

# Our Risen and Ascendant King: Proofs (Part 1)

---

## Introduction

### The Text

<sup>1</sup> In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

<sup>4</sup> And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” <sup>9</sup> And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, <sup>11</sup> and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:1–11)

### From Precepts to Proofs

- A. I said last week that we’re going to divide up these first eleven verses into four parts, and I’m going to take each of those parts and consider them one at a time, Lord willing.
1. So last time we looked at our risen and soon to be ascended king, Jesus, as he stands in relation to precepts, and we considered these “**commands**” we’re told he’s given to his apostles there in v. 2.
  2. Now this morning we’re going to consider these “**proofs**” that are mentioned in the subsequent verse.
    - a. Look at v. 3 again with me: “He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.”
      - i. We’ll look at what these “**many proofs**” might have been for these disciples here.
      - ii. And then we’ll look at the idea of proofs for us today concerning the resurrection of Jesus and the validity of the Christian faith and hope in him.

## Three Opening Observations

- A. But before I really get into what these proofs are for them and for us now, I wanted to make a few quick opening observations up front just to get the engine warmed up a bit . . .

### Opening Observation #1: Our Faith Is Reasonable

- A. There is a mistaken notion that's running its laps out there in the culture these days (and has been for a great while) that Christians are of the gullible sort.
1. They aren't so much concerned with the facts, with evidence, with matters of science or history or all of this.
  2. Instead, they have faith.
    - a. And faith, in this case, is implicitly, if not explicitly, understood to be akin to taking a blind leap in the dark. It's wishful thinking.
      - i. It's like to the child who, when he's in his bed alone and scared, he closes his eyes, or pulls the covers up over his head, as if the fact that he can't see the monster means the monster can't see him.
- B. So Christians, then, are that sorry group of folks who refuse to move on with the modern world, preferring instead to close their eyes to the facts and go on playing pretend.
1. Oh sure they have "faith" that God is here. But they have no "proofs" whatsoever to back the matter up.
- C. Well, placed forcibly against such a mistaken notion, obviously, we have [Acts 1:3](#). Here we're told that Jesus supplies his people with "[many proofs](#)" as evidence of his resurrection—of his conquering of Satan, sin, and death at the cross.
1. Is it remarkable? Certainly. Is it unbelievable? I should say so. But is it unreasonable? Not according to Luke.
- D. The word translated "[proofs](#)" here is, in the Greek, [tekmērion](#) and the standard Greek lexicon defines as "[that which causes something to be known in a convincing and decisive manner](#)" (BDAG). It's "[demonstrative proof](#)" or a "[compelling sign](#)." It's "[evidence](#)."
1. One commentator says: "[Luke could not have chosen a stronger term to convey the sense of proof beyond doubt](#)" (PNTC).
- E. This is why Paul Little, a man known for his work in apologetics, writes: "[Faith in Christianity is based on evidence. It is a reasonable faith. Faith in the Christian sense goes beyond reason but not against it.](#)"
1. So Josh McDowell, another well-known apologist, a once staunch skeptic of Christianity, writes of his own conversion: "[For me, Christianity was not a 'leap into the dark,' but rather 'a step into the light.'](#) I took the evidence that I could gather and placed it on the scales.

The scales tipped in favor of Christ as the Son of God, resurrected from the dead. The evidence so overwhelmingly leans toward Christ that when I became a Christian, I was 'stepping into the light' rather than 'leaping into the darkness'" (TNETDV, xxxiii).

- F. This is why Paul the apostle, on his various missionary journeys, is shown everywhere to be, not calling for a blind leap of faith, but "reasoning" with people from the Scriptures and the facts of life.
  - 1. Take [Acts 17:17](#) as just one example, where he's in Athens, and we're told there that "he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there."
    - a. He had evidence. He had proofs. He had reasons for his faith.
      - i. And we can and must have such things as well.

