

95 Historical Evidences For the Resurrection of Jesus

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The Garden Tomb

A God Who Sacrificed Himself For Us!

Introduction: A Preposterous Proposition

Sacrificing to the gods, including human sacrifice, was commonplace in world history - from prehistory to today! But only Christianity claims that God sacrificed Himself for us!

To the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans the idea of a god being sacrificed for humans was totally ridiculous. The gods had to be honoured, appease, placated, and wooed with sacrifices to avoid disaster, plagues, wars, bad crops, etc. etc. The Christian claim that Jesus was the Son of God, and He sacrificed himself for us was bizarre in the extreme! And it still is to many people today.

Two overarching questions must be answered: **What's the evidence, if any?** And **Why?** The first is an historical question, the second a theological question. The historical evidence comes from many sources but may be classified as biblical historical evidence, secular or non-biblical historical evidence and archeological evidence.

A. Should the Bible be Considered an Historical Source?

Some may object to considering anything in the Bible as historical because of the religious nature of its content. However, a couple of things need to be mentioned. First the Bible is not one source but a collection of 66 books, and the New Testament is made up of 27 of those writings by 9 different authors. Secondly, the historicity of the Bible is separate from whether one considers it inspired and theologically authoritative.

The writings of the New Testament, like any other ancient source, must pass the criteria used by historians to determine if it meets the standards of historical trustworthiness. The criteria listed by Habermas and Licona in 'The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus' include:

- Early Attestation,
- Multiple Attestation,
- Affirmation by Neutral or Hostile Sources,
- Eyewitness Testimony and
- Embarrassing Information.

Before reviewing the evidence, I want to provide an authoritative perspective by William Lane Craig, respected apologist, philosopher, historian, and author of 'Reasonable Faith.' Craig makes the case for the giving the New Testament documents the benefit of the doubt, unless proven otherwise, for historical accuracy because of their proven historical value in so many situations. Why?

- The rise of textual criticism and modern historical research means, according to Dr. Craig, " Today Jesus is no longer just a figure in a stained-glass window, but a real, flesh and blood person of history... whose life can be investigated by the standard methods of history."

- “The New Testament sources are a collection of the earliest reliable sources that describe the life of Jesus, not a single source.”
- “There is insufficient time (between the events and the writings of the gospels) for legendary influences to erase the core historical facts.”
- “The Jewish transmission of sacred traditions was highly developed and reliable, “making the oral culture of the first century “highly prized.” This included the early oral creeds, hymns and confessions of Christians who were mostly Jewish.
- “There were significant restraints on the embellishment of traditions about Jesus, such as the presence of eyewitnesses and the apostles’ supervision.”
- “The gospel writers have a proven record of historical reliability.”
- “Luke-Acts was written by a travelling companion of Paul who had the opportunity to interview eyewitnesses to Jesus’ life while in Jerusalem.”
- “People who insist on evidence taken from writings outside the New Testament don’t understand what they are asking us to do. They’re demanding that we ignore the earliest, primary sources about Jesus in favor of sources that are later, secondary, and less reliable, which is just crazy as historical methodology.” (Craig. Wm. L. “On Guard” pp.468-479)

J. Warner Wallace in “Cold-Case Christianity” provides an excellent chapter on the reliability of the Gospels by applying the principles of a cold-case detective to the evidence provided in the Gospels. He deals with the issues of dating, early acceptance, authorship, archeological support, internal collaboration among the Gospels and external corroboration. It is well worth investigating.

The other principal source of evidence for the reliability of the Bible, is archeology. In “Faith Building Evidence” I summarize many of the archeological evidence that confirm people, places and events referred to in the Bible. For example:

- Evidence from the Patriarchs to the Conquest of Canaan (2nd m. BCE) pp.1 – 40
- Places and Events Confirmed in the 1st millennium BCE pp. 41 – 76
- People Confirmed from the 1st millennium BCE pp. 77 – 112
- Extra-biblical & biblical evidence for Jesus’ existence pp. 147-182
- New Testament People, Places and Things Confirmed by History pp. 219-258

People may argue the theological teaching of the Bible, but it is not reasonable to reject the value of much of its physical and political landscape to historians and archeologists. Numerous biblical details once dismissed as fiction have been proven historically accurate including:

- the existence of the ancient Israelites confirmed by the Merneptah Stele,
- the existence of King David by the Tel Dan Stele,
- the existence of Sargon II from a 15-foot-high sculpture, in a palace in Khorsabad,
- the existence of Hezekiah from the Seal of Hezekiah,
- the existence of Belshazzar confirmed by the ‘Nabonidus Cylinder’
- the existence of 1st century villages of Nazareth and Bethesda, and
- the pre-70 AD synagogues of Magdala and Capernaum among others.

B. What's the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth?

Obviously, this is a subject that could fill libraries, so space will not allow for an extensive examination. However, I want to provide enough information to demonstrate its' accuracy and the necessary documentation to allow you to check it out for yourself. Therefore, I'll list most of the evidence with only a brief explanation. Let's begin by looking at the above criteria to verify ancient events, individuals, or phenomena.

1. Early Attestations or early sources are more valuable than later sources because they were closer to the events, so there is less opportunity for myth or legend to occur. Fifty years ago, a group of liberal scholars, the Jesus Seminar, claimed the Gospels were mid to late 2nd century and other gospels were earlier, like the Gospel of Thomas. This has been soundly rejected by scholars like Craig Evans, Gary Habermas, and William Lane Craig, among others.

In 'Fabricating Jesus' New Testament scholar, Dr. Craig Evans writes *"Jesus taught in the 20s and early 30s of the first century. Paul wrote his letters in the 40s to the early 60s. ... the Gospel of Mark was likely written in the mid to late 60s, and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke sometime after that (75-80) ... The Gospel of John is usually dated sometime in the 90s."* (P.55) He dates the non-canonical gospels to mainly the last half of the 2nd century.

