

# “He Is Not Here, But Has Risen”: Three Barrier-Breaking Effects of the Lord’s Resurrection (Part 2)

---

## Introduction

### The Text

<sup>1</sup> But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” <sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</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, <sup>11</sup> but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened. (Luke 24:1–12)

### Three Barrier-Breaking Effects

- A. We’ve already seen in previous weeks how Jesus’ resurrection launches the new creation of God. And what I tried to do last time and will continue into this week and next, is to show you how Jesus’ resurrection not only launches the new creation, it breaks down old barriers as well.
  - 1. Like the mad rush of water bursting through the walls of a dam, so Jesus’ resurrection life unleashes a tsunami that just blitzes through the old boundary-lines we used to draw.
  
- B. I said last time I see here in [vv. 1-12](#) outlined for us what I would call three barrier-breaking effects of Jesus’ resurrection.
  - 1. Effect #1 we looked at last time: The Marginalized Are Embraced. Here we considered the fact that women, who were notoriously oppressed and undervalued in ancient society, were given the dignity by God of being the first witnesses of and testifiers to the resurrection of Jesus.
    - a. It’s not the men who hear of it and speak of it first. It’s the ladies. And that breaks some significant barriers. That’s grace pushing through the dam.
  - 2. Effect #2, which we shall consider in our time together this morning is that The Skeptical Are Convinced. Here is where we see that barriers of doubt and skepticism are broken through and people are coming to faith.
  
- C. And this is the effect we’ll be focusing in on this morning . . .

## Effect #2: The Skeptical Are Convinced

### Have You Ever Struggled with Doubt?

- A. Let me begin by asking: have you ever struggled with doubt about Christianity, the reliability of the Scriptures, the validity of the gospel?
  - 1. I know I have. Big time. I'd go through months-long seasons of struggle. It would plague me, it would keep me up at night. I would read book after book after book. Sometimes it still gets me, but not nearly like it used to. God has won me over in many ways through the years.
  - 2. But, again, I wonder, have you ever struggled with doubt? Are you dealing with it, perhaps, even this morning?
    - a. You hear your friends snickering about your beliefs, you see the way Christians are mocked in the media and out in the culture, and you question: do I really believe this? Am I really going to put everything on the line for this—a crucified and supposedly raised peasant from Nazareth?
- B. Or maybe right now you are on the outside of Christianity looking in and you're just learning about it, and you're understandably skeptical of it. You've got a lot of questions, you've got a lot of doubts.
  - 1. Let me be the first to say: I'm glad you're here. We want to be a church that's open to the skeptic.
    - a. After all, Jesus welcomes the skeptics, the doubters, the strugglers. He's not threatened or intimidated by your questions. He invites them. He doesn't push or pull away from those who are doubting, he draws near and he helps.
- C. That is one of the things we see happening here in our text this morning. These people are struggling, they're doubting. They've given up on Christianity, as it were, but Jesus hasn't given up on them.
  - 1. And his resurrection just blows through the barriers of their skepticism and catches them up in the rush of faith.

### Three Misconceptions

- A. Now, there are a few misconceptions that are cleared up straightaway here in these verses. And I thought I might begin by identifying them quickly up front before we go any further . . .

#### Misconception #1: Pre-Modern People Were More Gullible and Credulous

- A. We wrongly assume from our modern perspective that people in primitive and ancient settings were more gullible and credulous. They didn't have the centuries of scientific and technological

advancement and things that we have. They were living there on the other side of the Enlightenment, poor souls, fumbling about in the dark.

1. So, in other words, they were certainly more likely therefore to just receive wholesale this ridiculous notion of the resurrection. Of course, they would believe in it, they didn't know any better. But we do.
- B. That's the misconception. And it's cleared up right here in our text. Look at it . . .
1. These women come to the tomb, find it empty, and think: "Ah, he's raised, he must be walking around somewhere!" No! We're told that "they were perplexed" (v. 4). The Greek literally means: to be at a loss, to be uncertain, to be in doubt.
  2. And when they later are convinced that something marvelous has happened and they run to tell the eleven apostles about it, how do these men respond—these men who are elsewhere called "pillars" of the faith (Gal. 2:9)? Ah well, they roll their eyes. They have a laugh. It seems a good joke, or as it's put there in v. 11, "an idle tale"—"[T]hese words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."
    - a. In other words, they weren't easily duped into believing such a thing as we might have assumed. They were skeptical just like any modern person would have been. It seemed like nonsense. They did not believe.
- C. One commentator sums up the matter well when he writes: "The apostles were not men poised on the brink of belief and needing only the shadow of an excuse before launching forth into a proclamation of resurrection. They were utterly skeptical. Even when women they knew well told them of their experiences, they refused to believe. Clearly irrefutable evidence was needed to convince these skeptics" (TNTC).

