



## “The Proof of the Resurrection”

*Luke 24:33-46*

**Theme:** The proofs of Jesus’ resurrection are irrefutable.

**Introduction:** The central truth of Christianity is the victory over sin brought to us by Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection. The fact that Jesus is alive means that He can forgive us from sin, reconcile us to the Father, intercede before God’s throne of grace, and send His Spirit to indwell us and provide us the power to be born again and conformed to Christ Jesus. Without the resurrection, [*1 Corinthians 15:14, 17*] “our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain ... your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” Thus, it is the “sticking point” of our faith – that which causes the most definitive reaction by unbelievers – cp. *Acts 3:26-4:2; 17:30-32*.

Immediately upon the resurrection, the soldiers who testified what had happened, were paid a “large sum of money” and instructed to claim the disciples came by night and stole Him away. This “**STOLEN BODY THEORY**” remains the claim that the Jewish people are taught in synagogues throughout the world. However, there are other theories that are embraced by those seeking to deny the resurrection of Jesus. The “**SWOON THEORY**” claims that Jesus was exhausted and had a “near death” experience where His blood pressure dropped and his breathing was undetectable and they mistakenly concluded He died, but he revived in the cool of the tomb and unrolled the stone and sneaked away. The “**PHANTOM THEORY**” stated that Jesus’ body remained dead, but His spirit essentially “haunted” the disciples. The “**HALLUCINATION THEORY**” states the disciples were so distraught and emotionally charged that they “saw” Jesus alive as a hallucination, not actually seeing Him. Finally, the “**MISTAKEN TOMB THEORY**” claims that the disciples got confused and went to the wrong tomb! Most of these claims wouldn’t be necessary if they had simply presented the dead body of Jesus in refutation of the claims that Jesus had risen.

In our text today, God provide us the incontrovertible truth of Jesus’ resurrection – clearly debunking all the assertions to the contrary. Although those who know nothing of the powerful saving grace of God will continue to connive to avoid their accountabilities to Jesus who lives to judge the living and the dead, “**the proofs of Jesus’ resurrection are irrefutable.**”

### **I. The Personal Attestations – 24:33-35**

#### **A. THE ATTESTATION BY THE TRAITOR RESTORED – vv. 33-34**

1. We suspended our study of Luke 24 after v. 32 after Cleopas and his companion were able to recognize Jesus “*and He vanished from their sight.*”

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2. Their faith had been bolstered, not by seeing Jesus, but by means of the Word of God generating faith as they heard it – cp. v. 32.
3. Despite the hour – they day being “nearly over,” *“they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem ...”* – a journey of seven miles – cp. v. 13 (which would have taken them about 1 hour, 45 minutes).
4. When they arrived, they knew exactly where to go and they *“found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them.”*
5. *“gathered together”* [ἠθροισμένους] - is a perf. pass. part. – meaning to collect and in the passive, to cause to be together in a group.
6. Something had caused this assembly – and Cleopas immediately – before he could share his news – encountered an explosion of enthusiasm – *“... saying, ‘The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.’”*
7. It is interesting when *“Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James and also the other women with them”* reported to the apostles what they had seen and heard, the apostles refused to believe – cp. vv. 10-11.
8. Yet, when Jesus *“appeared to Simon”* Peter and he came and reported that he had seen the Lord, they considered it reliable.
9. This appearance is unrecorded in Scripture – yet referenced again in **1 Corinthians 15:5**.
10. Apparently in consideration of the raw nature of this reunion with Jesus, Peter’s encounter is not detailed; it likely included both a rebuke by Jesus as well as a gracious, merciful, and tender restoration – not only as a follower of

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Jesus, but the leader of the disciples.<sup>1</sup>

11. Peter came and called everyone together to hear the news that this restored traitor had to share – *“the Lord has really risen!”*

### **B. THE ATTESTATION THROUGH THE TRAVELERS’ RECOGNITION – vv. 21-24**

1. Upon hearing the enthusiastic report by Peter, Cleopas and his friend *“began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.”*
  - a. *“their experiences on the road”* – refers to the mounting excitement, restoration of hope, and confident assurance that Jesus was indeed alive as Jesus Himself had tutored them on how it was *“necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory,”* explaining *“to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”* – cp. vv. 26-27.
  - b. *“recognized by them in the breaking of the bread”* – they had been prevented by Jesus from perceiving who He was so that their faith would rest firmly on the Scriptures, but were finally enlightened by Jesus once they had come to faith, using the *“breaking of the bread”* as the trigger.
2. This corroborating testimony to Peter’s testimony provided to fulfillment of how things are established in the mouth of two or three witnesses.
3. Additionally, the testimony that Jesus had been seen walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus refuted the **“SWOON THEORY”** that Jesus had slipped into a coma through blood loss, pain and exhaustion, but was revived in the cool, dark, quiet tomb.
4. It would have been impossible for him to have recovered and walked the 7 miles to Emmaus on the nail pierced feet with the raw wound in His side caused by the soldier’s spear who was responsible to ensure Jesus was dead.

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<sup>1</sup> Great care must be taken to not “go beyond what is written” about Peter and elevate him to a superior position to the rest of the apostles – he was the leader of equals.

