

and could in fact be confirmed or denied by them.
3. THEY ARE CORROBORATED.

To the list of witnesses which Paul provides, a number of other standard supports for the resurrection have weathered the critics attacks:

- a. The empty tomb. This has stood as a veritable rock in support of His resurrection. (The arguments of the Schonfields have not budged the evidence from the empty tomb which is mentioned again and again in the Gospels, but not in Acts. There was no point to do it in Acts because everyone--friend and foe alike--knew that it was empty.
- b. The Christian church. The documents of the churches association, as an attorney would term them, rests entirely with the bodily resurrection of Christ. The miracle of the resurrection is its very ground!
- c. The Lord's Day. The fanatic attachment of Jews to the worship of the Lord on the Sabbath persists to this hour. But what changed the day of worship from the seventh to the first--the resurrection!

Conclusion Paul affirms that he continues to preach (present tense) this matter of the resurrection. It was part of the Gospel on which the Corinthians believed (aorist tense) and were saved (v. 2). It is the same today and we proclaim this glorious good news to you today. Will you believe it and be saved from sin? Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS
"Witnesses of the Resurrection"
1 Cor. 15:7-11

Introduction

1. The resurrection of Christ is assuredly an item of history. There is an excellent, tho' disputed passage from Josephus (Antiquities xviii. 3.3) which in spite of its difficulty cannot be ignored. He said that Jesus was a "wise man, if indeed he should be called a man. For he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men. . . . This was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the instigation of our own leaders, those who had loved him from the first did not cease. For he appeared to them on the third day alive again. . . ."

2. With such an historical quote, it is no wonder that Luke, the divine historian wrote under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that He showed Himself alive with "man infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). There is more evidence than is necessary to testify to His bodily resurrection--if one is sincerely earnest in his quest for the truth (John 7:17).

3. Christ did appear in bodily form to chosen witnesses (Acts 10:41). One of the earliest accounts of these witnesses is given in our text. There are other witnesses who are recorded in the N.T.--all told about 17. Note three considerations about the witnesses:

1. THEY ARE LISTED.

a. Cephas. v.5. This is really another name for Peter. The appearance mentioned here took place on the afternoon of the resurrection (Luke 24:34). Peter had denied the Lord three times before household servants, but in the end he preached to the chief priests about the resurrection and proclaimed salvation through Christ alone (Acts 4:12). The reason for this was the private interview he had with the risen Lord.

b. The Twelve. v. 5. The term employed here is a technical one and does not signify 12 persons. This must be the case because Judas was dead and Thomas

was absent. (cf. Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23).

c. Five hundred. v. 6. The strength of these witnesses lies in the fact that "the majority" were still alive. Hence, 25 years after the actual event eye witnesses remained, and this means that the greater part of those who followed the Lord were youth. Some had died, but there were numbers of the 500 alive and willing to give testimony that they had seen Him alive.

d. James. v. 7. This man is the blood brother of our Lord. He, along with other members of the immediate family, did not believe on Christ's claim to be the Messiah (John 7:5), but after the resurrection James did believe (Gal. 1:19; Acts 1:14). He later became the chairman of the Jerusalem Council and is probably mentioned here--and nowhere else as an eye witness--because of his high position in the visible church.

e. All apostles. v. 7. This is probably a reference to the meeting of His own on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20).

f. Paul. vv. 8-10. Actually, the Lord appeared to Paul a number of times: on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6), in Arabia (Acts 20:24; 26:17; Gal. 1:12, 17), in the temple (Gal. 1:18; Acts 9:26-30; 22:17-21), and in prison (Acts 23:11). In connection with the appearance of Christ to himself, Paul elaborates:

1) On his position. He is stated to be the "least" and this perhaps provides the reason for listing himself "last" (v. 8). It is a strong term and diminishes himself (Eph. 3:8).

2) On his condition. He did not feel "meet" to be an apostle. The original term means he felt he did not "reach up" and thus he felt his inadequacy. The explanation for this feeling is given in that he had persecuted the church during his lifetime. This was a matter which plagued Paul and caused him deep remorse over his unconverted days. He never forgot what he had been (cf. 1 Tim. 1:12-15).

3) On his situation. The unusual phrase "born out of due time" is based on a hapaxlegomenon, in the N.T. but is often used in the LXX. In every case it means "an abortion, a still-born embryo." A good translation would be: "last of all He appeared

unto me as unto the abortion." It means that when Christ appeared to him, he was--in comparison with the other disciples who had known and followed him for 3 years--no better than an unperfected foetus among living men. But he was still a bold witness!

4) On his commission. No other verse in the Bible commends the grace of God toward Paul more than this section. The double "I am" supports God's grace in his life. This grace, he reports, was not found to be (Greek: "came to be") in vain or void of reality and without substance. Proof of this lay in that he laboured more than all the other apostles put together. It speaks of his superhuman energy output for the work of the Gospel. But this also was due to the energizing grace of God.

2. THEY ARE DEFENDED.

With such an array of eye-witnesses to His bodily resurrection, it is not surprising that falsification of their testimony would be offered. Among these are these attacks:

a. ALL WAS HALLUCINATORY. This cannot be true because the witnesses do not meet the rules under which hallucinations occur. Only certain psychological types experience them, but all classes of personalities saw Him. Again, hallucinations are highly individualistic, but here groups, yes, large groups, all saw Him. Moreover, hallucinations concern some expected event, but here the apostles were not expecting Him. Further, hallucinations occur at certain suitable times and surroundings, but here the scenes of His appearances varied. Hallucinations also normally recur, but here His appearance was but once, for example, to the 500.

b. ALL WAS LEGENDARY. This is a meaningless attack since one is not dealing here with stories handed down over generations, but accounts given by eyewitnesses themselves or attributed to them while they were still alive