

1. [1] Last week we started a short sermon miniseries on why the Christian faith is reasonable.

- a. And how we can reach out to our neighbor with REASON, evidence, when they ask us why we believe what we do.
 - b. [2] 1 Peter 3:15 “always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”
 - c. Last week we looked at evidence for the reliability of the Bible.
 - i. Encourage you to go back and check that out online if you missed.
2. Today we’re going to look at what is the central question of Christianity, and arguably the most important question ever presented:

a. [3] **WHY BELIEVE IN JESUS?**

- i. Why believe his claims...
 - 1. to be God incarnate
 - 2. to be the long prophesied messiah come to save lost humanity by paying the price for our sins.
 - a. By dying on the cross, and rising back to life after 3 days.
 - 3. to be the ONLY WAY to God and salvation for our souls
 - 4. To be the giver of resurrection life
 - ii. HUGE CLAIMS!
3. How can we Verify his claims?
- a. Last week we showed how the Bible is reliable and how it all points to Jesus.
 - b. And what’s more it records over 100 predictive prophecies specifically fulfilled in Jesus, most written hundreds and even more than a thousand years before Christ.
 - i. So from last week we saw that fulfilled prophecy does seem to uniquely authenticate not only the Bible, but the claims of Jesus as the Savior of the World as well.
 - c. Today we’re going to build our case by focusing on other evidences for the central linchpin claim about Christ –
 - i. [4] The Resurrection: that he actually rose from the dead!
4. Resurrection – everything comes down to his resurrection!
- a. Because if he didn’t rise from the dead, Christianity is completely false. No matter what!
 - b. We can agree with the Biblical author Paul (1 Cor 15) when he says:
 - i. [5] ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised [from the dead], your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep [DIED] in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.
 - c. So it’s really important to know whether this man really lived and died and was resurrected.
 - d. Did it happen?
 - i. Because if it didn’t we can chuck EVERYTHING about Christianity and the Bible (since it all claims he did rise as a central tenant AND as linchpin confirmation of their claims).
 - ii. But if he DID rise, everything else would follow...

1. Everything he taught is verified
2. Everything the Bible teaches is true

5. Today: Focus on Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus

6. [6] Before we start, let's pray

7. Available again: Sermon Notes on the black table (grab them now if you'd like)

- a. Sermon notes and slides always available on our website, along with sermon audio and video

8. [7] Drawing heavily from 2 books:

- a. Most of this From Habermas's book : "Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus"
- b. Josh McDowell's "Evidence that Demands a Verdict"
- c. Another book for those looking to supplement:
 - i. Case for Christ by Strobel

9. [8] Our Approach/Basics: 5 facts nearly ALL Scholars on this subject will agree on (even skeptical & atheist ones)

a. [9] Using the Bible

- i. Compatible with how we've been doing this series: not quoting Bible verses as authoritative in a sort of circular reasoning fashion.
- ii. However we CAN use the Bible to talk about Jesus
- iii. If we don't, skeptics WILL
- iv. But we WONT use them like a church would, as God's inspired holy word
- v. Instead we'll use the Biblical books as the experts would any other ancient work
 1. Not assuming inspired
 2. Not assuming inerrant
 3. Not assuming unbiased, Etc
- vi. But it IS admissible as ancient source-works BY ANY SERIOUS CRITICAL SCHOLAR!
- vii. This is in fact the BEAUTY of what we'll talk about today – the strength of this approach

b. [10] 5 Things that support historical claims (Used by Historians):

- i. Multiple Independent sources
 1. More than 1 independent source supporting an event or saying gives STRONG INDICATION OF HISTORICITY
 2. Even when they disagree on some peripheral details
- ii. Attestation by an enemy
- iii. Embarrassing admissions
- iv. Eyewitness testimony
- v. Early testimony

10. 5 Strongly nearly universally Accepted, best attested, Historical Facts:

11.[11] Fact 1: Jesus died by crucifixion

a. [12] Multiply attested in the New Testament writings.

b. [13] Also attested from Extrabiblical, NonXian early writings:

i. [14] Josephus, Jewish historian, working for Romans, (37-100 AD)

1. NOT A BELIEVER!
2. "At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day." - *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.63
3. Confirms NT reports that JC was a real person in the 1st century who executed via crucifixion

ii. [15] Tacitus, 1st century roman historian, regarded one of the most accurate historians of ancient world

1. Writing ~116AD
2. Says Christians are named for Christus, who was executed ("extreme penalty", referring to official Roman execution method: crucifixion) during reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus.
3. "...called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus"

iii. [16] Talmud (70-200 AD)

1. In Sanhedrin 43a, tells intent of Jewish leaders to kill Jesus and established the exact time and fact of his execution
2. "On the Eve of Passover, they hung Jesus of Nazareth for sorcery and enticing Israel [to idolatry]."

iv. [17] Lucian, 2nd century Greek writer, often sarcastic in critiquing Xty

1. "The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account ... You see these misguided creatures ... worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws."

c. [18] IN SUMMARY, from these 4 extrabiblical sources, we can specifically corroborate the claims of the New Testament that:

- i. JC was a real 1st century man
- ii. JC was executed by crucifixion
- iii. We can actually corroborate FAR MORE than that but for the sake of brevity and focus, this is all we need to build our "minimal facts" case.
- iv. [19] John Dominic Crossan (Jesus Seminar, highly skeptical scholar) – "That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be."

12.[20] Fact 2: Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them

- a. Virtual consensus among scholars who study this! CRAZY RIGHT? Why is that:
- b. Evidenced by:

i. [21] Early creedal statements

- 1. Early Christian Creed recorded in

2. [22] 1 Cor 15:3-5

- a. 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, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.**

- 3. Most likely datable w/in 6mo-3 years of cross.

