

Did Jesus Really Rise From The Dead?

The Significance Of The Resurrection & Ascension Of Christ

Savor The Savior, Session 13

Introduction:

1. The World Is Distracted From The Resurrection

- Easter has become commercialized. In 2016, Easter brought \$17.3 billion on retail revenue, according to the National Retailer Federation's survey.
<https://nrf.com/media/press-releases/nrf-says-easter-spending-will-reach-173-billion>
- Spring Break is the new focus of what was a Western celebration of Christ's resurrection impact.
- But to the believer, the focus of Easter – the Resurrection – is priceless.

2. The World Is Deceived About The Resurrection

- Hugh Schonfield detail his belief in *The Passover Plot* that - .
- Philosopher Robert Greg Cavin argues that Jesus had a twin brother named Hurome, who was separated from Jesus at birth. Hurome sees his long lost twin on the cross and assumes Jesus' identity after stealing the body on the cross.
- John Dominic Crossnan, from the Jesus Seminar, believes that Jesus' body was exhumed then consumed by wild dogs.
- Judaism believes the resurrection never happened
- Muslims deny that Christ was crucified, thus never being resurrected.
- Jehovah's Witnesses state in their Watchtower publication: "the King Christ Jesus was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature. Therefore the world will see him no more. He went to prepare a heavenly place for his associate heirs, 'Christ body,' for they too will be invisible spirit creatures." (*Let God Be True*, p. 138, Watchtower, cited by Hanegraaf, *resurrection*, p. 9)
 - Jehovah's Witnesses "suggest that Jesus' physical body was discarded, destroyed, or dissolved into gases" (Hank Hanegraaff, *resurrection*, p. xix)

3. How Is The Resurrection To Be Proved?

- Skeptics often ask believers to prove the resurrection of Christ through scientific method. But scientific method only works on objects or events that are repeatedly observable. History is unable to be repeated. Thus, the reliability of historical evidence must be what is taken into evaluation. You can not prove Julius Caesar or Buddha's existence and history through scientific method. Reliable historic records are needed in these cases.

I. The Controversy Of Christ's Resurrection

A. The Preference Of Reincarnation Over Resurrection

- **Reincarnation** – dominant Eastern position, but gaining in the West

- 1 in 4 Americans believe in reincarnation
- 1 in 5 who regularly attend church believe in reincarnation
(cited by Norman Geisler and Lanny Wilson, "Reincarnation," *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics*, ed. Ed Hindson and Ergun Caner, Harvest House Publishers, 2008, p. 414)
- Reincarnation has separate origins in the East and West
 - Eastern religions developed reincarnation through the Hindu Vedas (their religious scripture), Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhs, etc.
 - Eastern reincarnation focuses on returning in another form
 - There is a continuous cycle of death and rebirth (*Samsara*) – depicted by wheel
 - Until one escapes this cycle (*moksha*) where one is liberated
 - Reincarnation also had a distinct development in the West through Greek philosophy (starting with Pythagoras) influencing people like psychic Edgar Cayce and liberal Christians like John Hick (who believes reincarnated persons will live on other planets)
 - Western reincarnation holds that the soul and spirit are eternally indestructible
- Problems With Reincarnation
 - If you believe in reincarnation, who determines justice (*karma*)?
 - *Karma* is justice meted out in proportion to one's crime or a reward awarded in proportion to one's good deed
 - The Eastern religion holds to forms of *Pantheism* – which mean that there is no ultimate difference between good and evil. Then why is there *Karma*?
 - See the contrast of Christian ministries that served in India to help the poor, starving and handicapped? They are working against *Karma* which say the poor and the crippled are just getting what they deserve. Mercy trumps this cruel sense of justice.

Resurrection	Reincarnation
Happens once	Happens many times
Into the same body	Into a different body
Into an immortal body	Into a mortal body
A perfect state	An imperfect state
An ultimate state	An intermediate state

(Geisler & Wilson, p. 417)

Hebrews 9:27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,

- Die once
- Judged once
- Grace overcomes judgment – Resurrection is greater than reincarnation

B. The Imitation Of Resurrection In Other Non-Christian Religions

(following summarized from Josh McDowell's article on "Resurrection Claims in Non-Christian Religions")

- **Apollonius of Tyana.** Apollonius of Tyana (d. AD 98) is said to rival Christ's claim to be the son of God, and his biographer Philostratus is supposed to have reported post-death appearances. Actually, stories about Apollonius fit more under the apotheosis category than as resurrection accounts. In an apotheosis legend, a human is deified.
- **Sabbatai Sevi.** Sabbatai Sevi was a seventeenth-century Jewish teacher who claimed to be the Messiah and was heralded by a contemporary named Nathan. It was reported many years later that, after Sevi's death in 1676, his brother found his tomb empty but full of light (see Scholem).
- **Rabbi Judah.** Rabbi Judah was a major figure in Judaism and was involved in the completion of the Mishnah in about 200. According to the Talmud, after Rabbi Judah died, "he used to come home again at twilight every Sabbath Eve." Allegedly, when a neighbor approached the rabbi's door to greet him they were turned away by his maid. When the rabbi heard of this he stopped coming, so as not to upstage other good persons who returned to their homes after their deaths (Talmud, 3.12.103a).
- **Kabir.** Kabir was a fifteenth-century religious leader who combined facets of the Muslim and Hindu religions. After his death in 1518, his followers were divided over whether to cremate his body, which Hindus favor but Muslims oppose. Kabir himself is said to have appeared to stop the controversy. When he directed them to draw back the cloth placed over his body, they found only flowers underneath. His Hindu followers burned half of the flowers, and the Muslims buried the other half.

