

Evidences for the Resurrection of Christ
Lesson 4 – Historical Truths and Eyewitness Testimony of the Resurrection
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Introduction: How can I know what is true?

- A. What can we know from evidence and reason?
 - 1. Christianity is based upon truth that can be found. (Jn 8:32; 2 Tim 2:24-26)
 - 2. Critical thinking requires a good heart and a willingness to “dig deep!”
- B. Many think that the only real truth is scientific proof.
 - 1. Science functions in a very, very narrow field of truth. Science deals with evidence that is observable and repeatable.
 - 2. Jesus acknowledges that some truth that can be found in that realm.
(Mt 16:2-3; Rom 1:20)
- C. We will be examining evidence involving historical eyewitness testimony.
(Acts 10:39-41)
 - 1. This kind of evidence has always been used by men.
 - 2. The foundation of all law and courts are based upon hearing and testing testimony.
 - 3. This is also the basis of our understanding of all of human history.

I. How can I know the truth about things I have not personally seen?

- A. All truth that I personally know can be divided into two realms: memory and testimony.
 - 1. Memory involves things that I have personally seen.
 - 2. Testimony involves things that I have heard from others.
 - 3. Most of what we believe comes from testimony that is weighed and accepted.
(Ex. I accept on a daily basis forthright eyewitness testimony of my loved ones.)
 - 4. We do not accept all testimony however. On what basis should we do that?
- B. Christianity stands or falls with a specific event of history, the resurrection of Christ.
 - 1. Jesus often plainly spoke of His upcoming death and resurrection. He never predicted His death without adding that He would rise!
(Mt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; 26:32; Mk 9:10)
 - 2. He challenged His most vocal enemies that this was the only sign He would give them. (Jn 2:18-22)
 - 3. His enemies clearly understood this claim and did everything in their power to prevent it. (Mt 27:63-64)
 - 4. All evangelism was based upon presenting evidence of Jesus’ resurrection and then convincing their hearers of the implications of that evidence.
(Acts 2:36; 17:30-31)
 - 5. This was the basis for everything that Christians would believe and live for.
 - 6. No other major world religion has a historical truth at its foundation.
- C. What was the nature of the eyewitness testimony given of the resurrection of Christ?
 - 1. All fair-minded people should at least consider the claims and then test both the claims and the conclusions that the witnesses have made!

2. I encourage all to challenge and test these things with an open and fair mind!

II. The appearances of Jesus after His resurrection

A. There were many appearances and many witnesses of Jesus after His resurrection.

(1 Cor 15:3-8)

1. Many have tried to number and categorize these appearances.
2. We can categorize the witness into two categories: (1) The Apostles, (2) All others.
3. An angel sent word through the women that came to the tomb for Peter and the apostles to meet Him just as He had spoken four days earlier!
(Mt 26:31-32; 28:5-7; Mk 16:7)
4. The apostles were given more appearances and even more proof.
(Acts 10:40-41; Acts 1:21-22)

B. Those that did see Him for the first time were completely surprised.

1. Mary **(Jn 20:14)**
2. Road to Emmaus **(Lk 24:15-16)**
3. Apostles **(Jn 20:19-20)**
4. Thomas **(Jn 20:26-27)**
5. They did not have strong prejudices that made them gullible. These accounts are believable! **(Mk 16:9-14)**
6. These appearances completely changed their lives! They could touch, talk to and eat with Jesus. There was no doubt! **(Jn 20:16-18; Lk 24:32; Jn 20:27-28)**
7. They all would without shame, speak about the things they had “seen and heard!” They had to speak and share this good news! **(Acts 4:12-13, 19-20)**

C. Consider the detail recorded in some of His appearances.

1. His appearances was not like a “bigfoot” sighting, very brief and at a distance.
2. While they were slow to recognize Him, they had significant interaction and discussion. How much time is spent in walking 7 miles! **(Lk 24:13-14)**
3. Jesus was very specific and detailed in teaching the meaning of the prophecies about Him. This took time! **(Lk 24:27, 44-45)**

III. Eyewitnesses of the ascension of Jesus

A. Jesus raised anticipation to those disciples that would trust Him! **(Jn 6:62)**

1. He expected His followers to believe in His future ascension even before they witness this great event. **(Jn 20:17)**
2. The gospel accounts are brief and succinct. **(Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50-53)**
3. Some more details are given in the book of Acts. **(Acts 1:9-11)**

B. All of these real events the apostles were witnesses of. They had no doubts!

1. Others such as Enoch and Elijah ascended to heaven, but not like Jesus did!
2. They were filled with joy as an angel reminded them that there is work to do!

Conclusion: What would it have been like to hear an apostle discuss the things he saw?