to tell this to no one,

Luk 9:22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."

Again, in these verses, we see Jesus predicting His death and that He was going to be raised to life on the third day. Remember, this was the only sign we have that Jesus Christ is our Messiah.

Luke recorded again in Luk 18:31-34 what Jesus told His disciples about His death and resurrection. Then recognise from the last verse that His disciples did not understand what He was saying, the truth was actually hidden from them.

Luk 18:31 He took the twelve aside, and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written through the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be completed.

Luk 18:32 For he will be delivered up to the Gentiles, will be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit on.

Luk 18:33 They will scourge and kill him. On the third day, he will rise again."

Luk 18:34 They understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they didn't understand the things that were said.

Before I get into the proof of Jesus being in the tomb for exactly three days and three nights, I would like to see more proof that He is the "Son of God".

So, what is the evidence that we can see in these Ancient Words that can help us believe Jesus Christ is The Son Of God and has indeed risen from the dead?

Crossing the Lake in a Storm

Jesus performed many miracles during His time on the earth. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, cured cripples and even cleansed people from leprosy. Still, most of His miracles were never recorded in the books of the Bible, as we can see from Joh 20:30.

Joh 20:30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

Jesus performed one powerful miracle that had a profound effect on His disciples. This miracle that involved the disciples was when they were crossing the lake and a fierce storm arose and threatened to swamp their boat and drown them all, we must remember that these men were all experienced fishermen and had spent their lives on the lake and would have encountered many storms. This storm was one of the worst that they had ever encountered, and we can know this from their call for Jesus to rescue them. We can read this in Matthew 8:23-27.

Mat 8:23 When he got into a boat, his disciples followed him.

Mat 8:24 Behold, a violent storm came up on the sea, so much that the boat was covered with the waves, but he was asleep.

Mat 8:25 They came to him, and woke him up, saying, "Save us, Lord! We are dying!"

Mat 8:26 He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then he got up, rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.

Mat 8:27 The men marvelled, saying, "What kind of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

In verse twenty-seven, they ask, "What kind of man is this?". Here, they witnessed how Jesus even had control of the elements and did what no man had ever done before. He

stopped the furious storm and caused a complete calmness over the lake. This miracle alone would have had them believing that Jesus had powers that only belong to God. But I doubt they were fully convinced who was with them in the boat. They asked “what kind of man is this”.

Another miracle they witnessed was recorded for us in Matthew 14:22-33. This time, the disciples had left Jesus on the shore and were crossing the lake when another storm rose and threatened to swamp their boat. Suddenly Jesus appeared to them walking up to the boat on the water and again calms the wind. This time the Disciples make the correct connection about just who Jesus is, when they say, "Truly you are the Son of God."

There are many other miracles recorded in the Bible that the disciples of Jesus saw and marvelled at, such as feeding of the four thousand, healing the lepers and curing the paralysed man who was lowered through the roof, these are just a few of the recorded miracles we know of, but there were other miracles that He performed and that were witnessed by the disciples but never recorded.

The disciples must have witnessed hundreds of miracles ranging from small and almost insignificant to some of His biggest miracles, such as feeding of the 5 thousand and the calming of the sea. Those three and a half years must have been mind blowing for the disciples. Seeing the power Jesus possessed should have left no doubt in their minds if Jesus was the Son of God. But as we will see later in this book, it was not until after Jesus was resurrected from the dead that they were all fully convinced He was their Messiah.

The Disciples were Afraid

The disciples, who would have been the most convinced that He was the anointed One, still did not understand what Jesus had so clearly told them. Their faith and trust in Him was not strong, and they were afraid for their own safety. We can see how they reacted when Jesus was arrested. We can read about this in Matthew 26:54-56, when Jesus was about to be arrested in the garden of Gethsemane.

Mat 26:54 How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so?"

Mat 26:55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and you didn't arrest me."

Mat 26:56 But all this has happened, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. "Then all the disciples left him, and fled".

Yes, these disciples (who all believed that Jesus was the Son Of God) fled for their own safety even though they were witnesses to His miracles and believed Him to be The Son of God. Even Peter was afraid of the Jews, and did not want to be recognized as one of His disciples. But he was still curious enough to follow at a distance to see what was going to happen to Jesus. We can read of this in Luke, chapter twenty-two and verses fifty four to sixty-two.

Luk 22:54 They seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed from a distance.

Luk 22:55 When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard, and had sat down together, Peter sat among them.

Luk 22:56 A certain servant girl saw him as he sat in the light, and looking intently at him, said, "This man also was with him."

Luk 22:57 He denied Jesus, saying, "Woman, I don't know him."

Luk 22:58 After a little while someone else saw him, and said, "You also are one

of them!" But Peter answered, "Man, I am not!"

Luk 22:59 After about one hour passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Truly this man also was with him, for he is a Galilean!"

Luk 22:60 But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

Luk 22:61 The Lord turned, and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the Lord's word, how he said to him, "Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times."

Luk 22:62 He went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter had earlier in verse thirty-three said, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death". Yet here he was denying three times he even knew Jesus. He had earlier declared that Jesus "was the Messiah". But in the final crunch, Peter was anxious for his own welfare, so he took the simple way out and denied that he knew Jesus. The rest of the disciples went into hiding. These men were sure He was the Son of God, but they were still more concerned with their own welfare and safety. Their faith was weak and more proof was needed that he was who He claimed to be.