Christ's Resurrection	Non-Christian Resurrections
numerous credible witnesses	no credible eyewitnesses
numerous contemporary records	no contemporary records
abundant physical evidence	no physical evidence given
claims to deity made	some claims to deification only
other confirming miracles	no corroborating miracles

(McDowell)

- Gary Habermas: "Non-Christian resurrection claims have not been proven by evidence. Any of several naturalistic hypotheses is certainly possible and, in some cases, one or more can specifically be postulated as a probable cause.... Simply to report a miracle is not sufficient to establish it, especially if that miracle is going to be used to support a religious system" ("Resurrection Claims in Non-Christian Religions," *Religious Studies*, 1989, p. 177)

C. The Battle Over The Bodily Resurrection

1. Denials That The Resurrection Body Is A Physical Body

- Most liberals believe in the resurrection of Christ – not a physical resurrection, but a spiritual resurrection

Orthodox View	Unorthodox View
The Same Body (Numerically Identical)	A Different Body (Numerically Distinct)
A Material Body	An Immaterial Body
In The Flesh	Not In The Flesh
In History (In Space & Time)	Not In History (Not In Space & Time)

(from Norman Geisler's *The Battle For The Resurrection*, p. 25)

- 11% of evangelical scholars do *not* believe that “Christ rose from the dead in the same material body of flesh and bones in which He died” including J.I. Packer, Kenneth Kantzer, James Boice and Millard Erickson (Norman Geisler, “The Nature Of The Resurrection Body”, Voice Magazine, March/April, 1995; see Appendix G of Geisler’s *The Battle For The Resurrection*, p. 190 for the results of the survey of 1,207 members of the Evangelical Theological Society)

2. Proofs That The Resurrection Body Is His Physical Body

- Norman Geisler: “If Christ did not rise in the same physical body that was placed in the tomb, then the resurrection loses its value as an evidential proof of His claim to be God (John 8:58; 10:30). The resurrection cannot verify Jesus’ claim to be God unless He was resurrected in the body in which He was crucified. That body was a literal, physical body. Unless Jesus rose in a material body, there is no way to verify His resurrection. It loses its historically persuasive value.” (*The Battle For The Resurrection*, p. 36)

a. His Body Is Stated To Be A Physical Body And A Spiritual Body

1 Corinthians 15:44 ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

- Body = *soma* (1 Cor 15:44)
- spirit dominated body (*soma pneumatikon*)
- physical body and spiritual body can sound like a contradiction, but not to the Hebrew mind
- R.C. Sproul: “Angelic beings are spirits, but they have a definite finite form. They are not infinite spirits. A spiritual body is localized. It is contained to a definite space. It may be less solid and more vaporous in its composition, but it is still a form of matter.” (*The Glory Of Christ*, p. 177)

Luke 24:39 ³⁹Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

b. He Was Recognized As A Physical Person

- **Instant Recognition**

Matthew 28:9 ⁹And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.

Matthew 28:17 ¹⁷When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

John 20:19-20 ¹⁹Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

John 20:26-28 ²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

John 21:7 ⁷Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.

John 21:12 ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord.

- **Delayed Recognition**

- **Due To Darkness**

John 20:1 ¹Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, **while it was still dark**, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

John 20:14-16 ¹⁴Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

- Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus because it was dark, but she later recognized Him

- **Due To Veiling**

Luke 24:16 ¹⁶But their **eyes were restrained**, so that they did not know Him.

Luke 24:31 ³¹Then their **eyes were opened** and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

- c. **Jesus Ate Physical Food With A Physical Body**

Luke 24:42-43 ⁴²So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³And He took it and ate in their presence.

- Dr. Wilbur Smith: "There is no such thing as the 'resurrection of a spirit.' Resurrection means being raised again. The spirit never has to be raised again from the grave, because it never enters the grave; a spirit can know no resurrection from the dead, because a spirit never dies! The New Testament continually insists that it was a BODY which was placed in the tomb, so it was a body which came forth from the tomb...it is sheer nonsense to talk about believing in a SPIRITUAL resurrection of Christ. There is no such thing. If it were a spirit that was being raised, there would be no sense in insisting on a third day. A spirit could manifest itself at any time after death." (*The Supernaturalness Of Christ*, W.A. Wilde Co., 1940, p. 194-195)

II. The Bible On Christ's Resurrection

A. The Old Testament Is Specific About Christ's Resurrection

1. The Resurrection Of Christ The Messiah (Ps 16:10; Acts 2:25-31; Isa 53:10; 52:13; Mt 22:31-32)

- Peter is quoting David (Psalm 16) in Acts 2

Acts 2:25–31 27 For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave. ... 31 looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay

Psalm 16:10 ¹⁰For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Isaiah 53:10b He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand

- "He shall see His seed"; "prolong His days" – subsequent to His death – refers to His resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"

Isaiah 53:8-10	1 Corinthians 15:3-4
v.8a For He was cut off from the land of the living	Christ died
v.8b For the transgressions of My people He was stricken	For our sins
Isaiah said it in 53:8 700 years ago	According to the Scriptures
v. 9 And they made His grave with the wicked	And that He was buried
v. 10 When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days	And that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures

Isaiah 52:13 He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

- this is a preview of Christ's resurrection and ascension
- it will be a tough road ahead for the baby born in the manger – but it will end with His exaltation
- Hebrew literally: "He shall be high, very!"
- the idea is being exalted to the height of God
- no prophet or nation gets that privilege

Matthew 22:31-32 ³¹But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³²"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

2. The Hope Of Resurrection For The Old Testament Saints (Dan 12:2; Ps 49:14; Job 19:25-27; Isa 26:19; Heb 11:17-19)

Daniel 12:2 ²And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Psalms 49:14 ¹⁴Like sheep they are laid in the grave; Death shall feed on them; The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; And their beauty shall be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling.

Job 19:25-27 ²⁵For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Isaiah 26:19 ¹⁹Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Hebrews 11:17-19 ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," ¹⁹concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

B. The Foretelling Of The Resurrection

1. The Old Testament Looks Forward To A Resurrection

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2. **Jesus Christ Prophecies His Own Resurrection**

Matthew 22:31-32 ³¹But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³²I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

John 6:39-40 ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:44 ⁴⁴No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:54 ⁵⁴Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 11:25 ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

- Matthew 12:38–40; 16:21; 17:9; 17:22, 23; 20:18, 19; 26:32; 27:63
- Mark 8:31–9:1; 9:10; 9:31; 10:32–34; 14:28, 58
- Luke 9:22–27
- John 2:18–22; 12:34; chapters 14–16

C. **The Testimony Of The Resurrection Of The Apostles And Witnesses**

Acts 4:2 ²being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 ³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

1 Corinthians 15:21-23 ²¹For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

D. The Timing Of The Resurrection

1. Why Not Two Or Four Days? (Mt 12:40; Jn 2:19-22)

- Jesus resurrecting on day 1,2,4 or 12 would be an exceptional miracle, but then Jesus would have been a false prophet

Matthew 12:40 ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- Jonah was expelled from the whale after 3 days
- Jesus will be expelled from the grave after 3 days

John 2:19-22 ¹⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²²Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