This dates all the New Testament writings to the 1st century AD / CE. Meaning they all qualify as early sources, especially when compared to the sources of other classical personalities and events. Obviously, some writings are earlier than others as Dr. Evans's quote demonstrates.

The Early Sources for the Resurrection include:

a) The four canonical Gospels each contain separate accounts of the execution, burial, and resurrection of Jesus during Passion Week: Matthew chapters 21 – 28; Mark chapters 11 – 16; Luke chapters 19 – 24 and John chapters 12 – 21.

b) The letters of Paul were written before the canonical gospels (late 40s to the early 60s AD) and refer to the resurrection of Jesus or the resurrected Jesus.

- **Romans:** 1:4; 3:21 – 31; 4:23 – 25; 5:6 – 11, 16; 6:4 – 11; 7:4; 8:11, 33 – 34; 10:9 – 10; 14:9.
- **1 Corinthians:** 1:4 – 9; 6:14 – 15; 11:28 – 30; 15:3 – 8; 12 – 19; 20 – 34; 35 - 58
- **2 Corinthians:** 4:13 – 15; 5:6 – 10; 5:11 – 21.
- **Galatians:** 1:1,5, 12 - -19.
- **Ephesians:** 1:20 – 23; 2:6.
- **Philippians:** 2: 5 – 11; 3:10 – 11.
- **Colossians:** 1:15 – 23; 2:9 – 15; 3:1 – 4.
- **1 Thessalonians:** 1:10; 4:14.
- 2 Thessalonians: Implied but not specified.
- **1 Timothy:** 2:5 – 6; 3:16; 6:14 – 15.
- **2 Timothy:** 1:10; 2:8 - 10

c) The letters of Peter:

- **1 Peter:** 1:3, 21; 3:18 – 22.
- 2 Peter: Implied but not specified.

d) The Book of Hebrews, whose author is debated, does not use the terms raised or resurrected but is clearly talking about the resurrection of Jesus and its impact for humanity.

- **Hebrews** 2:5 – 18; 4:14 – 15.

e) The letters of John focus on the exercise of love but begin with a passage similar to the beginning of his gospel.

- **1 John:** 1 – 7; 2:1 – 2; 4:10 – 16.
- 2 John: Implied but not specified.

f) The Book of Acts of the Apostles is the second of a two-part history of the Jesus movement. The first volume, the Gospel of Luke, covering the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The second, 'the Acts of the Apostles' covers the first three decades of the birth and expansion of the Church, written by Luke, a travelling companion of the Apostle Paul. Historians generally believe it was written in the 60s and debate if it was before or after 64 AD /CE, because Acts ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome. Paul likely was martyred by Nero in 64 C.E. after the fires in Rome.

There is no question that 'the Acts of the Apostles' is a valuable historical source for the resurrection of Jesus because of the frequency of its appearance throughout the 28 chapters of Acts. A cursory reading will prove that point to any reasonable person. In addition, the multiple points of historical veracity and the endorsement of numerous experts adds to the authenticity of Acts as a source for the belief in the resurrection as a central quality of the birth of the Christian Church. Its unique important in the discussion of the resurrection because it clearly demonstrates the centrality of the resurrection to the teaching of the apostles and the growth of the church. One critical question is: ***Is Acts One Evidentiary Source or the Source of Multiple Evidence of the Resurrection?***

To argue the positive position one thing needs to be demonstrated. Each new incident or event, where the resurrection of Jesus played a significant role in the spread or defense of 'the Way', must show evidence of the resurrection as a catalyst for the growth of Christianity, not just one of many teachings of the new faith. Consider the following information:

1. **Acts 1: Acts begins with the resurrected Jesus meeting and teaching his followers** between the first Easter and the Ascension. Then he commissions them: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (v.8) The rest of Acts records his disciples obeying that commission.
2. **Acts 2: Peter's Pentecost Sermon.** claiming *"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the*

cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” (vs. 22-24) The result was 3000 people converted to Christianity on that very day (v.41)

3. **Acts 3: Peter healing the beggar at the temple gate**, saying, “By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.” (v.16)
4. **Acts 4: Peter and John boldly defend their actions to the Sanhedrin**, “If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, I then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.” (vs. 9-10)
5. **Acts 4: After being warned to stop and release Peter and John joined with the other believers** and we are given a brief insight into their lives together All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all. (vs.32,33)
6. **Acts 5: The “believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade”** (v.12) More people joined the new faith, there were healings, some of the apostles were arrested by were released at night by an angel and ended up going back to the temple to preach, only to be hauled before the Sanhedrin again. “We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross.” (vs.29,30) Even under threat, they insisted on their need to preach Jesus’ resurrection.
7. **Acts 7: The threat soon became real when Stephen was stoned to death** for challenging the Sanhedrin’ execution of Jesus and then claiming to see “Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” (v.55) A wave of persecution brought out in Jerusalem so many Christians fled to the rest of Judea, Samaria and into Gentile territory into modern-day Syria.
8. **Acts 8: “Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there... (v.5) But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. “(v.12) The 700 years old factionalism was overcome by the message of Jesus’ sacrificial death and resurrection.**
9. **Acts 9: Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus** after seeing Jesus in a vision. He had been on his way to Damascus were papers from the high priests to arrest Christians but ended up becoming one of them after the encounter with the risen Jesus. “At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.” (v.20)
10. **Acts 10: Tells the story of how Cornelius**, a Roman centurion, and Peter, the Jewish leader of ‘The Way’ both had visions that led to a turning point for the infant movement. Gentiles were accepted as equals, confessed Jesus as Lord, experienced the Holy Spirit, and were baptized by Peter.
11. **Acts 11: In Jerusalem Peter was called to explain his actions.** Peter recounted his vision to them and what he saw at Cornelius’ house, concluding; “So if God gave them the same gift, he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?” When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.” (vs. 17,18)