The same thing can be said about us today. Our faith in Jesus is not strong when we first believe. It is only after more proof has been discovered can we have a strong enough faith in Jesus to dedicate our lives to Him. Our faith, trust, belief and love for Him will not happen in an instant. No, it will only come from regular and consistent bible study. That is the aim of this book, to strengthen our faith and love for our Lord.

Not Expecting The Resurrection

We know the disciples were not expecting Jesus to be resurrected from the dead, because if they understood this, then they would have been waiting at the tomb after three days, ready to celebrate. Maybe with six earthen jars filled with water and hoping for a repeat of His first miracle.

But instead of waiting and looking for His resurrection, the disciples were afraid of what the leaders of the Synagogue may do to them, so they were hiding from them. Two of the disciples were on the road to Emmaus, which is a short distance from Jerusalem. They were trying to understand what had happened on Calvary.

The man they thought was their Messiah had been executed by the Romans, so their dreams of Him setting up His kingdom on the earth were shattered. They were not expecting Jesus to be raised from the dead, so they were on their way home. These two men were joined on their walk by a man whom they did not recognize and who taught them everything that was to happen to their Messiah, as was written in their scriptures, the old testament. Suddenly, they realized who this man was when Jesus disclosed himself to them as they were breaking bread.

The women who had followed Jesus from the first day were not expecting Jesus to be resurrected either. They must have been demoralized by the events that had taken place on the day Jesus was crucified. We read in the epistles that they were preparing the spices and perfumes that were needed to prepare His body for burial. Even though Jesus had spoken of His resurrection, nobody understood just what this meant. The women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. They did not expect to find that the tomb was empty.

The disciples were all afraid of the Jews. After three and a half years of following Jesus, they now had the humiliating feeling that they were the laughingstock of all

Jerusalem and were too embarrassed to go out, so they hid in the upper rooms. They also feared what the leaders of the Synagogue would do to them. They had just seen Jesus tortured and crucified, so they may have been fearing the same fate if they were caught. I think we can understand the predicament the disciples now found themselves in.

There was no-one at the tomb after the third day, because no-one understood what Jesus had said regarding His death and resurrection.

For me, the one event in the entire Bible that convinces me that Jesus is the real deal has to be the story of His resurrection, and how this event changes the lives of His disciples. Their entire worlds were turned upside down and their behavior changed. The Disciples went from hiding from everyone to being powerful and unafraid witnesses for their Lord.

They had seen many miracles that Jesus performed during their time with Him; After they had witnessed blind men regaining their sight, paralyzed men being able to walk again, Lazarus coming back from the dead must have been a convincing miracle that should have left them in no doubt just who was there with them. But it was only after they saw Jesus risen from the dead that their trust and faith in Him became unshakable.

After Jesus was crucified, and before He was raised from the dead, this period must have been the worst time in the lives of the Disciples. They had found their Messiah, seen His miracles, then witnessed the unthinkable as the man they believed was the Son of God was murdered on the cross. Can we imagine how we would have felt if we were in their shoes? Now we have the advantage of hindsight and know how the story ends, but the disciples did not have this advantage, they would have been left shattered.

What was going through the minds of the Disciples? They would have been devastated, confused, sad and with about a thousand emotions running through their minds? These men had lost their Lord and had no-one to turn to and explain to them just what had happened and just what the future may have held for them now that Jesus was dead. When Jesus was with them, they were no doubt considering their places in the Kingdom of God. Now, suddenly, these dreams were taken away from them.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples when they were in an upper room. This is the first time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after His crucifixion. We see here that the disciples had locked the door for fear of the Jewish leaders, so they spent the last three days hiding and fearing the Synagogue leaders.

Can we imagine how the disciples felt now? Confused, happy, excited, elated, and ecstatic, there would have been another thousand emotions running through their minds. But this time they would have differed totally from those they experienced just three short days ago. Now they had their Messiah back from the dead, and if they had any doubts about whether He was the Son of God, these doubts would now have been dispelled from their minds.

This was the ultimate proof they needed, and after this, these men were so convinced of what they knew they were prepared to suffer many things for the Lord, and indeed they did. Their lives would now never be the same.

Not a lot of information has survived about the fate of these men, but here is what's available from various sources, including the New Testament itself, apocryphal texts, early Christian historians, legends and lore.

Andrew was crucified.

Bartholomew was crucified.

James, son of Alphaeus, was crucified.

James, son of Zebedee, was killed by the sword.

John died at a good old age and of natural causes, the only one to do so.

Matthew was crucified.

Peter was crucified upside down.

Philip was crucified.
Simon was crucified.
Thaddeus was killed by arrows.
Thomas died of a spear thrust.

Some of these reports are indeed accurate and some may be a little more uncertain, but it is well believed that all the men (except for John) met very premature and violent deaths. All but John died at a relatively young age and their deaths were violent and no doubt painful.

The difference between before the resurrection, to after the resurrection is remarkable. These men went from hiding to being the founders of the new Church. When they were filled with the Holy Spirit, there was no stopping them. Please read acts chapter four and verses twenty nine to thirty-one.

Act 4:29 Now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness,

Act 4:30 while you stretch out your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy Servant Jesus.

Act 4:31 When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were gathered together. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

The Apostles were now speaking with authority and power and there was no way the Jewish leaders, or the Romans, were going to deter them from the task that Jesus had set before them. Now they had their futures laid out before them, and that was all they needed to withstand all threats and punishments that were handed out to them.

So, ten of the original twelve were martyred because of their love and trust in Jesus. (Judas, who betrayed Jesus, committed suicide). John lived to a good old age and died of natural causes. After the resurrection, the Apostles became bold in their preaching. This was when they stopped being afraid and put their total trust in their Lord.

