



**Empowering People to Change the World**

**Why We Believe**

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**Road Declaration**

## Romans Graphic

There are only three classes of people in the world today:

- 1) Those who are full of fear.
- 2) Those who don't know enough to be fearful.
- 3) Those who know their Bibles.

The degree to which we believe God's Word, apply it to prayer and obedience, is the degree to which God will pour out His power and peace into your heart.

Last week we inaugurated what could be one of our greatest spiritual adventures as a church: the study of the Epistle of Romans.

No book of the Bible has so impacted the world and has the potential to rock your inner life as Paul's epistle to the Romans.

- Swiss commentator Godet, who wrote on the great revivals of history, said, "The Reformation was certainly the work of the epistle to the Romans...and it is probable that every great spiritual renovation in the church will always be linked, both in cause and effect, to a deeper knowledge of this book."

## Why We Believe

### Romans 1:2-3

- **The Bible is the Signature of God.**
- We must remember that the Messiah, Jesus, was prophesied for centuries before He was born.
- Jesus was prophesied through the Holy Scriptures...through men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- Peter writes (2 Peter 1:16, 20, 21)  
"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."
  - These men in the Old and New Testaments were inspired by the Holy Spirit...the Greek word for inspired is *Pneuma*.

- E.g., Like the air pumped into a tire...which we call a *pneumatic tire*... why is the word spelled with a *p*? ...the disease of our lung called *pneumonia*, why the “p”? Because it comes from the Greek word *pneuma*, translated *breath* or *air* and *Holy Spirit*...the men who wrote the scriptures were men who God breathed His message through.
- God blew through these men and they set down divinely given thoughts on paper.
- E.g., Your word is yourself. Your word is as good as your signature...our law recognizes this. If you sign your name to a check where you don't have a deposit, the law will come to your door and arrest you...your word is yourself. Don't try to tell the judge that your word or signature is inseparable from you...he will laugh you right into jail as he gives both of you some time in the clink.
- In like manner the word of the prophets is identical with the prophets, and as it is the Word of God, it is identical with God...the Bible is the signature of God...it is who God is...it reveals God and who He is.
- **Jesus was Before Time and Scripture.**
- E.g., I have read articles in the past by skeptics who have said Christianity is a young religion and that there are oriental religions that were in existence before Christ.
- “Wasn't Buddha birthed before Christ?”
- When I hear such an accusation, my response would be: So, when do you date the time of Christ? That usually stops them for a moment.
  - If they try to say that the time of Christ was some twenty centuries ago, I would enjoy taking them to the scriptures to show them the many passages of the Old Testament that speak of Jesus.
  - There are 324 passages in the Old Testament that prophecy of Jesus' birth, life, and death that go back over thousands of years.
  - Let me just give a few:
    - Isaiah 53, written over 600 years before the birth of Christ gives us one of the most stunning and accurate portrayal of Jesus' death on the cross.
    - Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah accurately prophecies Jesus' birthplace.

- Micah 5:2  
"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,  
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me  
The One to be Ruler in Israel"
- Christ in the Psalms:
  - His crucifixion and resurrection Ps. 2:1-12
  - Jesus as part of the creation Ps. 8:3-8
  - Jesus' death and resurrection Ps. 16:8-11
  - His betrayal by Judas Ps. 41:9
  - His deity Ps. 45:6-7
- And we could look at over 50 other Psalms that were written over 3000 years ago that speak of our Savior's birth, death, incarnation, betrayal, resurrection, and millennial Kingship.
- Jesus was before time!
- John 1:1-5  
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."
- Jesus existed before He was born!

#### **Vs. 4**

- This is the greatest evidence of the deity of Christ.
- No other religion, sect, or religious group in all of world history has made such an audacious claim...that their founder rose from the dead and still lives!
  - Buddha is dead and all Buddhists will acknowledge that.
  - Mohammed is dead and you can visit his tomb.
  - Abraham is the father of Judaism, and no one disputes he and Sarah's death.

- Animism, Taoism, and other Eastern mystic religions worship trees, worms, and mother earth.

**The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of our faith. If Jesus was not raised from the dead our faith is useless.**

- The reality is, no other one historical event has been so studied and scrutinized through the centuries and found to be so well documented. For the honest intellectual, who really wants to know the truth, no single historical event has more evidence of its authenticity than the resurrection of Christ.
- Listen to what some of the greatest intellectuals, historians, and educators have said,
  - Simon Greenleaf, former Dean of the Greenleaf School of Law, “It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians would have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by reproducing the body of Jesus.”
  - Paul Althaus, professor University of Erlangen, Germany, “The resurrection could not have been maintained for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been maintained as a fact for all concerned.”
  - Paul Maier, historian, “If all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable, according to the canons of historical research, to conclude that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was actually empty on the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraphy, or archeology that would disprove this statement.”

**So, let's look at 8 facts to be reckoned with that give us evidence for the resurrection.**

#### **Fact #1: A Broken Roman Seal**

- The seal over the tomb represented the power and authority of Rome.
- The consequences for breaking the seal, to the soldiers who guarded the tomb, was severe; they would be crucified upside down, no questions asked.

