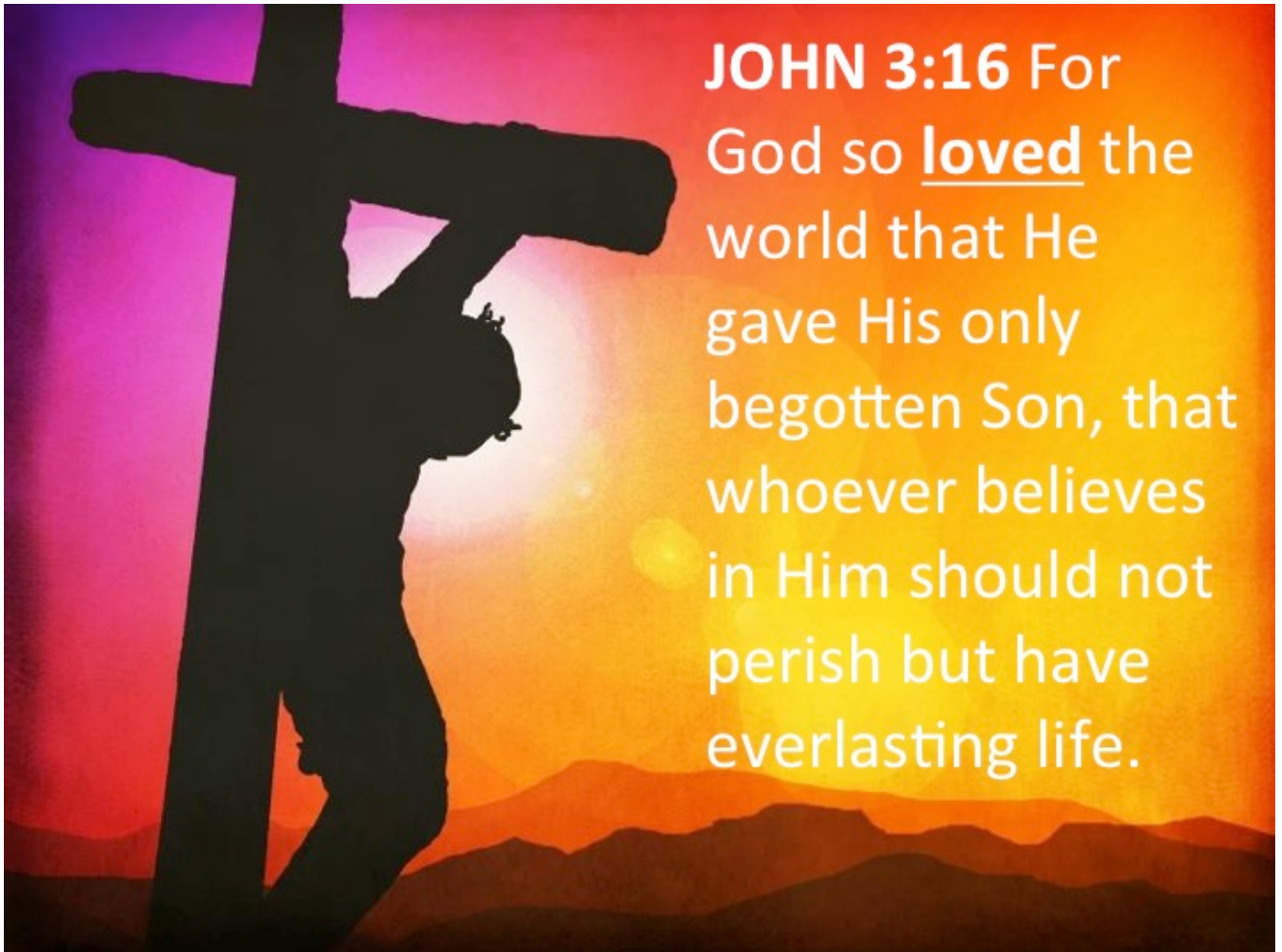




Did Jesus really die on the cross? Some critics claim he didn't die on the cross, but only appeared to be dead, and later awakened in his tomb, and escaped. Let's look at the evidence.