## Opening Observation #2: Our Savior Is Patient

- A. I'm drawing this out from the fact that Jesus offered not just one proof to them but "many proofs" ([v. 3](#)). And he didn't do so for just one day but "forty days."
  - 1. Think about that. He was patient with his disciples. They didn't buy into this at first, not by any stretch.
    - a. They are constantly going up and down with doubt and disbelief: "Is this for real? Are we seeing things? Did we all just have some bad lambchops last night or something? This can't be happening."
- B. It's interesting because it runs against the typical way we might think of these pre-modern folks.
  - 1. If skeptics are prone to think Christians today are gullible, how much more would these ancient communities be given over to superstition and fairytale!
    - a. Of course, they would buy into something as silly as the resurrection. They lived at a time before science, before the Enlightenment, before we knew any better.
      - i. But they weren't gullible. They weren't easily sold on this. That's not the picture presented here at all.
      - ii. They were just like us. Incredulous. Struggling to believe. Needing many proofs over many days.
- C. And Jesus is patient with them. And he will be with us as well. I really want you to let that sink in. We're all on our own personal journey with Jesus.
  - 1. Maybe some of you are currently outside the faith, just looking in, wondering, with lots of questions, lots of doubts.
  - 2. Maybe you've been in for a long time, but you're still struggling with these sorts of things.

- a. Listen, that's fine. Jesus can handle your doubts. He's patient with you. He offers up many proofs over many days.

### Opening Observation #3: Our Call Is Costly

- A. You see, one of the reasons Jesus is willing to offer up many proofs over many days, one of the reasons he wants these guys to be convinced about him, beyond a doubt, is he knows it's going to get hard.
  1. "A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).
  2. So we're told that Paul, in Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, he spent time "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).
    - a. It's going to get hard. The call to follow Christ is the call to pick up your cross daily and die to the things of this world so you can come alive to the things of God.
- B. Listen, if you're going to be the real deal; if you're going to go all in for Jesus; if you're not going to just treat Christianity like a little side hustle in your life, a hobby that you pick up on Sunday mornings, but set on the shelf the rest of the week; if Jesus is going to be your life—"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21)—you're going to have to be convinced!
  1. You're going to have to know what you believe and why you believe it. You're going to have to have many proofs, many reasons for your faith if you're going to be sustained in really living (and dying!) the way Jesus calls us to.
- C. So let's talk about it.
  1. What are these many proofs that Jesus offered to them?
  2. And what proofs does he offer us now here today?
    - a. We'll consider these one at a time. Obviously I can only really scratch the surface, but I'll do my best with the time we have left.

## (1) Proofs for Them

- A. This is where it becomes so helpful that Luke has not just written the book of Acts but his own gospel as well.
  1. Because we can know from his own recounting of the resurrection and things, what he likely has in mind when he refers here to Jesus "[presenting] himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs . . ." (v. 3).
- B. So it seems to me, when we look at [Luke 24](#), where he talks about Jesus' interaction with the disciples after his resurrection, we can divide these proofs into two basic categories: (1) his word, and (2) his body.

1. In other words, he proves to them via the Scriptures that the Christ was to suffer, die, and rise.
2. And then he proves to them via their senses that he really has suffered, died, and now risen.
  - a. His word and his body.

## Proof #1: His Word

- A. For this first category of proof, look at [Luke 24:25-27](#). Here he has now appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus. And they're still all torn up about what went down in Jerusalem with the cross and all that.
  1. ["We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" \(v. 21\)](#), they said, but obviously he's not. Because he's dead.
  2. But here Jesus is before them, risen, and they don't even get it. So Luke writes: [" 25 And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! \[Just because he's patient doesn't mean he's a pushover—he's got some choice words for these brothers!\]' 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" \(vv. 25–27\)](#).
    - a. As we saw Paul would go on to do later, here Jesus too is reasoning with these brothers from the Scriptures. ["The OT should have prepared you for these things, and yet you lost the forest for the trees."](#)
      - i. As he said earlier in [John 5:39](#): ["You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me . . . ." "I'm on every page. How could you miss it?!"](#)
- B. He goes on later in [Luke 24](#) to do the same thing for the eleven apostles when they were struggling to believe all that was going on: [" 44 Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things'" \(vv. 44–48\)](#).
  1. He says: ["You should have gotten it. It's all over the Bible. This isn't something new and unexpected. We're not just dropping this in from the outside. It's something that's been developing through the centuries. It's something my Father and I have been after from the beginning."](#)
- C. And I'll tell you, we'll look at this more later, but for me, this proof Jesus offers here—that all the Scriptures, written however many years before his arrival, have been speaking about him and he's the point and ultimate fulfillment of it all: the promises, the types, the shadows, the laws, all of it—when I started to really see this first in seminary, it truly did become an incredible evidence for me of God's handiwork, that the Christian faith is the real deal, not just the manufacturing of man.