2. Why Did It Take Three Days?

- "In the Old Testament a man defiled by contact with a corpse was to purify himself on the third day (Numbers 19:11,12), and the flesh of the peace offering was not to be kept beyond the third day...They believed quite widely that the spirit could be persuaded back into the body and the individual revived under certain circumstances up to but not beyond the third day. Talmudic tradition held that mourning for the dead should culminate 'on the third day,' because after that the spirit would not return. The fact is therefore, that if God had raised up Jesus Christ any sooner, the Jewish people as a whole might have argued that He was never really dead. And it seems likely that even in the minds of the disciples themselves there would have been some doubt." (Arthur Custance, *The Virgin Birth And The Incarnation*, p. 349)
- "It is at least a curious coincidence that the relatives and friends of the deceased were in the habit of going to the grave up to the third day so as to make sure that

those laid there were really dead. The Rabbis were in the habit of referring to Hosea 6:2 in this connection, where it is written, 'After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.'" (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah*, p. 630)

- Perhaps Jesus waited two days to come to Lazarus after hearing he was sick (John 11:6) and did not heal him until he had been in the grave for more than three days (John 11:17) to convince the everyone that His miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead was really a resurrection from a real, confirmed death

3. How Did It Take Three Days?

- **The Problem:** Jesus died on Friday afternoon and rose on Sunday morning. Yet the Matthew 12:40 says that Jesus must spend 3 days and 3 nights in the grave. How could Friday to Sunday be 3 full days?
- **Solution 1:**
 - Christ died on Thursday evening hours before sundown
 - The Bible never says He died on Friday
 - He spent Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday night in the grave
 - Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, and John 19:31 indicate that the crucifixion was a day before the Sabbath
 - But not all Sabbaths are Saturdays – there are ordinary Sabbaths (Saturday) and special Sabbaths (Holy Days)
 - The special Sabbath Jesus died the day before was Passover – John 19:31 "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)."
 - Jews in Northern Palestine (Galilee) calculated their days from sunrise to sunrise, but Jews in Southern Palestine (Jerusalem, where most of the priests are) calculated their days from sunset to sunset.
 - To reduce regional conflicts between two regions, Passover was celebrated over two days
 - Jesus and the Galileans started Passover on Thursday sunrise and ended it on Friday's sunrise
 - The Jewish leaders (in Jerusalem) started Passover on Thursday sunset and ended it on Friday's sunset
 - Jesus legitimately shared the Passover meal with His disciples on Thursday and was crucified that same day
- **Solution 2:** A Part Of A Day Is Considered A Whole Day (summarized by Josh McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, p. 122)
 - Josh McDowell: "The expression 'one day and one night' was an idiom employed by the Jews for indicating a day, even when only a part of a day was indicated."
 - The Babylonian Talmud (Jewish commentaries): "The portion of a day is as the whole of it."
 - The Jerusalem Talmud: "We have a teaching, 'A day and a night are an Onah (a period of time) and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it.'

- Arthur Custance: "It is generally believed that this method of reckoning was originally based upon the fact that in the Week of Creation, the first day began with a darkness which was turned into light; and thereafter each 24-hour period is identified as 'the evening and the morning' – in this order (Gen 1:5,8)

ie/ if child born at 11:59 pm on Dec 31st, then IRS treats that as being born any of the 365 days and nights of that year

4. **Where Did He Go For Three Days?**

3 Views:

a. Christ Went To Hell, The Place Of Suffering

- There is a movement that advocates that Christ went to hell for 3 days to continue His suffering
- The Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 50: "Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell."
 - true, Christ continued being physically dead for 3 days
 - false, Christ did not go to hell – the place of punishment
 - Christ may have went to Sheol for 3 days, but not the place of suffering
- *Scriptures misinterpreted to assume Christ went to hell:*

Romans 10:7 ⁷or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

 - The term "abyss" is often used of the depths of the sea (LXX: Gen 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; Dt 8:7)
 - This is not used for "hell"

Ephesians 4:9 ⁹(Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?

- "descend" = Christ's incarnation
- "lower parts of the earth" = earth, in contrast to heaven
- not hell

1 Peter 3:18-20 ¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine

longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

- Interpretation 1 - Jesus proclaimed victory (not an evangelistic message) to the imprisoned demons
- Interpretation 2 – Jesus preached to through Noah to the unbelievers at the time of Noah (Grudem)

- context of 1 Pet 3:13-22 parallels Noah's situation to the situation of Peter's readers

1 Peter 4:6 ⁶For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

- if Christ preached to those in hell, then they would have a 2nd chance
- this means that the dead had the gospel preached to them when they were alive - and some of the dead believed

b. Christ Went To Sheol, The Place Of The Dead

Acts 2:27 ²⁷For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

- Gr. *hades* = Heb. *sheol* = though term could refer to hell, it also refers to the place of the dead

c. Christ's Spirit Went Immediately Up To Heaven

Luke 23:43 ⁴³And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

- Gr. *paradiso* – used only here and 2 Cor 12:4 & Rev 2:7
- word can refer to a garden (LXX – Eden), but in NT all 3 uses refer to heaven

John 19:30 ³⁰So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

- payment/atonement was complete – no need for further suffering

Luke 23:46 ⁴⁶And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

- Christ's Spirit went to be with the Father

III. The Substantiation Of Christ's Resurrection

A. Consider The Witnesses

- **12 Resurrection Appearances:** 1) Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:11), 2) Other Women (Mt 28:9- 10), 3) Peter (Lk 24:34), 4) Two Emmaus Disciples (Lk 24:13-32), 5) Ten Apostles (Lk 24:33-49), 6) Thomas & Apostles (Jn 20:26-30), 7) Seven Apostles (Jn 21), 8) All the Apostles (Mt 28:16-20), 9) All the Apostles (Acts 1:4-9), 10) 500 Brethren (1 Cor 15:6), 11) James (1 Cor 15:7), and 12) Paul (1 Cor 15:7)
- C. S. Lewis: "The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the Resurrection. If they had died without making anyone else believe this 'gospel' no gospels would ever have been written." (*Mere Christianity*, p. 149)
- J. P. Moreland: "Finally, the resurrection appearances are reported with extreme reserve. When one compares them with the reports in the apocryphal gospels (second century on), the difference is startling. In the Apocrypha, detailed explanations are given about how the resurrection took place. Gross details are added. For example, the Gospel of Peter (mid-second century) reports a cross coming out of the tomb after Jesus, and Jesus is so tall he extends above the clouds." (*Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity*, 175)
- The resurrection of Christ is even substantiated, to some degree, by archaeology. The *Nazareth Decree* from the Emperor Claudius (41-54 AD) was found on a stone slab in Nazareth in 1878. Claudius decreed that no grave should ever be disturbed, no body should ever be moved or removed, or the offender will receive capital punishment, which is much more intense than other uncovered notices (which would fine offenders). Claudius was most probably responding to Christian claims of resurrection and the empty tomb, while trying to respond to the Jewish proposition that His body was stolen (Mt 28:11-15).

