

# AFTER THE RESURRECTION WHAT?

by

Lee Rutland Scarborough

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE EMPTY TOMB AND CHRIST'S REAPPEARANCES

#### INFALLIBLE PROOFS

PAUL says: **“He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time”** (I Corinthians 15:8).

In the former discussion we have marshaled before the world court a long list of eyewitnesses, with unimpeachable records and testimony to the fact of Christ's resurrection. These were pre-ascension witnesses. We now call in other eyewitnesses as post-ascension, infallible proofs.

Then we will assemble some convincing by-products of the resurrection which are based on or demand Christ's resurrection as essential to their existence. The last of the unimpeachable, infallible proofs is the empty tomb. It ought to silence infidelity's brag and boast forever.

#### CHRIST'S REAPPEARANCES

We must not overlook nor undervalue heaven's testifying witnesses who appeared to add the weight of their heavenly testimony to the other witnesses. Christ was an angel-accompanied messenger to earth. They announced His coming to the shepherds—heaven's good will tour of **“peace among men.”**

Angels fed Him in the wilderness of temptation, comforted Him in the garden of suffering. Legions were at His command in His betrayal. They were with Him all through His ministry. Why should we not value their testimony to His resurrection?

Two men stood by them in shining garments. Luke says: **“They said unto them . . . He is not here, but is risen”** (24:5, 6). Mary saw two angels in white, John tells us. This was on resurrection morning.

Two men in white appeared forty days later, Luke tells us in Acts 1:10, 11. Here are heavenly witnesses. If we believe the angels announced His birth, why not believe angels announced His resurrection and ascension and promised His return?

A dying deacon, Stephen, saw the same Saviour, who had risen and ascended and was at the right hand of the Majesty on High (Acts 7:55, 56). Here is a Holy Ghost witness years after the resurrection.

He appeared to Saul of Tarsus twice. While on the Damascus road, enraged and armed with destruction, Christ appeared to Saul and he recognized Him—“**Who art thou, Lord?**” (I Corinthians 15:8; 9:1; Acts 9:5). There is also in connection with this appearance to Saul the testimony of Ananias and Judas, as recorded in Acts 9:11-20. The second appearance He made to Paul was when he was praying in the temple, as recorded in Acts 22:17-21. Does it look reasonable to believe that Paul could have been made out of Saul on a vision of lies? Lies do not turn roaring lions into mighty evangelists of power.

Christ appeared to aged John, as told us in Revelation 1:10-20 and 22:6-21. John had a good record with Christ. He was one of the first two to follow Christ from the leadership of John the Baptist, and he went clear on through with Christ. He knew his life.

- He saw His miracles.
- He journeyed with Him.
- He heard His sermons, witnessed His trials, went the farthest with Him into the Garden, and stayed closest to the cross.
- He was there in the early morning of the resurrection.
- He was among the uplookers at Christ's ascension.
- He was at the Pentecostal prayer meeting and baptism.
- He knew Paul and knew of his missionary triumphs.
- He doubtless read from the original manuscripts of the New Testament.
- He was acquainted with all the New Testament churches.
- He knew of the death of all of the apostles; he outlived them all.
- He was familiar with Christ's commands, His promises, His great doctrines.
- He wrote the chief love letter of all time, and when he was very old he saw the Saviour.
- He was alone, in exile. He was not frightened. He was not dreaming.

Look at what he says:

**“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; . . . And I turned to see the voice that spake with me . . . And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”** (Revelation 1:10-18).

What can be more convincing? Sixty or more years after John's long, experimental tests with the Saviour He appears to him again. He saw Him, he fell at His feet, and heard the Saviour say, “**I am alive for evermore.**” Surely this is believable testimony.

## THE TESTIMONY OF RESURRECTION'S BY-PRODUCTS

*Pentecost.* Pentecost was just fifty days away from the resurrection. It was brought on by the same people that said Jesus was alive. How could they falsify and get by with it?

*Christ's churches* and their missionary, evangelizing and educationalizing triumphs of nineteen hundred years. Can such a superstructure be built on a league of lies?

*The apostolic leadership.* Peter, John, Paul, their comrades and successors, Luther, Spurgeon, Moody, Broadus, Mullins, Carroll, Speer, Mott, Gambrell and Truett, all are products of the resurrection of Christ.

*The Bible* is a by-product or a direct product of the resurrection. Every line of the New Testament was written after resurrection and in view of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Can such a mountain of dynamic truth be built on a mistaken apparition? No. Supernatural incarnation, holy life, atoning death and bodily resurrection are the girders of God's Book. Falsifiers do not write records like these.

*The preachers* of the post-resurrection period. Look at Acts 5:15; 4:2-10; 5:30,31; 10:40,41; I Peter 1:3; 1:21; 3:18; Acts 21:22; 4:33; I Corinthians 15; Galatians 6:14; I Thessalonians 3:10; 4:13,14; Galatians 1:1; Romans 1:4; 4:24,25; 8:11-34; 10:9; I Corinthians 6:14; II Corinthians 4:13-14; Ephesians 1:18-21; Colossians 2:12; Philippians 3:10, and on and on. If all these preachers of the cross and the resurrection are based on a deranged story of insane deceivers, where can there be any truth or any hope for a lost world?

Look at the *inner testimonies of millions of saved souls.* A group of us visited the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. Dr. G. W. Truett of Dallas read a Scripture as fifty of us stood around the empty tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The great preacher led a prayer and in the midst of an inexpressible exaltation of soul he said, "Thank God, Joseph's tomb is empty!" We not only saw the empty tomb with our eyes, but we felt the risen Lord in our hearts, and this is a sample of ten million souls and more during these nineteen hundred years of resurrection's triumphs.

*The empty tomb.* Witness the emptiness of Joseph's tomb.

- The angels said so (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:2-7). The faithful women said it was empty (Matthew 28:6-10; John 20:11-18).
- Peter and John testified that He was not there (John 20:1-8).
- The frightened soldiers testify that "**they have taken him away**" (Matthew 28:11-15).

A tragic dilemma—either Christ arose from the dead or the soldiers or His disciples removed His body. The soldiers were not accused of it. The soldiers accused the disciples and carried this deception to the elders, who paid for the lie and protected the soldiers from the government.

Nobody believed the soldiers or the bribing elders. The disciples did not do it. Christ arose! All testimony from any angle, direct or circumstantial, exonerates the disciples from taking the body of the Saviour away.

They are the consummate liars of history if they stole His body. Nobody believes they did and hid His body to cover up a lie. The empty tomb stares the world in the face and for nineteen hundred years has built a monument to Christ's resurrection. It challenges the world to find Christ's body, then or now. Infidelity, atheism or godless communism, we challenge you to find Christ's body! The futile efforts of these past centuries mock infidelity to shame and should silence you forever. What say you of Christ's empty tomb?

The final witness—*Christ Himself*, Prophecy said that He would rise (Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25; 13:35-37).

- Christ promised to rise. He promised it in Matthew 26:60-68; Matthew 16:27, 28; 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:22; Matthew 17:22,23; 27:63; and Luke 24:7.
- Christ's two ordinances are the established monuments to His resurrection (I Corinthians 15:29; Romans 6:4-13; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-28; Mark 14:22-25).

And on top of this accumulating testimony is Christ's own personal word that He is alive, adding the final, climactic proof that He is alive (John 20:14-17; Luke 24:25,26; Matthew 28:10; Revelation 2:5).

**“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore”** (Revelation 1:18); and in Revelation 21:20 He says, **“Surely I come quickly.”**

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