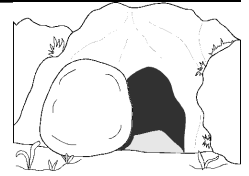


## The Resurrection of Jesus

### *The Witnesses (6 of 12)*



It should not be considered unusual to be skeptical when faced with unusual claims. It is hard enough to believe stories about men and women who have died for seconds or minutes at a time only to be brought back to life with the jolt of hospital paddles. Yet, even more difficult to grasp are the claims of Jesus Christ’s apostles who speak of a dead man living again three days after a public crucifixion!

Despite our skepticism, God has not left us without proof. Some outlandish claims are easy to disbelieve because they lack sufficient proof. However, the weight of eyewitness testimony always lends credibility to a claim. The power of eyewitness testimony is the reason we believe in the history of our state, nation and world. The power of eyewitness testimony is the reason we can sit on a jury and either release or convict a man as a criminal in our government courtrooms. Likewise, the power of eyewitness testimony can either cause us to believe Jesus was a mere criminal deserving of death or the King of Kings worthy of worship! Consider the eyewitnesses...

The Gospel records along with 1 Corinthians 15:4-8 provide us with a listing of eight different appearances of Jesus after His resurrection from the dead. These appearances to His apostles were one of the very reasons these men were chosen to proclaim the message of Christ—they were eyewitnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:22). Following the Biblical accounts, we find several occasions when Jesus showed Himself to His disciples and others.

1. The “first” witness of the resurrection was Mary Magdalene. As soon as she sees Jesus, she goes to tell others (Mark 16:9-11).
2. Matthew’s account notes the “other Mary” was also with Mary Magdalene (28:9-10).
3. On the “road to Emmaus” Jesus appears to Cleopas and another disciple (Luke 24:13-25; Mark 16:12-13).
4. After these three visits, He finally appears to all eleven of the skeptical disciples (Mark 16:14; John 20:19-29).
5. There are at least seven

listed by the seaside where Jesus again appears (John 21:1-22).

6. On a hill in Galilee, Jesus appears again to the eleven (Matthew 28:16-20).

7. At His ascension, Jesus is seen on the Mt. of Olives (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-12).

8. As Paul notes, Jesus finally appears to Saul so he might bring the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8).

In a courtroom, how many eyewitness accounts would a prosecutor need to convict a criminal? In your mind, how much more eyewitness evidence does God need to provide to prove Jesus was raised from the dead?

Not only do we see proof by the number of eyewitness accounts, but by the change evidenced in each eyewitness. There is a distinct difference in Peter, James, Thomas and Saul before the resurrection and after the resurrection. The only logical explanation is the absolute faith these men had, after the resurrection, Jesus was Lord!

*Joshua R. Welch*

<u>Character</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Passages</u>
Peter	Denies Christ	Proclaims Christ	Jn. 18:15-27 Acts 4:18-21
<b>James</b>	<b>Jesus is crazy!</b>	<b>Jesus is Lord!</b>	<b>John 7:3-5;</b> <b>James 1:1</b>
Thomas	Jesus is dead.	Jesus is alive.	John 11:7-8, 16; John 20:25-28
<b>Paul</b>	<b>Kill Christians!</b>	<b>Die for Christ!</b>	<b>Acts 9:1-2</b> <b>Acts 21:10-13</b>