B. Consider The Evidence

1. Jesus Was Not Drugged

Mark 15:23 ²³Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it.

2. The Roman Soldiers Could Have Hastened His Death Through *Crurifragium* - Breaking The Crucified's Legs, But He Was Already Dead.

John 19:33 ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

3. The Roman Soldiers Proved His Death By Thrusting A Spear In His Side And Seeing The Blood And Water Separation

John 19:34 ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

4. Pontius Pilate Asked For Proof Of Jesus' Death.

Mark 15:42-45 ⁴²Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

5. Joseph Of Arimathea Placed The Body In The Tomb And Secured It.

Matthew 27:57-60 ⁵⁷Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. ⁵⁹When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

6. Jesus Was Embalmed In 75 Pounds Of Spices And Bandages.

John 19:39-40 ³⁹And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

7. Jesus Was Buried In A Solid, Sealed Tomb With Only One Entrance.

Matthew 27:60-66 ⁶⁰and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. ⁶²On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

8. Roman Guards Were Posted By The Tomb To Prevent Tampering.

Matthew 27:62-66 ⁶²On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go

your way, make it as secure as you know how.”⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

9. The Guards Were Afraid At The Resurrection.

Matthew 28:4 ⁴And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

10. The Guards Were Bribed To Lie And Blame The Disciples.

Matthew 28:11-15 ¹¹Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹²When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’ ¹⁴And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.” ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

11. The Guards Were Assured Protection By The Jewish Leaders.

Matthew 28:14 ¹⁴And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.”

12. The Guards Carried Out This Deception.

Matthew 28:15 ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

13. The Disciples Demonstrated A Lack Of Understanding Concerning Jesus’ Death And Resurrection.

John 13:36 ³⁶Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.”

John 20:9 ⁹For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

14. Peter Denies Charges Of Devising A Scheme.

2 Peter 1:16 ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

15. God Sent An Angel To Roll Back The Stone.

Matthew 28:2 ²And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

16. The Resurrected Jesus Appeared To Over 500 Witnesses

John 20:11-31 ¹⁸Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. ¹⁹Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." ... ²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ... ³⁰And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

- **12 Resurrection Appearances:** 1) Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:11), 2) Other Women (Mt 28:9- 10), 3) Peter (Lk 24:34), 4) Two Emmaus Disciples (Lk 24:13-32), 5) Ten Apostles (Lk 24:33-49), 6) Thomas & Apostles (Jn 20:26-30), 7) Seven Apostles (Jn 21), 8) All the Apostles (Mt 28:16-20), 9) All the Apostles (Acts 1:4-9), 10) 500 Brethren (1 Cor 15:6), 11) James (1 Cor 15:7), and 12) Paul (1 Cor 15:7)
- C. S. Lewis: "The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the Resurrection. If they had died without making anyone else believe this 'gospel' no gospels would ever have been written." (*Mere Christianity*, p. 149)
- J. P. Moreland: "Finally, the resurrection appearances are reported with extreme reserve. When one compares them with the reports in the apocryphal gospels (second century on), the difference is startling. In the Apocrypha, detailed explanations are given about how the resurrection took place. Gross details are added. For example, the Gospel of Peter (mid-second century) reports a cross coming out of the tomb after Jesus, and Jesus is so tall he extends above the clouds." (*Scaling The Secular City: A Defense Of Christianity*, 175)

17. The Physical Body Was Never Found.

C. Consider The Suspects

- **Who Are The Suspects Of Taking Jesus' Body?**
 - Jesus faked His death.
 - The Disciples stole and hid the body.
 - Joseph of Arimathea hid the body at Jesus' request.
 - The Roman Soldiers
 - The Jewish Leaders
 - God

Suspect #1: Jesus Who Faked His Death

1. The Suspect's Motive: Did Jesus fake His death and pretend to be resurrected so He can claim greatness and deity?

- The Koran claims that Jesus only pretended to be dead (Surah IV:157) and other critics say he merely appeared to be dead, even being drugged, then revived in the tomb.
- In order to prove that Jesus was risen from the dead, we must prove that He was dead

2. The Witness's Testimony:

a. Jesus Was Not Drugged

Mark 15:23 ²³Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it.

- He rejected the common anesthetic/painkiller that was usually given to crucifixion victims
- Mark 15:36 was given a sip of sour wine to relieve his parched throat - but that would not intoxicate him to a drugged stupor
- in fact v. 36 Jesus died in agony with a loud voice

b. The Roman Soldiers Insured Jesus' Death

1) Crurifragium - Breaking The Crucified's Legs?

John 19:33 ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

What is crurifragium?

- The practice of smashing the lower leg bones of the crucified victim to speed up the time of death so he could not lift his legs to help himself exhale otherwise the victim could spend hours or days on the cross - this way the victim would be asphyxiated as his lungs filled with carbon dioxide - this also increased shock
- The Expert Executioners already determined Jesus to be dead.
- "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs." (John 19:33)

2) The Spear In The Side

John 19:34 ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

- Norman Geisler and Ron Brooks wrote in an article: "The spear entered through the rib cage, pierced His right lung, the sack around the heart and the heart itself, releasing both blood and pleural fluids. Jesus was unquestionably dead before they removed Him from the cross, and probably before the wound was inflicted. The wounds in both His wrists and feet would have severed the major nerves. The final wound to His side would have been fatal in itself."
- Medical doctors have written that this mixture of blood and water is a clear sign of death. Jesus was dead.

c. Pontius Pilate Asks For Proof Of Jesus' Death

Mark 15:42-45 ⁴²Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

- "Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. And when he found from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph." (McDowell)

d. Jesus Was Embalmed In 75-100 Lbs Of Spices And Bandages

John 19:39-40 ³⁹And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

- myrrh & aloes
- not embalm like the Egyptians, Jews covered stench with spices
- bandages wrapped from head to toe and secure with a gummy substance

e. Jesus Was Buried In A Solid, Sealed, And Guarded Tomb

Matthew 27:60-66 ⁶⁰and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. ⁶²On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples

come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

- Matthew 27:60 – cave was a massive rock (*petra*), hewn out, solid
- Only exit is the entrance (4-5 ft high)
- Door was a boulder so large it had to be rolled
- A boulder 4-5 feet in diameter would weigh almost 2 tons – pretty strong dead guy, huh
- The Roman seal was a clay packing with official signet from Roman governor
- If broken, it would be investigated
- When the person who broke it is found, they were crucified upside down
- Only God would break a government seal
- If Jesus wasn't really dead, then he would have waken up weak after bleeding from 5 major wounds (2 pierced hands, 2 pierced feet, and 1 thorn crowned head), wiggle out of 75-100 lbs of embalming spices and mummy wrap, push or leg press a stone that weighed thousands of pounds, getting past Roman guards who were elite fighting machines, then expected thousands of people to follow Him looking like a emaciated, punctured victim.

