



## Beyond Reasonable Doubt: The Irrefutable Evidence of the Risen Christ!



As you know, next Sunday is Resurrection Sunday. While we won't have our usual Sunday School hour, I have no doubt that our Pastor will be delivering a powerful message on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. My goal this morning is to 'step in front' of that message—to set the stage and prepare us for what he will preach on.

While I don't know his specific text, I want us to spend our time today reviewing the events of that first Easter Sunday as recorded across all four Gospels. We will see how these accounts, though capturing different perspectives, harmonize to provide an astonishing picture of what occurred that extraordinary day.

Our study has two primary objectives:

- **First, to synthesize the writings of the Gospel writers** into a clear, unified, chronological picture of the day.
- **Second, to review the evidence.** I would argue that the sheer number of witnesses—combined with the consistency and independence of their testimony—would, in any court of law, prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Jesus Christ rose from the grave. By the way, this is just looking at evidence from the first day alone.

In your lesson guide you'll find a **synthesized narrative**. This isn't a new translation; it is the ESV text from all four gospel writers, woven together into a single story, much like a detective might merge four different witness statements. To help you track the sources, I have labeled and color-coded the text: <sup>Mt</sup> and **brown** is Matthew, <sup>Mr</sup> and **blue** is Mark, <sup>Lu</sup> and **green** is Luke, <sup>Jo</sup> and **purple** is John, **red** is text brought forward from prior verses, **red & underlined** are my own additions to help the narrative flow.

For **Event Number One**, I have provided the combined text, along with the text from the other four gospel writers who wrote about the first event. Due to space constraints, I do not do this for the other seven events. For the other seven events I only provide my combined text. If in your private study time you would like to compare the individual Gospels alongside the combined text, I've made that resource available on our webpage under the '**Topical Messages from the Bible**' and '**Miscellaneous Handouts**.'

One quick 'FYI': the numbering of these events is simply for our organization. Some events, like Number Five, could easily be split in two. What is most fascinating, however, is the distribution: of the eight major events we will cover today, **only one** is recorded by all four writers. Six are recorded by two writers, and one is unique to a single author.

With that in mind, let's open our 'case file' to the first event of Resurrection Sunday: **The arrival of the women at the tomb at daybreak.**

### **The Arrival of the Women at the Tomb at Daybreak** (Mat 28:1-6, Mar 16:1-6, Luk 24:1-8, Joh 20:1-2a)

<sup>Mr</sup> When the Sabbath was past, (after Sunset on Saturday) <sup>Mr</sup> Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>Mt</sup> Now after the Sabbath toward the dawn of the first day of the week, <sup>Jo</sup> while it was still dark, <sup>Mt</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb, <sup>Lu</sup> taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>Mt</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>Mr</sup> And very early on the first day of the week, approaching the tomb, <sup>Mr</sup> when the sun had risen, they

were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back — it was very large. <sup>Jo</sup> Mary Magdalene saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She ran to find <sup>Jo</sup> Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved,

<sup>Lu</sup> But when they (the remaining women) went in, <sup>Mr</sup> entering the tomb, <sup>Lu</sup> they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed and <sup>Mr</sup> alarmed <sup>Lu</sup> about this, behold, two men stood by them in <sup>Mr</sup> white and <sup>Lu</sup> dazzling apparel. One <sup>Mr</sup> man sitting on the right side. <sup>Lu</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, one angel <sup>Lu</sup> said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>Mt</sup> Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus <sup>Mr</sup> of Nazareth, <sup>Mt</sup> who was crucified. <sup>Lu</sup> He is not here, but has risen <sup>Mt</sup> as he said. Come, <sup>Mr</sup> see the place where they laid him. <sup>Lu</sup> Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." And they remembered his words.

<p>28:1 ¶ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.</p> <p>28:5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6</p>	<p>16:1 ¶ When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back — it was very large.</p> <p>16:5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 6 And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was</p>	<p>24:1 ¶ But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,</p> <p>24:3 but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. 5 And as they were frightened and bowed</p>	<p>20:1a ¶ Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark,</p> <p>20:1b and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 20:2a So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved,</p>
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<p>He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.</p>	<p>crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.</p>	<p>their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." 8 And they remembered his words,</p>	
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**Observations Event One:**

**A. The Necessity of the Fourfold Witness:** The Resurrection narrative, at the very outset, demonstrates the power of multiple independent witnesses. To see the full picture of the first hour, we need all four accounts. Without this "fourfold witness," we would miss the atmospheric detail of the earthquake (**Matthew**), the specific names of three of the women who purchased the spices (**Mark**), the internal dialogue of their confusion (**Luke**), or the immediate, visceral reaction of Mary Magdalene (**John**).

