



Ref: 4.14

On the Third Day Jesus rose up alive from the tomb…

This is what Christians believe. If he didn’t rise again and is still dead, then Christianity and following Jesus is a complete waste of time. But if he did come alive again, we can know Jesus, trust what he has said and done for us …and follow him today!

Over the past 2000 years there have been lots of attempts to disprove the idea that Jesus came alive again - to show that it was not fact, but fiction.

We are going to look at some of the objections to the resurrection and see whether they fit with the evidence of those who were there and saw what really happened.

**Starting point:**

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The tomb where Jesus was laid after his death was found to be empty. Followers of Jesus believe that this is because Jesus rose from the dead. However, there are some other theories and explanations that try to

**Different theories/explanations:**

**Theory 1:** *The tomb was empty because the followers of Jesus stole the body.*

**Theory 2:** *The Jewish or Roman leaders had taken the body of Jesus.*

**Theory 3:** *Jesus was not actually dead when he was put in the tomb. Later he recovered and left.*

***Theory 4:*** *The followers of Jesus were so desperate to believe Jesus was alive that they convinced themselves that he really had risen – but they had only imagined it or hallucinated.*

***Theory 5:*** *The followers of Jesus thought they saw Jesus - but it was only someone who looked like him.*

***Theory 6:*** *The disciples just made up the story to trick people*

**Evidence:**

Jesus was killed on the Cross by the Roman soldiers who were experts at doing their gruesome job of finishing people off.

The Jews asked for a Roman guard to be placed outside the tomb (see Matthew 27 v 62-66) to stop anyone taking or tampering with the body.

The disciples risked their lives (and some were killed) because they went round telling people that Jesus was alive.

The claim of Jesus’ followers that Jesus had come alive caused the Jewish and Roman leaders a lot of problems – as did the rapid spread of Christianity. Those leaders would have loved to prove beyond any doubt that Jesus was still dead and shut the Christians up once and for all.

*Hundreds* of people claim to have seen Jesus alive, including: Mary Magdalene (John 20:10–18); the disciples (John 20:19–23); the two people walking on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35); and hundreds of others on at least one occasion (1 Corinthians 15:5,6).

When he met Thomas Jesus invited him to touch him and to inspect the wounds made by the nails and the spear (John 20:24–28).

When Jesus died on the Cross more quickly than expected, the soldiers pushed a spear into Jesus’ side to make sure the execution had been completed.

The followers of Jesus were dramatically changed after they claimed to have met Jesus alive. They had been sad and dejected and afraid of what the leaders who killed Jesus might do to them. Suddenly they were full of joy and were willing to risk everything to tell others about what had happened.

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**Your verdict…**

Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Why (or why not)?

If Jesus really did come alive as he promised, what difference does that make?

What do our friends think and why? What might you say to point them to the evidence so they can make up their minds?

