

# Sermon Notes – April 12, 2020

*He is RISEN, He has RISEN Indeed!* — Various Texts  
Pastor Jeff Hinds

## **Our Mission:**

*Helping people take the next step in one's relationship with Jesus Christ.*

## **Our Vision Statement:**

**Connect:** *Connect through authentic community with other Christ-followers;*

**Grow:** *Grow in one's personal relationship with Jesus;*

**Go:** *Go and serve others sharing love and the gospel.*

## EVIDENCES FOR THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection accounts record “embarrassing” details: all the disciples cowardly fled from Jesus; a woman was the first person to encounter the risen Christ (in the Jewish culture women were not considered credible witnesses); and the disciples were hiding when Jesus came to them in the Upper Room (if they were simply the founders of a false religion, they would not have wanted to portray themselves as cowards). These details affirm the authenticity of the accounts. A fabled account would be marked with revisions and embellishments.

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote the New Testament letter that goes by his name in the early 40s AD. Not only was James convinced that *his own brother* was God incarnate, but he also wrote this letter so close to Jesus' death and resurrection that if it was fabricated hundreds, if not thousands, of living witnesses to Jesus would have testified against him.

During Jesus' life on earth, and the decades immediately following, the Roman Empire was hostile to “new” religions. The threat of persecution and death was not enough to change the minds of those who witnessed Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' closest disciples, eyewitnesses to His death and resurrection, were so convinced by what they saw that most of them were martyred (by gruesome deaths) for their testimony.

There were multiple eye-witness accounts! Within 20–25 years of Jesus' resurrection, Paul wrote that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people at one time—most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15:6! This could easily have been discredited: the letter to the Corinthians was a public document; travel around the Mediterranean was easy and safe in those days of the *Pax Romana* (the peace of Rome); and these witnesses could have been interviewed and discredited if Jesus had not been resurrected.

People in the first century would have been just as skeptical of a resurrection as people are today. It was not even desirable for many. Greek religion wanted to be set free from the body (which they viewed as evil) not reunited with it, so resurrection would not have appealed to them. The Jews expected that along with the resurrection, everything else would change as well (no more sickness, suffering, or death anywhere at all!). An individual resurrection would not have appealed to them—they would not have imagined it.

Worldviews take a very long time to change as facts are studied and new discoveries are made. But Christianity centered around eyewitness accounts to Jesus' resurrection, and this brought immediate and sudden worldview change in a culture that was not friendly to resurrection. The compelling stories of the many eyewitnesses could not be denied!

The resurrection was attested to shortly after the event took place. This refutes the idea that stories about Jesus evolved into legend over time. Those who saw Him testified to what they had seen. The words of 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 are believed to have been circulating within two years of the resurrection of Christ.

Both Roman leaders and Jewish leaders had a vested interest in producing a body to prove Jesus had not risen from the dead. Even with such strong motivation, they were not able to bring any proof that Jesus had died and remained dead.

Those who wanted to silence the disciples were unable to do so by any proof or logic. They resorted to threats, which the disciples (rightly) ignored as they continued preaching that Jesus had risen from the dead.

The gospel accounts of the resurrection were told immediately after the event and written only a few years later. If anyone had had any ability to refute these gospel accounts, they would have had ample opportunity to do so.

The sheer number of named eyewitnesses in the gospel accounts strongly points to the validity of the resurrection account. The gospel writers purposefully named their sources. If the gospel writing were filled with the stuff of legend, these sources would have easily invalidated the message.