“TRUTH – The Resurrection – Fact or Fiction”

 *(Luke 24, Matthew 28, John 20)*

Today, we come to the most radical claim that Jesus ever made. On multiple occasions, Jesus claimed that He would be killed and then He would rise from the dead – this claim is what Easter is all about.

*John 2 18But the Jewish leaders demanded, “What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it.” 19“All right,” Jesus replied. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” 20“What!” they exclaimed. “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?” 21But when Jesus said “this temple,” he meant his own body.*

We will investigate this claim and conclude that ***Jesus was either a Liar, Lunatic, or He is Lord!***

**I want us to examine 3 undeniable truths that must be accounted for in consideration of the claim that Jesus did rise from the dead.**

We must explain **The empty tomb**

*John 20 3Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. 4They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. 6Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. 8Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— 9for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. 10Then they went home.*

**Possibilities for why it was empty.**

**Wrong tomb** – simply the disciples went to the wrong tomb.

**Swoon Theory –** Jesus did not really die on the cross.

**Stolen Body theory** – disciples stole the body and made up the story

**The Resurrection really happened!**

We must explain the **post resurrection appearances**

* Jesus appears to the disciples in the upper room (19-23)
* Mary Magdalene had a conversation with Jesus 11-18
* Two disciples on the road to Emmaus ([Luke 24:13-32](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+24%3A13-32)),
* Seven of the apostles on the shore of the Sea of Galilee
* Over five hundred disciples, probably on a mountain in Galilee
* The apostles when He ascended to heaven ([Acts 1:3-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+1%3A3-11)).

**How do we explain these sightings? 3 options…**

* Were they lying?
* Maybe they were hallucinating? Seeing things!
* **The resurrection is true**

We must account for **the existence of the Church today!**

* Today there are 2.3 billion Christians on the planet!
* Jesus is building His church… if the resurrection wasn’t true this would have failed a long time ago!

*Acts 5 38“So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. 39But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!”*

**As we evaluate Jesus claim that He would rise from the dead we must answer the questions…**

1. What about the empty tomb?
2. What about the physical appearances?
3. What about the church today?

Any one of these 3 are sufficient evidence that the resurrection is true. When you combine all 3, it becomes entirely implausible to explain away the mountain of evidence.

**What are the implications of this TRUTH – that Jesus rose again?**

**‘If someone is able to predict their own death and resurrection, and then pull it off, we need to pay attention!**

*John 14 6Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”*

*16For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.*

That is why Jesus could say He is the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE…