

“Prove It!”

(Using the OT Prophecies to Show Jesus is the Son of God)
Part 4 of 5

I. Foundation of the Christian Faith, Now and Forever

a. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

- i. Jesus is the prophesied Christ, the anointed king over God’s eternal kingdom. (focus of lesson 2 of 5 in this series)
- ii. He died for our sins, *according to the Scriptures*. (in lesson 3 of 5, our previous class)
- iii. He was buried and rose again on the third day. (focus of tonight’s lesson)
 1. According to the Scriptures (OT prophecies fulfilled)
 2. Seen by Paul, the apostles, plus hundreds of other eyewitnesses
- iv. **1 Corinthians 15:14-19**. Paul states that the entire Christian faith hangs on the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. “If Christ is not risen, then...”
 1. Our faith is empty and useless; we are still in our sins.
 2. Paul and the apostles are false witnesses about God.
 3. We Christians are to be pitied more than all men.

b. As Carl Sagan, noted 20th century astronomer and outspoken unbeliever said, “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.” The physical resurrection of Jesus on the third day is indeed an “extraordinary claim”!

- i. Do we have the “extraordinary evidence”? Paul says yes.
 1. We have the eyewitness accounts.
 2. We have the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, written hundreds of years before the death of Jesus.

II. The Resurrection: This is The Big One.

- a. The critical question: Was Jesus *physically raised from the dead* on the third day? (with a real physical body and an empty tomb)
- b. Thousands have been crucified on crosses. Millions of worthy people have died as martyrs.
- c. Only one claimed in advance that he would be raised from the dead on the third day, and fulfilled that claim. In **John 2:18-22**, Jesus staked his entire authority on this one sign.
 - i. “Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.”

- d. The Jews acknowledged that Jesus was crucified and died on a cross, but claimed the disciples stole His body from the tomb. Justin Martyr, a Christian from Samaria charges Trypho, a Jew, c. 150 AD:
 - i. “You have sent chosen and ordained men throughout all the world to proclaim that, a godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver, whom we crucified, but his disciples stole him by night from the tomb, where he was lain when unfastened from the cross, and now deceive men by asserting that he has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.
 - ii. ...Besides this, even when your city is captured, and your land ravaged, you do not repent, but dare to call down evil on Him and all who believe in Him. Yet we do not hate you...but we pray that even now all of you may repent and obtain mercy from God, the compassionate and long-suffering Father of all.” (ANF v. 1, p.253)
 - iii. **Matthew 28:11-15.** This false story, that the disciples stole Jesus’ body at night, was spread among the Jews from the beginning.

III. The Evidence of Eyewitness Accounts of the Resurrection

a. **Luke 24:36-43**

- i. “Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”
- ii. “They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.”

b. **Mark 16:9-14**

- i. “Later (after His resurrection) Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; He rebuked them for their lack of faith and for their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after He had risen.”
- ii. Regarding the ‘long ending’ of Mark: Some Bibles footnote that earliest manuscripts we have (Codex Sinaiticus, c. 350 AD) do not include the long ending. However, it was known to much earlier Christian writers. We find quotes from the ‘long ending’ by Tatian, c. 160 (ANF v.9, p.128-9) and Irenaeus, c. 180 (ANF v.1, p.426). Based on that evidence, I believe we are on solid ground when we quote from it.

c. **John 20:24-29**

- i. Thomas would not believe the reports he heard.
- ii. Jesus invites Thomas to touch the wounds on His hands and side.

d. **Acts 1:3.** “After His suffering, He presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.”

e. Notice two things from these gospel accounts:

- i. The apostles don’t come across in a very good light

1. They had a hard time believing it; were rebuked by Jesus for their lack of faith.
- ii. Jesus provided hard evidence that he had a real body; was not just a ghost or spirit
 1. Holes in his hands and feet
 2. Challenged them to touch and see
 3. Even ate a fish!
- f. Consider the response of Origen (Christian teacher from Alexandria, c. 185-225) to the objections of Celsus (a pagan critic).
 - i. **Celsus:** Attacked the Christian claim of Jesus' resurrection as "a juggler's trick".
 - ii. **Origen:** "A clear and unmistakable proof of the fact (resurrection of Jesus) I hold to be the undertaking of His disciples, who devoted themselves to the teaching of a doctrine which was attended with dangers to human life, - a doctrine which they would not have taught with such courage had they invented the resurrection of Jesus from the dead...who also...not only prepared others to despise death, but were the first themselves to manifest their disregard for its terrors." (Origen, *Against Celsus* ANF v.4, p.454)