“But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water” (John 19:33-34 NIV).

EXAMINING SKEPTICS CLAIMS

Some skeptics claim that Jesus somehow survived his crucifixion, and was unknowingly placed alive in the tomb, where he revived, and early on Sunday morning escaped from the tomb alive. This is quite a far-fetched story, but nevertheless, many people believe it. However, when we carefully consider all the known and pertinent facts, such a theory flies in the face of all the evidence.

EYEWITNESSES OF JESUS' EXECUTION

“The centurion, who had stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died” (Mark 15:39 NLT). “Many women were there, watching from a distance” (Matthew 27:55,56 NIV; Mark 15:40,41). “All those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things” (Luke 23:49 NIV). “The man who saw it [John] has given testimony” (John 19:35 NIV). Every single eyewitness of Jesus' death would have been mistaken, if these critics' claims were true. Jesus would have to have survived massive blood loss, torture, and a very invasive, deep stab wound to his side, as shown above.

JESUS DEATH OFFICIALLY CERTIFIED

The Roman soldiers, and their centurion officer, who were professional soldiers, would have been quite derelict in their duties to have not only concluded that Jesus was dead, and to have allowed Joseph of Arimathea to remove his corpse from the cross, but then to have certified his death to governor Pilate (**Mark 15:44-46; Luke 23:53**).

The Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two convicts who were executed beside Jesus, so as to speed up their deaths. If Jesus had still been alive at this point, they would have broken his legs also (**John 19:32,33**).

MEDICAL EVIDENCE

Eyewitnesses saw clearly that when Jesus was jabbed forcefully with a sharp spear in his side, there was **“a sudden flow of blood and water”**. Medical experts say that this is additional solid proof that Jesus **“was already dead”** (John 19:33 NIV).

EYEWITNESSES OF JESUS' BURIAL

When Jesus' body was being prepared for burial, including being completely **“wrapped . . . with . . . spices, in strips of linen”** (John 19:40 NIV), as well as being **“wrapped . . . in a clean linen cloth”** (Matthew 27:59 NIV; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53), and being buried in the tomb, no one questioned the fact that he had died earlier that afternoon, while still nailed to the cross (John 19:38-42; Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-54).

There also were a number of other eyewitnesses to Jesus' body being put into the tomb. **“They followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it”** (Luke 23:55 NIV; Mark 15:47; Matthew 27:60). It is absurd to think that any of these devoted followers of Jesus would permit him to be buried alive.

THE LOGISTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY JESUS' SURVIVAL

The sheer logistics of critics' claims are absolutely impossible. Jesus had been beaten unmercifully, with severe lacerations to his back, a very large and deep puncture wound in his side, nails having been driven completely through his hands and feet. From inside the dark tomb, Jesus would have to have gotten a firm grip on the large 2,000 pound stone, and then to have rolled the stone away *[which usually took several strong men]*, and then somehow sneak past four or more soldiers, and topping all this off, walk several miles out of Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus, without arousing any suspicion.

Such claims of Jesus performing all of these feats, especially in his weakened state, fly in the face of all reason! Jesus really did die on the cross.

NO WITNESSES OF JESUS' SUPPOSED SURVIVAL

If Jesus, who had already achieved some fame by the time of his death, and his earthly existence is testified to by at least 20 outside sources, had survived the crucifixion, and was only an ordinary man, as critics claim, there would likely be a record or a witness to Jesus dying at a later time. Since this didn't happen, it only adds credibility to the Bible's accounts of Jesus' miraculous resurrection.

CONCLUSION

“Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay” (Acts 2:27 NIV).

Jesus' resurrection on the third day fulfills this scripture.

Jesus really did die on the cross, as proven by all the evidence!