

## Evidences for the Resurrection of Christ

### **Lesson 3 - The Generation that Saw and Heard Jesus and the Audience on Pentecost**

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**Introduction:** The generation that heard Jesus was given the most powerful evidence.

- A. Though they were given this evidence, few seriously considered it! (Jn 1:10-11)
  - 1. The problem was not with the evidence but the willingness to think and search!
  - 2. Jesus often pointed to that unwillingness. (Lk 11:29-32; Jn 5:36, 39-40)
  - 3. Who is really willing to think? Who really has “ears to hear?”
- B. What would it have been like to have personally heard and saw Jesus?
  - 1. What kind of miracles did Jesus work? How could that generation know if they were “real?”
  - 2. Why was demon possession and the ability to cast out demons such a powerful sign?

#### **I. The Miracles of Jesus and His Apostles**

- A. The miracles of Jesus were widely known by that generation. (Mt 4:23-25)
  - 1. Even Herod knew of His widespread reputation. (Lk 23:8)
  - 2. One of the primary reasons people came to Jesus was to be healed.
  - 3. Imagine today if one person had the cure for all cancer and that news was spread by word of mouth! What would happen if it was know he was in town?
  - 4. While Jesus wanted this to be a part of His work, He often discouraged people from speaking! (Mk 7:36-37)
- B. Could His miracles have been fakes and mirages?
  - 1. There were many very motivated to deny and discard His miracles.
  - 2. What would a man born blind from birth look like, before and after?
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  - 4. What if these people were in public places often and there for years?
  - 5. Jesus’ greatest enemies could not deny His miracles! They sought to attribute them to Satan. (Mt 12:22-24)
- C. Consider the powerful sign of casting out demons.
  - 1. Imagine facing a supernatural power that you could do nothing about!
  - 2. Consider that this problem was widespread and was clearly known by the public! (Mt 8:5-8)
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  - 4. Demon possession resulted in visible, terrible things.
    - a. Some were blind and unable to speak. (Mt 12:22; Mk 9:25)
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- D. Jesus gave the apostles this power! (Lk 9:1-2)
  - 1. They would later be the spokesmen for Jesus after His resurrection!
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- A. Jesus planned for this great sign.

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1. They had the opportunity to “cross-examine” the witnesses.
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- C. Consider the powerful sign of casting out demons.
  - 1. Imagine facing a supernatural power that you could do nothing about!
  - 2. Consider that this problem was widespread and was clearly known by the public! (Mt 8:5-8)
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  2. He let the disciples know that Lazarus was dead *even before they arrived*. (Jn 11:14-15)
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1. When Jesus arrived Lazarus was *dead four days!* (Jn 11:17, 39)
  2. The *family knew* He was dead.
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- C. The resurrection of Lazarus was *a very public event*. (Jn 11:39-45)
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  - 1. There were many very motivated to deny and discard His miracles.
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  - 4. What if these people were in public places often and there for years?
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- C. Consider the powerful sign of casting out demons.
  - 1. Imagine facing a supernatural power that you could do nothing about!
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  - 1. Even Herod knew of His widespread reputation. (Lk 23:8)
  - 2. One of the primary reasons people came to Jesus was to be healed.
  - 3. Imagine today if one person had the cure for all cancer and that news was spread by word of mouth! What would happen if it was know he was in town?
  - 4. While Jesus wanted this to be a part of His work, He often discouraged people from speaking! (Mk 7:36-37)
- B. Could His miracles have been fakes and mirages?
  - 1. There were many very motivated to deny and discard His miracles.
  - 2. What would a man born blind from birth look like, before and after?
  - 3. What would a lame man disabled from birth look like, before and after?
  - 4. What if these people were in public places often and there for years?
  - 5. Jesus’ greatest enemies could not deny His miracles! They sought to attribute them to Satan. (Mt 12:22-24)
- C. Consider the powerful sign of casting out demons.
  - 1. Imagine facing a supernatural power that you could do nothing about!
  - 2. Consider that this problem was widespread and was clearly known by the public! (Mt 8:5-8)
  - 3. Also consider the fakes that took your money and did nothing.
  - 4. Demon possession resulted in visible, terrible things.
    - a. Some were blind and unable to speak. (Mt 12:22; Mk 9:25)
    - b. Some were wild and had superhuman strength. (Mt 8:28; Mk 5:3-4)
    - c. These demons could also speak. (Mk 1:34)
    - d. Those who were delivered from demons knew the truth! (Lk 8:2)
- D. Jesus gave the apostles this power! (Lk 9:1-2)
  - 1. They would later be the spokesmen for Jesus after His resurrection!
  - 2. Real miracles show God is behind the one performing them.

#### **II. The Resurrection of Lazarus**

- A. Jesus planned for this great sign.

1. When he was summoned to come and heal Lazarus, He intentionally delayed His return. (Jn 11:3-6)
  2. He let the disciples know that Lazarus was dead even before they arrived. (Jn 11:14-15)
  3. He knew that this sign would pave the way for His own death. This would become an undeniable sign that would enrage His enemies.
- B. There was no question that Lazarus was dead!
1. When Jesus arrived Lazarus was dead four days! (Jn 11:17, 39)
  2. The family knew He was dead.
  3. They knew when and how he was placed in the tomb. He could not have survived even if he was still alive at burial.
  4. The smell at the opening of the tomb would have plainly “spoke!”
- C. The resurrection of Lazarus was a very public event. (Jn 11:39-45)
1. With many witnesses the event could be verified.
  2. Some of the witnesses were not disciples of Jesus. Some were loyal to the Pharisees. (Jn 11:37, 46)
  3. Those that witnessed this event had a simple, powerful story to tell! Their own “shock and awe” no doubt highly motivated them to speak!
- D. Jesus’ greatest enemies could not deny this miracle! (Jn 11:47-48, 53)
1. They had the opportunity to “cross-examine” the witnesses.
  2. They could have spoken to Lazarus or his family!
  3. They did not deny the miracle but they did deny its implications! They refused to think and draw the obvious conclusion!
  4. They wanted to destroy the evidence! (Jn 12:10)
  5. This was so foolish. Jesus could have raised Lazarus again!

### ***III. The audience on the day of Pentecost***

- A. Most of them were present at the previous Passover!
1. They would have heard the witnesses speak about Lazarus! (Jn 12:9-11)
  2. This combined with all that Jesus had done, gave this generation a powerful knowledge!
  3. The events at the Passover feast only 50 days earlier would be greatly pondered.
  4. The wickedness and hypocrisy of their leaders combined with the signs at the crucifixion (darkness, the earthquake and others raised from the dead). (Mt 27:45, 51-54; Lk 23:48)
  5. Reports of the empty tomb and the resurrection.
- B. Peter mentioned this evidence to the audience on Pentecost! (Acts 2:22-23)
1. Even though this was a hostile audience, he could say: “as you yourselves also know” without fear of contradiction!
  2. There is no other audience in the book of Acts that such an appeal was made.
  3. Those who were converted on this day formed a nucleus that would result in the conversion of many!
  4. Even though at first they were hostile, they were willing to think!