



# Belpres Church

## A Few Reasons to Believe Jesus Was Raised from the Dead

Scripture says that women were the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. In Jesus' day, women were considered pathological liars, so much so that their testimony was not admissible in a court of law. This was so extreme that if 100 women saw someone commit murder, but no man saw it, the murderer could not be convicted (even with 100 women testifying). In such a culture, where women's words were so distrusted, there is no way that, if the story of Jesus' resurrection was made up, women would be the first witnesses of the resurrection. Some guy would have been.

The disciples all died claiming they saw Jesus raised from the dead. People will die for a lot of things and a lot of causes, but not something they know they made up. If Jesus really wasn't raised from the dead, why would so many people be willing to die for claiming that He was?

Conspiracies are notoriously difficult to keep under wraps (think about Watergate). If there was a conspiracy to concoct a story that Jesus was raised from the dead, somebody would have eventually spilled the beans.

The Biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection were all written within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses to the event. The resurrection, therefore, cannot be a myth, as myths take generations to evolve.

The Biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection name specific individuals by name who saw the resurrected Jesus. These individuals were still alive at the time the accounts were written. If it were myth, specific names would not be given because the stories of the resurrection could easily have been contradicted by these individuals, but there is no evidence of such refutations.

Jesus claimed to be the Jewish Messiah. Many people made such claims; most were killed, and when they were killed, one of their followers or a close relative would step forward and take over the claim in place of the deceased. In Jesus' case, however, none of the disciples, nor any of Jesus' close relatives, did so. The reason was because He did not stay dead. They did not need to take over the claim because He was raised again.

People dismiss the resurrection of Jesus because it is a miracle, and miracles, it is assumed, do not exist. The sloppy argument goes as follows: miracles don't happen; the resurrection is a miracle; therefore, the resurrection did not happen. The premise (miracles don't happen) is unproven, and there is much evidence to contradict it. There are many reports of miracles even in our own time. They are not frequent, but they weren't frequent in Jesus' day either. That's why everyone was so astounded when one occurred. To dismiss the resurrection because it is a miracle is an argument that rests on an unproven premise, and is, therefore, untenable.

The Biblical accounts of the resurrection all read like eyewitness reports, and do not bear the typical marks of myth. The level of specific detail, the stories of the disciples' weaknesses (which would have been eliminated in any myth making), the consistency of the narrative across four different authors, the absence of anachronisms, all point to eyewitness accounts that can be relied on.

The Old Testament records over 500 prophecies of Jesus that give specifics as to His birth, life, and death, all of which were written centuries before Jesus and all of which came true. It is inconceivable to think that this vast number of prophecies would all come true by mere coincidence alone.

Ockham's razor states that the best explanation is the simplest. The simplest explanation for the disciples' behavior after the resurrection, the rise of the church, the number of Biblical accounts and witnesses, the lack of any contravening evidence, etc., is that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Those are just a few reasons to believe. For a more thorough discussion read *The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel; *Evidence That Demands a Verdict or More Than a Carpenter*, by Josh McDowell; or the relevant sections in *A Handbook for Christian Apologetics*, by Peter Kreeft.

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