12. **Acts 13: Barnabas and Saul (Paul) are chosen to spread the message to Asia** (Minor) and beyond. *“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”* (vs.2,3) Sailing to Cyprus they ‘they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues’ and ended up converting the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, to ‘the Way.’(v.7)
13. **Acts 13: In Pisidian Antioch they continue the strategy of preaching in the Jewish synagogue.** *““Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. (vs.26-28, 30-31) The message was the prophesized death, and resurrection of Jesus ‘the Christ’ or Messiah. Why? “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.”* (v.38)
14. **Acts 14: “At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue.** *There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed.”* (v.1)
15. **Acts 14: In Lystra a healing caused the local population to believe they were gods** and tried to worship them. They had so much difficulty restraining them that little is recorded of their preaching. A riot was initiated by men from Antioch and Iconium resulting in them being badly beaten. In Antioch of Syria *“They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples.”* (21) . Then they backtracked their route, encouraging those who had believed at each city.
16. **Acts 15: The Jerusalem Council** confirms that salvation comes only *“through the grace of our Lord Jesus”*. (v.11) the issue was *“The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”* (v.5). Peter, Barnabas, Paul and James all spoke against adding anything for Gentiles to become Christians except, as Peter stated, *“... we believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”* (v.11) Obedience to the Law of Moses was not to be added to salvation by faith alone.
17. **Acts 16: In Philippi,** Macedonia Paul and Silas were imprisoned when an earthquake opened the cell doors and the Roman guard, thinking they all escaped prepared to kill himself when *“...Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!” ... “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”* (v.31) The same message as in Jerusalem, Samaria, Syria and Asia Minor.
18. **Acts 17: In Thessalonica** *“... Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,”* (vs.2,3).
19. **Acts 17: “While Paul was waiting for them in Athens,** he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. (vs.16-17) Paul was criticized by the Greek philosophers, *“... because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.”*(v.19) Later, when speaking to the Areopagus, Paul spoke of

one God who raised 'the man he has appointed' from the dead. This caused many to sneer, but some wanted to learn more. (vs. 22-31)

20. **Acts 18: In Corinth Paul continued his strategy of going first to the synagogue.** His message remained the same. "When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah." (v.5) Rejected by most of the synagogue leadership, he continued teaching for another year and a half, establishing a church there.
21. **Acts 19: In Ephesus Paul repeated his longstanding practice** of preaching first to the Jews of the diaspora in their synagogues. Here he meet people who followed John the Baptist but had not hear of Jesus. "Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (vs.4,5) Paul's ministry was so effective in Ephesus that it harmed the silversmith's trade in idols of Artemis and led to a near riot. On the journey back to Jerusalem they visited several of the churches previously established to encourage them.
22. **Acts 22 – 24: In Jerusalem Paul was arrested** and charged with bringing Gentiles into the restricted area of the Temple. Paul used his Roman citizenship to protect himself and get a fair trial but a plot to kill him led the Romans to take him under guard to Caesarea where he faced trial before Felix, the governor. In his testimony before Felix, Paul recounts his story, including his defense before the Sanhedrin. "It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today." (v.21) After this Felix placed Paul under 'house arrest' and brought him in several times "and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus." (v.24)
23. **Acts 26: Paul remained in Caesarea for two years** "Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison." (Acts 24:27) Festus had Paul appear before him and Jewish leaders from Jerusalem who again charged him. Festus, wanting to please the Jews suggested Paul return to Jerusalem for trial, at which point Paul appealed to Caesar, as was his right as a Roman citizen. Days later King Agrippa visited the new governor and Festus told him about Paul. Agrippa agreed to hear him and during this trial Paul reported his Damascus Road experience; "We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads... "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds." (vs. 14,19-20) Agrippa concluded that Paul could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.
24. **Acts 27-28: The trip to Rome** was fraught with delays, sailing in dangerous waters, a life-threatening storm, danger of execution by the crew, a shipwreck on Malta, only to be bitten by a snake and eventually arrival in Rome to another 'house arrest'. What did Paul do after this ordeal. He invited Jews in Rome to visit with him and he explained why he was there and "he witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus." (Acts 28:23)

Each one of these events are separate and unique. Each records the centrality of the resurrection to the spread of the early church. Each new city or territory, each confrontation and trial were presented with the same message. The same message Peter preached at Pentecost; "This man was handed over to you

by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." (Acts 2:23,24)

That is why each incident stands on its own as evidence for the resurrection. Regardless of the place or circumstances, the leaders of the early church centered the teaching on the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ.

g) Early Creeds quoted by New Testament writers are separate sources because they were drawn from the very robust oral tradition of 1st century Jewish culture and largely date to within a decade of the crucifixion of Jesus.

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 is an early creed, from within 10 years of the resurrection of Jesus, that lists the eyewitnesses to the resurrection.
"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."

Other early creeds, according to Dr. Gary Habermas, are harder to date but were obviously written before the other New Testament writings, in which they were quoted. They include;

- 1 Corinthians 11:26;
- Acts 2:22-36;
- Romans 4:25;
- Romans 10:9;
- Philippians 2:8;
- 1 Timothy 2:6; and
- 1 Peter 3:18.

These eight early creeds form the earliest written testimony of the early church and their belief in the resurrection of Jesus.

"The importance of these creeds is that they include the earliest message of the church following the death of Jesus. They reveal the most fundamental and central message of the early followers of Jesus. The significance of these creeds, then, can't be understated, and they all have one theme – the death and resurrection of Jesus." (The Message in the Earliest Creeds in the New Testament)

In summary, the New Testament provides us with **49 historical sources** for the resurrection of Jesus. They include the 4 canonical gospels, 13 letters in the New Testament from Paul, Peter, John and the author of Hebrews. The Acts of the Apostles provides 24 evidentiary incidents or

events and there are 8 early creeds. All written during the 1st century or within 70 years of the resurrection.