1. This book was written by a multitude of people, from various walks of life, living in different places, at different times, with different backgrounds, and different skillsets and personality types, and all this . . . and yet they're all ultimately telling one story: and it's a story that culminates and climaxes in the person and work of Jesus Christ!
    - a. It's astounding. It's compelling. It's proof.
- D. And it's clear that these apostles became convinced by it. Because I think we can see, whatever Jesus may have shared with them during these forty days of Bible study and things, it starts to come out later in their own ministries.
1. So, take Peter in [Acts 2](#), for example. When he lifts his voice to preach the good news and make a case, a reasonable case, for the faith, he points back to the OT.
    - a. So we drop in there at [v. 22](#) and we hear him say this: “<sup>22</sup> Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.<sup>24</sup> God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.<sup>25</sup> For David says concerning him [here he quotes Ps. 16:8-11 . . .], ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;<sup>26</sup> therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.<sup>27</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.<sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’<sup>29</sup> Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.<sup>30</sup> Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,<sup>31</sup> he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.” (vv. 22–31). He says: “It's right there in the OT. I didn't see it before. But now I do. And I want you to see it too. Because it's proof: that God is at work with him; that this isn't unexpected; that we should have known.”
  2. Later in [Acts 3](#), he draws on a text from Deuteronomy instead. Now we drop in at [v. 17](#): “<sup>17</sup> And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.<sup>18</sup> But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.<sup>19</sup> Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,<sup>20</sup> that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,<sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.<sup>22</sup> Moses said [and here he quotes Deut. 18:15 . . .], ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you’” (vv. 17–22).
    - a. It's very interesting. I'd never seen this before. Moses says the Lord will “raise up” for you a prophet. And we think: okay another one will be coming along someday. That's what “raising up” means.

i. But the deeper meaning and prediction and promise is hidden in plain sight.

(1) This prophet will not just be “raised up” in some natural sense.

(2) He will be “raised up” from the dead.

(a) Of course! How could we have missed it?! In the LXX it’s same word used for the resurrection: **anistēmi**.

(i) It can mean “to cause to be born”; “to cause to appear for a role or function.”

(ii) But it can also mean “to raise up by bringing back to life” — “to come back to life from the dead”!!!

E. So it’s held out as proof: “David spoke of him. Moses spoke of him. And now he’s come. Therefore, believe!”

## Proof #2: His Body

A. This second general category of proof, it seems to me, is that which is most obviously alluded to in our text there back in [Acts 1:3](#).

1. For there we see he “[presented himself alive to them](#)” and was “[appearing to them during forty days](#).” From this it follows that the evidence he presents, you could say, is “[himself](#).”

a. Perhaps you’ve heard people say: “[The proof is in the pudding](#).” I don’t know quite what that means really. I don’t even so much like pudding. If the proof was in the bowl of ice cream, well perhaps I’d be interested. But as it is I guess I’ll just take your word for it.

b. But whatever the case, in this instance, the proof isn’t in the pudding, it’s in the body.

i. How do they know Jesus is really raised up from the dead? He presents himself—his body—to them. They see him, they hear him, they touch him, they share meals with him.

(1) All of this is proof to them that he is no longer dead, but alive!

B. So we return again to [Luke 24](#) and can get some sense of what all this might have been like.

1. The two on the road to Emmaus had run back to Jerusalem to find the eleven and the others with them, and they begin discussing all that’s been happening.

2. And then we read this beginning in [v. 36](#): “[36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you!’ 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ 40 And when](#)

he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.<sup>41</sup> And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’<sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish,<sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate before them” (vv. 36–43).