## Misconception #2: Faith Is Contrary to Reason and Logic

- A. You've probably heard the idea of a "leap of faith." The idea as far Christianity is concerned is that faith is when you just shut your eyes to reality, and plug your ears to any reasonable dialogue, and you turn your brain off . . . and you just jump. It's not based on anything, it can't be based on anything. It's faith.
- B. But, let's be clear, that's not the biblical understanding of faith in the slightest. Faith is put forward as both reasoned and reasonable.
1. So all over the book of Acts we're told that Paul would "reason" with guys from the Scriptures (cf. Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 24:25).
  2. And to Timothy he would write: "Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything" (2 Tim. 2:7).
    - a. The Christian faith isn't contrary to reason it is in accordance with it!

- C. Secular people like to think: “Ah, you Christians, you close your eyes and do your Christian thing. I’ll keep my eyes open and face reality. You enjoy your faith. I’ll engage my reason.”
  - 1. But they are unaware of or at least what they are unwilling to admit, is that they essentially trade one set of ultimately unverifiable beliefs for another. Look deeper into the matter and you’ll find: there is a lot of faith tucked back behind a secular person’s reasons and there are a lot of reasons that stand behind and lend credibility to a Christian’s faith. There’s faith behind your reasons and reasons behind our faith.
- D. These people in our text, they need reasons to believe, you see. They don’t just jump. They don’t just take a “leap of faith.” Quite the contrary. They step out onto something solid—mysterious, sure, but solid in that it fits the facts, however crazy it may at first sound.

### Misconception #3: God Is Put off By Our Questions and Doubts

- A. I’ve already mentioned this in the introduction so I won’t linger here, but it bears repeating. We tend to think, especially in the church, that God is upset with us when we’re doubting and questioning and things. We feel guilty—indeed sometimes we’re told we ought to feel guilty—for questioning and things.
- B. But that’s never been the way the Scriptures present the journey of a disciple. There’s struggle, there’s doubt. And God isn’t impatient and frustrated with us in that place. He comes after us, he moves towards us, he helps us along.

### Five Pieces of Evidence

- A. Interestingly, in our text, there are five significant pieces of evidence that can really encourage our faith in the resurrection and the reality of the gospel and Christianity as it’s presented in the Bible.
  - 1. Some of these are things that particularly helped the women and men in our story here move through doubt to faith.
  - 2. Others are pieces of evidence that are particularly relevant to us as we consider them today.
    - a. But all of this on the whole really serves to make a compelling case for the truth of the Christian faith.
- B. So all I want to do now is consider these five pieces of evidence one by one . . .

### Evidence #1: Empty Tomb

- A. This is obviously a critical first component to believing in the resurrection of Jesus and the truths of the gospel. The tomb was empty: “<sup>1</sup>But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.<sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,<sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus” (vv. 1-3).
- B. Now, every historian in one way or another, has to give an account for the historical fact of the Christian church. Today we just take for granted that Christianity is the world’s largest religion, with some 2.3 billion adherents.

