



Rock Point Church
Bill Bush | 8.3.25

BIG IDEA | Reason says risen.

1 Corinthians 15:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins.

Evidence of the Resurrection:

- **Exhibit A: The Empty Tomb**

Matthew 28:6 (NLT)

⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.

Evidence of the Resurrection:

- **Exhibit A: The Empty Tomb**
- **Exhibit B: Early Creed & Eyewitness Testimony**

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NLT)

³ I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴ He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵ He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

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- **Exhibit B: Early Creed & Eyewitness Testimony**
- **Exhibit C: Extraordinary Transformation of the Disciples**

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- Exhibit C: Extraordinary Transformation of the Disciples
- Exhibit D: The Explosion of the Early Church
- Exhibit E: Every Fulfilled Prophecy – Written Centuries Before Jesus

PROPHECY	OT REFERENCE	DATE WRITTEN BEFORE JESUS	FULFILLMENT
BORN OF A VIRGIN	ISAIAH 7:14	~ 700 BC	MATTHEW 1:22-23
BORN IN BETHLEHEM	MICAH 5:2	~ 700 BC	MATTHEW 2:1
ENTERED JERUSALEM ON DONKEY	ZECHARIAH 9:9	~ 500 BC	MATTHEW 21:5-9
BETRAYED FOR 30 SILVER PIECES	ZECHARIAH 11:12-13	~ 500 BC	MATTHEW 26:15
HANDS AND FEET PIERCED	PSALM 22:16	~ 1000 BC	JOHN 20:25-27
CRUCIFIED WITH CRIMINALS	ISAIAH 53:12	~ 700 BC	LUKE 23:32-33
BURIED IN RICH MAN'S TOMB	ISAIAH 53:9	~ 700 BC	MATTHEW 27:57-60
RESURRECTION PREDICTED	PSALM 16:10	~ 1000 BC	ACTS 2:31

Looking for more resources?

[Got Questions: Why Should I Believe In The Resurrection?](#)

[Armor Of God Sermon: Right Weapon. Real Victory](#)

Extrabiblical sources

1. Tacitus (c. AD 56–120) – Roman Historian

Source: Annals 15.44

What he said: “Christus, from whom the name [Christian] had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of... Pontius Pilate...”

Importance: Confirms Jesus’ execution under Pilate and the early spread of Christianity in Rome.

2. Josephus (c. AD 37–100) – Jewish Historian

Source: Antiquities 18.3.3

What he said (in the most accepted version): “About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man... He was the Christ... He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him.”

Importance: Acknowledges Jesus as a historical figure, His crucifixion, and the claim of His resurrection—even if partially edited later.

3. Toledot Yeshu – Jewish Anti-Christian Writings (medieval compilation of earlier traditions)

What it says:

Offers an alternative explanation that the body was stolen, not that the tomb was still occupied.

Importance: Even hostile Jewish tradition admits the tomb was empty, offering naturalistic alternatives rather than denying it.

4. Pliny the Younger (c. AD 61–113) – Roman Governor

Source: Letter to Emperor Trajan (c. AD 112)

What he said: Describes early Christians worshiping “Christ as a god” and gathering regularly to sing hymns to Him.

Importance: Confirms early Christian worship of Jesus as divine, even under persecution.

5. Suetonius (c. AD 69–122) – Roman Historian

Source: Lives of the Caesars, Claudius 25

What he said: Mentions Jewish unrest in Rome “at the instigation of Chrestus [Christ].”

Importance: Shows early impact of the Christian movement and indirect confirmation of Christ’s influence.

6. Lucian of Samosata (c. AD 125–180) – Greek Satirist

What he said: Mocked Christians for worshiping “a crucified sage” and said they believed “they are all brothers... worshiping him and living by his laws.”

Importance: Confirms early Christian devotion to a crucified leader, and the radical nature of their community and belief.

7. Gerd Lüdemann – Skeptical New Testament Scholar

What he said: “The elements of the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion... not later than three years.” (1 Corinthians 15:3–8)

Importance: Even skeptical scholars affirm how early the resurrection claims began.

8. David Friedrich Strauss – 19th-Century Skeptical Theologian

What he said (on the swoon theory): “It is impossible that a being who had crept half-dead out of the tomb... could have given the disciples the impression that He was the Conqueror over death.”

Importance: Even as a skeptic, he rejected the theory that Jesus simply survived crucifixion and inspired belief.

GROUPS QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you most in this week’s message, and why?
2. If the resurrection of Jesus were put on trial today, what kind of evidence would you personally find most compelling—historical, eyewitness, prophetic, or something else? Why?
3. Read Matthew 28:1–7 and John 20:1–10. What details in these accounts stand out to you as significant or trustworthy? How might they support the claim of a real resurrection?

4. How does the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (like Isaiah 53:9 or Psalm 22:16) influence your confidence in the truth of Jesus' resurrection? Why might prophecy be hard to explain apart from divine involvement?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–8. What does this early Christian creed reveal about the beliefs of the first followers of Jesus? How might the timing and content of this passage support the resurrection claim?
6. What do you think motivated thousands of Jews—many fiercely monotheistic—to worship Jesus as God, especially in Jerusalem where He had just been crucified?
7. Pastor Bill said, “Faith is not blind. It is built on reason.” What does that mean to you personally? How do you reconcile faith with reason in your spiritual journey?
8. After reviewing the evidence presented—empty tomb, eyewitnesses, fulfilled prophecy, transformed lives—how does this impact your personal belief in the resurrection? What does that belief (or unbelief) mean for how you live today?