- a. Isn’t that wonderful?! Again, these are not gullible men. They are struggling to believe that what they are seeing is real. And they are asking for tangible proof.
    - i. And Jesus is happy to oblige: “You see me. You hear me. Now touch me. Look at the scars on my hands and feet, where the nails went in. Watch as I share a meal with you. I’m not a pipe dream. I’m not a mere hallucination. I’m not a hovering phantasm. I’m the Son of God, in the flesh—resurrected, immortalized, glorified . . . never to die again. The proof is in the body.”
- C. But, like we so often are, they’re troubled, and doubtful, and disbelieve, and struggle with this, and they will continue to do so.
1. So Jesus continues to offer many proofs just like this over many days.
    - a. Indeed, New Testament scholar Peter Williams catalogs all the various appearances for us as recorded in the NT and the list is quite extensive. Listen: “The resurrected Jesus is recorded as appearing in Judea (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:31, 36) and in Galilee (Matt 28:16-20; John 21:1-23), in town (Luke 24:36) and countryside (Luke 24:15), indoors (Luke 24:36) and outdoors (Matt. 28:9, 16; Luke 24:15; John 21:1-23), in the morning (John 21:1-23) and the evening (Luke 24:29, 36; John 20:19), by prior appointment (Matt. 28:16) and without prior appointment (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:15, 34, 36; John 21:1-23), close (Matt. 28:9, 19; Luke 24:15, 36; John 21:9-23) and distant (John 21:4-8), on a hill (Matt. 28:16) and by a lake (John 21:4), to groups of men (John 21:2; 1 Cor. 15:5, 7) and groups of women (Matt. 28:9), to individuals (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5, 7-8) and groups of up to five hundred (1 Cor. 15:6), sitting (John 21:15 implied), standing (John 21:4), walking (Luke 24:15; John 21:20-22), eating (Luke 24:43; John 21:15), and always talking (Matt. 28:9-10, 18-20; Luke 24:17-30, 36-49; John 20:15-17, 19-29; 21:6-22)” (Can We Trust the Gospels?, 134).
- D. He presents himself alive to them after his suffering again and again and again and again and again. Why?
1. Well, because he loves them, no doubt. As he loves you.
  2. But more than that, as I said in that third opening observation, he knows the calling is costly. And he knows if they’re going to make it, they have to be convinced.
    - a. His whole mission for them, as he says at the tail of all this in [Luke 24](#) is that they be “witnesses [to the world] of these things” (v. 48; cf. [Acts 1:8](#)). It’s the Greek word [martus](#).
      - (1) It means “witness.”
      - (2) But it also means “martyr”—which, of course, is a person who gives the ultimate witness—whereby I testify to Jesus’ resurrection life . . . even at the cost of my own.



E. Is it any wonder, then, that Peter—after all of this, in those two sermons/speeches we already referenced—he doesn’t just point back to Scripture as proof of Jesus’ resurrection. He speaks of what he’s personally seen:

1. So in [Acts 2](#) he goes on to say: “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (v. 32).
2. And in [Acts 3](#) he says: “[Y]ou killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses” (v. 15).
  - a. “It’s not just been biblical for us; it’s been tangible. We didn’t just see him in a book; we saw him in the flesh.”

## (2) Proofs for Us

A. Now, of course it’s one thing for the apostles and disciples here to be convinced of Jesus’ triumph over the grave.

1. But it’s quite another thing for you and I to be convinced of it.
  - a. And, while we may not be responsible for giving first and foundational witness to the resurrection of Jesus, we still need our own “many proofs” over many days, right? We must have good reasons for our faith.

B. So that’s what I want to consider now with whatever time we have left. I want to take those same two basic categories of proof—(1) his word, and (2) his body—but here now apply them to us and our place in all of this.

### Proof #1: His Word

A. With this we return to the discussion we began earlier when considering the matter with regard to the apostles. I said I wanted to take it a bit further, and that’s what I intend to do briefly right now.