- In fact, read independently we could misunderstand what really happened at sunrise that morning (consider reading just Mark or John’s account in isolation).

**B. Matthew’s Unique Testimony: The Security Failure:** Only Matthew records the paralyzing fear of the Roman guards. From a legal standpoint, this "security detail" is vital. The tomb wasn't just found empty; it had been secured by professional soldiers who were somehow rendered helpless. If we reject the supernatural explanation, we are left with a massive problem: What happened to the Roman guard unit stationed by Pilate (**Matt 27:62-66**)?

**C. The Witness List:** At this stage of the investigation, we can positively identify three primary witnesses by name: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome. While we will see more names added to the record later, these three are the first recorded on the scene. We believe Salome is with them since she was involved in purchasing the spices the night before and Mark uses “they” to describe those who went to the tomb.

**D. The "Unready" Witnesses:** In John's account, Mary Magdalene does not wait for a heavenly explanation. The moment she sees the stone moved, she assumes the body has been stolen and runs to alert Peter and John. Meanwhile, the other women enter the tomb and are "perplexed and alarmed." This does not read like a concocted story; it reads like a record of people who are legitimately blindsided and confused.

**E. The Invitation to Evidence:** It is significant that the angels do not simply announce the Resurrection; they invite the remaining women to **"come and see where He lay."** The angels provide the first "exhibit" of the investigation: an empty space where a body should be.

**F. Beyond a Reasonable Doubt: Foreknowledge and the "Criterion of Embarrassment"**

At this point in the investigation, the witnesses have found an empty tomb and been reminded of Jesus' own prophecies.

- Jesus predicted His death and resurrection multiple times (Matt 16:21; Matt 17:22-23; Mar 10:32-34; Mat 12:40, etc.). This specific foreknowledge of a future event cannot and should not be easily explained away.
- **The Criterion of Embarrassment:** If these women were part of a conspiracy, why would they record their own confusion? They weren't expecting a miracle; they were expecting a corpse.

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## 2. The Angles Direct the Women to go and tell the Apostles that Jesus is Risen!

(Mat 18:7-8, Mar 16:7-8)

The angel said to the women <sup>Mt</sup> go quickly and tell his disciples <sup>Mr</sup> and Peter <sup>Mt</sup> that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee. <sup>Mr</sup> There you will see him, just as he told you." And they went out <sup>Mt</sup> quickly <sup>Mr</sup> and fled from the tomb, <sup>Mt</sup> with fear and great joy, <sup>Mr</sup> for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid <sup>Mt</sup> and ran to tell his disciples.

### Observations Event Two:

**A. The Specificity of the Witness "And Peter":** Testimonies that includes specific names often point to a deeper subtext. Why would the angel single out Peter? While we cannot be certain, the most likely reason is Peter's recent history—the last time he appeared in the narrative, he was weeping over his triple denial of Jesus (Matt 26:75).

- **The Inference:** This detail transforms the Resurrection from a mere display of **power** into a miracle of **restoration**. As our Pastor often says, "There is nothing a good resurrection cannot fix."
- **The Argument:** If this were a concocted myth, why include this specific line about a disgraced leader? Its inclusion suggests a genuine, recorded message meant to reconcile a broken witness.

**B. The "Silence" vs. The "Report" - Harmonizing the Communication:** Mark's *"they said nothing to anyone"* and Matthew's *"they ran to tell his disciples"* are not contradictions. In an investigative context, this is a matter of immediate versus eventual communication.

- **The Reality:** The women didn't stop to chat with neighbors or strangers; they were gripped by *"trembling and astonishment."* They bypassed the public to go directly to the specific people—the disciples—they were commanded to find. Their silence was selective and focused, not absolute.

