

Week 2: The Case for the Resurrection

I. Why Start with the Resurrection?

Christianity rises or falls on the truth of the resurrection of Jesus.

“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” 1 Corinthians 15:17

If Jesus rose from the dead, then:

- *Christianity is true.*
- *Jesus is Lord.*
- *Sin and death are defeated.*
- *The world has meaning, hope, and purpose.*

II. The Five “Minimal Facts”

Most scholars—Christian or not—agree on these five historical facts:

1. *Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.*
2. *The disciples sincerely believed Jesus appeared to them alive after His death.*
3. *The tomb was found empty.*
4. *Paul converted because he believed he encountered the risen Christ.*
5. *James, the skeptical brother of Jesus, became a believer and church leader.*

Common Objections & Responses

1. “They hallucinated.”

- Hallucinations are individual, not group events.
- First-Century Jews would not have hallucinated something they did not believe in.
- Cannot explain the empty tomb, or Paul and James’ conversion.

2. “They stole the body.”

- The disciples gained nothing from their claim of the resurrection.
- They experienced immense suffering and agonizing deaths.
- Conspiracies fall apart quickly under severe persecution.

3. “Jesus only appeared to die.”

- Roman executions were highly efficient.
- Roman soldiers did not “accidentally” leave people alive.
- A half-dead Jesus could not inspire a wide-spread belief in the resurrection.

4. “Ancient people were gullible.”

- Ancient people knew that dead people don't rise from the dead.
- Resurrection was offensive and unexpected.
- “Alexamenos Worships His God.” - Roman graffiti mocking Christians

“If Christ has been raised, then nothing else matters; and if Christ has not been raised, then nothing else matters.” — Jaroslav Pelikan —

Memory Verse for the Week

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." 1 Corinthians 15:17

GROUP ACTIVITY: