

ABOVE 500 WITNESSES!



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VIRTUAL

How many eye-witnesses would it take for an unbeliever to believe that Jesus is alive! The apostle Paul said that Cephas was a witness to the resurrection of Jesus—then the twelve saw and talked with Him. *1 Corinthians 15:6* “After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.” They all met Jesus, but they all were believers.

And we never want to believe in vain, that is why the apostle also said *1 Corinthians 15:1* “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” The apostle who was an enemy of Christ, was convicted and converted to be a faithful follower of Christ.

The resurrection of Christ from the tomb is the very foundation on which we place our faith in God, and on which the entire Christian life is based. If the resurrection did not happen as the Bible clearly states, our belief in Jesus is in vain—our life of faith is pointless. *1 Corinthians 15:14* “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

There would be no reason to *live* as we do, nor to *trust God* in faith as we have. *1 Corinthians 15:20* “But, in reality, Christ has risen from among the dead, being the first to do so of those who are asleep.” We know He is alive, and we *trust* in the Atonement for sin He made for us.

The Truth from the Word declares that the resurrection of Jesus *did* happen—and there are over 500 witnesses over 40 days who affirm it is true—that is *overwhelming evidence*. Because our Savior lives—*everyone* can face tomorrow with confidence—that the Atonement sacrifice of Jesus was made for sinners—to forgive our sins and to give a living hope of eternal life.

Actually, we are *one* or the *other* of the two malefactors [criminals; evil-doers] who were crucified with Jesus. One *mocked* Him; and the other *loved* Him; one was *critical*; and the other *remorseful*; one *complained at* Jesus; and the other *submitted to* Jesus in repentant faith.

Good works offer *no payment*; but a good sacrifice offered *full payment*. Jesus said *Luke 13:3 and 5* “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” By sincerely repenting of our sins and placing our trust on the Blood of Christ, we can be *with Him* forever in Paradise!

All the thief said to Jesus was *Luke 23:42*, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” To which Jesus replied ⁴³ “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Only an attitude *change*, *changed* the direction of his life—he went from *lost* to *saved* in seconds! Jesus knew the man’s *heart* and promised him a place in *Heaven*.

It all depends on *faith*, but faith is *not* a feeling. We can exercise faith without any emotion. If we *believe* that a chair will *hold* our weight, there is no feeling connected to that. Doubt *is* a feeling, however, because we can *feel* uneasy if we believe that a chair will *not* hold us.

Faith is *not* a feeling but is a *choice* of our own. *That chair looks okay*, so we sit down without thinking anything further. It is a *choice* based on *trust* by what we *see*. *Faith in Jesus* is based on *trust* by what we *know is true*. Once we decide to trust in faith, there is no feeling or emotion involved—we just *know* what Jesus *did* on the Cross and *trust* on His promise to deliver.

The malefactors on the cross each had a choice of who Jesus was—and as a result of their *choices*, one went to *Hell* and the other went to *Heaven*. Everyone has that *same* choice! What we decide about Jesus, will determine where we spend eternity. Only an *attitude* separated Heaven from Hell for the two thieves.

The apostle has to admit *1 Timothy 1:13* “Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.” God’s love and mercy reached further than his worst mistake.

He admitted that he is the vilest of sinners and did not deserve *any* mercy or grace *1 Timothy 1:16* “But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.” A truly *repentant heart* is promised a *Paradise environment* as given to the thief.

Colossians 2:14 “[Jesus] canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ’s cross.” Canceling the debt is stamping it *Paid in full!* When Jesus said “It is finished,” it means all prophecy is *fulfilled* regarding the Messiah’s work on earth of atoning for sins in the world. The debt was paid 2,000 years ago, so by faith in Him, we are no

longer a sinner heading for the flames but a beloved child of God getting ready to be raptured.

All that God *wants* to give us is *ours*—if we will decide to accept those gifts by faith and live each day by trusting on the Blood of Christ. God does *not force* us to love Him—but gives us a *choice* to love Him. We must maintain an attitude of adjustment. God gave us free will—so, will we *run our own life*, or ask *God to run it!*

God will allow us to run our own life—it is our choice to do that. But 2 Peter 3:9 “*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*”

If we will come to repentance; if we will be sorry for the wrongs we have committed; for the rebellious attitudes we have taken; and if we will ask Jesus to be in our heart to control our life—our attitudes and choices from that moment, He promises to do it!

Jesus paid our debt in full so we are *free to return* to God. We can approach His throne of grace without fear—that is Good News! God *wants* to show us *mercy*, and He offers us the most valuable gift of all time—total forgiveness through faith in His Son. If we choose to *receive* the gift, and we keep trusting Him in faith to the end—we will be *with* Him for an eternity!

We are free from the debt of all our transgressions if we accept by faith what Jesus accomplished on the Cross for us and then we continue to trust in that atoning sacrifice He made for us. More than 500 witnesses and over 40 days is the evidence that Jesus is alive!

When the women arrived at the tomb of Jesus that morning with spices, they found the stone had been rolled from the entrance. Luke 24:4 “*As they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in*

shining garments. 5 *They said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen!’”*

The angels told them what Jesus had said— Luke 24:7 “*The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.* 8 *And they remembered his words*”—words that are accurate, and words that contain all the teaching we need to take us to Heaven. Acts 2:24 Jesus is He “*Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.*”

It brings us back to the opening verses and what the apostle declared—that the Gospel he gave them would *save* them from God’s wrath—if they would keep in memory the Gospel he spoke—of enduring faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ regarding any trial or test we encounter.

1 Corinthians 15:3 “*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.*” That would be 13 eye-witnesses and not counting the two angels or the women who later personally met Jesus.

The apostle explains all that took place following the resurrection of Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:6 “*After that, [Jesus] was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*”

The apostle *knew* how merciful and loving God is, and that He will give anyone every opportunity possible to *repent, believe*, and put their faith in the Blood of the Cross for the saving of

their soul—every opportunity. Hebrews 3:7 “*As the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert.’”*

We *have* to open our heart to God’s Truth and be willing to receive His offer of grace. The apostle was grateful of God’s forgiveness— 1 Corinthians 15:9 “*For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*”

In a Jewish court, two witnesses were needed to establish the truth of anything. When Jesus rose from the grave, He was seen by more than 550 people in thirteen different places over a period of forty days. The resurrection of Christ, and His presence in the world for 40 days, was not hidden but out in the open for all *believers* to witness.

This proved beyond any doubt, that *Jesus is God* incarnate—the *Messiah* had come. Jesus’ followers would die for their faith because they had seen the resurrected Savior! Acts 1:3 “*After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.*

He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” Above 500 witnesses *confirm* the truth of the Gospel of Christ!



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