

Proofs of Jesus' Resurrection

Douglas W. Cho, D.R.S.

[1 Corinthians 15: 3-8] For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Rejoice, the Lord has risen! Easter is the time of rejoicing for all Christians because Jesus Christ rose from death on this day. They celebrate this miraculous event and share its significance. Do you believe that Jesus Christ rose from His grave on the third day after the crucifixion? Some say that, although He was a great teacher, it is difficult to believe that He was resurrected from death. In this message, I wish to present to you the proofs of His resurrection – proofs in the Bible, in historical records, and in the lives of Christians through the centuries, even today around us.

The four gospel books, which were written in the middle of the first century, all record in detail how the followers of Jesus witnessed the empty grave, their encounters with the risen Savior, and the meetings in which He appeared to and taught His followers. They are recorded in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20. Also, Luke records in the Book of Acts how the Lord spent forty days with His disciples and followers, teaching them about the kingdom of God, and telling them to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of God's Holy Spirit on them. They then witnessed His ascent to heaven at the end of the forty days. Luke records in detail how they followed the Lord's instruction to stay in Jerusalem and experienced the descent of the Holy Spirit on them on the day of Pentecost.

[Acts 1: 1-5] The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. 4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father,

Whereas Luke records that the Lord “assembled together with them (followers),” the apostle Paul wrote that the number of followers who assembled with the Lord in Galilee was about 500 in 1 Corinthians 15:6 quoted above. It is not known how many days they met with Him but likely for many days because otherwise, He needed not stay with them for forty days before His ascent to heaven. Then the risen Lord appeared to Saul, the chief oppressor of the followers of Christ, whereupon the Lord instructed him to take the gospel to the gentiles, as the transformed Paul, and the result of his ministry in many parts of the Roman Empire is well known to us.

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the time, recorded in his book that Jesus, who is Christ, rose from death on the third day and showed Himself to His followers, as having been prophesied by the prophets of the past, and the tens of thousands of Christians held this faith. According to the records of the Roman Empire, Pontus Pilate, who, as the Roman governor of Palestine, made the judgment for the Lord's crucifixion, wrote in his report to Emperor Tiberius after the facts that the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from death had spread throughout Palestine and a great multitude believed Him as God. Tertullian, a 2nd-century Jewish writer, wrote that because Tiberius had a favorable disposition to Pilate's report, the gospel of Christianity had a free course of preaching throughout the Roman territories during his reign as emperor.

The empty tomb, which the disciples witnessed with their eyes in the early morning of the resurrection Sunday, was the direct physical evidence of the Lord's resurrection. However, many theologians point to a much stronger evidence of the resurrection thesis – that is, the drastic transformation of the attitude, spirit, and commitment of the followers of Jesus Christ after His resurrection and ascent to heaven from their prior state. After His crucifixion and burial, the disciples and other followers were in a dejected state of the lost cause, having seen their master and teacher die and buried in a grave with their own eyes. They were highly confused, badly

hurt, disappointed, and dejected in their spirits, as recorded by all of the gospel writers. Thus was their condition before the Lord's resurrection.

However, when they saw the risen Lord, had meals with Him, spent days of instruction from Him during the forty days, and witnessed His ascent to heaven as He had foretold them, their minds, attitudes, and spirits went through a total transformation. This change is very evident when we read of how the 120 followers waited for the descent of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 1. They were no longer a dejected, purposeless, lost-cause group but were now a dedicated, faith-filled, strongly-motivated group waiting in expectancy and earnest prayers for the fulfillment of the Lord's promise of the Holy Spirit. Then, the promised Holy Spirit came down in the form of a whirlwind to each of them in the gathering, and they experienced a miraculous change in them so that they each could speak in a tongue of the numerous localities of the Roman Empire. The large crowd of Jewish people who had come from all regions of the empire to Jerusalem could hear the gospel in their dialects, so that some 3,000 people came to believe in Jesus Christ on this day alone. This was the beginning of the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit through the lives of the transformed Christian believers, who were witnesses of the resurrection of their Savior Jesus.

[Acts 2:30-32] Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

Just as the apostle Peter spoke to the Pentecost crowd in Jerusalem, the followers of Jesus Christ witnessed their Lord's resurrection wherever they went. After 2,000 years, we now have some 31 percent of the world's population, that is 2.4 billion, believing in Jesus Christ as their Savior. This great expansion of the kingdom of God here on earth started from the miracle of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. The total conviction the disciples came to have from witnessing the risen Lord with their own eyes, touched His resurrected body with their hands, ate with Him, and spent days under His instruction. That was what motivated them to devote their lives to the spreading of the gospel story in spite of the hardships and persecutions.

Friends, I want you to look around you at those who are witnessing the truth of the risen Christ today. The living proof of His resurrection still lives on in the lives of His true followers in spite of the darkness and opposition in the world. They testify that the risen Jesus is now in heaven, asking you to come to Him and be saved because He died for you. Come to Him and share in the joy of His resurrection and victory! Amen.

www.douglaschoministry.net

Please send financial support to Douglas Cho Ministry:

한국: 신한은행 82234498000 [예금주: 조덕운]

Using PayPal, send your contribution to dwcho4771@gmail.com