

1 Corinthians 15:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

Analysis

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once (ἐπειτα ὥφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ)—The adverb ephapax (ἐφάπαξ, "at one time, simultaneously") demolishes the hallucination hypothesis—mass hallucinations of this scale are psychologically impossible. Paul provides 500+ eyewitnesses, many still living when he wrote (AD 55), inviting verification.

Of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep (ἐξ ᾧν οἱ πλείονες μένουσιν ἔως ἥρτι, τινὲς δὲ ἐκοιμήθησαν)—Paul's phrase **fallen asleep** (ekoimēthēsan, ἐκοιμήθησαν) is the Christian euphemism for death, implying resurrection awaits (1 Thessalonians 4:13). This appearance, unrecorded in the Gospels, may be Matthew 28:16 or another Galilean event. The appeal to living witnesses is unprecedented in ancient literature—Paul invites fact-checking.

Historical Context

When Paul wrote (AD 55), Christ's resurrection was 25 years past, yet 'most' of 500+ witnesses still lived. This is powerful apologetic evidence—Paul couldn't make this claim if easily falsifiable. The Jerusalem church knew these people; skeptics could interview them.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the invitation to verify with living eyewitnesses demonstrate Paul's confidence in resurrection's historicity?
2. Why does the simultaneity of 500+ witnesses present an insurmountable problem for naturalistic explanations?
3. What does the phrase 'fallen asleep' reveal about early Christian confidence in resurrection?

Interlinear Text

Ἐπειτα ὡφθη ἐπάνω πεντακοσίοις ἀδελφοῖς ἐφάπαξ
After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once
G1899 G3700 G1883 G4001 G80 G2178

Ἐξ ὧν οἱ πλείους μένουσιν ἔως ἦρτι τινὲς
of whom the greater part remain unto this present some
G1537 G3739 G3588 G4119 G3306 G2193 G737 G5100

δὲ καὶ ἐκοιμήθησαν.
but are fallen asleep
G1161 G2532 G2837

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 28:10 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Mark 16:7 (Parallel theme): But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Acts 13:36 (Parallel theme): For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

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