Paul's Conversion

We all know the story of Paul and how he was converted on the road to Damascus. He went from persecuting the church to being one of its strongest witnesses, and what was it that changed this man so much? Simple, he saw the resurrected Jesus. In the book of Acts, we see recorded this amazing event that changed Saul, later to be renamed Paul. This was when he changed from being a true hater of Christ's disciples to being one of their most powerful allies.

Act 9:1 But Saul, still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,

Act 9:2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Act 9:3 As he travelled, he got close to Damascus, and suddenly a light from the sky shone around him.

Act 9:4 He fell on the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Act 9:5 He said, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

Act 9:6 But rise up, and enter into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Paul was converted almost instantly on this road to Damascus. His encounter there with Jesus after His death and resurrection must have been an incredible thing for Paul to experience.

Paul was not a member of the original twelve, but there can be no doubt that he was an Apostle of Jesus. He went from persecuting the church to being responsible for much of what we know today as the New Testament, and the one incident that started Paul's conversion would no doubt have been when he was confronted by the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus. Paul spent the rest of his life preaching about Jesus and was eventually beheaded for his beliefs.

Paul had gone from persecuting the church to being a powerful witness for Jesus. When he was writing to the Corinthian Church, he explained some suffering he had undergone for Jesus. Please read his account in two Corinthians chapter eleven and verses twenty-three to twenty-eight.

2Co 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I am more so; in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths often.

2Co 11:24 Five times from the Jews I received forty stripes minus one.

2Co 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I suffered shipwreck. I have been a night and a day in the deep.

2Co 11:26 I have been in travels often, perils of rivers, perils of robbers, perils from my countrymen, perils from the Gentiles, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brothers;

2Co 11:27 in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and in cold and nakedness.

2Co 11:28 Besides those things that are outside, there is that which presses on me daily: anxiety for all the assemblies.

These are some hardships that Paul had to face, yet he never flinched or wavered from speaking the truth about Jesus. He would never have done this if he knew Jesus was a fake and not the Messiah, if he knew Jesus was not the real deal, then why would he continue to preach about Him and be prepared to suffer so much punishment, his body bore many scars from the 195 lashes that he received not to mention the other injuries he suffered. Why would he be prepared to suffer all this if Jesus was a phoney?

We must remember where Paul came from. He had a very comfortable lifestyle until he met Jesus. We can see this in Philippians chapter three and verse three to six.

Php 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;

Php 3:4 though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I yet more:

Php 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

Php 3:6 concerning zeal, persecuting the assembly; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.

Paul was highly regarded among his fellow Jews prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus. They would have looked up to him with respect and admiration. He probably had the best seats at festivals and Jewish feasts. His opinions on all matters would have been sought after. He was a man of importance and held in high regard by the Pharisees and Sadducees of his day. But all this ended on the road to Damascus.

The question we must ask here is, why would he give this way of life up and then be hated by the Jews and punished for his ideas? Unless, of course, he knew Jesus was the real deal. And then in the next five verses, we see what the past lifestyle of Paul now meant for him.

Php 3:7 However, I consider those things that were gain to me as a loss for Christ.

Php 3:8 Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be a loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them nothing but refuse, that I may gain Christ

Php 3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Php 3:10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death;

Php 3:11 if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

In verse eight, the term refuse, or garbage, is used, but other versions of the bible are a little more graphic and say dung. So I think this gives us a rather powerful sign of what Paul thought of his former way of life and all the trapping of comfort and privileges that he once enjoyed. But now that he has found Jesus, he sees all this comfort and privilege to be

worth nothing.

Paul was a changed man after seeing his risen Lord. The other disciples would no doubt have had a similar view of their former lifestyles. They did not have the same position in life as that of Paul, but they gave up their former ways of life to follow Jesus and to suffer for His name's sake. We can only imagine what they suffered as they preached about the Kingdom of God.

Our Friend "Doubting Thomas"

The changes that came over the disciples were incredible. But the most amazing of all, and the one that should help us all in our journey of faith, is the experience of our good friend that we know as, "doubting Thomas". Consider his attitude after the crucifixion of Jesus and before he saw Him resurrected from the dead. In John twenty and verses twenty-four and twenty-five, we see Thomas refusing to believe what his fellow disciples were trying to tell him about Jesus being resurrected from the dead.

Joh 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, wasn't with them when Jesus came.

Joh 20:25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

We must remember that Thomas had spent the last three years intimately acquainted with Jesus. Witnessing all His miracles and even hearing His prophecies about His coming death and resurrection, as has been recorded for us in Matthew chapter sixteen and verse twenty-one. That, and the testimony Thomas received from the other ten disciples about Jesus' resurrection, should have been enough to convince him Jesus was indeed resurrected from the dead. But because he had not seen Jesus, he could not believe the impossible. That someone could come back from the grave. So he continued to not believe.

I can just imagine the other disciples trying to convince Thomas that the Lord had indeed risen from the dead. They would have tried every form of persuasion to get Thomas to believe them, but we can see in verse twenty-five what Thomas thought. He was not about to take anyone's word for it. He had to see the evidence for himself. *"Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."*

He had already seen Jesus Crucified and buried, so he needed actual proof before he would believe anyone that Jesus was resurrected. And the longer Jesus stayed away, the more adamant, and the more determined Thomas would have been in his thoughts, and the more he would have said “I will not believe”. If Jesus had never shown Himself to Thomas, then Thomas would have never believed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

We read in the next verse in John chapter twenty and verse twenty-six, that it was a week later before Jesus showed Himself to His disciples again. I think those 7 days between His first and second appearances to His disciples tell a very interesting and powerful story. One that is very easy to just read over and not consider the full and true meaning of this period.