1. But where did this come from? Why the sudden break from Judaism and things back in the first century? Why does the church even get rolling in the first place?
- C. Well, most all historians come to the conclusion that it's because the tomb was empty, in one way or another.
1. Now, of course historians have various ideas they put forward as to how or why the tomb was empty and not all of them trend towards faith in an actual resurrection. Most modern historians don't want to believe in such supernatural nonsense like a resurrection, so they put forward alternative theories.
    - a. But upon deeper analysis, what we find at every point, at least by my estimation, is that it requires greater faith to believe one of these alternate theories than it does to believe in the historical fact of the resurrection itself.
- D. I don't have time for a full-blown evaluation of all of this, but let me at least give you some soundbites to consider.
1. The first alternate theory is the Swoon Theory. And this just says the tomb was empty because Jesus didn't really die on that Friday on the cross—he passed out or swooned from the pain of it all, but he later revived and came out and appeared to the disciples and things.
    - a. But, of course, the massive problem with this is if Jesus only swooned, listen he's still in ridiculously bad shape. Lacerations all over his body. Guts hanging out from the lashes. White as a ghost from the blood loss. Even if he could somehow manage to roll back that stone, take out the Roman guards, and stagger his way back to where the disciples were hiding, do you really think this visual of Jesus would energize his base and give them confidence to go proclaim his resurrection in the face of great opposition and persecution? This image of Jesus isn't going to energize, it's going to freak you out all the more, right?
  2. The second alternate theory is the Wrong Tomb Theory. Here the idea is simply Jesus wasn't in the tomb the these ladies went to, because they went to the wrong tomb.
    - a. But for this, the rebuttal is plain. If both the Jews and Romans despised these Christians, albeit for different reasons, and if all they had to do to put an end to the commotion they were stirring there in Jerusalem and beyond was just present the dead body of Christ, why didn't they do it? Why would they resort to imprisoning and persecuting and killing these Christians—acting all desperate to stop them—when they needed only to go the right tomb and show everyone Jesus is still there? The reason they didn't present the body is they didn't have it.
  3. And this leads to the third alternate theory: the Theft Theory. The tomb was empty because the disciples stole it.
    - a. But again the glaring issue with this is that it runs contrary to everything we know about human nature to think that these apostles were all willing to die for what they

knew was a bold-faced lie. You say, but don't suicide bombers for Islam kill themselves for the cause? Yes, of course, but they honestly believe that they'll be rewarded for that in the life to come. And that's the point. They wouldn't go to such an extent if they knew it were a lie. We lie to benefit ourselves here and now, and if that lie threatens our joy here and now, we'll recant it. But these apostles never did. They believed it to be true.

4. Now this fourth and final alternate theory is the most complex and the most subscribed to by modern critical scholars today. It's what's been called the Legendary Development Theory.
  - a. Here, the idea is that the tomb was empty, not because it truly was historically, but because Christians developed these various legends around the events. They came to talk like it was empty, maybe they had visions about it, maybe because they desperately wanted it to be true and they were a bit nostalgic, maybe the church leaders a few generations later were trying to consolidate their power and manipulate the masses, so they fabricated things, developed these legends about a resurrection and an empty tomb.
- E. But there are quite a few massive problems with this. I'll be touching on a couple more a bit later with some of the other evidence we'll draw out from [Luke 24](#). But let me just give you one now . . .
  1. It's understood that legendary stories necessarily require a long time for them to develop and really take root and seem plausible. If you're going to have folks believing these stories as true you have to be well removed from the events you're embellishing or you'd have a whole crowd of people ready to shoot that plane out of the air before it even gets anywhere.
- F. But we know historically that the church was proclaiming the bodily resurrection of Jesus very soon after his death. Indeed, it was at the very heart of their message, and it's one of the reasons they were persecuted.
  1. Putting aside the biblical records for a moment and even turning to secular sources, Roman historians talk about the early church and what seems to be their faith in the resurrection.
    - a. So Tacitus, referred to as the "greatest historian" of ancient Rome, who lived from around 55-120 A.D., he writes of the emperor Nero's reign which was from 54-68 A.D. and he says that people were blaming Nero for the fires that swept through Rome in those days and so Nero was trying to pass that blame on to the Christians in the city. So Tacitus writes: "[T]o suppress the rumor, he [Nero] falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also" (Annals XV, 44). Many scholars have looked at this "pernicious superstition" referred to here and thought it most likely a reference to their faith in the resurrection of Jesus.

- b. To add yet one more secular voice to this, later Roman historian Suetonius also writes of this fire that devastated Rome under Nero’s reign. And he recounts that “Punishment by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition” (Lives of the Caesars, 26.2). What is that? The resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The empty tomb.
  - i. One scholar sums it up nicely: “Assuming Jesus was crucified in the early thirties, Suetonius—no friend of Christianity—places Christians in the imperial city less than twenty years later, and he reports that they were suffering and dying for their conviction that Jesus Christ had really lived, died, and risen from the dead” (TNETDV, 122).