C. **The Psychological Profile, "Fear and Great Joy":** The emotional state of the women is a hallmark of authentic human experience. A fabricated story would likely describe them as immediately jubilant, perhaps singing or shouting. Instead, the text describes a jarring mix of "**fear and great joy.**"

- **The Argument:** This is the reaction of someone whose worldview has just been shattered. They aren't just happy; they are terrified by the implications of a broken physical law. Jesus was dead and the angels are declaring He is alive! This "messy" emotional data is a strong indicator of an honest eyewitness account rather than a polished legend.

D. **The Pre-Arranged "Rendezvous Point":** Notice that the angels are not issuing new instructions; they are confirming a meeting Jesus had already scheduled before His death (**Matt 26:32**).

- In any investigation, when a witness confirms a detail that was established *before* the event took place, it reinforces the credibility of the entire timeline.

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### 3. Mary Runs to Find Simon Peter

(Luk 24:12, Joh 20:2b-10)

Meanwhile, (Mary Magdalene) ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved,<sup>Jo</sup> and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." So Peter<sup>Lu</sup> rose and<sup>Jo</sup> went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and<sup>Lu</sup> stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves<sup>Jo</sup> and he<sup>Jo</sup> went into the tomb.<sup>Jo</sup> He also<sup>Jo</sup> saw the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes<sup>Lu</sup> and he (Peter)<sup>Lu</sup> went home marveling at what had happened.

#### Observations Event Three:

A. **The "Other Disciple" as an Eyewitness:** In a courtroom, our lawyers in the class can testify, what they look for is **consistency or alignment of testimonies** and personal perspectives. John refers to himself as "the other disciple" or "the one whom Jesus loved." Rather than a boast, this serves as a humble, first-person signature on the deposition.

- **The "Vivid Detail" Argument:** John's mention of outrunning Peter is a classic hallmark of authentic memory. It serves no theological purpose; it is simply a factual recollection. Historians prioritize these "unnecessary" details because they point to a real person recalling a real event.

B. **The State of the Grave Cloths (The "Smoking Gun"):** This is one of the most critical pieces of forensic evidence in the entire investigation. The condition of the linens provides a clear profile of the "exit."

- **The Thief Theory:** If grave robbers had stolen the body, they would have either taken the body *with* the cloths (for speed and cleanliness) or left the linens in a disheveled heap.
- **The Orderly Exit:** Instead, the cloths are "lying there" (likely still in the shape of the body, like an empty cocoon), and the face cloth is neatly folded in a place by itself.

C. **The "Unprimed" Witnesses:** The text explicitly notes that "as yet they did not understand the Scripture." This is a vital point:

- **Against Hallucination:** If the disciples had been "primed" to expect a resurrection, we might suspect a grief-induced hallucination or wishful thinking.
  - **The Reality:** The witnesses were confused and ignorant of the prophecy's fulfillment.
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#### 4. Mary is the First to Encounter the Resurrected Jesus (Mar 16:9, Joh 20:11-18)

<sup>Jo</sup> But Mary Magdalene <sup>Jo</sup> stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>Mr</sup> Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. <sup>Jo</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" — and that he had said these things to her. **Note: It is likely that Mary did not actually make it to the disciples until after event #5.**

#### Observations Event Four:

A. **The Evidence of "Mistaken Identity":** The fact that Mary does not recognize Jesus immediately—mistaking Him for the gardener—is a critical piece of evidence against the "Grief Hallucination" theory.

- **The Psychological Profile:** A person experiencing a wish-fulfillment hallucination typically sees exactly what they expect to see. Mary, however, was looking for a corpse and assumed she was speaking to a cemetery worker.
- **The Conclusion:** Her initial confusion suggests that Jesus' appearance was physically objective, yet perhaps altered by her tears, the early morning light, or what Mark calls "*another form*" (Mark 16:12). It proves she wasn't "primed" to see Jesus alive, she was **surprised** by Him!

B. **The Credibility of the "First Witness":** In the 1st-century legal world, a woman's testimony was often considered secondary or even inadmissible in certain contexts.

- **The "Legal Suicide" Argument:** To choose a woman—specifically one with a history of demon possession (Luk 8:1-3) as the **primary eyewitness** to the most important event in the faith would be "legal suicide" for a forged story.

If the disciples were inventing a myth to convince the world, they would have named an important male witness. The only reason to list Mary as the first witness is because that is what happened.

C. **The Personal "Identity Check" - The Power of a Name:** Notice that it wasn't a visual miracle or a theological lecture that broke Mary's grief; it was the sound of her own name.

- **The Intimacy of Evidence:** By addressing her personally as "Mary," Jesus provides the most intimate and undeniable evidence possible. This was not a generic apparition; it was a specific, personal encounter.
- Warren Byrd in his review of this document pointed out that Jesus' interaction with Mary involved three senses, seeing, hearing, and touching. There is simply no possibility this is a hallucination when it involves three senses simultaneously!

D. **The Physicality of the Resurrection: "Do Not Cling":** The instruction to "*not cling*" is a fascinating piece of biological evidence. It proves that Jesus was not a "ghost" or a "spirit."

- **The Tangible Proof:** You cannot "cling" to a ghost. Mary's physical reaction—reaching out to grab Him—confirms that she was looking at a solid, corporeal body.
- **The Relationship Shift:** Jesus isn't stopping her because He is "spiritually untouchable," but because the nature of their relationship was changing.

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## 5. The Women Returning from the Tomb Encounter the Resurrected Jesus and the Soldiers Report to the Jewish Authorities (Mat 28:9-15)

Meanwhile, while the other women were returning (to tell his disciples) <sup>Mt</sup> behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." <sup>11</sup> ¶ While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. <sup>12</sup> And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers <sup>13</sup> and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

### Observations for Event Five:

A. **Physical Evidence: The Corporeal Presence:** The detail that the women "**took hold of His feet**" serves as a vital piece of forensic data. Like Mary "clinging" to Him earlier, this interaction confirms that the Resurrection was not a ghost, or a "spirit."

**The Legal Value:** In a court of law, this is known as **direct physical evidence**. By grasping His feet, the women verified that Jesus possessed a corporeal, physical body that occupied space and could be felt. It moves the case from a "visionary experience" to a "physical reality."

B. **Corruption of the Witness: The Bribe:** Matthew provides a rare "behind-the-scenes" look at the suppression of evidence. Notice the chain of command: the guards didn't report to their Roman officers (where they would face the death penalty for failing their post). Instead, they report to the chief priests.

- **The Forensic Indicator:** The "sufficient sum of money" given to the soldiers is a classic indicator of a **bribe**. In any investigation, when the opposition pays witnesses to change their story, it suggests that the original, suppressed truth was far more damaging to their case.

**C. The Logical Collapse of the "Stolen Body" Theory:** The "defense" theory—that the disciples stole the body while the guards slept—**falls apart** under basic cross-examination:

- **Incompetent Testimony:** If the guards were truly asleep, they could not legally testify to what happened during their unconsciousness. If they were asleep, they couldn't know it was the disciples; if they saw the disciples, they weren't asleep.
- **The Penalty Factor:** Roman soldiers faced execution for sleeping on duty. They would only admit to such a crime if they had been guaranteed political protection from the highest levels (as the priests promised in verse 14). The story itself is an admission of its own falsehood.

**D. The "To This Day" Rebuttal:** Matthew's note that "**this story has been spread... to this day**" indicates that he was writing to an audience already familiar with the "stolen body" rumor.

- **The Closing Argument:** By documenting the bribe, Matthew is performing a formal **rebuttal**. He is explaining why a popular lie exists and providing the evidence to dismantle it.

## 6. The Apostles Do Not Believe the Testimony of Mary or the Other Woman (Mar 16:10-11, Luk 24:9-11)

<sup>Lu</sup> And returning from the tomb **the women**, <sup>Lu</sup> told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>Mr</sup> She (Mary Magdalene) <sup>Mr</sup> went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. <sup>Lu</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

### Observations Event Six:

**A. The Witness List Expands:** In this section, the testimony moves from a single individual (Mary Magdalene) to a **corroborated group report**. We now have Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and "the other women" all providing matching depositions.

- **The Legal Value:** In a legal setting, the more independent witnesses you have testifying to the same event, the harder it is to dismiss as a "one-off" delusion or a mistake. Here we have multiple witnesses all alleging the same fact.
- **The List of the Women at the Tomb:** At this point it seems a minimum of five women went to the tomb. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and at least one other woman due to Luke testimony here that included "other women."
- **From a Jewish perspective only two to three witnesses were required to establish a fact.**

**B. The "Idle Tale (The Forensic Red Flag):** The Greek word used for "idle tale" (**lēros**) is a medical term often used to describe the babbling of a person with a high fever or someone who is delirious.

