

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is denied by my Jehovah's Witness friend as it is by her religious organization. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus was raised a spirit and that God manufactured a body for Jesus so that the disciples would believe that Jesus arose from the dead. Last month I demonstrated that their proof-texts from the Gospels did not take into account the clues presented in the narratives. These clues explained why some of Jesus' followers were hindered from seeing Jesus properly. In none of the texts was the explanation given that Jesus was a "spirit" being clothed in a fabricated body by God. In fact, there is no Scripture that states that God produced another body for Jesus at His resurrection.

In this letter I will demonstrate that there is ample evidence that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead. This is a key doctrine in the Christian faith, because, if Jesus was not bodily raised, our "faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Good morning, my friend

I wish you could see what our house looks like right now. The windows will be coming today. We are still trying to choose the brick for the front. I know that all this is supposed to be fun, but I keep thinking about the things I have to do. Not only that, I must live for many years with these decisions I am so hastily making.

I would like to continue the discussion of the bodily resurrection of Jesus that we began last month. It seems that Jesus never mentions to the disciples that he was raised a spirit-being as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim. On the contrary, Jesus actually denies that he was a spirit after He arose.

When the disciples were gathered together after the resurrection of Jesus, he appeared to them (Luke 24:36-43). Instead of being exuberant, they were frightened. They "thought that they were seeing a spirit" (v. 37). Jesus responds to that fear, accusing them of "doubting." This was a moment when Jesus could have revealed that they were correct in their perception, that he was raised as a spirit. Jesus, however, displayed two proofs of his bodily resurrection.

The first proof was his hands and feet. He demanded that they "touch" him and see that he had "flesh and bones" for "a spirit" has neither of these (v. 39). Jesus claimed that he was not a spirit! In order to demonstrate to the disciples that he was not a spirit, Jesus "showed them his hands and his feet" (v. 40). While they remained unbelieving, Jesus gave his second proof that he was bodily resurrected—he asked for something to eat (v. 41). When they handed him "a piece of broiled fish," he ate it in front of them signaling that he truly had a resurrected human body (vv. 42-43).

At the beginning of the book of John (John 2:13-22), Jesus had an opportunity to instruct his disciples and the religious leaders on the essential feature of his future resurrection—that it would be bodily. After Jesus had rid the temple of the money-changers, the Jewish people demanded that he produce a sign that would reveal his "authority for doing these things" (John 2:18). The sign he gave them was perplexing to them. He answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (v. 19). They thought Jesus is speaking of the temple he had previously cleaned out. John the writer, though, informs us what Jesus truly meant. Jesus was speaking, not of the temple, but of "his body" (v. 21). Jesus did not profess that his spirit would be raised on the third day and given another body; he announced that he would raise **his own "body!"**

My friend, Jesus was not raised a spirit, for he claimed otherwise when his disciples imagined he was a spirit. Furthermore, Jesus predicted that he would raise his own body when it would be "destroyed." Are you able to enlighten me with your own Scriptural proof of a spirit-raised Jesus?

Barbara