

JESUS

THE LIFE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD | WEEK EIGHT

THE RESURRECTION



OUR CRAZY WORLD

We live in a crazy world. Just when you think you've heard it all, something even crazier comes up. Check out these wild claims from history:

- In 1726 a young woman in England, Mary Toft, with the backing of a prominent surgeon who investigated her case, said she had given birth to a handful of bunnies.

- In 1896 the famous Louvre museum in France paid \$4 Million to purchase a golden tiara that had been a Greek gift to a Scythian king in 250 AD.
- In 1917 two girls in England told their mom they got their new dresses dirty while playing with fairies. When their mother didn't believe them, they went and took photos—which were later published—that showed the fairies.
- In 1956 Herb Stempel lost a Jeopardy-like TV gameshow by missing a question about his favorite movie. Then Charles Van Doren started a winning streak that earned him over a million dollars.
- In 1983 a German newspaper called *Stern* published volumes of the never-before-seen diary of Adolf Hitler.

Do you know what all these real-life stories have in common? They were all frauds! In a world where people try to claim crazy things with fabricated evidence, we can understand why so many people are skeptical about this claim:

- In around 30 AD, a man in Jerusalem was killed on a cross by the Romans. But three days later people said they saw Him walking around again and eating meals with friends.

Many people dismiss the claim of Jesus' resurrection as simply sounding too good to be true. But is it? Or is there good evidence to believe that it actually happened? Let's find out...

How would you rank the top moments in the ministry of Jesus? He did so many amazing things and taught so many profound truths that it's impossible to rank them in order by importance. This eight-week study will work through some of the highlights of Jesus' ministry, culminating in His death and resurrection.





Looking at the evidence.

The resurrection of Jesus didn't just make a splash—it changed the world. It proved His death was not an accident—He chose to die for us on purpose! And it gives us hope for our own future.

But before we talk about all that, we need to ask an important question: **Did it really happen?** We live in a world full of big claims, viral videos, and crazy magic tricks that look real but aren't. So how do we know the resurrection isn't just another fake story? *Let's dig into the evidence like detectives.*

First, let's read **Matthew 27:57-61** and ask: *Who saw Jesus buried?*

Answer: Joseph of Arimathea—and two women named Mary. That's three real people who saw Jesus' dead body placed in the tomb. Back then, there weren't smartphones to record everything, so the best way to prove something happened was to have multiple living eyewitnesses—real people who were still alive—who could say, "I saw it!" Matthew lists these three as his eyewitness sources.

Next, look at **Matthew 27:62-66** and ask: *Why was the tomb sealed?*

Answer: In those days, people sealed important things (like private letters) with wax so everyone would know if someone messed with it. It was the same idea with sealing Jesus' tomb. In those days, people regularly took bodies in and out of these smelly burial caves, so they sealed Jesus' tomb to lock it down tight. They didn't want anyone to get in. And they never thought someone might get out!

Now continue to **Matthew 28:1-6** and ask: *Who showed up on Sunday morning?*

Answer: It was the same two women who saw Jesus buried! They knew exactly where the tomb was. And what did the angels tell them? "Come and see." Not, "Don't ask questions—just believe!" They basically said, "Look for yourself. Check it out. See the evidence. Use your brain. He's not here. He's alive!" The women were invited to investigate! It turns out God isn't afraid of questions.

Next, read **Matthew 28:7-10** and ask: What did Jesus call His disciples?

Answer: Brothers. When Jesus was arrested just a few days before, His disciples ran away. Peter even denied knowing Him three times! They had totally failed. If you were Jesus, what would you have called them? "Failures" or

"Jerks"? Would you have given them a guilt trip: "I'm disappointed in you"? Or maybe just yelled, "You totally blew it!"?

That's not what Jesus did. He said, "Go tell my brothers..." Not "those cowards." Not "those failures." *My brothers.* That's kindness. That's grace. The resurrection isn't just about an empty tomb. It's about a living Savior who brings proof, hope, and forgiveness—all at the same time.

A different story.

Finally, let's look at **Matthew 28:11-15**.

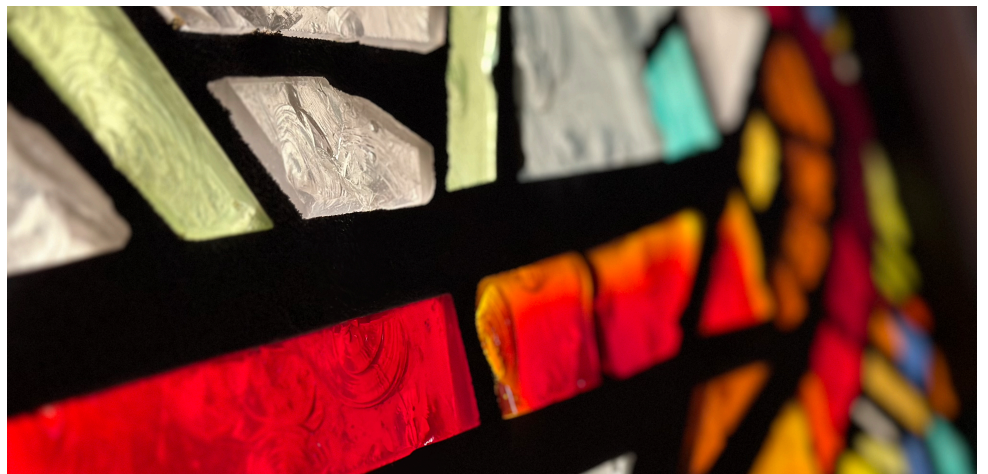
This part is like the "what happened next?" scene in a mystery movie. It actually gives us some really important clues that Jesus truly rose from the dead. Let's look at a few big ones:

1) EVERYBODY AGREES THE TOMB WAS EMPTY.

