

SEVEN REASONS WHY I BELIEVE IN THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

(Adapted from CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS by Dr. Ian Paisley)

Christianity is founded on the empty tomb. Its throbbing vitality is the fact that the Christ who bled and suffered on the Cross is gloriously risen from the dead and is alive for evermore. The Church’s only justification for its origin and doctrine is that Christ is risen from Joseph’s tomb. The vacated sepulcher alone vindicates the Church’s existence. The gospel stakes all on the actuality that the Lord Jesus rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

The experiment of Gilbert West and Lord Lyttleton – intellectuals of their day, is a powerful witness.

West undertook to write a treatise on the Resurrection proving it to be a fabrication.

Lyttleton vowed to produce a treatise demonstrating that Paul was not miraculously converted on the Damascus Road. Both men became Christians!

- 1. **The Bodily Resurrection was prophetically anticipated by Christ Himself.** Matt. 12:39, 40., Matt 20:17-19
Mark 14:28 John 2:18-22

The argument that Christ predicted His death by a deduction from antagonistic circumstances cannot stand. His prophecy in John chapter 2 came early on in His ministry, long before the religious leaders organized themselves against Him. Peter and other disciples repudiated Christ’s death as impossible. Matt:16:21-23.

- 2. **The Bodily Resurrection is perfectly substantiated by the gospel narratives.**

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
2 Appearances Ch. 28:7, 16,19,	3 Appearances 16:9-11 To Mary M 16:12-13, Two men 16:14 To the eleven	4 appearances 1. To men going to Emmaus Luke 24:15, 2. To Peter 24:33,34 3. To Eleven disciples in Jerusalem 24:33,34 4. At Ascension 24:50	4 Appearances 1. To Mary M at sepulcher 20:16,17 2. To disciples apart from Thomas 20:19 3. To apostles with Thomas 20:26 4. To 7 disciples at sea of Tiberias 21:2

There was no collusion on gathering the information – due to the diversity of order and accounts. There were no contradictions in the accounts.

- 3. **The bodily resurrection is practically demonstrated by the apostles’ transformation.** The conduct and attitude of these men before and after tell the story of their new found conviction and willingness to suffer and face death for the risen Christ. The resurrection made bold apostles out of cowards. Contrast Peter and John at the trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrin, and Peter and John denying the very same hierarchy. Acts 4:19,20.

4. **Because the bodily resurrection is powerfully vindicated by Christianity's history.** The central message and driving thrust of apostolic preaching was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Acts 4:33. It was this message that drew such hostility especially from the Sadducees. "Of all people, the Sadducees would have exposed Christ's Resurrection as a deception if they had been able to do so. "The spiritual force of Christianity is inexplicable, apart from the doctrine of the bodily Resurrection.

5. **The bodily resurrection is perpetually commemorated by the Lord's Day.** John Bunyan said of the Lord's Day, the Lord Himself began it the Holy Spirit seconded it (Pentecost was on the first day of the week, see Leviticus 23:16) and the Apostolic Church practiced it. Its basis was the Resurrection of Christ.

"The universal and uncontradicted Sunday observance in the second century can only be explained by the fact that it had its roots in apostolic practice. Such observance is the more to be appreciated as it has no support in civil legislation before the age of Constantine, and must have been connected with many inconveniences, considering the lowly social condition of the majority of Christians and their dependence upon their heathen masters and employers. Sunday thus became by an easy and natural transformation, the Christian Sabbath or weekly day of rest, at once answering the typical import of the Jewish Sabbath, and itself forming in turn a type of the eternal rest of the people of God in the heavenly Canaan." Philip Schaff – Church historian.

The Lord's day on the first day of the week was anticipated. Lev. 23:10:11. Notice the time of the feast: "The day after the Sabbath. That day was the third day after the Passover lamb was slain, so at the very time when in the temple the priests were preparing to present the wave offering, Christ arose.

"Exactly as the type had prefigured it, so was He offered up unto God. And on the morrow after the Sabbath He came forth the Sheaf, the Branch out of the earth... Suffering and death were behind Him. He had died once unto sin, but now He lived unto God." _ Adolf Saphir

The apostle Paul was thinking of this when he wrote, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept," 1Cor. 15:20.

6. **The bodily resurrection is plainly indicated by the impossible alternatives.**

The Fraud theory – That the disciples stole the Lord's body.

The Swoon Theory – That Jesus was not really dead

The vision Theory – that it was all a dream, that all involved had the same dream, and all who preached the resurrection were working from a mere dream.

What of the empty tomb? Was it empty or not?

7. **The bodily resurrection is personally corroborated by the believer's experience.** Joseph's tomb is not only emptied of Christ's body, but it is emptied of our curse. This experience of justification in the heart of the believer is a personal corroboration that Christ is risen from the dead. In the joy of this experience the believer can say with Job, that I shall in my flesh see God. See Job 19:25-27.