Extra-biblical Early Sources for the Resurrection of Jesus (Neutral or Hostile Sources)

h) Pliny the Younger, Governor of Bithynia, in the early 2nd century (ca. 117) wrote about the Christians "... that they were in the habit of meeting on a fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god..."

i) Josephus, late 1st century Jewish historian, in the last quarter of the 1st century, wrote of the trial and later execution of James by "the younger Ananus" but identified which James he was talking about with the phrase "...brought before it the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ whose name was James..."

These two hostiles, early sources imply the belief of his followers in the resurrection, making **51 early sources** for the resurrection of Jesus.

2. Multiple Attestations are another criterion for historians simple because dependence on one or a couple sources raises the possibility of forgery or collusion. That is much less likely with multiple sources from different authors. If we look at the early sources above, some have argued that the New Testament writers are not legitimate sources because they were followers of Jesus. The fact that they included embarrassing information about themselves and Jesus, difficult and demanding sayings of Jesus, separated Jesus' words from their own, and abandoned centuries old traditional beliefs and practices at great cost to themselves argues in their favour. ("10 Things You Should Know about the Reliability of the New Testament Writers")

Several events related to the death and resurrection of Jesus are multiply attested. As mentioned earlier each of the canonical gospels, Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, record, in varying detail, the events of Passion Week. These included the growing confrontations between Jesus and the religious leaders, the betrayal by Judas, the arrest at night in the Garden of Gethsemane, the late night and early morning trials before the Sanhedrin, the trials before Pilate and Herod. After all this came the flogging, crucifixion, death, burial, the appearances to the disciples and the resurrection.

For our purposes the flogging and crucifixion, the burial, and the appearances are the most critical for the resurrection. Each of these events are recorded in each of the gospels. Obviously, the appearances are the most unique and therefore the most important. Mark has the fewest record of the appearances in the earliest documents which do not contain Mark 16:9- - 20. Still three women go to the tomb and find it empty and receive instructions to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee.

The four Gospels do cite multiple appearances of Jesus to numerous individuals & groups.

- Matthew 28:9 - Mary Magdalene & Mary mother of James / Joses (27:56), close to the tomb, early Sunday morning.
- Matthew 28:16-20 & Acts 1:4-9 - the eleven disciples in Galilee (mountain) within 40 days.

- Mark 16:1 Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Salome took spices to the tomb & John 20:10-18 - Mary Magdalene, near tomb (implied) early Sunday AM
- Mark 16:12-13 & Luke 24:13-35 - two in countryside, Cleopas and the other disciple (On road to Emmaus) 2-7 miles West of Jerusalem on Sunday (Resurrection Day)
- Luke 24:36-49 – the disciples plus the two travellers to Emmaus, in Jerusalem (v.:33) the evening or night of Resurrection Sunday. It is probable this the same event recorded in John 20:19 – 23 when Thomas was absent.
- John 20: 24-29 - the disciples with Thomas, probably in Jerusalem, a week later.
- Luke 24:50-53 - the eleven Near Bethany (possibly the Mount of Olives) within 40 days.
- John 20:30 - many other signs with the disciples (the disciples often had women supporters with them that were not identified), within 40 days.
- John 21:1-14 - seven disciples (fishing) on the Sea of Galilee, before breakfast.
- Acts 9:1-7 - Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus.
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 - Peter, the Twelve, more than 500, James (Jesus' brother) and Paul

Any theory that seeks to explain the appearances of Jesus must be able to account for each and everyone of these 11 incidents. They include multiple people – both individuals and groups – multiple locations, different times of the day, discouraged and disheartened disciples, skeptics, one persecutor and a group of 500. The often-cited alternate theory of hallucinations might account for individual discouraged persons but it does not account for appearances to groups, skeptics, or hostile persons.

The Transformation of the Disciples.

The Gospels reveal a radical change in Jesus' disciples after the empty tomb was discovered.

We have already noted the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples after the arrest, and their absence during the trials and crucifixion. Peter was outside during the first trials overnight, but he denied knowing Jesus three times before morning. John was the only disciple mentioned during the crucifixion, and Jesus assigned him to care for his mother. The only hint that the other disciples may have been present is Luke's vague comment, "But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things." (Luke 23:49)

Less than two months later they are speaking in tongues in Jerusalem and Peter declared "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it." (Acts 2:32) Habermas & Licona in 'The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus' state that the disciples "claimed he rose from the dead and appeared to them. This conclusion can be reached from nine early and independent sources that fall into three categories: (1) the testimony of Paul about the disciples; (2) the oral tradition that passed through the early church; and (3) the written works of the early church."

"After Jesus' death, the lives of the disciples were transformed to the point that they endured persecution and even martyrdom. Such strength of conviction indicates they

were not just claiming that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them in order to receive personal benefit. They really believed it.” **John Stott** notes that modern psychology discredits the theory that the disciples could have removed the body of Jesus and then been willing to suffer torture or death for the purpose of promulgating a fantasy which they knew was false.”

Chuck Colson wrote, “I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified, they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned, and put in prison...Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world and they couldn’t keep it a lie for 3 weeks. You’re telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely Impossible” (“Faith Building Evidence” p.384)

Leading researcher, Dr. Gary Habermas “listed eight major considerations specifically in favor of these appearances, each accompanied in turn by their own attesting critical data.... The first four are drawn from the undisputed epistles of Paul... The second four are derived from other well-attested research.” (Habermas, ‘Risen Indeed’ p.23)

