

The Pinnacle

The resurrection of Jesus after His torture and crucifixion is the single most important historical factor in all of Christianity. Jesus is the only religious figure in the history of mankind to make the claim of deity and subsequently rise from the dead. The resurrection alone puts Jesus light years ahead of all other religious figures in history and in a category all His own.

The Christian faith is an historical faith. It is an intellectual faith. It is an experiential faith. And yes, it is an emotional faith, as well. Jesus' resurrection from the grave was documented 15 times in Scripture.

1. To Mary Magdalene: Mark 16:9, John 20:14
2. To women returning from the tomb: Matthew 28:9, 10
3. To Peter later in the day: Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
4. To the Emmaus disciples: Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-24
5. To the apostles without Thomas present: Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-24
6. To the apostles with Thomas present: John 20:26-29
7. To the seven by the Lake of Tiberias: John 21:1-23
8. To a multitude of 500-plus believers: 1 Corinthians 15:6
9. To James: 1 Corinthians 15:7
10. To the eleven: Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:33-52; Acts 1:3-12
11. At the ascension: Acts 1:3-12
12. To Paul: Acts 9:3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8
13. To Stephen: Acts 7:55
14. To Paul in the temple: Acts 22:17-21; 23:11
15. To John on Patmos: Revelation 1:10-19

The historicity of His resurrection is based on at least 7 major defenses:

1. The Roman Crucifixion: It meant absolute death. According to Roman Law, two Roman coroners would examine the dead body and sign his death certificate. A coroner's mistake rendered his own immediate crucifixion.
2. The Stone: Historian H.J. Thornburn, after carefully examining a 4th century manuscript wrote, "and when He was laid there, he (Joseph of Aramathia) put against the tomb a stone which 20 men would not roll away." (Thornburn RNMC, 98)
3. The Roman Seal: Roman historians report that after death on a Roman cross, the ruthless government of Rome stood behind the death and burial of the victim. Over the tomb of a crucified man, Roman soldiers placed the Roman seal which was two crossing strips of leather and a clay pack in the middle with the official seal of the government of Rome stamped on it. The penalty for any human breaking the seal was the wrath of Rome. An earlier Biblical account of Daniel describes this precaution, "A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel." (Daniel 6:17).

4. The Roman Guard: The Roman guard of 4, 8, 12 or 16 men was trained to defend a piece of ground against an entire invading army! The Jewish temple guard, was a highly disciplined group of soldiers, who if any member was caught sleeping on duty would all be burned alive with the fire started from their own clothing. As Jesus' death was a Roman crucifixion, a Roman guard was probably used. But whichever guard was stationed there, Scripture is clear on this point: The Jews and the Romans took great care to place a guard before Jesus' tomb.
5. The Changed Lives of the Disciples: Ten of the disciples died martyr's deaths based on their absolute certainty of Jesus' resurrection. Before the resurrection, these men fled in fear! Peter repeatedly denied ever knowing Jesus. After the resurrection, "boldness unto death" seized their hearts. They were completely transformed by what they saw.
6. The Jewish Burial: "Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of Jews."(John 19:39 & 40) Mummies can't breathe!
7. The Roman Flogging: The most feared, brutal, inhumane torture in the history of mankind was the endless application of the "cat of nine tails" on the back, chest, face and legs of the condemned victim. The Roman "cat of nine tails" was a whip made of multiple leather strips with pieces of bone, rock and metal tied to the ends designed to remove pieces of flesh with each brutal application.
8. The Private Burial Ground of Joseph of Arimathea: "And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain." (Luke 23:50-53)
9. Arguments and Rebuttals of the Resurrection of Jesus: Considering these historical factors, the arguments of the reliability of the accounts of Jesus' resurrection carry very little, if any, plausibility.
 - A. "*Jesus really didn't die!*" The Roman flogging, the coroner's reports, the finality of the crucifixion, the mummification, the tomb, the stone, the seal, and the guard mute this argument.
 - B. "*The women went to the wrong tomb.*" It was a private burial tomb. Surely the women, the Jews, the Romans, the disciples and the owner of the tomb didn't get confused and forget the tomb's location.
 - C. "*The Jews stole the body.*" All they would have had to do was put the body on a wagon and parade it down Main Street and Christianity would be dead in the womb. They didn't because they couldn't.
 - D. "*The disciples stole the body.*" The very nature of man overrules this argument. Men will die for a lie if they believe it is the truth. But ten sane men will never give their lives for a lie if they know it is a lie.

History is filled with men who claimed to be God, but only one God claimed to be man.
 (special thanks to Josh McDowell for his research provided for this study)

Mark these Key Words: **resurrection** **Jesus** **God**

Old Testament Viewpoint

Isaiah 53:10; Psalms, 22: 16-17; Daniel 6:17

Isaiah 53:10 But the LORD was pleased
To crush Him, putting Him to grief;
If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,
He will see His offspring,
He will prolong His days,
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

Psalms, 22:16-17 For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
I can count all my bones.
They look, they stare at me;

Daniel 6:17 A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.

New Testament Viewpoint

1 Corinthians 15:3-6; 1 Peter 1:3-4; John 11:25; Mark 16:1-7

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies."

Mark 16:1-7 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"

 **OBSERVATION: What is God saying?**

1) How does the resurrection of Jesus substantiate His claims of deity?

2) Why is the resurrection important to you as a believer?

- 3) Name three evidences of the resurrection that give the event the most credibility to you.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

- 4) Paul makes some very bold claims about Jesus' resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. What are they and why are they important?

- 5) What effect did the resurrection have on the disciples?

- 6) What effect does the resurrection have on your faith today?

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS: *What else of significance do you see God saying in this passage?*

APPLICATION: *How does this passage relate to me today? What changes does it bring to my life?*

LOCKER ROOM: *If indeed Jesus is alive and if indeed He lives in you, what kind of man ought you to be at home, at work and in your private life? What does "living the resurrected life" look like to you?*

MEMORY VERSE: John 11:25

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies."

My Prayers

A

Adoration: Father, today I praise You for...

C

Confession: Father, please forgive me for...

T

Thanksgiving: Father, today I'm thankful for...

S

Supplication: Father, the people & things that I wish to pray for today are...