

M U L T I P L Y

Christian Church

Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus:

- 1. The empty tomb and associated evidence surrounding it** - Neither the friends of Christianity nor its foes could deny the stark fact that three days after Jesus was buried, his tomb was empty. It is significant that after the resurrection, these suddenly emboldened disciples of Christ (who were discouraged, defeated, fearful, and hiding after his death) did not go off to a foreign land to preach that Jesus had been resurrected, but went back to Jerusalem to share the news. If what they were claiming was a lie, their message would have easily been proven false. The resurrection claim wouldn't have lasted long in Jerusalem, the city where Jesus had been crucified and buried, if the tomb was not empty.

Both Jewish and Roman sources and traditions acknowledge an empty tomb. Author Dr. Paul Maier calls such acknowledgements *“positive evidence from a hostile source, which is the strongest kind of historical evidence. In essence, this means that if a source admits a fact decidedly not in its favor, then the fact is genuine.”*

Historical evidence shows that:

- The grave was empty
 - The grave clothes were neatly left behind after being prepared with a sticky, gummy consistency - between the wrappings. The burial spices served the dual purpose of preserving the body and acting as an adhesive for the grave clothes. The presence of the grave clothes are significant. It was the spices attached to the cloth that had value. Anyone removing the body for profit or mischief would have taken the wrapped body away and separated out the valuable items.
 - The stone enclosing the tomb was rolled away and its entrance was guarded by Roman soldiers, whose sole job was to prevent anyone from stealing the body of Jesus. The tomb's entrance was also blocked by a stone weighing as much as one to two tons (up to 5,000 pounds!). Additionally, the stone, slotted on an incline, was designed to only be opened from the outside, which was a physical struggle for several men to accomplish.
 - The body of Jesus was never found and no one ever claimed to have stolen the body.
- 2. Women witnesses** - In first-century Palestine, women had a low status and Jewish law even excluded them from giving testimony in a court of law. If the

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resurrection story was a lie, women would have never been included as the first witnesses in the story, in that cultural context.

- 3. The appearances to many** - Paul mentioned the fact that the resurrected Jesus was seen by more than 500 people at a time. Paul even reminds the Corinthians that most of those witnesses were still alive - meaning that they would have been available for questioning.

If each of these 500 people were to testify in a courtroom for only six minutes each, you would have 50 hours of firsthand eyewitness testimony. Add this to the testimony of the many other eyewitnesses and you could well have the largest and most lopsided trial in history.

Many of the principal eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus died because of their claim that Jesus was resurrected. Their lives would probably have been spared if they recanted. This is very significant. We know that people will die for a cause. No one would choose to die for a lie. But these men and women died for a set of facts. They went to their grave defending the truth.

- 4. The growth of Christianity** - In the very place where Jesus died and was buried there was an explosion of growth in the Christian movement – which was centered on the claim that the grave was empty and that Jesus had truly risen. This explosion of growth happened mere weeks after the death and resurrection of Jesus in the place where He died. The growth happened in the face of hostility, opposition, and persecution from civil and religious leaders.

“You can be sure that if Jesus’ body hadn’t been resurrected, the religious and political leaders of the day could have quickly and effectively squashed the rising sect of Christianity by locating the corpse and wheeling it through the streets.”
Josh and Sean McDowell, [The Unshakeable Truth](#)

Some recommended and trustworthy resources for you to do your own investigation (available in our new library 4/16):

[The Unshakeable Truth](#), by Josh and Sean McDowell

[Evidence for Christianity](#), by Josh McDowell

[Cold-Case Christianity](#), by J. Warner Wallace

[Evidence that Demands a Verdict](#), by Josh and Sean McDowell