G. The resurrection, the empty tomb—this wasn’t something that later church leaders massaged into the stories in order to garner more power for themselves. This was central to the message of the church from the very beginning!

## Evidence #2: Prophetic Foretellings

A. These women, as we’ve said, come to the tomb and upon finding it empty they are perplexed. They are confused. They are in doubt. Well, what happens next? Pick back up the story in v. 4: “<sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.<sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead?’<sup>6</sup> He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee,<sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.’<sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words . . .” (vv. 4-8).

1. So these angels appear and their job is to help these women believe—to give them good reason for faith. And so what do they do?

- a. Well they point them to what I’m here calling Prophetic Foretellings. “Ladies, don’t you remember? Jesus told you this would happen, long before it ever happened?” And they do remember, and it ignites their faith. Surely something amazing is happening here.

B. Listen, you and I don’t even know what’s going to happen next week, right? If there is anything this last year and a half has taught us it’s that we don’t have clue what tomorrow holds. Is the hillside going to catch fire? Is the virus going to rage? Is the city going to shut down? Is the earth going to quake? Is Jesus going to come back? We have no idea.

1. But here Jesus is, still in Galilee, miles away from Jerusalem, months before the cross, telling his disciples, not just that he’s going to suffer and die, but that on the third day he’s going to rise.

C. All of this reminds us that prophecy in Scripture is good evidence for our faith in God’s Word and the gospel.

1. And, of course, it was not just Jesus who foretold of his coming death and resurrection, it's been the massive theme of Scripture long before Jesus even set foot in Galilee or Jerusalem.
  - a. This is why Jesus will say later to his disciples in [Luke 24](#): “<sup>44</sup> . . . [E]verything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. . . .<sup>46</sup> Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead . . .” (vv. 44, 46).
    - i. The whole of the OT has been anticipating this moment. Prophetic foretellings, types and shadows, all over the place.
  
- D. One of the most prominent examples, of course, (and one we've looked at before) is [Isa. 53](#). The prophecy is so descriptive and so vivid and so clearly referring to what took place for Jesus at the cross. (Now, I don't have time to read it to you here, but I encourage you to go home and check it out on your own time.)
  1. And remember, the book of Isaiah, it's estimated, was written some 700 years before Christ. So this chapter 53 is a real force to be reckoned with.
  
- E. But I hear the objection: “Oh, you Christians, isn't it obvious? I know what's happened. Some earlier church folk, trying desperately to convince others of their lie, they doctored the documents, they went back and slipped this in and reshaped some things in the book, and now you get all excited about it. But it's a sham.”
  1. And perhaps you could have thought such a thing before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but that notion no longer holds water. We now have the entire scroll of Isaiah and it's dated with widespread consensus to the second century B.C. And wouldn't you know it, [Isa. 53](#) is there.
  
- F. So one commentator sums it up nicely: “. . . it is beyond even the wildest credulity to believe that the resemblance in every feature and minutest detail between this prophetic portraiture drawn centuries before his [Jesus'] advent and the story of his life, and death, and glorious resurrection as narrated in the gospels, can be mere accident or fortuitous coincidence” (Baron, *The Servant of Jehovah* c. 2000, p. viii).
  1. Do you hear what he's saying? It takes too much faith to disregard this. It was spoken about long before it ever happened. And then it happened just like it was spoken about. There's good reason to believe.

### Evidence #3: Eyewitness Testimony

- A. For this I'd just quickly draw your attention to [Luke 24:10](#) where Luke somewhat randomly it would seem, makes this parenthetical note in the midst of his narration and says this: “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 . . .](#)”
  
- B. Now why would he stop this riveting recounting of things to give us this seemingly boring little detail?



