

HARD TO BELIEVE

Help From Jesus Christ for Doubters and Skeptics

3. The Ultimate Sign.

LOOK UP AND READ: Luke 24: 28-46 and Matthew 12:38-41.

It is amazing and wonderful to see how our Lord helped His disciples with their doubts in the day after He arose from the dead. Matthew 28:17 says,

“And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.”

Mark 16:11 says,

“And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.” (See also v. 13).

Although they were full of doubt and confusion, Jesus dispelled their doubts, and he can dispel your doubts, too!

We have been looking hard at Luke 24 and at the Lord's dealings with His doubting disciples. We saw that their problem was in their *heart* and not really in their head (v. 25). We saw that an examination of the scriptures (the Bible) is a tremendous aid to faith (vs. 25-27 and 44-45), and that Jesus opened the Bible to them. But we cannot miss that His own literal and physical resurrection from the dead was the key to proving the truth of His claims. There is much proof that Jesus Christ did actually come back to life after dying on the cross, and this fact proves everything else about the Christian faith.

a. The “*sign of the prophet Jonas.*”

In His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus performed many miracles. The Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost said that Jesus was “*a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him*” (Acts 2:22). The miracles were God's stamp of approval on Him (See also John 3:1-2), but the Pharisees still were not convinced (so they said). Jesus then told them that the ultimate sign that would prove His claims would be His own burial and resurrection. Read what He said in Matthew 12:38-41. He called it the “*sign*” of Jonah the prophet. As Jonah was in the whale for three days and nights, Jesus would be in the grave for the same period. Then He would arise. Can you see how His resurrection proves it all? If He arose, He is Who He said He was: the Son of God and God the Son. If He was the Son of God, His words were truth. If His words were true, then the scriptures He endorsed and verified are what they claim to be:

the written Word of God. And, of course, all of this points to the fact that there is a God!

b. *“Many infallible proofs.”*

The physician Luke wrote both the Book of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. In His powerful record of Christ’s post-resurrection days on earth, he says that Jesus *“shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs”* (Acts 1:1-3). These proofs are given to us in the last chapter of Luke. See what they are.

- (1). The empty tomb (Luke 24:1-3).
- (2). The vision of angels (Luke 24:4-6).
- (3). The words of Jesus Himself (Luke 24:6-8). Some people are convinced by the character and teachings of Jesus as well as by the miracles He did, that He is the Son of God. For these folks, the fact that He promised to rise from the dead carries great weight.
- (4). The arrangement of the grave clothes (Luke 24:9-12). See also John 20:1-8. This evidence spoke volumes to the disciples.
- (5). The prophecies of the Old Testament (Luke 24:13-27).
- (6). The appearances of Jesus to many (Luke 24:28-43).
- (7). The touching of His risen body (Luke 24:36-40).
- (8). The eating of food by the risen Christ (Luke 24:41-43).
- (9). The time He spent with many eyewitnesses (Luke 24:44-53). See also Acts 1:1-3 and I Corinthians 15:1-7.
- (10). The coming of the Holy Spirit into the lives of His followers (Luke 24:49). See also Acts 1:4-8 and 2:32-33.

c. *“They worshipped him.”*

One important element in the discussion of Christ’s resurrection is the fact that the disciples (who had doubted) were convinced. Even the most determined doubter was convinced (See John 20:24-29). Somebody has said that Thomas doubted so that we might believe. Not only were they convinced, but they also were willing to die for the conviction that Jesus had risen! And they did die, many of them for that very conviction. They were given the opportunity to renounce their testimony with the promise that they would be spared execution. But they refused to renounce their testimony and went to their deaths affirming that they *knew* He had risen. Why would they do this, if the story was a lie or a hoax? The blood of the martyrs confirms the truth of their testimony.