1. Paul is the most respected resurrection observer to critical scholars because of his seven undisputed epistles.
2. “An incredible amount of critically recognized data from the 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 creedal tradition includes its being a pre-Pauline report that lists five appearances, three of which occurred in groups. ... Paul probably received this report when he visited Jerusalem to converse with Peter and James, the brother of Jesus in Galatians 1:18-20 – a meeting that is dated at 35-36 CE.”
3. In Galatians 2:1 – 10 Paul describes his second visit to Jerusalem “to specifically examine the nature of the gospel message with Peter, James and the apostle John, as well. The result was that the other three major apostles approved Paul’s gospel teaching (especially Galatians 2: 6b,9), which certainly included Jesus’ resurrection (as per creeds like 1 Cor.15:3-7, Romans 1:3 – 4 and 10:9) “
4. Paul therefore personally knew these three major apostles and they confirmed his message and taught the same themselves (1Cor.15:11)
5. The witness of Jesus’ brother, James, who was a former skeptic who saw the risen Jesus (1 Cor.15:7) (
6. “Many very early and critically recognized creedal traditions and the Acts sermons summaries also mention the resurrection testimony.”
7. The total transformation of the disciples including their willingness to die for their resurrection beliefs.
8. “The strong critical testimony that favors the historicity of the empty tomb.” (Habermas, ‘Risen Indeed’ p.24)

Much of the detail in Habermas' defense of the resurrection appearances includes sources already discussed, so although helpful to our understanding, it does not add to the count of additional sources.

The combination of critical evidence he provides does add two evidences not yet discussed, ***the agreement among the major apostles*** - Paul, Peter, James and John – over the proper teachings, including the resurrection, does add a new element of certainty over the common teachings.

The confirmation of the very early dates of the creedal evidence, especially the 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 creed, is extremely important. If Paul received this creed in 35-36 CE, then the creed existed before that time – within 5 years of the crucifixion of Jesus. Claims of legendary influences, mythology, and later conspiracy to mislead are eliminated by this timeline. These two evidences and the eleven appearances add 13 more evidences in support of the resurrection, **increasing our the count of evidence for the resurrection increases to 64.**

3. Eyewitness Testimony

The four gospels are generally considered to be based on eyewitness testimony to events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. There is little debate about Matthew and John's gospels because they were both part of the twelve disciples who were present with Jesus for his three-year public ministry. They were participants in the events and therefore had first-hand knowledge.

Luke laid out his intent at the beginning of his gospel and his historical accuracy in his second volume, 'the Acts of the Apostles' provides additional credibility to his gospel. As a travelling companion of Paul, he would have had opportunity to interview numerous eyewitnesses to the resurrection.

“Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.” (Luke 1:1 – 4)

The second generation of leaders, after the Apostles, are often referred to as Church Fathers. One of them connects Mark's Gospel to the Apostle Peter.

“Papias, for example, described Mark's Gospel as a record of Peter's teachings related to what Peter saw and heard from Jesus. According to Papias, while Mark was not himself an eyewitness to the events described in his Gospel, he did accurately record the firsthand experiences of his teacher and mentor, Peter.” (The Apostles Wrote The Gospels As Eyewitness Accounts”)

Again, these sources do not add to our count since we have referred to them as early and multiple attestations. However, there is an interesting passage in 2 Peter 1:16 – 18 that provides another eyewitness testimony to our count. Although not a direct reference to the

resurrection, it is a clear reference to the truthfulness of the stories told about Jesus. Peter wrote this brief letter shortly before his death, probably in 66 AD / CE. Hear the concern in his words to these second-generation Christians understand the truth of Jesus' power.

For we have not been telling you fairy tales when we explained to you the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming again. My own eyes have seen his splendor and his glory: I was there on the holy mountain when he shone out with honor given him by God his Father; I heard that glorious, majestic voice calling down from heaven, saying, "This is my much-loved Son; I am well pleased with him."

The eyewitness nature of their testimony just adds more credibility to their accounts. Plus, just reading the gospels reveals that they included material that revealed Jesus' frustration with his disciples, his anger over the attitude of the religious leaders, his compassion for the poor and disadvantaged and several difficult teachings that lost him support among the people. They are not filled with embellishments but provide a multidimensional perspective of Jesus.

How do you account for the inconsistencies in the Gospel accounts?

"Who actually went to the tomb that morning, is it Mary Magdalene by herself or with other women, and with how many, and what were their names? It depends which Gospel you read. Was the stone rolled away before or after they got there? It depends which Gospel you read. What did they see when they got there? Was it one man, or two, or an angel? It depends which Gospel you read. Did they tell anyone? Mark says they didn't tell anyone, Matthew says they ran and told the disciples, so which is it? It depends which Gospel you read." **Bart Ehrman**

Is Ehrman's charge of inconsistencies in the four eyewitness accounts a justifiable cause to reject the legitimacy of all the accounts? J. Warner Wallace, a homicide detective and author of "Cold-Case Christianity" offers an interesting perspective on several key issues:

- "If there is one thing my experience as a detective has revealed, however, it's that witnesses often make conflicting and inconsistent statements when describing what they saw at a crime scene.... The more witnesses involved in the case, the more likely there will be points of disagreement."
- "Every case I handle is like this; witnesses seldom agree on every detail. In fact, when two people agree completely on every detail of their account, I am inclined to believe they have either contaminated each other's observations or are working together to pull the wool over my eyes. I expect truthful, reliable eyewitnesses to disagree along the way."

Some of the differences in the Gospel accounts are easily explained and others are not. For example,

- the discrepancy of when the women went to the tomb is insignificant when you realize some people have a 'glass half-empty' perspective (dark), while others have a 'glass half-full' perspective (early dawn).
- John's focus only on Mary Magdalene may simply be because he wanted to add to the record, her personal encounter with Jesus.
- The two-staged report to the disciples, may just be a more detailed account than the other gospels, which he was aware of already.
- however, the differences in the number of angels in the gospels and Mark's comment about the women not telling anyone are harder to harmonize.

This, however, is exactly what Warner reminded us of is typical of eyewitness accounts. What if they were all identical - then the charge would be that they colluded.

Despite the differences detailed above, the Gospels agree on some critical points, including:

1. The tomb Jesus was placed in on Friday was empty on Sunday morning.
2. There were messenger(s) of God at the tomb that affirmed Jesus' resurrection.
3. The first eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus were women.
4. The disciples initially doubted the resurrection.
5. Jesus appeared to various people in various contexts, over a period of time after He was crucified, and buried.
6. Jesus was raised bodily, not just as a spirit. This was confirmed by those who touched him and saw him eating.
7. The disciples believed that Jesus was raised by God to prove he was the long-prophesized Messiah (Christ).