People all over the world—Muslims, Jews, Atheists, Buddhists—have tried to explain the resurrection in different ways. Some say the disciples stole the body. Some say Jesus wasn't really dead. Others have different theories.

But here's the interesting part: everyone agrees on one thing—the tomb was **empty**.

Why does that matter?



Because if Jesus' body was still in the tomb, the whole thing could have been stopped immediately. The leaders could have just said, "Here He is. Still dead." And that would have been the **end** of the Jesus movement.

But they couldn't do that. So, they had to make up a different story. *Because the tomb was empty.*

2) THE FIRST CHRISTIANS BELIEVED IT RIGHT AWAY.

Sometimes people say, "Hundreds of years later, Jesus' loving followers embellished His life story and made up this legend about Him coming back to life." But that's not what the **evidence** shows.

Matthew said the soldiers were *still* spreading their made-up story *to this day*—when he was writing—which was very soon after everything happened. Remember those eyewitnesses he named? They were still alive! And on top of that, archeologists have found such early copies of the gospels that it's clear these accounts were written from the time of Jesus!

Imagine writing a book about a strange event in your neighborhood last year—and naming the people who were there. If you made it up, those people could stand up and say, "That's not true!" In the same way, the resurrection story isn't something that slowly grew into a legend. The very people who were at the empty tomb were saying, "We saw Him. He's alive!" If they weren't claiming it, they could have said, "Hey, that's not true!"

3) THE DISCIPLES WERE WILLING TO SUFFER AND DIE FOR THIS.

Think about this carefully. If the disciples had stolen the body and made it all up, would they really be willing to suffer, get arrested, and even **die** for a lie they invented?

Usually when people are caught in a hoax, they eventually admit it—like some of the people who "fessed up" from our opening list. But the disciples never backed down. They kept saying Jesus was alive—even when it cost them **everything**. So, it's clear they didn't *think* they were lying.

But what if they were just *tricked*? Maybe Jesus and Judas had some secret arrangement, or the disciples were just duped in some other way.

Well, then you have to explain: Who tricked them? How did they do it? And how did this small group of gullible people end up changing the entire Roman Empire—without an army? Because the fact is, within about 200 years, Christianity spread across the Roman world and beyond.

Sure, some other religious founders tricked their followers into doing some crazy awful things. But none of those gullible followers changed the world simply by sharing their message.

So, when you combine the willingness of the disciples to die for their faith and the amazing results of the Christian church, it's just too hard to explain everything if it was all based on a lie or a mistake. What makes the most sense of the facts? *Jesus truly rose again and changed people's lives.*



One more fascinating clue: the women.

One more thing... In every gospel story about the resurrection, women were the first ones at the tomb. As we've seen, they're even named as eyewitnesses.

Now, here's why that's important: Back in that time, women often weren't allowed to testify in court. Many people wrongly thought women weren't reliable witnesses.

So if someone was *making up* a story in that culture, they would *not* choose women to be the first and main witnesses. That would actually hurt their case. (True story: a guy named Celsus argued that the resurrection reports were sus because they came from women!)

But all the gospel writers say that it happened that way. Why? It must be because that's what actually happened!

So, when you put all these clues together—the empty tomb, the early eyewitness accounts, the disciples' courage, and the surprising detail about the women—you start to see something powerful:

The resurrection does't read like a made-up legend.

It reads like real history.

And that means the hope, forgiveness, and new life Jesus promises?

That's real too.

THE ULTIMATE HOPE JESUS GIVES

Here's the deal: just believing the resurrection happened doesn't change your life. You've got to **understand what it means**.

1) IT SHOWS THAT JESUS REALLY IS GOD.

Jesus made some big claims about Himself. He said He was the Son of God. He forgave sins. He said He would rise from the dead.

Turns out, lots of people across history have claimed crazy things. But only one person died... and then came back to life and is still alive. Jesus.

If He had stayed dead, maybe we'd think, "He was a really wise teacher." But the resurrection shows us He's way more than that. He is God with us.

When Jesus spoke, it was God speaking.

When Jesus healed, it was God helping.

When Jesus loved people, it was God's heart on display.

2) IT PROVES HIS DEATH WAS ON PURPOSE.

When Jesus died, the disciples thought everything was ruined. Game over. Total defeat. But it wasn't a mistake. It was the plan all along. Why? So Jesus could pay for our sins.

Think about when you buy something at the store. You get a receipt that proves, "Paid in full!" Well, the resurrection is like God's giant receipt to the world. It proves the payment worked, and that all our failures have been dealt with.

Sin? Paid for. Guilt? Covered. Death? Defeated. And that means we don't have to live scared or ashamed anymore.

3) IT GIVES US A PICTURE OF OUR FUTURE.

The Bible says Jesus' resurrection is just the beginning—like the very first apple picked before a huge harvest. Or like the first kid in a big family. In other words: What happened to Jesus is going to happen to us.

One day, Jesus will return. And if we've died before that, our bodies won't stay dead forever. God will raise and renew them—strong, whole, and alive. And not just to life as we know it, but something wonderful. The Bible describes a future world filled with joy, friendship, beauty, laughter, truth, and love that never ends. No more sickness. No more funerals. No more fear.

The resurrection is like a sneak peek of that future. And that fills our lives right now with hope. Because Jesus isn't just someone who *was* alive. He *is* alive. And that changes everything.

