



## 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