In short, yes there are some discrepancies among the Gospels that are hard to harmonize but this is to be expected with eyewitness testimony. The critical events of the death, burial, resurrection appearances and transformation of the disciples are not in debate in the gospels or in the early church, as demonstrated by the book of Acts.

4. Hostile or Enemy Attestation

We have already discussed two hostile sources, Josephus and Pliny the Younger, who verified that the early Christians believed that Jesus rose from the dead and therefore was 'a god'. In "Faith Building Evidence" May's entries have four that confirm his crucifixion and eleven more hostile sources that verify Jesus' existence but that's not our topic here.



The Alexamenos Graffito from 200 AD.

The Alexamenos Graffito is another hostile evidence dating from ca. 200 AD. The graffiti depicts two figures, one on the left worshipping another on the right pinned to a cross but having the head of a donkey. Below is the caption 'Alexamenos worships his God.' It clearly demonstrates the contempt many Romans had for the idea that someone would worship one who was crucified.

This first visual depiction of Jesus is another hostile source that moves our count to **65 historical sources for the resurrection.**

4. The Criterion of Embarrassment

The record of Jesus' arrest, trials, death, and resurrection are filled with embarrassing details that lend more credibility to the accuracy of the accounts. If these sources were made up later to promote the new religion, it would be unlikely they would include these embarrassing details. Consider these:

1. Jesus was betrayed by Judas, one of his twelve disciples who had been with him for 3 years.
2. The disbelief of Jesus' own siblings, including James, a devout Jew.
3. Jesus' anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane before the arrest.
4. The disciples all deserted him once he was arrested except for Peter and John.
5. Peter's triple denial of Jesus reflects badly on one of the key leaders of the early church.
6. The humiliating treatment of Jesus during the late-night trials- slapping, spitting, and punching.
7. The Roman flogging the next morning made him look weak to the Roman world.
8. His inability to carry his own cross to Golgotha after teaching people they had to "deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)
9. The humiliation of the crucifixion and the public mocking that occurred there.

10. Only John and the women are mentioned as being present at the crucifixion.
11. Jesus said, "I thirst" on the cross (Jn.19.28) but claimed to be the source of "living water" (Jn.4.14).
12. His cry from the cross, "My God, My God. Why have you forsaken me?" (Matt.27:46)
13. The first witnesses to the resurrection were women when neither the Hebrews, Romans nor Greeks accept women's testimony in law courts.
14. The disciples' refusal to believe the women's report of his resurrection. (Lk.24.10,11)
15. Thomas' refusal to believe his fellow disciples that Jesus had been resurrected.
16. Even at the Great Commission some doubted. (Matt.28:17)

People who create a fictitious account to support their own agenda do not normally include embarrassing information that may require explanation later or undermine their case in the eyes of some.

The most damaging of these 16 embarrassing incidents, in the ancient world was that the first eyewitnesses were women. Jews, Romans, and Greeks all devalued the testimony of women in court. Why did each of the gospel writers include this discrediting detail if it did not happen? That is why embarrassing information is viewed by historians as evidence for authenticity. This evidence moves our count to **81 historical evidences.**

5. Material and Written Remains

Lawrence Mykytiuk in an article "New Testament Political Figures confirmed' cites 23 separate public figures referred to in the New Testament who have been confirmed by history and / or archeology. ""Four are Roman Emperors, eleven are members of the Herodian Dynasty, five are Roman Legates or Governors and three are independent." (FBE p.241)

Numerous physical locations referred to in the New Testament have been confirmed by archeology, including pre - 70 AD synagogues in Magdala and Capernaum, the towns of Nazareth, and Bethsaida, the pools of Siloam and Bethesda, Solomon's Portico and Kinneret Boat or Jesus boat, that fits the description of the boat Jesus and his disciples used.

These incidental details of the New Testament narrative confirm the setting of the Gospel accounts as described in the four canonical Gospels. The book of Acts has scores of geographical, political, legal, and cultural details confirmed by history. Plus, the resurrection of Jesus is a major theme in Acts.

Clearly this background detail is not direct evidence of the resurrection but if it had been proven inaccurate the charge would certainly have been made that the rest of the book was untrustworthy. Is not the reverse also true? It would be unrealistic to count each geographic, cultural, religious, societal and human confirmation as a separate evidence but surely we can **count the whole of them as one (1) evidence, making 82 historical evidences.**



The Heel of Jehohanan, discovered in 1968 in East Jerusalem with a Roman spike wedged into the heel. It refutes the claim of some that crucified bodies were thrown into the ditch to rot or be eaten by dogs

One material remain that does have a direct bearing on the resurrection is the discovery of a heel bone in an ossuary box in Jerusalem in 1968. The discovery disproved the claims of Hugh Schonfield's 1965 'Passover Plot' that a crucified body would never have been put in a tomb but would have been discarded in a ditch because only criminals and traitors were crucified. Our count now stands at **83 historical evidences.**

6. Circumstantial Evidence

Now consider the amount of circumstantial evidence that supports the resurrection. Are these just coincidences?

- Jerusalem was the location of the death and resurrection of Jesus and the birth of the Church. Would Peter's preaching on Pentecost (Acts 2) have resulted in 3000 conversions in a single day – less than 2 months later - if people did not believe in the resurrection? Of course not!
- Everyone knew where Jesus was buried – in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the most powerful Jewish authority under Roman occupation. Plus, there were several people who followed Jesus' body to the burial site and a military guard was placed by the tomb. Obviously, the Jewish authorities believed people knew where the body was buried.
- The story the Jewish leaders told the soldiers to tell, that the disciples stole the body, was an admission, the body was not in the tomb. How believable is it that the disciples who abandoned Jesus, Thursday night and Friday decided to attack a Roman guard at the tomb early Sunday morning?