3. Lack Of Evidence To Convict:

- Jesus was proven dead
- Even if Jesus wasn't dead, there was no way out of the tomb
- People followed a resurrected Jesus, not a resuscitated Jesus
- No missing body found

Suspect #2: The Disciples

1. The Suspects' Motive: To keep alive this new Christianity by stealing and hiding the body of Jesus, thus faking the resurrection.

Q1: Were these disciples in the proper state of mind to logically construct an intricate scheme?

- the Scriptures tell us that Peter was so distraught during the trials of Jesus, that he was ashamed to be identified with Christ
- even after finding the tomb empty, Peter went back to fishing - sounds like a guy who was giving up - not trying to keep up a legend by concocting a fabrication

Q2: Could the disciples have overtaken the Roman guards?
- no way

Q3: Why would the disciples deify a mere man?
- disciples were Jews steeped in OT teaching of the unity of God – "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

Q4: Would the disciples have given up their lives as tortured martyrs for a known lie?

- we know of religious fanatics who did unimaginable things because they were deceived, but if the disciples knew all this was a lie, what did they have to gain but death

Q5: Why would the disciples devise a scheme of a dead and risen Messiah when that was the last thing the Jews were expecting in a Messiah?

- "He contradicted virtually all Jewish messianic expectations at the time. According to S.W. Baron, the Zealots expected the redeemer to appear sword in hand and lead the people against Rome's military power. Others expected a cosmic cataclysm out of which would arise a new world with the chosen people marching to final salvation. Many believed the Messiah would bring back the remnants of the Ten Tribes and reunite Israel and Judah. As John Warwick Montgomery says, 'The single fact that official Jewry crucified Jesus for blasphemy is sufficient ground for rejecting the idea that Jesus fulfilled the messianic dreams of His time.'" (Lutzer, *Christ Among Other gods*, p. 137)
- Millar Burrows writes: "Jesus was so unlike what all Jews expected the son of David to be that his own disciples found it almost impossible to connect the idea of the Messiah with him." (cited in *ibid*)

Q6: When were the disciples actually transformed spiritually, before Christ died or after Christ appeared to them in His resurrection?

2. The Witness' Testimony:

a. Peter Denies Charges Of Devising A Scheme

2 Peter 1:16 ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

b. The disciples demonstrated a lack of understanding concerning Jesus' death and resurrection (John 13:36; 20:9)

- Jesus' death

John 13:36 ³⁶Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."

- Jesus' resurrection

John 20:9 ⁹For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

- after entering the tomb - they did not know what to make of the empty tomb

- "For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."
- Peter went fishing

c. The Jews prevented this stealing by setting up guards (Mat 27:62-66)

Matthew 27:62-66 ⁶²On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

- Jewish leaders afraid of Jesus' claim of arising in 3 days and that the disciples would try to steal the body
- Pilate told them to use their guards: 2 possibilities
- Temple guards - Josh McDowell describes this guard as 27 units of 10 men per unit (270 total men). Their discipline was so good that if one fell asleep, he was beaten and burned. Each guard was forbidden to sit down or lean against something when on duty.
- Roman guards - McDowell notes that Pilate probably wanted to insure peace with the Jews by giving them what they wanted. This Roman guard would have come from the Roman Legion, probably one of the greatest offensive and defensive fighting machines ever conceived.

Suspect #3: Joseph Of Arimathea

1. The Suspect's Motive: Joseph hid the body at Jesus' request.

- In 1965, Dr. Hugh Schonfield published a book called *The Passover Plot* which claims Jesus instructed Joseph of Arimathea to remove His body from the tomb so He could appear to be the Messiah. The resurrection appearances were cases of mistaken identity. The disciples were bold after the resurrection because they were fooled by the hoax.
- "As a member of the Jewish court that condemned Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea is unlikely to be a Christian invention. There was strong resentment against the Jewish leadership for their role in condemning Jesus (1 Thess 2:15). It is therefore highly improbable that Christians would invent a member of that court who honors Jesus by giving him a proper burial instead of allowing him to be dispatched as a common criminal." (William Lane Craig, "Resurrection Evidence", Moody Monthly, March/April 1999)

Q1: Why would Joseph do this?

- Why would he want to prevent the disciples from stealing the body if he was a disciple himself?
- If he was a critic of Jesus, all he had to do was present the body.

Q2: When would Joseph do this?

- No opportunity. As a devout Jew, he would not have broken the Sabbath especially during Passover. If he did, he would have to get past the guard.

Q3: Where would Joseph put the body?

- There was 2 months from the time of the resurrection to the time the disciples began preaching. Plenty of time to expose the fraud if there was one. Where was the body?
- Joseph had no motive or opportunity to steal the body.

2. The Witness' Testimony

a. Joseph Placed The Body In The Tomb And Secured It (Mt 27:57-60)

Matthew 27:57-60 ⁵⁷Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. ⁵⁹When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

- disciples of Jesus, asked Pilate's permission
- v. 61 tells us that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary witnessed the whole thing
- Proof of his whereabouts that evening of the burial

b. The Tomb Was Solid With Only One Entrance

Matthew 27:60 ⁶⁰ new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock

- The tomb was hewn out of stone
- There were no secret doors to sneak the body out
- There was only one way in and that was past the guards

Suspect #4: The Roman Soldiers

1. The Suspect's Motive:

- None. What would they have to gain but execution for mutiny.

2. The Witness' Testimony

a. The Guards Were Afraid At The Resurrection

Matthew 28:4 ⁴And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

b. The Guards Were Bribed To Lie

Matthew 28:11-13 ¹¹Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹²When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'

- Were all of them asleep at the same time?
- If they were asleep - they would be put to death.
- **If they were asleep - how did they know what happened?**

c. The Guards Were Assured Protection By The Jewish Leaders

Matthew 28:14 ¹⁴And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure."

d. The Guards Carried Out This Deception

Matthew 28:15 ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Suspect #5: The Jewish Leaders

1. The Suspect's Motive:

- None. If they could reproduce the body, they can silence Christianity for good.

2. The Witness' Testimony:

- Jewish leaders bribed the guards to blame the disciples (Mt 28:11-15)
- The Jewish leaders may have resisted the Apostles' testimony, but never refuted it.

Suspect #6: God

1. The Suspect's Motive:

- To insure victory over sin and death by raising Christ from the dead.

2. The Witness' Testimony:

a. God Sent An Angel To Roll Back The Stone

Matthew 28:2 ²And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

- no human could bet pass the guards or even roll the stone up hill in front of the guards
- the guards were not afraid of men, but they were of the supernatural angel (Mt 28:4)

b. The Resurrected Jesus Appeared To Over 500 Witnesses (Jn 20:11-31; 1 Cor 15:5-8)

- Jesus was barely recognizable - but not a near-dead corpse, but a healthy individual
- supernatural body, with the visible nail scars

c. The physical body was never found.

D. Consider The Historicity Of The Resurrection

1. Minimal Historical Facts

- Habermas & Licona: "The 'minimal facts approach' considers only data that meet two criteria:
 1. The data are strongly evidenced.
 2. The data are granted by virtually all scholars on the subject, even the skeptical ones.

A skeptic ought not be allowed to merely cite apparent contradictions in the Bible and say that the Resurrection has been disproved. The "minimal facts approach" builds a case using facts with a high degree of certainty, facts that any skeptic probably accepts. These facts need to be addressed. If a skeptic takes a position that even the majority of skeptical scholars reject, we can argue individually for the minimal facts that we are using. So if a skeptic prefers to take another position, that's okay. In doing so, the believer now has an opportunity to present much more data in support of the argument for Jesus' resurrection. The skeptic will need to respond."

Gary R. Habermas; Michael R. Licona. The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus (Kindle Locations 377-379). Kindle Edition.

- Gary Habermas reviewed 3,400 works by both liberal critics, scholars and conservative writers and the majority accept the following 12 points as historical fact:
 1. Jesus died by crucifixion. (non-Christian ancient sources: Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian, Mara Bar-Serapion, Talmud)
 2. Jesus was buried.
 3. His death caused the disciples to despair and lose hope, believing that his life was ended.
 4. The tomb was empty a few days later.

5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were literal appearances of the risen Jesus.
6. The disciples were transformed from doubters who were afraid to identify themselves with Jesus to bold proclaimers of His death and Resurrection.
7. This message was the center of preaching in the early church.
8. This message was especially proclaimed in Jerusalem, where Jesus died and was buried shortly before.
9. The church was born in Jerusalem and grew rapidly.
10. Orthodox Jews who believed in Jesus made Sunday their primary day of worship.
11. James, the half-brother of Jesus, converted to the faith when he saw what he believed was the resurrected Jesus.
12. Paul was converted to the faith after his experience which he believed was with the risen Jesus.

Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1996), p. 158.

2. Multiple Historic Sources

a. 500+ Witnesses including the Apostles (Eye-Witnesses)

- **12 Resurrection Appearances:** 1) Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:11), 2) Other Women (Mt 28:9-10), 3) Peter (Lk 24:34), 4) Two Emmaus Disciples (Lk 24:13-32), 5) Ten Apostles (Lk 24:33-49), 6) Thomas & Apostles (Jn 20:26-30), 7) Seven Apostles (Jn 21), 8) All the Apostles (Mt 28:16-20), 9) All the Apostles (Acts 1:4-9), 10) 500 Brethren (1 Cor 15:6), 11) James (1 Cor 15:7), and 12) Paul (1 Cor 15:7)

b. The Creeds (Oral Tradition)

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

- “For I delivered to you”
 - Paul is delivering, not determining
 - He is the postman, not the originator
- “As of first importance”
 - The Gospel is the most important issue for the Church
- “What I received”
 - This Creed dates back to at least 30 A.D. from a time right after the resurrection of Christ
 - Paul didn’t originate, he, himself, received it

Romans 1:3-4 "His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"

c. **The Gospel Authors** (Written Tradition)

Matthew 28:1-10 **1** Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. **2** And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. **4** And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. **5** But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. **6** He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." **8** So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9** And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Mark 16:1-8 **1** When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. **2** And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. **3** And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" **4** And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. **5** And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. **6** And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." **8** And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Luke 24:1-12 **1** But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. **2** And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, **3** but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. **5** And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? **6** He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, **7** that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." **8** And they remembered his words, **9** and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. **10** Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, **11** but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not

believe them. **12**But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

John 20:1-10 **1**Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. **2**So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." **3**So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. **4**Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5**And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. **6**Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, **7**and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. **8**Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9**for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10**Then the disciples went back to their homes.

d. The Church Fathers (Written Tradition)

- Clement, Bishop of Rome (AD 30-100): "Therefore, having received orders and complete certainty caused by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and believing in the Word of God, they went with the Holy Spirit's certainty, preaching the good news that the kingdom of God is about to come." (*Letter to the Corinthians*)
- Also Tertullian, Irenaeus, Polycarp (mentions resurrection 5x in letter to Philippi)

e. Non-Christian Sources

- **Flavius Josephus**, Jewish historian (37-97 AD)
 - became a Pharisee at age 19
 - commander of the Jewish forces in Galilee in 66AD
 - after being captured, he became a part of the Roman headquarters serving commander Vespasian in Jerusalem
- "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him; for He appeared to them alive again in the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him. And the tribe of Christians so named from Him are not extinct at this day." (*Antiquities*, xviii.33)

f. Women

Luke 24:10-11 Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

- Habermas & Licona: "When we come to the account of the empty tomb, women are listed as the primary witnesses. They are not only the first witnesses mentioned. They are also mentioned in all four gospels, whereas male witnesses appear only later and in two gospels. This would be an odd invention, since in both Jewish and Roman cultures, women were lowly esteemed and their testimony was regarded as questionable, certainly not as credible as a man's." *Gary R. Habermas; Michael R. Licona. The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus (Kindle Locations 645-649). Kindle Edition.*
- "Sooner let the words of the Law be burnt than delivered to women." (*Talmud, Sotah 19a*)
- "The world cannot exist without males and without females – happy is he whose children are males, and woe to him whose children are females." (*Talmud, Kiddushin 82b*)
- "But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex, nor let servants be admitted to give testimony on account of the ignobility of their soul; since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment." (Josephus, *Antiquities 4.8.15*)
- "Any evidence which a woman [gives] is not valid (to offer), also they are not valid to offer. This is equivalent to saying that one who is Rabbinically accounted a robber is qualified to give the same evidence as a woman." (*Talmud, Rosh Hashannah 1.8*)
- Tim Keller: "Celsus, a Greek philosopher who lived in the second century A.D., was highly antagonistic to Christianity and wrote a number of works listing arguments against it. One of the arguments he believed most telling went like this: Christianity can't be true, because the written accounts of the resurrection are based on the testimony of women—and we all know women are hysterical. And many of Celsus' readers agreed: For them, that was a major problem. In ancient societies, as you know, women were marginalized, and the testimony of women was never given much credence.