Can you imagine these 7 days? If the Disciples slept for 8 hours a day, then they were awake for about one hundred and twelve hours, and just what do you think they were talking about? They may have still been arguing about who was to be the greatest in the Kingdom, who was to sit at His right hand and who at His left, and no doubt wondering how Jesus was now going to kick the Romans out of Jerusalem. But I think their major topic of conversation for those days would have been about their resurrected Lord, and how things might now change.

But what about Thomas for those one hundred and twelve hours? He must have been wondering what was wrong with the last bottle of wine the others had drunk to believe such a thing. People do not come back from the dead. We know from the next two verses that he kept this attitude for the full seven days.

Joh 20:26 After eight days again his disciples were inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors being locked, and stood in the middle, and said, “Peace be to you.”

Joh 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand, and put it into my side. Don’t be unbelieving, but believing.”

Joh 20:28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

Thomas had kept on doubting for the full seven days, but after seeing the resurrected Jesus, the change in him is complete and immediate. He needs no more proof that Jesus is indeed risen, or that He is the Son Of God. Thomas spent the rest of his life teaching about

Jesus and His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead, and tradition has it he was killed with a sword for teaching these things.

I wonder why there were seven days between these two appearances, and why Thomas was not present the first time Jesus appeared to His disciples. Maybe it was for us to see the determination of Thomas sticking to his guns for seven days and refusing to be persuaded, but demanding physical proof of Christ's return from the dead. Then his total acceptance after he saw the resurrected Jesus. His story is powerful proof that our Lord is indeed alive today.

As an extra encouraging note to future Christians, and that is us, Jesus says in the next verse. Those who have not seen Him but still believe are blessed. Read verse twenty-nine to see this very reassuring message from our Lord.

Joh 20:29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and have believed."

It is my thoughts that God made absolutely certain that Thomas was not present a week earlier, because He knew the heart and mind of Thomas and that he would stubbornly continue to say "I will not believe". Until he had the absolute proof he needed.

If Jesus had not returned and shown Himself to Thomas, then our good friend Thomas, no longer Doubting Thomas, would have never believed, but this stubborn man was now convinced, and we can also believe that Jesus was resurrected thanks to the change in Thomas's attitude after he saw Him resurrected.

James the Brother of Jesus

James, the half brother of Jesus, is another perfect example of someone who has seen Jesus risen from the dead. He and the other half brothers of Jesus did not believe that He was who He claimed to be while He was alive, and we can read this in John chapter seven and verses one through to five.

Joh 7:1 After these things, Jesus was walking in Galilee, for he wouldn't walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Joh 7:2 Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was at hand.

Joh 7:3 His brothers therefore said to him, "Depart from here, and go into Judea, that your disciples also may see your works which you do.

Joh 7:4 For no one does anything in secret, and himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, reveal yourself to the world.

Joh 7:5 For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

We read in verse five that His half brothers did not believe that He was "The Christ". Yet, in verse three, they tell Jesus to go to Judea so His disciples can see the works that He does. Therefore, they must have seen, or at least heard, about some miracles Jesus had performed. But they still did not believe. The following verses are more proof of this in Matthew chapter thirteen and verses fifty-four to fifty-eight.

Mat 13:54 Coming into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom, and these mighty works?"

Mat 13:55 Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?

Mat 13:56 Aren't all of his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all of these things?"

Mat 13:57 They were offended by him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and in his own house."

Mat 13:58 He didn't do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

This is an interesting passage of scripture for anyone who still believes that Mary, the mother of Jesus, remained a virgin all her life. It is very clear here that Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters. This event happened in Jesus' own hometown, so the people gathered there would have known Jesus and His family very well. The fact Jesus had siblings was recorded here to let us know, from God's own bible that Mary was only a virgin till the day Jesus was born. If you doubt this, then read Mat 1:23-25.

Mat 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel;" which is, being interpreted, "God with us."

Mat 1:24 Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took his wife to himself;

Mat 1:25 and didn't know her sexually until she had given birth to her firstborn son. He named him Jesus.

How clear does God need to make this before people will believe the truth and accept what He has had written in His precious book for our benefit?

Note especially verse fifty-seven, where Jesus states a Prophet is not without honour EXCEPT in his own town and in his own home. We know from the story of Jesus' birth that Mary and Joseph were both told by the angel exactly what was going to happen, and exactly who their first-born son was going to be. So those of "his own home" must have been others apart from Mary and Joseph, so it can only mean the half brothers and half sisters of Jesus.

Yet after the resurrection of Jesus, James also became a believer and wrote the book of James in the New Testament where he describes himself as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ", Why the change now, and why not believe while Jesus was alive and performing His miracles.

James, and his brothers, must have witnessed, or at least heard, about the works that Jesus was performing, so why only after His death did they believe that their half Brother, Jesus, was the Lord? Very simple, they had seen Him crucified and buried and had mourned for Him for three days, and now they have seen the resurrected Jesus. What could be more powerful proof than to witness the power of the resurrection, to see Jesus shrug off the chains of death?

The Other Brothers of Jesus

The other half Brothers of Jesus were also believers only after the resurrection, and we can read of this in Acts chapter one and verses thirteen to fourteen.

