

The Witnesses to the Resurrection

Introduction:

- A. The preeminent question in considering the claims of Jesus: Was He raised from the dead? - Matthew 12:38-40; Romans 1:4
 - B. The constant, consistent testimony of His disciples was that they saw Him alive after His death. - 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
 - C. This is a question of historical fact. - Luke 2:1-3; 3:1-2
 - D. Can we believe the disciples' testimony that Jesus was raised from the dead?
- I. The Witnesses (The Appearances) - Acts 1:3
- A. Mary Magdalene - Mark 16:9; John 20:11-17
 - B. the other women - Luke 24:10; Matthew 28:9
 - C. Simon Peter (later that day) - 1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34
 - D. Cleophas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-32
 - E. Apostles in Jerusalem (Thomas absent) - John 20:19-24; Luke 24:36-43
 - F. 500 at once - 1 Corinthians 15:6
 - G. James - 1 Corinthians 15:7
 - H. all the apostles (Thomas included) - 1 Corinthians 15:7; John 20:26-29
 - I. 7 apostles at Sea of Tiberias - John 21:1-14
 - J. 11 apostles in mountain in Galilee (Great Commission) - Matthew 28:16-17
 - K. 11 in Jerusalem - Luke 24:44-50
 - L. 11 on Mount of Olives near Bethany - Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11
 - M. Saul (last of all) - 1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:1-6
- II. Are the witnesses credible? (Three Criteria: Honesty, Competency, Number)
- A. Honesty (What motive did they have to lie?)
 - 1. dispassionate, matter-of-fact relating of incidents
 - 2. facts to their own discredit - Matthew 26:69-75
 - 3. allusions to details (which give away lies) - e.g., John 19:19-20; 20:6-7
 - 4. testimony different (thus, no collusion) but harmonizable
 - 5. their sufferings - e.g., Acts 5:17-42
 - 6. their change
 - a. from unbelief - Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 24:11; Mark 16:14
 - b. to belief - Acts 2:32
 - c. from fear - Matthew 26:56
 - d. to boldness - Acts 4:33; 5:29
 - 7. their zeal - Acts 8:1-4
 - B. Competency
 - 1. opportunity - Acts 1:21-22; 10:41-42
 - 2. mental capacity - Read what the apostles wrote!
 - C. Number - Deuteronomy 19:15

III. were the appearances hallucinations or visions?

- A. If so, this would in no way account for the empty tomb.
- B. Were the disciples excitable visionaries? - Matthew 16:21-23; Mark 16:14
- C. Can this theory possibly explain His appearance to:
 - 1. Thomas? - John 20:24-28
 - 2. two on road to Emmaus? - Luke 24:13-31
- D. Three times He was not immediately recognized. - John 20:14-17; Luke 24:13-31; John 21:4
- E. Why did the appearances cease after forty days? - Acts 1:3,9-11

Conclusion:

- A. The uniform, consistent testimony of the witnesses is that Jesus was raised from the dead.
- B. Their testimony passes the test of historical evidence: Honesty, Competency, Number.
- C. Jesus was indeed raised from the dead and is the Christ, the Son of God. - Romans 1:4