- **Against Groupthink:** The apostles—the very men who would later die for this message—initially treated the Resurrection report as **nonsense**.

- **The Inference:** This proves there was no "shared hallucination" or "pious hope." The disciples were predisposed to **unbelief**, not belief. Their eventual transition to faith required overwhelming proof because they were starting from a place of total skepticism.

**C. The Psychological Profile: Mourning and Weeping**

Mark includes the detail that the disciples were "*mourning and weeping.*" This establishes their emotional state as one of "survival mode."

- **The Logic of Conspiracy:** People in this state—hiding in fear of arrest and execution—are rarely looking to start a global movement based on a lie they know to be false. A "conspirator" doesn't call his own conspiracy an "idle tale." Their reaction is perfectly consistent with people who are genuinely shocked by news they find impossible to believe.

**D. The Credibility of Joanna:** Joanna's presence is a major "*Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*" anchor. As the wife of Chuza (the manager of King Herod's household) (Luk 8:1-3), she was a woman of high social and political standing.

- **The Argument:** Having a witness with high-level connections to the very government that helped execute Jesus adds significant weight to the credibility of the report. **Equally, she had everything to lose by associated with this "idle tale."**

## 7. The Two Traveling to Emmaus

(Mar 16:12-13, Luk 24:13-35)

Mr After these things he appeared in another form, Lu that very day two of them Mr were walking into the country Lu going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and

broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> Then they <sup>Mr</sup> went back and told the rest, <sup>Lu</sup> what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. <sup>Mr</sup> But they did not believe them.

### Observations Event Seven:

**A. Prior Knowledge Yet Unbelief:** First, it is evident that Cleopas and his traveling companion had heard about Mary Magdalene and the other women who had met Jesus in person that morning. They had heard about Peter and John and what they saw. Yet they did not believe Jesus had rose from the grave

**B. The "Slow Reveal" and the Hallucination Defense:** The two travelers walked and talked with Jesus for hours without recognizing Him.

- Hallucinations are brief and projected from the mind's expectations. These men were *not* expecting Jesus; they were mourning a dead prophet. The fact that they didn't recognize Him until a specific physical act (breaking bread) suggests His presence was an external, physical reality.

**C. The Intellectual Foundation: "Moses and the Prophets":** Jesus didn't just show them His hands; He walked them through a "closing argument" of the Old Testament.

- **The Inference:** This moves the Resurrection from a **fabricated story** or some event of body theft to a **logical and even theological necessity**. By showing how His death and resurrection fulfilled centuries of prophecy, He provided the intellectual and theological framework they needed to move from sadness to certainty.

**D. The Immediate Turnaround:** Emmaus was seven miles from Jerusalem. They had already walked it once that day and it was already "*toward evening.*"

- **The Behavioral Proof:** Upon recognizing Jesus, they didn't wait for morning. They immediately walked seven miles back uphill to Jerusalem. In an investigation, **sudden changes in behavior** are major indicators of a genuine encounter. Tired, grieving men do not walk an additional seven miles in the dark unless they have seen something that changed everything.

**E. The "Criterion of Embarrassment": Persistent Unbelief:** Even with mounting eyewitness reports, many of the disciples **still refused to believe**.

- **The Argument:** This is again the classic example of the "Criterion of Embarrassment." If this story were a fabrication designed to make the Apostles look like heroes of the faith, the writers would never have documented their stubborn unbelief and slow hearts.

Their skepticism actually serves as evidence of their honesty—they were not "gullible" people looking for a miracle; they were hard-headed witnesses who demanded overwhelming proof.