These items include dramatic doctrinal and cultural shifts that occur immediately after the first Easter.

- The beloved Mosaic Law, the held together the Israelites / Jews for 1400 – 1200 years was replaced by the Doctrine of Grace by these Jewish Christians, overturning a primary element of their national and cultural identity. Why, if not because of the resurrection?
- The strict monotheism of Judaism was modified to include the Trinity of Christianity.
- The renunciation of the Sacrificial System, instituted by Moses on command of God, was discarded by early Jewish Christian because of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. Why? Because no more sacrifice was needed after Jesus' sacrifice.
- Sunday became the day of worship to God rather than the Sabbath because it was the day of the resurrection.
- The Sacrament of Baptism was a visual representation of the death and resurrection of Jesus – being buried in the water and rising to new life.
- The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Mass) was instituted as a remembrance of Jesus sacrifice for us and the hope of our resurrection with him in the future. This Jesus instituted himself on the night he was betrayed (John 13).
- The existence of the Church is an historical reality. It is arguably one of the most influential movements / institutions in the world. It is clear from the New Testament sources, including the epistles, the Book of Acts, and the early creeds among others, that the resurrection was central to the Church's creation and spread throughout the Roman World.

These 10 historical facts move our count to 93 historical evidences for the resurrection. One could argue that the simultaneous development of last seven historic shifts in belief and practice of the Jewish faith, after centuries of relative stability, is additional evidence or at a bare minimum, strengthens the argument that something dramatic must have occurred to cause that change! What other logical explanation exists beside the one the eyewitnesses claimed, the resurrection of Jesus?

7. Conceptual Evidence:

The belief that the Christian concept of the resurrection was borrowed from previous ancient societies was commonplace in the late nineteenth century and the much of the twentieth century, in some circles. Why?

- The theory that there was a widespread worship of a dying and rising fertility god- Tammuz in Mesopotamia, Adonis in Syria, Attis in Asia Minor, and Osiris in Egypt-was propounded by Sir James Frazer, who gathered a mass of parallels in part IV of his monumental work "The Golden Bough"
- In the 1930s three influential French scholars, M. Goguel, C. Guignebert, and A. Loisy, interpreted Christianity as a syncretistic religion formed under the influence of Hellenistic mystery religions.

- John H. Randall, emeritus professor of philosophy at Columbia University, has asserted: "Christianity, at the hands of Paul, became a mystical system of redemption, much like the cult of Isis, and the other sacramental or mystery religions of the day"
- Hugh Schonfield in "Those Incredible Christians" (1968, p. xii) has declared: "The revelations of Frazer in The Golden Bough had not got through to the masses.... Christians remained related under the skin to the devotees of Adonis and Osiris, Dionysus and Mithras." (Yamauchi, Edwin. "Easter: Myth, Hallucination, or History?" in <https://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/yama.html>)

Yamauchi examines each of these theories in detail in his article, which I recommend to you. In short, his conclusion is that "the Christian concept of Jesus' resurrection could not have been derived from myths in ancient cultures such as those of the Sumerians, Babylonians, or Egyptians, which appear to espouse a belief in dying and rising vegetation gods." (Habermas, 'Risen Indeed' p.41)

Habermas, referring to Yamauchi's article, writes" These latter myths reveal both far too superficial resemblances and even questionable evidence concerning this belief in a "resurrection" to have been a basis of belief for Jesus' rising." (Ibid)

In "Jesus, The Final Day" N.T. Wright's article "The Surprise of Resurrection" describes the contrast between the Christian understanding of resurrection and the predominant cultures of the time. "The pagan world denied resurrection itself, even though many pagans believed in all kinds of different theories about life after death." (p.76)

Of course, the immediate context of the rise of the Christian belief in the resurrection was Second Temple Judaism. Even here Wright points out the differences in beliefs. Jews did believe in a resurrection as an 'end of the age' general resurrection. You can see this in Martha's response to Jesus, after Lazarus' death in John 11:24. However, there was no sense on individuals being resurrected. Plus, the Christian resurrection is a bodily resurrection not just a spiritual resurrection.

To add to the contrast, Christianity associated resurrection with the Messiah, but prior to Easter, "...nobody expected the Messiah would be killed in the first place. This is totally a new thing, and it leads us to reflect just a little bit on how impossible it is to account for the early Christian belief in Jesus as Messiah unless something like the resurrection took place.

Yamauchi's negative evidence against the alternate theories of the origin of the concept of resurrection and Wright's positive contrast of the uniqueness of the Christian concept of resurrection form two (2) additional evidences for the resurrection of Jesus.

That brings our count to 95 historical evidences for the resurrection.

Conclusion of the Historical Evidence:

This brief overview of the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus should make several things clear. It's obvious that there are multiple lines of evidence for the resurrection. Obviously, some are more consequential than others. The Bible is not one source but a compilation of multiple sources that include some extremely early evidence going back to the same decade as the crucifixion and resurrection. External sources are mostly hostile to Christianity but verify the existence, if not the truth, of much of the basic claims about the resurrection.

The work of Habermas and Licona in "The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus" is one of the most influential approaches because of its simplicity and its use of critically accepted data.

They reduce their defense of the historicity of the resurrection to four (4) facts that a) have substantial scholarly evidence from several independent lines of research, and b) are accepted by most scholars (90% plus) regardless of the religious position. A fifth is accepted by about 75%. This '4 +1 approach' cannot be ignored by anyone who seriously proposes an alternative explanation to the traditional Christian view of the resurrection, because each of these five facts must be accounted for by another theory. What are the 4 +1 facts?

1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
2. Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
3. The church persecutor Saul (Paul) was suddenly changed.
4. The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.
5. The Tomb was empty (75%).

This has become the standard upon which any alternative theory must be judged.