IV. Important Background: What Happens After We Die

- a. Unfortunately, there is a lot of confusion and misinformation in popular Christian culture today about this.
 - i. Well-meaning speakers at funerals often say things like, "I'm sure that so-and-so is up in heaven right now... playing golf, eating lunch, looking down on us smiling, etc."
 - ii. Many claim that the dead are immediately, individually judged and go straight to heaven (or hell) upon death. That is not what Jesus taught.
 - iii. This subject is within two of the six "elementary principles of Christ" of **Hebrews 6:1-2** (resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment). So let's get it right!
- b. Jesus and his apostles taught that all will be raised and judged at the resurrection, on the Last Day. (Not one-at-a-time right after each individual dies.)
 - i. **Matthew 12:41-42.** Queen of Sheba from Solomon's time, men of Nineveh in Jonah's time, and people of Jesus' day would all rise up at the judgment, together.
 - ii. **Matthew 25:31-33.** All nations will be gathered together before Jesus on the Day of Judgment.
 - iii. **Matthew 13:39.** In parable of the wheat and tares, harvest is "at the end of the age".
 - iv. **John 5:28-29.** All who are in their graves will come out (resurrection of the dead prior to judgment).

- v. **1 Corinthians 15:50-53**. When the last trumpet sounds, the dead shall be raised.
(For similar, see **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**, and **2 Thessalonians 1:3-10**)
- c. Prior to the resurrection, the souls of the dead wait in an intermediate resting place called *Hades*.
 - i. **Luke 16:22-26**. Story of the rich man and Lazarus.
 - 1. It says that the rich man is “in Hades”.
 - 2. Hades has two regions, separated from each other.
 - ii. Compare **Psalms 16:10** from the OT Hebrew “you will not abandon me to Sheol (the grave)” with the same passage quoted in the NT, in Greek (from the LXX) in **Acts 2:27** “you will not leave my soul in Hades”.
 - 1. Hades (Greek word) = Sheol (Hebrew word).
 - 2. In some English Bibles it is translated “the grave”.
 - iii. For more information regarding Hades, I recommend David Bercot’s CD lesson, *What the Early Christians Believed about Life after Death*; as well as the companion message, *Christ’s Descent into Hades*. Also the article, “Dead, Intermediate State of the” in *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*. Available from Scroll Publishing, www.scrollpublishing.com.

V. How the Spirit of God Operates through Prophecy

- a. **Amos 3:7**. “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing His plan to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared – who will not fear? The Sovereign Lord has spoken – who can but prophesy?”
 - i. God doesn’t just reveal a few things in advance through prophecy. He reveals everything, in advance, to his servants the prophets. It’s His *modus operandi* (His “M.O.”, or habitual method of operating).
- b. **Psalms 78:1-3**. Asaph says, “My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable – I will utter hidden things, things from of old – things we have heard and known, things which our ancestors have told us.” (Also quoted by Jesus in **Matthew 13:34-35**)
 - i. In the Hebrew Scriptures, God often reveals truth in the form of parables. (*Parable* = a riddle, enigma or puzzle where elements of the story correspond elements of a deeper, hidden truth.)
 - ii. **Hebrews 1:1** reminds us that God spoke “through the prophets in many times *and in various ways*.”
 - iii. Examples of use of the word “parable” in the Bible include:
 - 1. **Proverbs 1:6**. One of the benefits of studying the proverbs to gain wisdom is, “for understanding proverbs and parables”.