Act 1:13 When they had come in, they went up into the upper room, where they were staying; that is Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

Act 1:14 All these with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer and supplication, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Here the eleven Disciples are all named and along with them are mentioned the half brothers of Jesus, so these half brothers were not disciples, but half brothers of Jesus. Many people do not believe Jesus had any siblings, but here is proof positive that He has siblings.

So, the resurrection of Jesus is the turning point for many to come to believe that He is the Son of God. Even His unbelieving half brothers and sisters were now totally convinced.

The other disciples of Jesus were 100% convinced of who He was and were prepared to go through any hardships. To be persecuted and mistreated by many as they preached about Jesus. They witnessed the persecution and death of their Lord, so they must have known their own lives would be in danger if they continued to preach about Jesus and the coming Kingdom of God. Yet they never stopped preaching until the day they were put to death because of their faith in Jesus.

You and I can also believe that Jesus is our Lord by the witnessing of His disciples

and the incredible changes that occurred in their lives after they saw Jesus resurrected from the dead. These fishermen and a tax collector all saw the works of Jesus, saw His death and resurrection and were the foundation members of Christ's Church.

For me personally, it is this amazing change in their attitudes and lives after the resurrection of Jesus Christ that really seals it for me. How many of these men would have lived their lives this way, and have been prepared to suffer the kinds of death they experienced, if they knew that this was all just a fantastic lie? It makes no sense to think that any of them would do this.

Jesus Appears to Others

The Apostles were not the only ones to see the risen Christ, as we can read in 1 Co 15:5-8.

1Co 15:5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1Co 15:6 Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers at once, most of whom remain until now, but some have also fallen asleep.

1Co 15:7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

1Co 15:8 and last of all, as to the child born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also.

The five hundred that He appeared to in verse six would have been the founding members of the early church, and because of persecution, they spread around the world, taking the knowledge of Jesus with them to all parts of the world.

We have the witness of many people that Jesus was indeed resurrected from the dead, and because of this incredible event that has been recorded for us, we can all rest easy knowing that this event is a fact of history, and that we can rely upon all the other promises that we have been given about our futures in the Kingdom of God.

The reason that the disciples all believed that Jesus was resurrected is because they all saw it with their own eyes, as was recorded in 1Jn 1:1-3.

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we saw, and our hands touched, concerning the Word of life

1Jn 1:2 (and the life was revealed, and we have seen, and testify, and declare to you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was revealed to us);

1Jn 1:3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may

have fellowship with us. Yes, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

We must believe in the risen Jesus Christ. Then we can have fellowship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ Himself.

What is a Preparation Day

There are two very important days that occurred at the time of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. These two days are "Preparation Day" and "Special Sabbath". It is vital to understand the meaning of these two days, and when they occur, to understand properly the timing of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

A "Preparation Day" as observed in Judaism, is the day immediately prior to a Sabbath day. To enforce their strict observance of a Sabbath day, the people were to make preparations for the Sabbath well before the actual starting time of this day of devotion to the Lord.. All meals were to be prepared before sunset, so the only thing to do on the day was to serve the food. This practice was to make certain that no work of any kind was done during the Sabbath. Leaving the entire day to worship of God. That is why it is called a "Preparation Day".

It is vital to realise that a preparation day always precedes a Sabbath day, whether it is a normal weekly Sabbath, or one of the Annual holy days that God has set apart to reveal His overall plan of salvation.

The term "Special Sabbath" never applies to a normal weekly Sabbath unless one of God's annual holy days falls on a weekly Sabbath. There are seven high days, or "Special Sabbaths" throughout the year, that are observed by Jews, and by a minority of Christians. They are set on special dates according to the Jewish calendar, therefore, they can fall on any day of the week the same as any other annual celebration.

In the book of Leviticus, God instructs Moses to keep His appointed festivals. Please note here that the festivals are God's appointed festivals. They are not necessarily Jewish festivals, but God's festivals. Moses was to proclaim sacred assemblies for the people, as we see in Lev chapter twenty-two and verse two.

Lev 23:2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

The first two of these annual sacred assemblies, or “Special Sabbaths,” are during the Passover, and are always during the first month of the year according to the Jewish calendar. These “Special Sabbaths” are described in Num 28:16-18.

Num 28:16 "On the fourteenth day of the first month the LORD's Passover is to be held.

Num 28:17 On the fifteenth day of this month there is to be a festival; for seven days eat bread made without yeast.

Num 28:18 On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.

Then, dropping to verse twenty-five, we see a second sacred assembly, or Sabbath, on the last day of the unleavened bread festival.

Num 28:25 On the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.

The Lord’s Passover is on the 14th day of the first month. Then on the 15th day is the first day of Unleavened Bread, and it is a “Sacred Assembly”. This festival is to last for seven days with a special Sabbath day on the first and on the last days of the festival.

The other five “Special Sabbaths” throughout the year are held on Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the last two “Special Sabbaths” occur during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now we know what these days mean. Let us see why they are important for us to understand the timing of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. In the book of John 19:30-31, we see both terms used regarding the day of His crucifixion.

Joh 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

*Joh 19:31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a **special Sabbath**. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.*

It is clear from these verses Jesus was crucified on a “Preparation Day” and the next day was a “Special Sabbath”, not a normal weekly Sabbath as is the popular belief in most Christian Churches today. This is just one of those places where you must put away your preconceived ideas and listen to the words of God. Assume nothing, but prove everything from the scriptures.