"Do you see what that means? If Mark and the Christians were making up these stories to get their movement off the ground, they would never have written women into the story as the first eyewitnesses to Jesus' empty tomb. The only possible reason for the presence of women in these accounts is that they really were present and reported what they saw. The stone has been

rolled away, the tomb is empty and an angel declares that Jesus is risen.” (“Tim Keller On The Resurrection,” Relevant Magazine, April 11, 2011, <http://archives.relevantmagazine.com/god/deeper-walk/features/25243-a-case-for-resurrection>)

3. Martyrs

- Tertullian (writes in AD200): “That Paul is beheaded has been written in their own blood. And if a heretic wishes his confidence to rest upon a public record, the archives of the empire will speak, as would the stones of Jerusalem. We read the lives of the Caesars: At Rome Nero was the first who stained with blood the rising faith. Then is Peter girt by another, when he is made fast to the cross. Then does Paul obtain a birth suited to Roman citizenship, when in Rome he springs to life again ennobled by martyrdoms”
- Habermas & Licona: “The skeptic might object, ‘Followers of other religions and causes have willingly suffered and died for their beliefs. Even atheists have willingly died for the cause of communism. This does not mean that their beliefs were true or worthy.’ Agreed, but this misses the point: The disciples’ willingness to suffer and die for their beliefs indicates that they certainly regarded those beliefs as true. The case is strong that they did not willfully lie about the appearances of the risen Jesus. Liars make poor martyrs. *Gary R. Habermas; Michael R. Licona. The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus (Kindle Locations 532-534). Kindle Edition.*

E. Consider The Options

Josh McDowell’s Reasons (from *The Resurrection Factor*) That Christ’s Tomb Was Either:

Occupied				
Unknown Tomb	Wrong Tomb	Legend	Spiritual Resurrection	Hallucinations
OR				
Empty Through Natural Causes				
Stolen By Disciples	Moved By Authorities	Swooned (Faked Death)	Hidden By Joseph Of Arim.	
OR				
Empty Through Supernatural Causes				
Supernatural → Bodily Resurrection → He Is Risen				

- “I know pretty well what evidence is and I tell you, such evidence as that for the resurrection has never broken down yet.” (John Singleton Copley, 3x High Chancellor of England)

IV. The Significance Of The Christ’s Resurrection

- E.M. Bounds: “The resurrection of Jesus is the great affirming and cementing fact of Christianity. By it he was declared to be the Son of God with power; it is the fitting and necessary complement to his advent and crucifixion; it binds into a complete whole all the facts of his wondrous life and puts the seal of truth on them; it is the keystone of the sacred arch, the crown of the system, the miracle of all miracles. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was necessary to establish the truth of his mission and put the stamp of all conquering power

on his Gospel. His death met the law, conciliated divine justice; his resurrection sent the proclamation of liberty through all the realms of the dead and led the conqueror Death in chains." (reprinted in Faith For The Family, Mar/Apr, 1976)

- Erwin Lutzer: "The arrival of Christ in heaven changed the character of heaven forever. This is the first time perfect humanity entered the presence of God. He was the first man in heaven with a resurrected body....Never before had Christ been in heaven joined to a human body. Never before had there been a man with nail prints at the center of the universe. Christ had resided in heaven before, but not as the God-man." (*Christ Among Other gods*, p. 149)
- Napoleon Bonaparte, on a ship bound for his North African campaign, he was conversing with one of his generals and asked: "General, what are you going to do when this war is over and we return home?" The general replied to Napoleon, "Excellency, I think I will found a new religion." To which Napoleon responded, "That should be easy – all you have to do is die on a cross and rise again on the third day!" (from Tim LaHaye, *Jesus Who Is He?*, p. 222)

A. Proves That He Is Alive (Death No Longer Has Dominion Over Christ)

Romans 6:9 ⁹knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 ³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Acts 2:24 ²⁴whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

- A.W. Tozer: "We understand and acknowledge that the Resurrection has placed a glorious crown upon all of Christ's sufferings!"

B. Proves That He Is God

Romans 1:4 ⁴and **declared to be the Son of God** with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

C. Proves That Our Salvation Is Fully Paid For

Romans 4:25 ²⁵who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

- Watchman Nee: "The greatest negative in the universe is the Cross, for with it God wiped out everything that was not of Himself: the greatest positive in the universe is the

resurrection, for through it God brought into being all.”

D. Proves That Christianity Is True.

1 Corinthians 15:14,17 ¹⁴And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty... ¹⁷And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

E. Proves That Jesus Christ Is Lord Of All

Romans 14:9 ⁹For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

F. Guarantees The Certainty Of The World’s Future Judgment

Acts 17:31 ³¹because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Acts 10:40-42 ⁴⁰Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴²And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

- John C. Broger: “God has defeated Satan through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through this overwhelming victory, God has also empowered you to overcome any temptation to sin and has provided sufficient resources for you to respond biblically to any problem of life. By relying on God’s power and being obedient to His Word, you can be an overcomer in any situation.”

G. Guarantees That Believer Has Forgiveness Of Sin

1 Corinthians 15:17 ¹⁷And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

H. Guarantees The Believer Certainty Of Future Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:20, 42 ²⁰But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... ⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

John 11:25 ²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

I. Guarantees The Believer Hope Of Victory Over Death

1 Corinthians 15:54 ⁵⁴So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

1 Corinthians 15:57 ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:3 ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:21 ²¹who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

- Lee Strobel: "Jesus Christ did not come into this world to make bad people good; He came into this world to make dead people live."

J. Guarantees The Security Of The Believer's Salvation

Romans 8:33-34 ³³Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Hebrews 7:25 ²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

K. Proves That Old Testament Prophecies Are True

Luke 24:44-46 ⁴⁴Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

Acts 16:22-23 ²²Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

1. Prediction That Christ's Resurrection Avoids Corruption And Brings Exaltation

Psalms 16:8-11 ⁸I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. ¹⁰For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ¹¹You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

(also quoted by Peter in Acts 2:25-28)

- sheol – place of the dead (hades & paradise)

- Reasons why David is not speaking of himself:
 - refers to "Your Holy One"
 - David's body did go to sheol
 - David's body did suffer corruption/decay in death
 - Peter confirms David spoke as a prophet (Acts 2:29-30,34-35)

Acts 2:30-33 ³⁰Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³²This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

2. Prediction That Christ's Resurrection Confirms Christ's Sonship

Psalm 2:7 ⁷I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Acts 13:33 ³³God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'

3. Prediction That Christ's Resurrection Allows The Seed Of David To Ascend To The Throne

Isaiah 55:3 ³Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David.