C. WHY?

Why would God sacrifice Himself for Humanity? The answer is as simple as it is profound!

In talking with Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, who came to Jesus at night, **Jesus stated:**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. " (John 3:16 – 18 NIV)

Paul writing to the Roman Christians explained what Jesus' resurrection accomplished:

"When we were utterly helpless, with no way of escape, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners who had no use for him. Even if we were good, we really wouldn't expect anyone to die for us, though, of course, that might be barely possible.

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners". (Romans 5:6 – 8 TLB)

The Apostle John wrote to his churches: "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4:10 NIV)

The Apostle Peter wrote to his churches: "He personally carried the load of our sins in his own body when he died on the cross so that we can be finished with sin and live a good life from now on. For his wounds have healed ours!" (1 Peter 2:24 TLB)

The message of the New Testament is consistent. It has several simple but incredibly important elements to it:

1. Jesus was sent on a rescue mission to save us from our sin that separates us from God.
2. The motive for this rescue mission was God's love for us.
3. The means of this rescue mission was the sacrificial death of the perfect Son of God, Jesus.
4. The way to be rescued is not by 'being good enough' but by believing in God's Son and accepting Him as Saviour and Lord. In other words, it doesn't depend on what we do but what Jesus has already done.
5. Ignoring or resisting God's offer of salvation leaves us where we were – "stand(ing) condemned already" (John 3:18)

The Apostle Paul summed it all up in Romans 10:8 – 10 (TLB):

"For salvation that comes from trusting Christ—which is what we preach—is already within easy reach of each of us; in fact, it is as near as our own hearts and mouths. For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord and believe in your own heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God; and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation."

The Resurrection of Jesus has always been the core – the foundation stone – of Christianity.

The Apostle Paul writing in his first letter to the Corinthians makes this abundantly clear in the starkest of terms.

¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:13 – 19 NIV)

What hinges on the resurrection of Jesus? Our preaching, our faith, being guilty of lying about God, Christ's resurrected life, our faith is useless, we still bear the guilt of our sin, Christians who have died are not saved but lost, our hope in eternal life in Christ is gone and we are pitiful!

But the reverse is true if the resurrection is true!

- Our preaching is true
- Our faith is true
- We are truthful witnesses of God's sacrificial love
- Our faith does save us – and anyone who accepts Jesus as the Christ – from our sins
- We are freed from the burden and consequences of our sin, because of Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross.
- The promise of eternal life is real.
- Christians will be honoured by God regardless of how they are treated now.
- Jesus' resurrection confirms His divinity and the truth of all He taught!

This is available to anyone who believes – “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9 NIV)

Amazing Grace!!

The only question left is - how will you respond to His offer of love?

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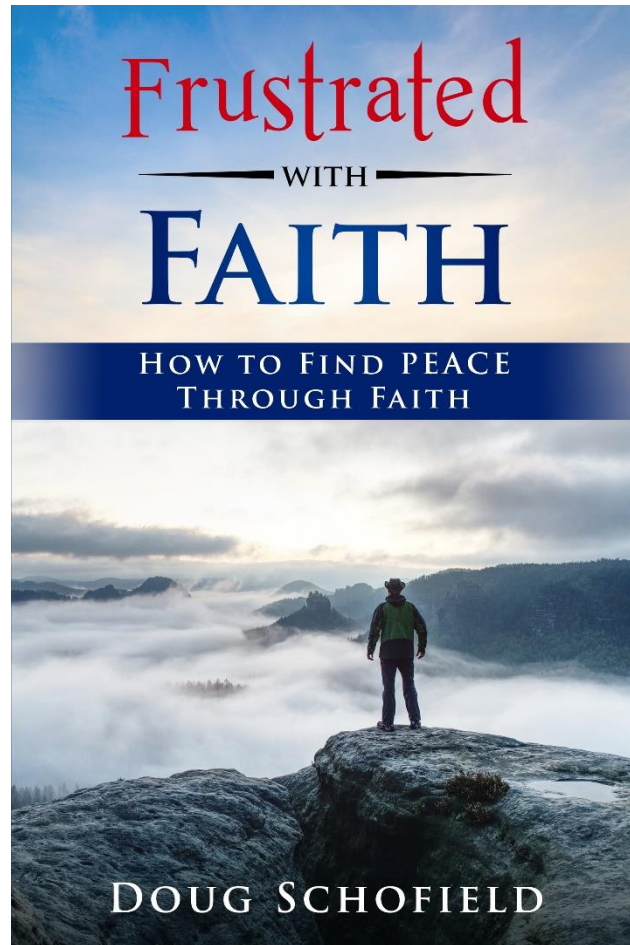
“That’s fine in theory, but what about putting it all into practice?”

What frustrates you about Christianity?

- 1. *Is it because someone told you, 'Just accept it by faith'?***
- 2. *Is it because some people seem to be acting just on emotion rather than reason?***
- 3. *Have you been offended by Christians and so you want no part of their 'faith'?***
- 4. *Are you turned off because of what you believe are historical injustices of Christianity?***
- 5. *Do you believe that Christianity is anti-science or anti-intellectual?***
- 6. *Is it questions about what faith is, what it does, how to get it or how to grow it?***
- 7. *Is Christianity's claim to openness to everyone (John 3:16) and yet its' insistence on one, and only one way to Heaven, really intolerance? (John 14:6)?***
- 8. *How can a good God allow so much pain and suffering or how can a good God send people to hell?***
- 9. *Are you frustrated with unanswered prayer?***
- 10. *Or maybe it's just the difficulty of staying faithful to the commitment you have made to 'live by faith' but keep bumping into the reality of your own issues?***

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was written to answer these questions.



This little book is going to help you as a new Christian or if you, like many, have become disenchanted and stepped back from your faith and church. Whether you read it alone or with a group, you may be surprised to find such an inspiring resource that will stimulate your thinking, warm your heart, and offer practical guidance as you grow as a disciple of Jesus!"

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