A tradition of the Jews was to have all bodies taken down from the cross before a Sabbath began. This was to avoid having to do this on a Sabbath day. Therefore, they approached Pilate to have the body of Jesus, and the two thieves that were crucified with Him taken down and buried before sunset. This was made clear in John 19:31. Then in Mar 15:42-43, we see Joseph asking Pilate for Christ’s body on the preparation day.

Mar 15:42 It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached,

Mar 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus's body.

Here in verse forty-two it is clarified that the day Jesus was crucified was on the “preparation day”. This was followed by a Special Sabbath day as we saw in Joh 19:31 above.

Jesus was crucified and buried on this “preparation day”. The most important thing I hope you will understand from this is that Jesus was crucified on a “Preparation Day”, and this was followed by a “Special Sabbath”.

Following are three more passages of scripture that support the fact that Jesus was crucified and buried on a day that the Jews refer to as “the preparation day”.

Luk 23:52-54

Luk 23:52 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.

Luk 23:53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.

Luk 23:54 It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

Joh 19:41-42

Joh 19:41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.

Joh 19:42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Joh 19:14-15

Joh 19:14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

Joh 19:15 But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.

Please understand from verse fourteen that it was the “Preparation Day” prior to the Passover, and not to a normal weekly Sabbath. Many people mistake this preparation day as being just before a weekly Sabbath, but it is just before the Passover Sabbath, and that is the first day of unleavened bread. As stated earlier, these special Sabbaths can fall on any day of the week and are not tied to the weekly Sabbath.

How does understanding these special Sabbaths and preparation days lead us to actually prove the days of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? The answer is revealed in the chapter “On What Day Was Jesus Crucified”.

The Only Sign

What is the most important question you can ask when you are trying to prove the resurrection from the dead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? There was only one sign Jesus gave to the Pharisees of His day that He is who He claimed to be. Since this was to be the only sign, it needs to be scrutinized to see if it stands or fails the test. The only place we can go to find out how the Pharisees were testing Jesus is in the bible. And it was recorded in Mat 12:38-42 along with the amazing response Jesus gave them.

Mat 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

Mat 12:39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet."

Mat 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Mat 12:41 The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, someone greater than Jonah is here.

Mat 12:42 The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, someone greater than Solomon is here.

In these verses, Jesus explains to the Pharisees that He was going to give them one, and one sign only, that He was Who He claimed to be. The Son Of God. And that sign was the sign of the prophet Jonah. Then He tells us the meaning of this sign. That He would be three days and three nights in the tomb, the same as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly. Following this, He then tells them someone greater than Jonah and Solomon is there, referring to Himself. This is an enormous claim for anyone to make and one these Pharisees would have objected to.

And since this “sign of Jonah the prophet” is to be the only sign, then it is vital He keeps this sign exactly. Otherwise, He cannot be who He claims to be. This Sign was that He would be in the heart of the earth, or in the tomb, for this exact amount of time Jonah was in the whale's belly. Any other amount of time and He does not fulfil this all important and only sign. If He fails this test, that would make Him a false Messiah and not the Son Of God.

To emphasise the importance of this sign, the time Jesus was in the tomb has been described in a variety of ways, as I will now describe. The first was simply “three days and three nights” as we see above in verse 40. By our reckoning today, three nights of about 12 hours each, and three days also of about 12 hours each, add up to 72 hours.

The second example is found in Joh 2:18-21, here Jesus used the term “**in three days**”.

Joh 2:18 The Jews therefore answered him, “What sign do you show us, seeing that you do these things?”

Joh 2:19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Joh 2:20 The Jews therefore said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple! Will you raise it up in three days?”

Joh 2:21 But he spoke of the temple of his body.

The term “in three days” means Jesus must be in the tomb for three days and three nights, but no longer than 72 hours. His resurrection must be inside this time period.

In the third example, we are told Jesus would be raised from the tomb **after three days**.

*Mar 8:31 He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and **after three days** rise again.*

This term “after three days” shows Jesus was again to be in the tomb for three days, but this time no less than three days. In other words, only after the full 72 hours have passed.

The fourth and final example is in 1Co 15:4, here the term “**on the third day**” is used.

1Co 15:4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

The time in this example is made clear to us in the first book of the bible. This is when God is describing the days of creation. Notice verse 13 of chapter 1 and that it was according to the scriptures.

Gen 1:13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

So if we check this out, according to the scriptures, then after three days and three nights of creating, God recorded this was “the third day” and we can clearly see three nights at 12 hours each and three days of 12 hours each adding up to 72 hours.

From these 4 examples of scripture, we see the four different ways the time frame for Jesus being in the tomb is described. First, it is just “**three days and three nights**”. And this equates to exactly 72 hours, as was shown earlier. Second comes the term “**in three days**”. It must be no more than 72 hours if it is to be “in three days”. The third example given is **after three days**. It must be no less than a full 72 hours, otherwise it cannot be “after three days”. The last term is “**on the third day**”. Again, exactly three days. These four scriptures, and they are not the only ones, tell us Jesus was precisely a full 72 hours in the tomb. Notice especially 1Co 15:4 where it states this term, on the third day, was according to the scriptures.

Hopefully, by now we can see Jesus was in the tomb for 72 hours, otherwise He has failed the test of the only sign He gave to the Pharisees. So now we must ask, “does it matter, or make any difference to the claim that Jesus is the Son Of God?”

The answer to that vital question is - it makes all the difference in the world. It either proves, or disproves, that Jesus Christ is our King of kings and Lord of lords. If He fulfils this sign, He is our Messiah. If He cannot fulfil it, then He is a fake Messiah.