## II. The Physical Appearance – **24:36-43**

### A. THE STARTLING ARRIVAL – **vv. 36-37**

1. As the testimonies of Peter and Cleopas were still ongoing, they were interrupted by the startling arrival of Jesus – *“While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst.”*
2. This was frightening to them – *“But they were startled and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit.”*
3. John tells us that the reason they were so startled and frightened was because the door was shut and locked – cp. ***John 20:19***.
4. How Jesus appeared to them in a closed room, we do not know, only that He did.
5. Perhaps as Cleopas shared that He had simply vanished, Jesus simply appeared and provided a classic Jewish greeting, but never more needed – *“Peace be with you.”*
6. Jesus’ appearance was not dazzling and glorious, but natural and unassuming – like one of them; yet none of them had seen Him come in and no one knew how He had gotten into the room.
7. They had just declared together in great enthusiasm that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, but when He came to them, they got all superstitious out of fear – having no ability to process what they were seeing.

### B. THE STARTLING AUTHENTICATION – **vv. 38-40**

1. Jesus recognizes their struggle *“and He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?’”* –
2. *“Troubled”* [ταράσσω] – refers literally to causing movement by shaking or stirring and describes being disturbed to the point of shaking.

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3. These *“doubts”* [διαλογισμός] - were caused not by a lack of knowledge of the truth, but in how to process what they were experiencing; the word refers to a dispute about the truth that *“arise[s] in their hearts.”*
4. They simply didn't know what to do with Jesus – seeing Him was something completely unexpected – to come into their closed meeting.
5. So, Jesus provides them the proof that He is not a phantom or a ghost – *“See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”*
6. Jesus would later offer the same opportunity to Thomas who was not present on this occasion – cp. [John 20:26-27](#).
7. It was real *“flesh and bones”* despite the ability to appear and vanish in a moment.
8. *“And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet”* - demonstrations of the wounds that confirm and authenticate that this is really Jesus – the One who was crucified.
9. In Charles Wesley's 18<sup>th</sup> Century hymn about Jesus' intercession for us - still favored by Christians, he wrote of the assurances not only of Jesus' identity, but of His eternal accomplishment on our behalf:

Five bleeding wounds He bears,  
Received on Calvary;  
They pour effectual pray'rs,  
They strongly plead for me:  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

10. .

### C. THE STARTLING APPETITE – vv. 41-43

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1. Jesus then did something they were yet again startled by – He asked for leftovers from their meal!
2. Luke reports – *“While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’”*
3. They hurried and brought Him dinner – *“They gave Him a piece of broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them.”*
4. Clearly, Jesus didn’t have to eat, but did so to demonstrate that His was an actual body – the disciples needed additional evidence as theirs was a state in which *“they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement”* ... it was too good to be true!!!
5. His eating before them provided them time to resolve their questions.
6. *“In the final analysis, the struggle of faith is not a problem of knowledge, for the disciples acknowledge the risen Jesus; nor is faith the banishment of all doubt and uncertainties, for these too are dormant in the disciples. Faith is the choice to believe what they know to be true even in the face of ‘bewilderment, astonishment, and incredulity.’”<sup>2</sup>*
7. These events completely refute both the **PHANTOM AND HALLUCINATION THEORIES** denying the resurrection.

### **III. The Prophetic Affirmation – 24:44-46**

#### **A. THE EXPECTATION OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION – vv. 44**

1. As helpful as the previous proofs are of the resurrection, the ultimate evidence of Christ’s resurrection is the proclamation of God’s Word – *“Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the*

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<sup>2</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke* in The Pillar New Testament Commentary, p. 729.

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### *Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’’*

2. No one has ever been argued into the Kingdom of God – one enters by the exercise of the grace of God using the Word of God to produce faith – cp. **Romans 10:17**.
3. Jesus refers to the entirety of the Old Testament in His statement:
  - a. *“Law of Moses”* – Genesis through Deuteronomy.
  - b. *“the Prophets”* – “former prophets” – historical books; and “latter prophets” - Isaiah – Zechariah.
  - c. *“the Psalms”* – Job – Song of Solomon
4. The entirety of the Old Testament contains the expectation that God would send a Deliverer who would die in the place of sinners – cp. **Luke 24:27**.

## **B. THE EXPLANATION OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION – vv. 45-46**

1. Jesus mercifully provided them the ability to understand – *“Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures ...”*
2. *“open their minds”* [διανοίγω] possesses two nuances:
  - a. It means to take something that was closed and open it – cp. **Luke 24:31; Acts 17:3**.
  - b. It means to explain or interpret – **Luke 24:32**.
3. He takes them back to base their faith in what the Word of God teaches – *“and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,’ ...”*
4. God’s Word – the Scriptures – are the most reliable, certain, and unmistakable revelation of truth – cp. **2 Peter 1:16-21**.
5. The fact of the resurrection is not a wish or legend, but an historical fact documented by Personal Attestations, Physical evidence, and most importantly Prophetic Affirmations.

**So What?**

1. **Efforts to deny the resurrection of Jesus crumble under the weight of revelation, testimony, and evidence.**
2. **All Christian graces, advances, and hopes rise and fall with Jesus being alive – we have hope ... in this life to overcome sin, and in the next life to receive the inheritance of salvation in glory.**
3. **Since Jesus is alive – we will all one day answer to Him as the judge – holding us accountable for one main responsibility: have you bowed before Him as your Lord and King, repenting for the forgiveness of sins?**

**The proofs of Jesus' resurrection are irrefutable.**