- With the cowardice of the disciples at the time and the confidence and size of the number of soldiers at the tomb...nothing less than a mighty work of God could have broken that seal.
- Professor Thomas Arnold, author of the 3 volume *History of Rome* wrote, "I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no other fact in the history of mankind which proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

### **Fact #2: The Empty Tomb**

- We must remember the disciples did not go off to Athens or Rome to proclaim the empty tomb, they shouted it from the rooftops in Jerusalem, where anyone could have checked out the evidence.
- And believe me, the authorities would have done that! This news of Jesus rising from the dead was causing a major uproar among the political and religious leaders!
- If there was a shred of evidence that could have been drummed up, it would have been.
- Even Jewish and Roman documents of that time, who were hostile to the resurrection, acknowledge the empty tomb.
- Maier writes, "Positive evidence from hostile sources, is the strongest kind of historical evidence. In essence, this means that if a source admits a fact that is decidedly not in its favor, then that fact is genuine."

### **Fact #3: Large Stone Moved**

- On that Sunday morning, what impressed everyone was the new location of the 2-ton stone that had been lodged in front of the entrance to the tomb.
- All the gospel writers mention the removal of the stone from the entrance.
- In Matthew 27, Matthew describes the removal of the stone with an added preposition that indicates the stone was rolled up an incline!
- So, who broke the Roman seal and then pushed a 2-ton stone up a hill?
  - The women who came to the tomb? No Way!

- The Roman garrison, who would be killed for doing such a thing? Not a chance!
- The frightened and cowardice disciples? Not possible!
- There is no commonsense explanation, but that God did it!!

#### **Fact #4: Roman Guard goes AWOL**

- The Roman Guard fled! They left their responsibility...this was punishable by death.
- The Roman Guard was made up of 16 highly trained, elite soldiers and they all fled their charge!
- Only something so fantastic that there was no explanation, would cause these “Roman Elite Special Ops” troops to have run away from their assignment.

#### **Fact #5: Grave Clothes Tell a Tale**

- Like the empty chrysalis of a caterpillar’s cocoon, the grave clothes were caved in as if the body had just slipped out of the clothes.
- This is what is meant when John looked in the tomb, saw the grave clothes, and immediately believed.
- The first thing that stuck in the mind of the disciples was not the empty tomb but rather the empty grave clothes—undisturbed in form and position.

#### **Fact #6: His Appearances Confirmed**

- Jesus appeared to hundreds of people after the resurrection.
- In studying or investigating any historical event, the most important evidence is an eyewitness. In a modern court room trial today, if you have just one eyewitness, you can convict a person of a crime.
- Not only do all the disciples speak of seeing Jesus alive, the Apostle Paul, in one of our earliest writings appeals to his audience that over 500 people saw Jesus alive at one time. Paul even mentions that most of these people are still alive.

- Dr. Edwin M. Yamauchi, associate professor of history at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, emphasizes, “What gives a special authority to the list of witnesses as historical evidence is the reference to most of the 500 brethren being still alive. St. Paul says in effect, ‘If you don’t believe me, you can ask them.’ Such a statement is an admittedly genuine letter written within 30 years of the event is almost as strong evidence as one could hope to get for something that happened nearly 2000 years ago.”

#### **Fact #7: Women Saw Him First**

- Another authenticating feature of the resurrection is that Jesus was seen first by the women: Mary Magdalene and others, and not the disciples.
- This must have been an embarrassment to the disciples.
- According to Jewish laws of evidence, women were considered invalid witnesses.
- Dr. Maier observes, that since the testimony of a woman was deemed unreliable, the “initial reaction of the eleven was understandably one of suspicion and disbelief. Again, if the resurrection accounts had been manufactured...women would never have been included in the story.”

#### **Fact #8: All of the Disciples Gave the Rest of Their Lives to This Truth**

- History is full of examples of men who gave their lives for a lie, but do we have any examples of men who gave their lives for a lie, when they knew it was a lie? I don’t think so.
- All the 11 disciples gave the rest of their lives proclaiming that Jesus had risen from the grave.
- If we include Paul, 11 of the 12 apostles died martyr’s death proclaiming this truth.

### **The Resurrection is a Dramatic Fact that Changed History and Can Dramatically Change Your Life**

#### **Vs. 5-6**

- Through the resurrected Christ we have received:
  - the grace of God
  - apostleship
  - the faith needed to walk with the Lord



- Paul moves from his own calling to be an Apostle to saying we are all called out to be apostles. We are all called to an apostolic anointing in our family, our work, and spheres of influence sovereignly given by God for your life.
- We are the called-out ones!
- The Bible calls us the elect ones, the *Ekklesia*, a Greek word *meaning to call out of*:
  - We are called out of the world.
  - We are called into Christ.
  - We are called to 1) Christ, 2) Church, and 3) Cause.
- If you are a sincere thinker...if you are a sincere seeker...if you are sincere about longing for love, meaning, and purpose for life.
- If you have never placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you can do that today.
- You have come to the right place...Jesus is the answer, Jesus is the source, Jesus is the love you are searching for.
- The Bible says (1 John 4:10 NKJV)  
“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
- Propitiation means that Jesus vindicated our sin by His holy character and life, took our place on the cross and died for all your sins. He made provision and through His holiness, you can be forgiven, healed, and set free.
- The living Christ loves you! He wants a relationship with you! Today, open your heart and place your faith in Christ and the work of the cross and the resurrection from the dead.
- Romans (10:9-10 NKJV)  
“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”