

PAUL'S PUBLIC CHALLENGE

Author Unknown

Saying "One guy wrote that 500 people saw Jesus" completely misunderstands the historical claim. Paul did not offer a rumor. He issued a public challenge.

Paul wrote in 1st Corinthians 15:6 that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred eyewitnesses and then added the key detail modern skeptics ignore: *"Most of them are still alive."* In the ancient world, that was the equivalent of saying, "Go verify this. These people exist. They can confirm what I am saying."

You do not write that to a hostile audience unless you are absolutely certain those eyewitnesses are real. Corinth was full of skeptics, Greeks, pagans, and people who openly mocked Christianity. If Paul were lying, they would have crushed that claim immediately by demanding names or pointing to a body. Yet no one did. The movement exploded because the claim stood up to scrutiny.

Ancient historians accept far less evidence for events nobody questions. One written source reporting a public claim is normal historical practice. Paul's statement is not a lone voice telling a fairy tale. It is a documented appeal to hundreds of living people during the lifetime of the eyewitnesses and the enemies of the movement.

And here is what makes the atheist objection collapse even further: Paul was executed for preaching the resurrection. Not for politics. Not for theft. Not for rebellion. For proclaiming that he encountered the risen Christ.

Liars do not willingly go to their death protecting a lie. People do not suffer beatings, prison, torture, and execution for something they know they invented. And Paul was in the perfect position to know whether the resurrection was true. He met the apostles, interviewed eyewitnesses, spent time with Peter and James, and built his life on what he knew firsthand.

So, the idea that "One guy wrote that 500 people saw Jesus" is not simple skepticism. It is selective disbelief aimed at Christianity alone. If their standard were applied evenly, they would reject every event in ancient history.

The resurrection stands on stronger historical footing than anything the skeptic rests their worldview on. Their issue is not evidence. Their issue is refusing the conclusion the evidence points to.

OLDEST KNOWN INSCRIPTION REFERENCING GOD

Jason Ashe

One of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries connecting the ancient Near East with the God of Israel comes from the Temple of Soleb in northern Sudan. Constructed under Pharaoh Amenhotep III around 1400 BC and dedicated to the Egyptian god Amon-Re, this temple contains what is widely regarded as the oldest known extra-biblical reference to "YHWH", the sacred name of the God of Israel. Italian archaeologist Michela Schiff Giorgini uncovered a limestone pillar during excavations in the late 1950s bearing an inscription that translates as "the land of the Shasu of YHWH".

The term "Shasu" refers to nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral peoples who roamed the deserts and borderlands of Egypt. Egyptians frequently mentioned these groups in their texts, noting their geographic regions and cultural distinctiveness. What makes the Soleb inscription extraordinary is its direct connection of a people group to YHWH, indicating that this deity was recognized beyond Israelite circles. This is the earliest known occurrence of the Tetragrammaton outside Scripture, showing that knowledge of YHWH existed in the ancient world well before the Israelites had established themselves as a settled nation.

The historical and biblical implications are significant. The inscription dates to roughly the same period described in the early Exodus, when the Israelites wandered the wilderness for forty years before entering Canaan. The Egyptians' description of the Shasu as a nomadic people mirrors the biblical portrayal of Israel, suggesting that these desert-dwelling groups were visible, distinct, and significant enough to be recorded by the Egyptians. Far from being a minor footnote, the inscription shows that YHWH was recognized as a deity by neighboring civilizations, providing independent confirmation of the God central to the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Soleb inscription also offers insight into the broader cultural context of the time. The presence of nomadic peoples associated with YHWH at the edges of Egypt demonstrates that this group had a distinct identity that set them apart in the eyes of other nations. As an extra-biblical reference, it strengthens the historical reliability of early Israelite narratives, showing that YHWH was not merely a later theological construct, but a deity known and acknowledged in the ancient Near Eastern world.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Men's & Ladies' Studies @ 6:20 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN"

PROVERBS 25:11

"No passage of Scripture directs Christians to prep for the Antichrist, but numerous passages instruct them to await Christ's return. It's a real problem if your end-times expectations are Antichrist-centered, centered on fear, rather than Christ-centered, centered on hope (1st Thessalonians 1:9-10)."

– Jeff Wickert

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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THE UNCOMPROMISED CHRIST

Sewell Hall

Generally speaking, our generation has an aversion to authority, yet those who heard the Lord's great sermon observed that *"He taught them as one having authority"*. We prefer sermons that deal in generalities; Jesus dealt with specifics. We prefer preachers who praise rather than condemn; Jesus condemned not only wrong conduct but wrong motives as well. We object to "name calling"; Jesus unabashedly named unfavorably the leading religious party of His day. We favor motivation by promise of rewards, but Jesus, while offering rewards, did not hesitate to threaten *"hell fire"*. Our society seeks instant gratification while the promises of Jesus are primarily for life hereafter. We tend to think of everything as relative, but Jesus spoke in absolutes. We criticize as simplistic any preaching that "makes everything black and white", yet Jesus repeatedly divided His subjects into just two categories: right and wrong. We applaud broad-mindedness and seek the easy way, but Jesus warned that His way is narrow and the gate is difficult.

Jesus knew that in every generation, those who would follow the heavenly way would be few compared to the many who would reject it. His concern was not with quantity but with quality. Consequently, He compromised His standards not one iota to accommodate the weaknesses of men or the peculiarities of His generation. Had He made any compromise at all, the resulting kingdom would not have been the kingdom of Heaven.

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