1. Well, it's for great reason. You see, he's trying to establish eyewitness testimony, which for the ancient world was all you had to go on when trying to prove the validity of something.
    - a. Remember, if you wanted to prove something in these days, you didn't have video footage, people didn't have iPhones, they all whip them out and start streaming to Facebook or whatever: "Jesus is back, get a photo!" You didn't have all that. You had eyewitness testimony. That's it. And that's what Luke is invoking here.
      - i. Luke is drawing particular attention to these ladies so as to say to his readers: "If you doubt what I am saying go and ask them."
- C. And these were not insignificant names.
1. Mary Magdalene was well known as the one from whom Jesus cast out eight demons (Luke 8:2).
  2. Joanna, we're told back in Luke 8:3 was "the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager." So even king Herod would have probably known about her.
    - a. These are people you could find and talk to. And that's the point.
- D. And this, again, is part of why we'd say that Legendary Development Theory can't hold. This is not how you write a legend. This is how you write history.
1. And, remember, writing history has been Luke's stated goal all along. So he opens up his gospel this way: "<sup>1</sup>Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us,<sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us,<sup>3</sup> it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,<sup>4</sup> that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:1-4).
    - a. So Luke here in ch. 24, writing probably some 30-40 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, gives us the names of some of these eyewitnesses, inviting us, as it were, to go and verify what he's saying if we doubt it.
- E. Now, let's run a quick little thought experiment on this just to see how this might play out . . .
1. Let's go back 30-40 years, so maybe to the eighties. People have that neon fashion going, hammer pants, big hair, perms and stuff. And again to be fair let's pretend we don't have cameras and all that, you just have eyewitness testimony.
  2. And, now, imagine an alien ship actually touched down there in the outlying hills around San Francisco—one of those awesome flying saucer things. And some dude's been compiling all the evidence, talking to people, and things and, then, about 30-40 years after the event itself—just last month let's say—he finally releases this bombshell book outlining these facts and making these radical claims.

3. Now, if you were making something up, you would try to say it happened in secret somewhere, and you were the only one who saw it, or anyone who did see it is dead. The CIA killed them or something to cover it up.
4. But instead the guy says: "Yeah, okay, it was the middle of the night, but it was loud and the surrounding neighborhoods all heard it and hundreds of people came out and saw it before it took back off and did that Star Wars warp-speed thing to another galaxy or whatever. Oh, and here are some of the names of those folks. They're still around. If they were twenty at the time they'd be in their sixties now. Go find them, talk to them."
5. So what would you do, if this book drops, and it's making all these ridiculous claims? It's on the top of the New York Times bestseller's list for the first week, because it's so scandalous.
6. Well anyone in their right mind, before just believing in such a thing, would go verify it. You'd drive up to the city, look up these names and chat with these folks the author is claiming saw all this.
7. And if these people all say: "Man, we don't know where this Looney Tune is coming up with this stuff. Homeboy's watched a little too much X-files or something. We never saw such a thing." I'm telling you that book would drop so fast from the bestseller's list, once it was evident it was all manufactured and ramblings of a lunatic, it'd be done. You'd put it on the rack next the National Enquirer but that'd be about as far as it would go.

- F. And so, ending our little thought experiment, the idea that Luke namedrops here ladies as significant and well known as the wife of one of Herod's righthand men, and says they saw the resurrected Jesus and the empty tomb . . . come on, that's ridiculously gutsy if it's a lie. And it's a pretty good indication that it's actually true.

#### Evidence #4: Counterproductive Content

- A. Here again is another fly in the ointment of the Legendary Development Theory. The essence of it is this: if you were shaping the legends to suit your needs, whether you're the apostles trying to start a movement or you're the later church trying to consolidate your power and manipulate the masses and things, you wouldn't include the kinds of details that are included here.
1. There's some counterproductive stuff, stuff that would actually seem to hinder your goals.
- B. For one thing, we've got women as the first witnesses.
1. As [Luke 24](#) makes plain, these women are the first witnesses of the empty tomb, and yet we're talking about a time when around Palestine a woman's testimony wasn't even admissible in court because of their low social status and the way they were discriminated against by men. You remember from last time, perhaps, the early church had trouble gaining credibility for this fact that women were the first witnesses and were so prominent in the movement and things.
    - a. The bottom line is: if you're the one shaping the legend to get cultural power and things, you don't put women in here as the first witnesses of it all. The only way you think to do that is it's just the way things actually happened.
- C. And another piece we see in our text is the foolishness of the founders, the apostles.