1. We got a sense from those couple of soundbites from Peter’s proclamation of the sort of things Jesus may have shown them of himself from the OT.
2. But I want you to realize, he could’ve (and maybe he very well did) taken them anywhere!
  - a. All of Scripture speaks of his suffering, death, and resurrection.
  - b. And therefore all of Scripture stands as proof that this is not the mere invention of man, but from God. It’s his doing. And he’s been pointing us towards it all along.
    - i. Let me just give you a few more examples to consider, though I could give you hundreds.

B. [Gen. 3:15](#). God, right there in the opening pages of the Bible, just after the fall of man, when he’s cursing the serpent, he gives a promise to humanity. He says: “Listen, an offspring will come from the woman, Satan you will bruise his heel, but he shall bruise your head.”

1. In other words: “He will be wounded and suffer, but he will strike the mortal blow and come out ultimately triumphant.” Sound familiar? He’s talking about Jesus and the cross, right there on the opening pages of your Bible.
  - a. All of Scripture, from this point forward, is given over to tracing out the line of this promised offspring. Who’s it going to be? When’s he going to come and make all the wrong right?
  
- C. We follow the Scriptures and later come to Isaac, the promised child of Abraham. Born miraculously of God.
  1. And then seemingly out of nowhere, God tells Abraham to offer him up as a sacrifice. He directs him to a mountain in the land of Moriah, which seems to be very same place the temple is later built, where all the sacrifices will be offered for the forgiveness of sin, where Jesus will ultimately be crucified for us.
  2. But we’re told Abraham was going to go through with it, had God not stopped him, why?
    - a. The author of Hebrews says: “[He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead](#)” (Heb. 11:19). He says: “Even if I have to sacrifice you my child, my only son, I know that God will raise you up again.” What’s this? Well, it’s a picture of Christ—his suffering, death, and resurrection glory.
  
- D. Later still, the line is traced to David, who is made king of Israel, but it’s not easy, right? I wonder if you realize that David himself was anointed king by the prophet Samuel, somewhat secretly, years before he ever took the throne. He spent a long time on the run, in the wilderness, suffering, humiliated, rejected, being hounded by the current powers that be and hated by many.
  1. That’s Jesus’ story. That’s what David, in an earthly sense, was meant to foreshadow. He’s a picture of the greater son of David who would come in Jesus.
    - a. In a similar manner, Jesus as king is anointed in secret by John the Baptist in the river Jordan, the Spirit rushes upon him at that point. But his glory is hidden from view at first, it’s cloaked under humility, meekness, rejection, and shame.
      - i. He gives himself up to the cross, and only after this does he rise and ascend to the throne.
  
- E. And, of course, to this point I’m just coming at things from one angle really—looking at this original promise and the genealogy and how it works out in types and shadows.
  1. I can’t even begin to talk about all the specific prophecies that permeate the Scriptures concerning the coming of Jesus—predicting his suffering and glory with remarkable precision.
    - a. I think fulfilled prophecy, in this sense, is one of the most compelling pieces of evidence that God was up to something with Jesus.

F. I only have time to give you one example on this, so I figure I better give you the cream, if I can. The crown jewel of prophetic oracles, it seems to me, is none other than [Isa. 53](#).

1. Supposedly, the prophet Isaiah wrote it some 700 years before Jesus ever showed upon the scene. Yet you read it and it's so vivid, it's so detailed, you almost feel like he must have written it while sitting underneath the cross, watching the events of Calvary unfold.
  - a. In fact, David Baron, an old Jewish convert to Christianity, wrote in the preface to his exposition of [Isa. 53](#): “[I]t is beyond even the wildest credulity to believe that the resemblance in every feature and minutest detail between this prophetic portraiture drawn centuries before [Jesus'] advent and the story of his life, and death, and glorious resurrection as narrated in the gospels, can be mere accident or fortuitous coincidence” (Baron, *The Servant of Jehovah* c. 2000, p. viii). In other words: you'd have to be crazy to think that this chapter just coincidentally seems to line up with the details of Jesus' life. Oh no. The only rational move in the face of such unmistakable alignment is to conclude: God must have spoke it!

G. But, of course, people still try to get around this. This prophecy is so vivid, and it's so detailed, that many have thought clearly it's a Christian forgery. Obviously, some Christ-sympathizers went back and tampered with the evidence, as it were. We made it look like God had foretold such a thing, as if this were proof of our faith. But it's not.