2. **Hebrews 9** tells us the Holy Spirit was revealing that Christ (the ultimate high priest) would enter the Most Holy Place (heaven) with blood (his own), communicated through the story of the tabernacle, “a *parable* (Gk.) for the present time”. (**Hebrews 9:9**)
 3. **Hebrews 11:19** Abraham, after he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac, “*in a parable* (i.e. figuratively) did receive Isaac back from death.”
- iv. Examples of parables in the OT prophesying Christ include:
1. Passover lamb
 2. Bronze snake in the Wilderness
 3. Rock in the Wilderness from which water came
- c. Justin Martyr explained to Trypho, a Jew, some of the ‘rules’ for interpreting prophecies from the Hebrew Scriptures:
- i. “For the Holy Spirit sometimes brought about something that was a type of the future...the Christ is oftentimes called a Stone in parable, and in figurative speech Jacob and Israel.” (similar to Psalm **78:1-4**, the future is revealed through types and parables)
 - ii. “...sometimes (the Holy Spirit) uttered words about what was to take place as if it was then taking place, or had taken place.” Examples Justin provided (ANF v. 1, p. 256; similar in v. 1, p.175):
 1. “He *was led* as a sheep to the slaughter.” (**Isaiah 53:7**)
 2. “I *have stretched out* my hands to a disobedient and opposing people.” (**Isaiah 65:2**)
- d. Q1: So why isn’t the Holy Spirit more direct? Why the riddles and puzzles? Why doesn’t He just lay things out plainly so all can clearly understand?
- i. Q1a: Why doesn’t a football team’s quarterback just shout out the plan for the next play, for everyone to hear? Why does he use signals and codes when he “calls an audible”?
 - ii. A1a: He is in a battle against a dangerous opponent. He needs to communicate the plan to his team, but does *NOT* want his opponents to understand and thwart his plan before it is accomplished!

VI. Two Key Prophecies about Resurrection of the Messiah

- a. **Delivered from Hades (Psalm 16:8-11** from David, c. 1000 BC).
 - i. Quoted by Peter in **Acts 2:24-32** and used by Paul in **Acts 13:34-37** to prove the Messiah would be raised from the dead.

- ii. “Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced exceedingly; my flesh also shall dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades nor allow your Holy One to see corruption.” (**Ps. 16:9-10**; since Peter quotes this entire passage from the LXX, I thought we should do likewise).
 - 1. Jesus’ soul was not left in Hades.
 - 2. His flesh did not see corruption.
 - iii. Peter argues in **Acts 2:39-31** that this prophecy could NOT have applied to David (author of **Psalms 16**, who says “my flesh”).
 - 1. Since David was long dead, this prophecy referred to the Messiah, the promised son of David who would sit on David’s throne.
 - 2. Note that Jesus (not Solomon) was raised up after the death of David, in fulfillment of **2 Samuel 7:12**.
 - iv. In **Acts 13** Paul also used the prophecy of **Psalms 16** to persuade Jews of the resurrection, but comes from a different angle:
 - 1. “God raised him from the dead so that He will never be subject to decay. As God has said, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’” (from **Isaiah 55:3**)
 - 2. So it is also stated elsewhere: “You will not let your Holy One see decay.” (from **Psalms 16:10**)
 - 3. (Therefore Paul says that the precious promises made to David would pass to the Messiah, applying this to the great promise made to David in **Psalms 16**.)
- b. **Resurrection on the Third Day (Jonah 1-2, c. 850 BC).**
- i. When Jesus explained fulfillment of the prophecies to the apostles in **Luke 24:44-47**, he said “This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.”
 - 1. Where in the Law of Moses, the Prophets or Psalms does it say the Christ would rise on the third day?
 - ii. **Luke 11:29**. Jesus said, “This is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” (similar in **Matthew 16:1-4**)
 - iii. **Matthew 12:38-40** “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (**Matthew 12:40**)
 - 1. What does the phrase “heart of the earth” refer to? Where was Jesus for the three days? He was in Hades (Sheol in Hebrew), according to **Psalms 16:10** and **Acts 2:27**, “you will not leave my soul in Hades” (NKJV).

2. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 350 AD; Cat. Lecture No. 14, NPNF v.7) remarked on the similarities of the stories of Jesus and Jonah:
 - a. Both were sent to preach repentance
 - b. Both were sleeping in the bottom of the boat during a violent storm
 - c. Both had the ability to quiet the storm
 - d. “The one was cast into a whale's belly: but the other of His own accord went down there, where the invisible whale of death is. And He went down of His own accord, that death might cast up those whom he had devoured, according to that which is written, ‘I will ransom them from the power of the grave (Gk. = Hades); and from the hand of death I will redeem them (**Hosea 13:14**)’.”
3. Note some other things about the Jonah story.
 - a. When Jonah is in the belly of the sea creature, he prays, “I cried out of my affliction to the Lord my God, and He heard my voice; out of the belly of Hades, you heard the cry of my voice.” (**Jonah 2:3**, LXX, SAAS)
 - b. NKJV reads, “out of the belly of Sheol I cried”. Recall that Sheol (Hebrew) = Hades (Greek)
 - c. Jonah’s prayer in **Jonah chapter 2** is reminiscent of several earlier psalms, including:
 - i. **Psalms 18** of David: “the anguish of Hades encircled me...he drew me out of many waters... He will deliver me from my strong enemies...He sets me on high places...”
 - ii. **Psalms 30** of David: “O Lord my God, I cry out to you...O Lord you brought my soul out of Hades...” (**30:3-4**)
 - iii. **Psalms 69** of David: “I came into the depths of the sea...Deliver me...from the depths of the waters...Neither let the deep swallow me up...”
- iv. How do you count “three days and three nights”?
 1. Jesus died at the 9th hour on the Day of Preparation (3 pm Friday), as noted in **Luke 23:44-46, 23:54**; and **John 19:31-33**. He rose early morning on the first day of the week, Sunday (**Matthew 28:1-7, John 20:1**).
 2. Justin Martyr (c. 150 AD) tells the Romans, “He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (*Saturn-day!*); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the sun (*Sun-day!*), having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.” (ANF v. 1, p.186)

- a. Justin explains to the Romans that's why Christians assemble on "the day of the sun".
- 3. Jesus used the phrases "three days and three nights" (**Matthew 12:40**) and "on the third day" (**Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:19; Luke 24:46**) and "after three days" (**John 2:19**) interchangeably. They refer to the same period of time. Note also how these terms used by others in **Luke 24:21** (two on road to Emmaus), and **Matthew 27:62-64** (chief priests and Pharisees).
- 4. John Cassian (Christian writer, c. 350-435) explains that in Scripture, often a part is used to represent the whole. "And indeed in this way the difficulty about the time of our Lord's Passion is cleared up: for whereas the Lord prophesied that after the model of the prophet Jonah, the Son of man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and whereas after the sixth day of the week on which He was crucified, He was only in hell (Hades) for one day and two nights, how can we show the truth of the Divine words? Surely by the figure by which the part stands for the whole, i.e., because to the day on which He was crucified the previous night belongs, and to the night on which He rose again, the coming day; and so when there is added the night which preceded the day belonging to it, and the day which followed the night belonging to it, we see that there is nothing lacking to the whole period of time, which is made up of its portions. The holy Scriptures abound in such instances of ways of speaking." (He then discusses other examples; Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, v.11, book 6, chapter 23)

VII. Other References to Resurrection from the Dead, 'Life out of Death'

- a. **Psalms 3:5-6**. "I lay down and slept; I awoke for the Lord will help me." (discussed by Lactantius in Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7, p. 122)
- b. **Hosea 6:2**. "After two days he will heal us. In the third day we shall rise and live before him." (discussed by Lactantius in ANF, v. 7, p. 122)
- c. **Hosea 13:14**. "I will deliver them out of the hand of Hades. And I will redeem them from death. Where is your penalty, O death? O Hades, where is your sting?" (LXX; discussed by Lactantius in ANF, v. 7, p. 122)
 - i. Note that this verse is quoted by Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:54-56**, where he expands on "sting" from the LXX.
- d. **Psalms 22:19-31**. (end of a psalm which details death on the cross)
 - i. Asks to be rescued from the mouths of lions; is delivered in the end. (Discussed by Justin Martyr in ANF v. 1. p. 252.)
- e. **Daniel 6**. Story of Daniel in the lion's den contains an allegory of the resurrection.
 - i. Jewish prophet in the 'pit of death'. None of his bones broken (unlike others facing the same fate).

- ii. Stone is rolled over the opening and sealed. In the morning, one who comes is happy/surprised to find him alive.
 - iii. (I cover the Daniel 6 allegory in detail in an audio lesson available from Scroll Publishing.)
- f. **Daniel 12:2-3.** “Millions who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”
- g. **Genesis 22:1-18**, as revealed in **Hebrews 11:19**. “Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.”
- h. **Ezekiel 37:1-14.** Valley of the Dry Bones, which come back to life.
- i. **Job 14:13-15; 19:23-27.** (Connection noted by Clement of Rome, c. 96 AD, in ANF v. 1, p.12.)
- j. **Genesis 37-50.** The story of Joseph (covered in the next lesson) also contains an allegory of the resurrection.