



Vintage Jesus Notes

Chapter 7 - Did Jesus Rise from Death?



Chapter Summary

In this chapter we pour over all the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus including, biblical, circumstantial and non-christian historical evidence. We'll see irrefutable evidence speaking to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus which was the basis, foundation and cause for the explosive growth in the early church.

By the end of this chapter everyone should see Jesus' resurrection as a matter of both fact **and** faith.

You can visit the Vintage Jesus website to see videos and audio of this series:

<http://reliit.org/vintagejesus/downloads.php>



Notes

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live"

(Jesus - John 11:25)

The Resurrection in history

1. The resurrection of Jesus is a matter of fact *and* faith, not just faith
2. Jesus is the only one who has conquered death.
3. The fact of Jesus' death and resurrection must be accepted through faith in the person of Jesus.
 - 3.1. We should have confidence in what happens after death because our savior has been there and beaten it.
 - 3.2. No other major religion has that or even claims to
4. The resurrection is the most known and celebrated miracle in all of history.
5. Notable quotes
 - 5.1. **Thomas Arnold** (professor of modern history at Oxford), "No one fact in the history of mankind...is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort..." than the fact that "...Christ died and rose from the dead."
 - 5.2. **Billy Graham** "The entire plan for the future has its key in the resurrection."
 - 5.3. **John R. Stott** "Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion. The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed."
6. 1 Corinthians 15 talks about the cruel reality if Jesus' did not rise from the dead.
 - 6.1. our preaching is useless
 - 6.2. our faith is useless
 - 6.3. we are liars
 - 6.4. dead in our sins



6.5. we are all lost

6.6. we should be pitied more than all men

Biblical evidence for the resurrection

1. Jesus' resurrection was prophesied in advance (**Isaiah**)
2. Jesus predicted his resurrection. (**Matt. 12:38-40, Mark 8:31**)
3. Jesus died on the cross, didn't feign death. Some evidence to that point:
 - 3.1. Sleepless nights of trials and beatings that left him exhausted.
 - 3.2. Jesus was scourged. Many didn't make it through this punishment alone.
 - 3.3. Jesus was crucified and a professional executioner declared him dead.
 - 3.4. To insure his death a spear was thrust in his side and a mixture of blood and water poured out due to a punctured heart sac.
 - 3.5. Jesus was wrapped in nearly 100 pounds of linens and spices which if Jesus somehow survived everything prior, this would have caused suffocation.
 - 3.6. Jesus was in the tomb in this condition for 3 days with no food or water.
 - 3.7. Impossible to believe he could have survived all of this.
4. Jesus was buried in a tomb that was easy to find.
 - 4.1. Joseph of Arimathea gifted his tomb to Jesus. He was a well-known wealthy man and his tomb location was known and recorded. (**Matt. 27:57-60**)
5. Jesus appeared physically alive after 3 days in his tomb.
 - 5.1. Jehovah's Witnesses maintain a heretical position that Jesus didn't physically resurrect, only spiritually
 - 5.2. many people touched his body including the disciples (**Matt. 28:9**)
 - 5.3. Mary clung to him (**John 20:17**)
 - 5.4. Thomas the doubter put his hand in Jesus' wound in his side (**John 20:20-28**)
 - 5.5. the disciples were uncertain if Jesus had physically resurrected and Jesus cleared that up with an emphatic yes (**Luke 24:36-43**)
 - 5.6. no other credible historical evidence for any other fact but bodily resurrection



6. Jesus' resurrection was recorded as scripture shortly after occurring.
 - 6.1. Mark's gospel was written at the latest in 37 A.D. At the **LATEST**. That is not nearly enough time for legend to form or mythologizing the facts because many witnesses were still alive.
 - 6.2. That is a gold mine for recorded historical artifacts and blows away any other historical point from that era or even since.
7. Jesus' resurrection was celebrated in the earliest church creeds.
 - 7.1. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 speaks of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and is considered the earliest church creed which began circulating as AD 30-36
8. Jesus' resurrection convinced his family to worship Him as God.
 - 8.1. James (brother) was originally opposed to Jesus' claims (**John 7:5**)
 - 8.2. James changed after the resurrection (**1 Corinthians 15:7**), James went on to pastor the church in Jerusalem and authored the book of James.
 - 8.3. James also suffered and died proclaiming Jesus as the resurrected Lord
 - 8.4. Mary was part of the early church and praised Jesus as God (**Acts 1:14**) as was Jude.
 - 8.5. Getting your family to worship you as God is a tough sell. What would it take for your family to believe you were actually the son of God? resurrection perhaps?
9. Jesus' resurrection was confirmed by His most bitter enemies, Paul.
 - 9.1. After an encounter with the risen Christ Paul became the most dynamic defender and expander of the church. (**Acts 9**)
 - 9.2. Paul hated Jesus, why change?

