



What Makes Christianity True?

The _____ is central to the gospel and is Christianity's ultimate supporting _____.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE _____

- ▶ Jesus' identity, mission, and message rest on the _____ of the _____.
- ▶ The entire New Testament was written in light of the resurrection and each book bears witness to its _____.
- ▶ The Apostle Paul recognized that Christianity _____ or _____ on Christ's resurrection. (1 Cor 15:14-20)

"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

1 Corinthians 15:14

"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."

1 Corinthians 15:17

- ▶ Paul pinned the _____ of the entire Christian faith on a historical event that either happened or didn't happen.
- ▶ Paul is saying, "If Jesus didn't really rise from the dead, Christianity is a _____."
- ▶ But the opposite is also true. If Jesus really rose from the dead, this historic event shows that he was speaking the truth. Jesus is the _____. Christianity is _____.

Five types of evidence that help 'prove' history

1. Reports from _____ than one _____ source.
2. Reports that make the witness or their friends _____.
3. Reports from an _____.
4. Reports from an _____.
5. Reports that are _____.

What can we prove about the Resurrection of Jesus?

Fact #1: Jesus _____ on a cross.

- ▶ Nearly all scholars, even liberal ones, agree that the tomb was in fact _____.
- ▶ Jesus' death by crucifixion is also mentioned by ____, ancient, _____ sources:
 - Josephus, a Jewish historian

"When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified..."

- Tacitus, a Roman historian

"Nero fastened the guilt (of the burning of Rome) and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate."

- Lucian of Samosata, a Greek author

"The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day---the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account."

- Mara Bar-Serapion, *a prisoner who wrote a letter to his son*

"What advantage came to the Jews by the murder of their Wise King, seeing that from that very time their kingdom was driven away from them?"

- Talmud, *a Jewish Rabbinical text*

"On the eve of the Passover, Yeshu was hanged."

- ▶ Roman soldiers were very good at executing people and were under constant threat of the death penalty if they let a prisoner _____.
- ▶ Crucifixion was so gruesome that Romans were _____ from it.
- ▶ Cicero called it "the most _____ and _____ of tortures."
- ▶ Roman soldiers _____ Jesus was dead by thrusting a spear into his side, which cause blood and water to flow from his heart. (John 19:34-35)
- ▶ They also found _____ to break his legs so he would die faster. (John 19:36-37)

Fact #2: The disciples believed that they _____ Jesus after he rose from the dead.

- ▶ Paul knew the apostles personally and said they were _____ Jesus rose. (1 Cor. 15:3-11)
- ▶ All four of the _____ record the disciples' claim that Jesus rose from the dead.
- ▶ They were _____ to the point where they willing to _____ and _____ for saying Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them.
- ▶ They willingly put themselves in danger by _____ this in public over and over again.
- ▶ _____ ancient sources document their willingness to _____ for their claim.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Acts | 5. Dionysius of Corinth |
| 2. Clement of Rome | 6. Tertullian |
| 3. Polycarp | 7. Origen |
| 4. Iganitius | |

- ▶ The apostles' _____ for their testimony that they had personally seen Jesus alive after his crucifixion.
- ▶ The disciples of Jesus died for what they knew was _____ (likely) or what they knew was _____ (unlikely).

Fact #3: The conversion of _____, the persecutor.

- ▶ Paul, the persecutor of Christians, suddenly _____ a Christian.
- ▶ The Apostle Paul became a follower only _____ meeting the resurrected Jesus. (Acts 9:1-30)
- ▶ "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." Galatians 1:23
- ▶ Jesus' friends and even an _____ said they saw Jesus alive after his death on the cross.
- ▶ Paul _____ and _____ for his belief.

Fact #4: The conversion of James, the skeptic. (Jesus' brother)

- ▶ The Jewish historian, Josephus, _____ "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James."
- ▶ James and the rest of Jesus' brothers were unbelievers _____ his death on the cross.
- ▶ After Jesus rose from the dead, Acts report that James was a _____ in the Jerusalem church.

- ▶ Not only did James become a Christian and lead the Jerusalem church, but he _____ for his claim.
- ▶ James is another case of a _____ becoming a Christian because of his belief that he saw Jesus alive after his death on the cross.

Fact #5: There was an _____ tomb.

- ▶ Nearly all scholars, even liberal ones, agree that the tomb was in fact _____.
- ▶ Jesus was _____ executed in Jerusalem--exactly where news about his empty tomb and his resurrection were first _____.
- ▶ It would have been impossible for Christianity to even get off the ground in Jerusalem if Jesus' body was _____ in the tomb.
- ▶ According to Luke (Acts), the disciples were publicly talking about Jesus' resurrection about _____ after his crucifixion...a short enough time to still _____ a body.
- ▶ The Gospels were in existence by the early _____, within a generation of the events of Jesus.
- ▶ The resurrection was discussed at a _____ date by the Apostolic Fathers (the generation of leaders following the Disciples).
- ▶ It was never challenged, let alone refuted, by the _____ and _____ of Christianity.
- ▶ Either the Jews or the Romans could have simply _____ of Jesus and immediately killed the spread of Christianity.

Evidence for the Resurrection

The evidence for the resurrection _____ any evidence against it.

- ▶ There was an empty tomb that needs a good _____.
- ▶ Jesus _____ to over 500 people at various times, places, and circumstances.
- ▶ The Apostles were _____ from defeated cowards after Jesus' crucifixion to courageous preachers a martyrs for their faith.
- ▶ The early Christian church changed the day of their worship from Saturday (the Sabbath) to Sunday to _____ the resurrection.
- ▶ This single event started a _____ that within 400 years came to dominate the entire Roman Empire and eventually all of Western civilization.

“One of the greatest weaknesses of alternative explanations to the resurrection is their incompleteness: they fail to provide a comprehensive explanation of all the data. By contrast the resurrection furnished one, simple, comprehensive explanation of all the facts without distorting them. Therefore, it is the better explanation.”

William Lane Craig

Knowing the Truth about the Resurrection

To Sum It Up:

If the tomb was empty because Jesus really rose from the dead...

then God exists, Christianity is true, and eternal life is both

_____ and _____ to you.

Resource for Further Study:

Video :: **'5 Facts for the Resurrection by 36 AD'** – Video Lecture by Dr. Gary Habermas

Book :: ***The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus***, by Gary R. Habermas and Michael Licona