

# The Christian Arsenal

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## Ten Reasons to Believe that Christ Rose from the Dead

### One of the Essentials of the Christian Faith

#### 1. The Public Execution by Roman Soldiers Assured His Death:

During the Jewish Feast of Passover, Jesus was swept away by an angry crowd into a Roman hall of justice. As He stood before Pilate, the governor of Judea, religious leaders accused Jesus of claiming to be the king of the Jews. The crowd demanded His death. Jesus was beaten, whipped, and sentenced to a public execution. On Golgotha outside of Jerusalem, He was crucified between two criminals. Brokenhearted friends and mocking enemies shared in His deathwatch. As the Sabbath neared, Roman soldiers were sent to finish the execution. These were professional executioners. To hasten death, they would break the legs of the criminals. But when they came to Jesus they did not break His legs, because from experience they knew He was already dead. As a final precaution, however, they thrust a spear into His side. It would take more than mere resuscitation for Him to ever walk about let alone be a threat again.

#### 2. A Roman Official Seal The Tomb:

The next day, religious leaders again met with Pilate. They said Jesus had predicted He would rise in 3 days. To assure that the disciples could not conspire in a resurrection hoax, Pilate ordered the official seal of Rome to be attached to the tomb to put grave robbers on notice. To enforce the order, soldiers stood guard. Any disciple who wanted to tamper with the body would have had to get by them, which wouldn't have been easy. The Roman guards had good reason for staying alert. The penalty for falling asleep while on watch was a brutal death.

#### 3. The Grave Was Found Empty, In Spite Of Guards:

On the morning after the Sabbath, some of Jesus' followers went to the grave to anoint His body. But when they arrived, they were surprised at what they found. The huge stone that had been rolled into place over the entrance to the tomb had been moved, and Jesus' body was gone. As word got out, two disciples rushed to the burial site. The tomb was empty except for Jesus' burial wrappings, which were lying neatly in place. In the meantime, some of the guards had gone into Jerusalem to tell the Jewish officials that they had fainted in the presence of a supernatural being that rolled the stone away. And when they woke up, the tomb was empty. The officials paid the guards a large sum of money to lie and say that the disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept. They assured the guards that if the report of the missing body got back to the governor they would intercede on their behalf.

#### 4. People Claimed To Have Seen Him Alive:

About AD 55, the apostle Paul wrote that the resurrected Christ had been seen by Peter, the 12 apostles, more than 500 people (many of whom were still alive at the time of his writing), James, and himself ([1 Corinthians 15:5-8](#)). By making such a public statement, he gave critics a chance to check out his claims for themselves. In addition, the New Testament begins its history of the followers of Christ by saying that Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by [the apostles] during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" ([Acts 1:3](#)). Not only was He seen alive but there were others who had died were also resurrected and seen in Jerusalem (Matthew 27: 50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and

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appeared unto many.)

## 5. His Apostles Were Drastically and Permanently Changed:

When Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus, the other apostles ran for their lives. Even Simon Peter, who earlier had insisted that he was ready to die for his master, lost courage and denied that he ever knew Jesus. But the apostles went through a dramatic change. Within a short time, they were standing face to face with the ones who had crucified their Lord. Their spirits were bold and courageous. They became unstoppable in their determination to sacrifice everything for the one they called Savior and Lord. Even after they were imprisoned, beaten, threatened, and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, the apostles said to the Jewish leaders, "We ought to obey God rather than men" ([Acts 5:29](#)). After they were beaten for disobeying the orders of the Jewish council, these once-cowardly and sheepish apostles "did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" ([Acts 5:42](#)). This was no mere story to save face. There were many men whom the Jews followed. They stirred up the people but were put to death and their fame and followers disappeared.

## 6. Witnesses Were Willing To become Martyrs For Their Claims:

History is full of martyrs. Thousands and thousands of men and women have died for their belief in Jesus. For this reason, it is not that significant to point out that the first disciples were willing die for their faith. But it is significant that while many will die for what they believe to be the truth, few if any will die for what they know to be a lie. That psychological fact is important because the disciples of Christ did not die for deeply held beliefs about which they could have been honestly mistaken. They died for their claims to have seen Jesus alive and well after His resurrection. They died for their claim that Jesus Christ had not only died for their sins but that He had risen bodily from the dead to show that He was like no other spiritual leader who had ever lived. This is one of the most compelling reasons. It is one thing to say you believe something, but to die for it puts a whole different perspective on it.

## 7. It Was Clearly Predicted in the Old Testament:

The disciples were confused about some things. They expected their Messiah to restore the kingdom to Israel. Their minds were so fixed on the coming of a messianic political kingdom that they didn't anticipate the events essential to the salvation of their souls. They must have thought Christ was speaking in symbolic language when He kept saying over and over that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem to die and be resurrected from the dead. Coming from one who spoke in parables, they missed the obvious until after it was all over. In the process, they also overlooked the prophet Isaiah's prediction of a suffering servant who would bear the sins of Israel, being led like a lamb to the slaughter, before God "prolonged His days" ([Isaiah 53:10](#)).

## 8. The day of worship for the Jewish believers changed:

Basic to the Jewish way of life was observing the Sabbath day of rest and worship. A Jew who did not honor the Sabbath was guilty of breaking the Law of Moses. Jewish followers of Christ began worshiping with Gentile believers on a new day. Being faithful to the Law was at the heart of the Jewish religion. They were fiercely devoted to their traditions. They were willing to die for them! The first day of the week, the day on which they believed Christ had risen from the dead, replaced the Sabbath. For a Jew, it reflected a major change of life. The new day, along with the Christian conversion rite of baptism, declared that those who believed Christ had risen from the dead were ready for more than a renewal of Judaism. They believed that the death and resurrection of Christ had cleared the way for a new relationship with God. The new way was based not on the law,

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but on the sin-bearing, life-giving help of a resurrected Savior.

## **9. It Was A Message that Changed the World:**

Look at the course of history. The gospel of Jesus Christ has raised and toppled empires. The promises of God throughout history can be clearly seen. Nations that have called upon God have been helped in their darkest hours. Nations that have refused to heed the message of the Gospel have suffered from the disease of sin and moral corruption to the point of extinction. You do not have to go too far in history to find out that a nation that falls has fallen from within. The mighty Roman Empire is a classic example. Look at the example we have today of the far reaching effect of this message. Our calendar, our holidays, and many other parts of many of the worlds cultures find their roots to this one all important event in history. It can truly be said that this was the only important event in history for history is His Story.

## **10. It Fits The Experience Of Those Who Trust Him:**

The apostle Paul wrote, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" ([Romans 8:11](#)). This was the experience of Paul, whose heart was dramatically changed by the resurrected Christ. It is also the experience of people all over the world who have "died" to their old ways so that Christ can live His life through them. This spiritual power is not evident in those who try to add belief in Christ to their old life. It is seen only in those who are willing to "die" to their old life to make room for the rule of Christ. It is apparent only in those who respond to the overwhelming evidence for Christ's resurrection by acknowledging His Lordship in their heart.