Circumstantial evidence for the resurrection

1. The transformation of the disciples

- 1.1. prior to the resurrection the disciples were fearful and even hid from Jesus (**John 20:19**)
- 1.2. following the resurrection they were bold witnesses to Christ's resurrection and some died for those convictions. If they weren't true they surely would have recanted.
- 1.3. Peter was a coward and denied even knowing Christ before resurrection, but afterwards became a fearless leader of the early church and was crucified upside down, never recanting.



- 1.4. Simon Greenleaf, a world-renowned law professor at Harvard University said that it was "*impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they knew any other fact*"

2. The disciples loyalty to their messiah

- 2.1. Modern day messiahs lose their following when they die, either through lost hope or the disciples look for someone else.
- 2.2. Jesus' disciples didn't leave him, they remained loyal to death.

3. The character of the disciples

- 3.1. these men were devout Jews who knew they would go to hell for worshipping a false god

4. The day of worship

- 4.1. The early church stopped worshipping on Saturday as Jews had worshipped for thousands of years and suddenly began worshipping on Sunday in memory of Jesus resurrection.
- 4.2. The sabbath was so sacred that could not have changed but for a monolithic event.

5. The object of worship

- 5.1. Now Jesus was the object of worship, considering the importance of the 10 commandments to Jews, worshipping a false god was not a consideration.
- 5.2. According to non-christian historians multitudes began worshipping Jesus as the one true God. They recorded large groups meeting on certain days and worshipping Jesus as the risen God (Pliny the Younger & Lucian)

6. Theological changes in the church

- 6.1. baptism = buried, raised and cleansed
- 6.2. communion = remembering the body and blood of Jesus who rose
- 6.3. both are tied to the resurrection
- 6.4. rejection of OT law as fulfilled by Jesus (cataclysmic shift)

7. Women discovering the empty tomb

- 7.1. women were known by name, well known in the early church and could easily have been questioned



- 7.2. testimony of women was not highly respected in that culture, so if this was fabricated they certainly would not have chosen women to find the tomb

8. Early church preaching

- 8.1. The debate was not about whether the tomb was empty, but why it was empty.
- 8.2. Acts repeatedly mentions the resurrection as a basis for our faith and central truth for the early church.

9. The tomb was not enshrined

- 9.1. It was common and customary in Jewish custom to enshrine the tomb. Jesus followers certainly would have followed precedent as his burial location was well known, but there was no trace of any veneration or enshrinement, the reason...he wasn't there.

10. Growth of the church

- 10.1. There was a huge growth in followers of Christ after his death and resurrection. This growth can't be explained by any other event or occurrence.
- 10.2. 2 other men died with Jesus the same way, yet we don't know their names and billions don't worship them. Why? Cause they are still dead.

Non Christian historical evidence

1. Josephus (Jewish historian born a few years after Jesus died)
 - 1.1. reports of Jesus being alive after the 3rd day of death and appearing to men and a "*tribe of Christian men still not extinct to this day*"
2. Suetonius (Roman historian A.D 70-160)
 - 2.1. mentions the persecution of Christians given to a "*new and mischievous superstition(resurrection)*"
3. Pliny the Younger (AD 61)
 - 3.1. wrote a letter to emperor Trajan around 111 describing early christian worship gatherings as "*meeting on specific days and chanting verses alternately in honor of Christ as if he is a god*"
4. the Jewish explanation
 - 4.1. earliest attempts at an alternative explanation was not that the tomb wasn't empty but that the body was stolen. Which is impossible for the following reasons:
 - 4.1.1. the tomb was guarded by roman soldiers whose job it was to defend from that very thing, whose failure was met with death



- 4.1.2. the tomb was closed by an enormous rock
- 4.1.3. if it was stolen a ransom would have been offered (none was) and if taken by the disciples they would have been questioned and punished (they were not)
- 4.1.4. even if it was stolen how do you account for the fact he appeared *alive* to many thousands?

Poll Results:

12% of Christians believe Jesus did not rise from the dead as historical fact
32% of *non-christians* believe Jesus **did** rise from the dead as historical fact