1. And perhaps that argument could have held water before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s and 50s.
  - a. For to that point the earliest manuscripts we had of Isaiah were from around 1000 A.D. That makes it look a little suspicious.
  - b. But this discovery changed everything! Many consider it to be the single most important archeological manuscript find of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We now have the entire scroll of Isaiah—the “Great Isaiah Scroll” as it's called—and it's dated with widespread consensus to at least 100 B.C. and it may be from even earlier. You can go to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and see it. The scroll of parchment is some 24 feet long.
    - i. And, here's the kicker, when you compare the [Isa. 53](#) we have today with that dated before the time of Christ there is minimal difference and no substantial shift in import whatsoever. It's virtually the same text!

(1) Here we have the death and resurrection of Jesus, and our salvation by way of his sacrifice, foretold some hundreds of years before it ever even happened!

H. Just listen, take it in: “<sup>1</sup>Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?<sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? <sup>9</sup> And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see [light!] and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors” (Isa. 53:1–12).

I. There’s nothing like the Bible . . . and there’s no one like our God and our Savior!

1. When reflecting on prophecy in the Scripture, scholars Geisler and Nix write: “No unconditional prophecy of the Bible about events to the present day has gone unfulfilled. Hundreds of predictions, some of them given hundreds of years in advance, have been literally fulfilled. The time (Dan. 9), city (Mic. 5:2), and nature (Isa. 7:14) of Christ’s birth were foretold in the Old Testament, as were dozens of other things about His life, death, and resurrection (see Isa. 53). Numerous other prophecies have been fulfilled [as well] . . . . Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the [Hindu] Veda. But none of those books contains predictive prophecy. As a result, fulfilled prophecy is a strong indication of the unique, divine authority of the Bible” (A General Introduction to the Bible, 196). And I would add: it’s a strong apologetic, or proof, that God is up to something remarkable with this man from Nazareth.

J. So if you need proof that God is on the move, working in and through Jesus, one place you can go is [Isa. 53](#).

1. As we’ll see later in [Acts 8](#), the Ethiopian eunuch is reading from this very chapter.
2. And Philip will use it to direct him towards the good news of Jesus and, in view of this, he comes to believe.

## Proof #2: His Body

A. I have no choice but to be brief on this, but here’s what I’m thinking. Because Jesus is now risen and ascended, we’re not going to see his body the way that these first apostles and witnesses did (at least not until he returns!).

1. But, we're still called to base our faith on their testimony, that they saw his body—that he truly is alive.
  - a. That's why in the new Jerusalem, the names of the apostles are written into the foundations of the city (Rev. 21:14).
  - b. It's why Paul says that we as the church are "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20).
    - i. Our faith is built upon their testimony.

B. So can we trust it? Did they really see it? How can we know? What proof do we have, if any?

1. Well, you'll have to come back when I preach again in two weeks to find out. That's what you call a cliffhanger ; )

## Conclusion

A. We'll finish this discussion up then. But for now, I wanted to close with a final thought. If Jesus truly is raised from the dead, if all this truly is reasonable, then it communicates something really important about him, and it calls for something really important from us.

1. About him it communicates that he really is the King of kings. That he really is the Son of God. That he is who he says he is—that his death was different; that it was for our sins and it was sufficient to purchase our forgiveness; that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and we can get back to God only through him.
2. And that leads to the really important thing it calls for from us: repentance and faith.
  - a. You see, proofs and evidence, this isn't just a fun little intellectual exercise. It isn't about winning an argument merely.
  - b. It's about your salvation. God wants us to see this is true so we come back to him and find life.
    - i. That's why Peter's sermon in Acts 2, do you know how it ends? Therefore, in light of all this: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins . . ." (v. 38).
    - ii. And in Acts 3, same thing (we read it, I wonder if you caught it): " <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, <sup>20</sup> that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord . . ." (vv. 19-20a).

B. So let's do this together now! Some of us maybe for the first time. Others of us, we got to go deeper, we got to get serious, we've got to lay it all down.