- The Davidic Covenant: through David's lineage, a ruler will rule Israel forever

Acts 13:33-34 ³³God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' ³⁴And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'

L. Proves That Jesus Christ's Prophecies Are True

- Jesus made 7 of these predictions

John 2:19-22 ¹⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²²Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

Matthew 12:40 ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- Jonah was expelled from the whale after 3 days
- Jesus will be expelled from the grave after 3 days

Luke 24:25-26 ²⁵Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

- Also: Matthew 16:20-21; 20:18-19; 26:32; Luke 9:22; John 10:17-18

John 11:25 ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

M. Guarantees The Indwelling Holy Spirit For The Believer

John 16:7 ⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

- Ray C. Stedman: "Remember that He who rose from the dead, rose to pour out His Holy Spirit into human lives, and, by that Spirit, to make available to any individual all the fullness of Himself, twenty-four hours a day."

N. Guarantees A New Kind Of Life For The Believer

Romans 6:4 ⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

2 Corinthians 5:15 ¹⁵and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Colossians 3:1-2 ¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

- Watchman Nee: "Our old history ends with the cross; our new history begins with the resurrection."

O. Guarantees A Purposefulness In Life For The Believer

1 Corinthians 15:32 ³²If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

P. Guarantees Christ's Authority Over Everything, Including The Church

Ephesians 1:19-22 ¹⁹and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in

this age but also in that which is to come. ²²And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

Matthew 16:18 ¹⁸And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

- Jesus did not say Peter is the rock (*petros* – small stone), but that the Church will be built on a large boulder (*petra*) – Christ is the Chief cornerstone (1 Pet 2:6-7)
- Hades – not even death (of Christ or martyrs) could prevail against the church – because Christ has risen, so shall the church
- ie/ D.L. Moody assigned some of his ministerial students to conduct evangelistic tent meetings through out Chicago. Unannounced, Moody showed up at one of the meetings and heard one of his young men expound the death of Christ with eloquence. But as the young man concluded, he announced for everyone to come back the next night to here the resurrection of Christ.
- After the people left, Moody said, “Young man, you will not be back tomorrow night! You did not preach the gospel tonight, only half of it. Many of these people will not be back tomorrow night and consequently have only heard half the gospel!” Then Moody described the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 ‘Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.’”

Q. Guarantees That We Can Have A Personal Relationship With Christ Presently

- Matthew Henry: “Come, and see the victories of the cross. Christ’s wounds are thy healings, His agonies thy repose, His conflicts thy conquests, His groans thy songs, His pains thine ease, His shame thy glory, His death thy life, His sufferings thy salvation.”

Conclusion:

1. Illustrations Of Lives Transformed By The Resurrection:

- Simon Greenleaf, a famous Harvard law professor of yesteryear, sought to use his legal skills to deny the resurrection of Jesus - he could not. He saw that the resurrection was true and accepted Christ as his Savior.
 - He wrote *The Testimony of the Evangelists* as his description of his case study
- Frank Morison, an English journalist and lawyer, set out to disprove the resurrection of Christ. His findings after 10 years of research convinced him that the resurrection was true, not a myth. He composed the book *Who Moved The Stone*.
 - He wrote: "The opportunity came to study the life of Christ as I had long wanted to study it, to investigate the origins of its literature, to sift some of the evidence at first hand, and to form my own judgment on the problem which it presents. I will only say that it affected a revolution in my thought. Things emerged from that old-world story which previously I should have thought impossible...It was the

strangeness of many notable things in the story which first arrested and held my interest. It was only later that the irresistible logic of their meaning came into view."

- Lew Wallace, author of *Ben-Hur*, in preparing for writing this book sought to present Jesus as a mere man - but was convinced of Jesus being Lord and Savior after studying the Scripture.
- So many others, like C.S. Lewis, had sought to knock down Jesus only to kneel before Him as Lord and Savior.

2. Question: Is the resurrection true?

- a. If true, then Christ is alive. He has given victory over the sting of death that sin brings. Then you must consider Christ as your Savior or pay the consequences.
 - the consequence is paying for your penalty of your sin yourself
 - an eternity in hell
 - the benefit is that Jesus paid for your sin on the cross - all you have to do is accept His offer as His Easter gift to you
 - b. If it is false - don't bother with Christianity - it is a waste of time. We can close the doors to this church and I can go convert to Islam.
 - But Mohammed died at age 61, on June 8th in 632 AD in Medina where thousands of visitors still visit his tomb.
 - Wilbur M. Smith writes in *Therefore Stand*: "The original accounts of Buddha never ascribe to him any such thing as a resurrection; in fact, in the earliest accounts of his death, namely, the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, we read that when Buddha died it was 'with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind.'" (p. 385)
 - My Savior is not in His tomb - He's alive!!!
- Tim Keller: "If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead."
 - Habermas & Licona: "Such a historical test of truth is unique to Christianity. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, he was a false prophet and a charlatan whom no rational person should follow. Conversely, if he did rise from the dead, this event confirmed his radical claim." *Gary R. Habermas; Michael R. Licona. The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus (Kindle Locations 144-146). Kindle Edition.*

Conclusion:

1. What are the issues about Christ, His death and resurrection that you are struggling with?
2. Saving faith trusts not only in Christ's death for our sins but His resurrection too. (1 Cor 15:3-

4; Rom 4:25)

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Romans 4:25 ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

3. Because there is a **resurrection**, there is hope in this life.
- Resurrection gives us the hope of being with God in heaven <https://www.christianpost.com/church-ministries/we-have-more-evidence-than-we-need-to-prove-christianity-apologist-says.html>
 - Resurrection gives us the hope that death isn't the ultimate victor
 - Resurrection gives us the hope that life can go on with joy
 - Death of a dream
 - Death of a loved one
 - Personal failure
 - Personal disappointment

More Resources:

<http://www.garyhabermas.com> - materials by Gary Habermas (free articles and downloadable books)
<https://www.josh.org/wp-content/uploads/Evidence-For-The-Resurrection.pdf> (Josh McDowell pdf)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5wKYck_kUs - Lee Strobel's "The Case For The Resurrection"
www.risenjesus.com - materials by Mike Licona (videos of teaching and debates)