Now that we have established the fact that Jesus was to be in the tomb for exactly 72 hours. We need to find the precise starting and finishing times of these 72 hours. These starting and finishing times of Christ’s burial and resurrection are explained in the next chapter. “On What Day Was Jesus Crucified”.

On What day Was Jesus Crucified?

I hope you have read the chapter titled “What Is A Preparation Day” to understand the meaning of the terms “Preparation Day” and “Special Sabbath”. It is very important to understand the meaning of these terms before going any further.

Probably the best and most accurate way to find the day and time of Christ’s burial and resurrection is to follow the activities of the women. They hold the answer to the question of when Jesus was buried and resurrected from the grave.

In the days when Jesus was present here on the earth, women were not held in high regard and even their testimonies held very little value in a court of law just because they were female. I guess this status for women has not changed too much even today as we see women regarded as lower-class citizens in many countries. But God has never seen women in this class. He sees us all as equals. I believe God used the activities of the women from the time Jesus was crucified until He rose from the grave to reveal when these events happened. Maybe this is God’s way of telling us we are all equal in His eyes.

Let us start with the narrative from Luk 23:46-56 and see that the women were all there when Jesus was crucified and put into the tomb.

Luk 23:46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Luk 23:47 The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."

Luk 23:48 When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away.

Luk 23:49 But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed

him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Luk 23:50 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man,

Luk 23:51 who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God.

Luk 23:52 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.

Luk 23:53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.

Luk 23:54 It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

Luk 23:55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it.

Luk 23:56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

In verse forty-nine, the women who had followed Jesus were all there, standing at a distance. Verse fifty five tells us the women saw the tomb and how His body was laid. Therefore, they were at the tomb very late on the day Jesus was crucified, and the Sabbath was about to begin. So the women would not have had time to buy the spices necessary to anoint Jesus' body before the start of the Sabbath. Also note that ALL the women were there, so there was no one who could have purchased the spices prior to the Sabbath starting.

The women were all there witnessing the crucifixion and burial of Jesus (verse fifty five). Then, in verse fifty six, the women went home and prepared the spices. This sounds like they prepared the spices on that same day, the preparation day when Jesus was crucified. But if you look at Mar 16:1, it is clear they purchased the spices AFTER the Sabbath.

Remember, I said at the start of this book that you will not find the answer in just one place, but that a careful study in several different books of the bible will be needed to find the truth. Let us now look into what Mark said in chapter sixteen and verse one.

Mar 16:1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.

The women would not have had time to buy these spices before the High Day Sabbath

started. They were there to witness Jesus being laid out in the tomb right at sunset, and verses fifty-four and fifty-five of Luke chapter twenty-three, shows the Sabbath was drawing near. Therefore, they would not have had time to purchase the spices prior to the Special Sabbath starting. And purchasing and preparing the spices on the special Sabbath would have violated the Special Sabbath day law. Apart from that, any shopkeeper who would have sold these spices would have closed shop by now to prepare for the Sabbath.

A reminder of what we read in the last chapter is needed here to emphasize that this Sabbath mention here is actually a special Sabbath and not an ordinary weekly Sabbath.

Joh 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Joh 19:31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

Mar 16:1 informs us it was after the Special Sabbath that the women purchased the spices. So we can see that one Sabbath day has passed since Jesus was laid out in the tomb. And it is after this Sabbath the women purchased and prepared the spices.

Back to Luk 23:56, this explains the women prepared the spices and then rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment before going to anoint Jesus' body. Now we have a second Sabbath in the story. After resting on the first Sabbath, the special Sabbath, the women purchase the spices they need and prepare them. Then they rested on the Sabbath. This one is the usual weekly Sabbath.

We know from Joh 19:31 the Sabbath that was about to begin after Jesus was buried was "The Special Sabbath" and not the weekly Saturday Sabbath.

So now, if we follow the timetable of these events, we have to come to the following conclusion.

After witnessing the burial of Jesus very late on the preparation day, too late to purchase the spices before the Special Sabbath began. The women rested on the Special Sabbath. Then they purchased and prepared the spices the day after the special Sabbath. This

is clear from Mar 16:1. Then, after preparing the spices, the women rested again on the weekly Sabbath, as is clear from Luk 23:56.

Luk 23:56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

From these verses, we can plainly see two Sabbaths with one ordinary day in between.

If we compare the details in both Gospels, we see where Mark tells us the women bought spices after the Sabbath (Mar 16:1), Then Luke relates they prepared the spices before resting on the weekly Sabbath (Luk 23:56). This shows two different Sabbaths being mentioned. The first, as John 19:3 tells us, was the “high day”, or “Special Sabbath”, that was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The second Sabbath is the weekly Sabbath.

We saw the timetable of the events a little earlier. But now let us look at these events in reverse order to come to the exact day Jesus was crucified and buried.

We know Jesus was exactly seventy-two hours in the tomb (Three days and three nights) He was put into the tomb at the very end of the day of preparation as the day was ending. Therefore, He must have risen at the same time of the day three days later.

Very early on the first day of the week, and that is Sunday, the women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. But note what was recorded in Luke chapter twenty-four and verses one through to three.

Luk 24:1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

Luk 24:2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

Luk 24:3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus was placed in the tomb at sunset on the day He was crucified, and He had to be in the tomb for exactly seventy-two hours. This was to fulfil the prophecy He gave to the Jewish leaders that He would be in the tomb for the same time Jonah was in the whale's belly, as we can read below.

Mat 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

Mat 12:39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet."