1. They don't look strong here and worthy of following, they look pathetic. They are hiding. And when the women come with great faith, they mock them and they look like idiots.
  - a. If you're the one shaping the legend—either the apostles or those following after as leaders in the church—you don't make yourself or your team look stupid. That's not how you get anything off the ground. Nobody does that.
    - i. Think of how you handle your social media account. You don't put pictures of you struggling and having a hard time. You put pictures of you on a beach smiling, and on a boat kicking back, and eating a big steak or something, looking awesome. You want people to like and follow you, that's what you do.
    - ii. Think of when you go into a job interview. You want to look good, trustworthy, strong. Nobody walks in saying: "I'm sorry, my hairs a mess, I haven't shaved in a couple weeks because I can't manage my life, I've got like a neck beard so long you could almost braid it, my shirts all wrinkled because my mom never taught me how to iron." Nobody does that. You come in putting your best foot forward. Because you want the job.
  - b. So this is counterproductive content if you're trying to gain a following, if you're wanting to be seen as in line with the apostles and therefore worthy of respect and power. But we're saying: "These guys? These guys a joke but for the grace of God."
    - i. Don't you see: you wouldn't record it this way unless it actually happened this way!

## Evidence #5: Transformed Lives

- A. One of the things we can look at now and say, "Wow, something has happened here!" is the transformed lives of these people who were encountered by the risen Jesus.
  1. These women went to the tomb there all somber and sad, but they come back ecstatic.
  2. Peter, we're told in v. 12, "rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened." He's starting to find his courage again and he'll be utterly transformed by the time this thing is done, as will the other apostles.
    - a. They go from cowardice to courage; from hiding in private quarters to preaching in public squares; from trembling in fear of death to boldly marching towards it come what may—because they know that death doesn't have the last word anymore . . . Jesus does, because he's alive!
- B. So it's a great evidence of the reality of the resurrection and the validity of the Bible and the gospel. And you know, Jesus is still transforming people today.

1. I came across an intriguing quote from a young and, at the time, radically skeptical CS Lewis:
 

“You ask me my religious views: you know, I think, that I believe in no religion. There is absolutely no proof for any of them, and from a philosophical standpoint Christianity is not even the best. All religions, that is, all mythologies, to give them their proper name, are merely man’s own invention—Christ as much as Loki. . . . Superstition of course in every age has held the common people, but in every age the educated and thinking ones have stood outside it, though usually outwardly conceded to it for convenience. . . . Of course, mind you, I am not laying down as a certainty that there is nothing outside the material world: considering the discoveries that are always being made, this would be foolish. . . . Whenever any new light can be got as to such matters, I will be glad to welcome it. In the meantime I am not going to go back to the bondage of believing in any old (and already decaying) superstition.”

  - a. But he does go back to it and he does believe it. And this great skeptic—who even called himself “the most reluctant convert”—becomes one of Christianity’s greatest apologists and defenders. You can hardly come across a Christian today who would not point to his book *Mere Christianity* as one of the significant influences that brought them to faith.
2. Even in my own story, I was skeptical and stubborn in my unbelief. I would make fun of Christians and then I became one, and people started coming to faith because of me. What changed? How could that be? Jesus is alive!

## What This Means for You?

A. But, now what does all of this mean for you?

1. If you’re not a Christian, you’re skeptical of it all, you’ve got barriers of doubt, for one thing it means you can’t just brush Christianity off as a fairytale, as a mere blind “leap of faith.” You’ve got to seriously consider it. I’m pleading with you to seriously consider it.
  - a. If the claims of Scripture are true, then not only do you find yourself in a desperate place because of your sin before a holy God, but you also find the way of salvation and forgiveness freely offered to you in the person and work of Jesus.
    - i. He wants to satisfy and transform you as he has so many others. Jesus is alive!
2. And if you are a Christian, I’d just say: let this encourage your faith. There are good reasons to trust Christ. I don’t care what the culture says. And if you’re doubting and struggling, you can come talk to God about it. He can handle it. He invites your honest questions.
  - a. He can break through that barrier of doubt and lead you back to faith. Jesus is alive! If that is true, doesn’t it just change everything?!