**F. The "Hidden" Corporate Confirmation:** Upon their return, the travelers are met with a brand-new piece of evidence: "**The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!**"

- **The Undocumented Appearance:** This is a fascinating! Until this moment in the narrative, the reader is unaware that Jesus had also appeared to Peter privately sometime during this day. This suggests there were possibly even more appearances than the ones recorded in detail, further thickening the "**cloud of witnesses.**"

**G. The Power of Convergent Testimony:** By the end of this scene, the evidence has reached a "tipping point."

- **The Summary of Evidence:** You now have two men from the road, at least five women from the tomb, and Simon Peter all reporting the same "**impossible**" fact independently and simultaneously. In a court of law, this is called **convergent testimony**—multiple unrelated lines of evidence, from different locations and different perspectives, all pointing to a single, inescapable truth. **Jesus Christ has risen from the grave!**

## 8. The Resurrected Jesus Appears to the Disciples (less Thomas)

(Luk 24:36-43, Joh 20:19-23)

<sup>Lu</sup> As they were talking about these things, <sup>Jo</sup> on the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus <sup>Lu</sup> himself <sup>Jo</sup> came and stood among them and said to them, <sup>Lu</sup> "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." <sup>Jo</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands, <sup>Lu</sup> his feet, and his side. <sup>Jo</sup> Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>Lu</sup> And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. <sup>Jo</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

### Observations for Event 8:

**H. The Forensic Examination - Invitation to Inspect:** In this final appearance, Jesus doesn't simply ask for blind faith; He invites a **forensic inspection**. By offering His hands, feet, and side for physical touch, He provides the highest form of evidence: tangible proof that allows the "jury" to confirm His identity through the very wounds that caused His death.

- **The Legal Significance:** This is "exhibit A" in the case for a physical resurrection. He isn't asking them to believe in a ghost; He is asking them to verify a body.

**I. Biological Proof: The Consumption of Food:** The detail of the broiled fish is a critical piece of biological data. A ghost or a hallucination cannot consume physical matter.

- **The Inference:** By eating "before them," Jesus provides an undeniable biological proof of life. He demonstrates that He is a functioning, physical human being with a digestive system, not a "memory," a "vision," or a "pious hope."

### ***J. The Psychological Shift: From Fugitives to Messengers***

The shift in the room's atmosphere is one of the strongest historical indicators of the Resurrection. At the beginning of the scene, the doors are locked because the disciples are terrified fugitives. By the end, they are being "sent" into the world as ambassadors.

- **The Behavioral Proof:** Radical, permanent changes in behavior are rarely based on a coordinated lie—especially one that leads to the witness's own execution. Cowards do not become martyrs for an "idle tale" they know to be false.

### ***K. The Realism of "Disbelieving for Joy"***

Luke records a fascinating psychological nuance: they "disbelieved for joy." This is the "too good to be true" reaction.

- **The Authenticity Factor:** This is exactly the kind of complex human emotion we find in authentic eyewitness accounts. In a manufactured myth, the heroes would believe instantly and perfectly. In reality, the shock of such an event causes a temporary mental "overload" that Luke captures perfectly.

### **Closing Argument: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt:**

As we conclude our investigation of the first Resurrection Sunday, we must weigh the cumulative evidence. When taken together, these five lines of evidence point toward a single, inescapable conclusion:

- **Testimonial Evidence:** We have at least **17 eyewitnesses** (10 Apostles, at least 5 women, and 2 travelers) who all saw Jesus alive on the first Resurrection Sunday. Brought together, they provide independent, yet converging reports. These occurred in different places and at different times.
- **Physical Evidence:** An **empty tomb** with a massive stone moved and a Roman security detail that failed to produce a body. No body was ever found!
- **Forensic Evidence:** The **discarded grave clothes**, left in an orderly fashion that defies the profile of a hurried grave robbery. What grave robber would strip the clothes off the body?
- **Biological Evidence:** The **physical handling** of Jesus by the witnesses and His consumption of food in their presence. This further rules out the possibility of multiple hallucinations!
- **Behavioral Evidence:** The **radical transformation** of witnesses who moved from cowering in fear to boldly proclaiming the Resurrection at the risk of their lives. It is one thing to give your life for something you believe is true. If this is all fabricated, these people gave their lives for something they knew was false. That is highly unlikely!

All of these lines of evidence, occurring within the span of a single Sunday, demand a verdict. Based on the data, there is only one explanation that accounts for every fact: **Jesus of Nazareth has risen from the grave!**

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If evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is of interest to you, please download the document: **"Many Convincing Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ."** It can be accessed and downloaded from the Truth Seekers website under the **"Miscellaneous Handouts"** tab or by linking here: <https://www.truth-seekers.net/downloads/fafab241b34ae05e94fe1d040dda448b>

In this six-page document I provide 12 evidences that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is true.