Mat 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Since He was already risen very early on the first day of the week, Sunday, He could not have risen on this day because He had to rise as the sun was setting. This only leaves the weekly Sabbath as the day for Him to be resurrected from the dead.

To determine what day Jesus was crucified, all we need to do is to count backwards from the time of his resurrection at exactly seventy-two hours. Starting at the end of the regular weekly Sabbath. Count back one day and this is Friday. Friday, the day after the Special Sabbath, and the day the women purchased and prepared the spices.

Count back one more day and it is Thursday. The Special Sabbath after Jesus was crucified. This was the first day the women rested. Therefore, the day of preparation, the day of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ, had to be on the Wednesday. Just before sunset.

Jesus was buried just prior to the sun setting on the "day of preparation" on Wednesday. Therefore, He would have left the tomb just prior to sunset on the weekly Sabbath, exactly seventy-two hours, or three days and three nights, from the time of His burial.

This timetable fits in perfectly with the definition of "three days and three nights". Jesus told the leaders of the Jews He would be in the tomb for three days and three nights, the same time Jonah was in the belly of the enormous fish. And this was to be the ONLY SIGN Jesus was going to give. No other sign will conclusively prove He is our Messiah.

Even though Jesus performed many miracles, that point to Him being God. This one sign, Three days and three nights, is all He gave as the conclusive proof He was who He claimed to be. God in the flesh. The Messiah of the Jews. Our Messiah.

What Then is Our Future?

What I have covered so far is certainly not the complete story. There is a great amount of information still to explore, but I will leave it here as I think what has been covered should be enough to either convince you of the reality of Jesus, or give you a starting place for your own in-depth bible studies on this matter. So now let me ask two questions.

Question 1. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ is nothing more than just a lie, then what does the future hold for the followers of Jesus Christ? I think an excellent answer to this question can be found in 1Cor 15:12-19.

1Co 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

1Co 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised.

1Co 15:14 If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain.

1Co 15:15 Yes, we are also found false witnesses of God, because we testified about God that he raised up Christ, whom he didn't raise up, if it is so that the dead are not raised.

1Co 15:16 For if the dead aren't raised, neither has Christ been raised.

1Co 15:17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins.

1Co 15:18 Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

1Co 15:19 If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.

Our futures are bleak if Jesus Christ was not resurrected from the dead. As Paul

stated in the above verses, the followers of Jesus are to be pitied the most out of all humanity if His resurrection was not a reality.

Question 2. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ is reality, now what is the future of loyal followers of Our Lord?

Joh 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Joh 6:39 This is the will of my Father who sent me, that of all he has given to me I should lose nothing, but should raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:40 This is the will of the one who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes in him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Everyone who believes in The Son will achieve eternal life. This is one promise God has made to us. To recognise Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour is to be accepted by God the Father and is a guarantee of an eternal life in His Kingdom. Another passage that will give us all hope of a future time in God’s Kingdom is found in 1 Peter.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1Pe 1:4 to an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that doesn’t fade away, reserved in Heaven for you,

1Pe 1:5 who by the power of God are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1Pe 1:6 Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been put to grief in various trials,

1Pe 1:7 that the proof of your faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes even though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ—

1Pe 1:8 whom not having known you love; in whom, though now you don’t see him, yet believing, you rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory —

1Pe 1:9 receiving the result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

We can see here that it is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ that we now have an incorruptible inheritance that is reserved in Heaven for all those who believe in Jesus.

We may need to suffer through some trials and tribulations while we live in this present world, but then we can see what the result of our faith in Him will bring. The salvation of our souls.

We may have to suffer for a short time, but we are assured of an incredible future in God's Kingdom if we stay faithful to the end.

Conclusion

So, if we all agree that the resurrection was a reality, then Jesus has beaten death, and since he has beaten death, we will have the same victory.

The occasion of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was the greatest moment in history for all of humanity, but it must have been the worst time in all of history for our common enemy, Satan.

I found the following statement on the web while surfing for ideas and thought I would share it with you to finish this book.

Jesus came into this world immaculately, lived extraordinarily, died excruciatingly, rose victoriously, and ascended gloriously back into Heaven.

From all the evidence we can find in secular history and in the evidence we find in the bible and especially with the complete change in the character and behaviour of the disciples of Jesus, how can we deny Jesus was resurrected from the dead? And if He was resurrected, then our futures are assured and we can look forward to an eternity in God's Kingdom where there will be no more tears, death or dying.

God bless you, and thanks for reading this book.

About The Author

Leslie Rendell has had no formal religious education. But he has been studying the bible for most of his life. When he is researching a topic, he looks at what other people have said in their books or on the world wide web. He believes it is important to see opinions from every angle of the subject to give his own informed decision. But still the most important reference is always the bible. There is no other authority for matters of what God expects from those He has created in His own image.

He is retired and now lives in the South West of Western Australia. Apart from his love of the Bible, his other hobbies are vegetable growing and photography, where he loves to photograph God's creation.

If you have read one of his books, he would appreciate you leaving a comment on his website (www.leslierendell.com)

Books by the Same Author

Three Days And Three Nights

Ebook

<https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B092QRRL72>

Exactly how long was Jesus Christ in the tomb? The only proof that He was prepared to give to the Pharisees and Sadducees was He would be three days and three nights in the earth, the same time Noah was in the belly of the great fish.

Why So Much Suffering?

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The Rapture

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The Rapture is a very complicated topic and there are several ways to understand what the rapture is and when it is going to happen. This book was written to help you see what the Bible has to say on this subject.