- a. **[23] Gary Habermas writes, "Even radical scholars like Gerd Lüdemann think that 'the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion... no later than three years after the death of Jesus.'"**

ii. [24] The Gospel accounts

- 1. All 4 gospels accepted (even by skeptics!) to be written during 1st century (including Acts, =Luke pt 2)
 - a. Include multiple eyewitness testimony (GOOD!)
- 2. All w/in 70 yrs of cross.
 - a. Pretty early testimony historically too (GOOD!)
- 3. And all report disciples' claims that JC rose from dead and appeared to them

iii. [25] Early Church fathers' writings

- 1. Most were discipled or at least close w/ original apostles
- 2. Strong likelihood their teaching can be traced back to apostles
- 3. All church fathers taught that the apostles were dramatically impacted by JC's resurrection

4. [26] 2 examples: Clement of Rome and Polycarp

- a. Clement (bishop of Rome, ~30-100AD)
 - i. Likely referred to in Phil 4:3 (though not conclusive)
 - ii. Likely instituted by Peter himself
 - iii. Have letter to Corinth church in 95AD where he writes that the apostles were fully assured of JC's resurrection
- b. Polycarp (~69-155AD)
 - i. Reported by Iraneaus to have been instructed and conversed with Apostles.
 - ii. Talked w/ many who had seen JC resurrected
 - iii. Tertullian reports Polycarp was appointed by John

- iv. Polycarp letter to Philippian church ~110AD mentions the truth of the resurrection of JC 5x
- iv. All these amount to multiple early eyewitness testimony that the original disciples said they saw JC risen from dead

c. [27] Disciples BELIEVED it – evidenced by their willingness to suffer and die for their claim

- i. After his death, the disciples were radically transformed from fearful, cowering individuals who denied and abandoned him at his arrest and execution into bold proclaimers of the Gospel of the risen Lord. They remained steadfast in the face of prison, torture, and martyrdom.
- ii. Clearly sincere belief in JC rising from dead
- iii. Sufferings and Martyrdom evidence
 - 1. Some evidence that all apostles except John were martyred for their faith,
 - 2. [28] But here are the BEST attested:
 - 3. Book of Acts!
 - a. Stephen, James brother of John
 - 4. Martyrdom of James, brother of JC
 - a. Reported by Eusebius (c 263-339) first church historian (Ecclesiastical History), others
 - 5. Peter & Paul both suffered and martyred
 - a. Clement of Rome, Tertullian
 - b. Origin (~185-254) reports Peter, Paul both martyred for faith, and that they claimed JC rose from dead
- iv. Doesn't prove what they believed was true, but rather they sincerely believed it.
 - 1. They weren't trying to deceive anyone
- v. [29] Even atheist Gert Lüdemann, perhaps the most prominent current critic of the resurrection, admits, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus's death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."

13.[30] Fact 3: Church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed

- a. Conversion of an enemy
- b. Paul's radical conversion and transformation from enemy to Christian preacher is MULTIPLY attested
- c. And that this happened precisely because he claimed to experience appearance of risen JC
 - i. [31] Luke's account in Acts 9
 - ii. Paul's own testimony in Acts 22 & 26
 - 1. Where he states how he was previously very zealous against early Christians, believing their claims blasphemous.
 - 2. He personally worked to imprison and kill early church leaders.
 - 3. Then he personally encountered the risen and glorified Jesus on the road to Damascus

- iii. Same Story that was circulated among Christians in Judea (referenced in Acts)
- iv. Also multiply attested by Luke, Clement, Polycarp, Tertullian, Dionysius of Corinth, Origin.
- d. Certainly not a man predisposed to believe in the risen Jesus!
 - i. Paul's conversion is unique from modern conversions because he converted based on FIRSTHAND experiences of risen Lord, rather than 2nd hand evidence leading to change of belief
- e. Died Martyr's death for his claim that risen JC appeared to him (as we've already shown)

14.[32] Fact 4: Skeptic James, brother of JC, suddenly changed

- a. We know from both Biblical and extrabiblical sources that Jesus had other siblings.
- b. [33] One: James described in NT and in Josephus as a pious Jew who did NOT believe in his brother's divinity (nor, apparently did the rest of his siblings) before his death (Mk 3, 6, Jn 7)
 - i. James, a pious Jew, was NOT predisposed to believe in his brother being God. Nor that he would be rising from the dead.
- c. Ancient creedal stmt in 1 Cor 15 says JC appeared after his resurrection to James
 - i. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.
- d. [34] Afterward, James is identified as leader of Jerusalem Church! (Acts 15, Gal 9)
- e. Not only did James convert to Xty, but died a martyr for his belief in JC's resurrection
 - i. Attested by Josephus, Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria

15.[33] Fact 5: Jesus' Tomb was empty

- a. [36] Jerusalem factor
 - i. [37] Public execution in Jerusalem
 - 1. Everyone was talking about it (luke 24)
 - ii. JC's Burial location was KNOWN
 - 1. **After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb (rather than a mass grave for criminals).**
 - a. Specific well known public figure!
 - 2. Multiply attested
 - a. [38] According to the late NT scholar **John A. T. Robinson of Cambridge University, the honorable burial of Jesus is one of "the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus."**
 - iii. So, Jesus publicly executed and buried in Jerusalem
 - iv. [39] Then Resurrection first proclaimed in Jerusalem
 - v. **YET No one ever presents the body**
 - 1. IMPOSSIBLE to think how Xty could get off the ground in Jerusalem if the body was still available in tomb!
 - 2. Jewish (and Roman) leaders would simply have to roll away stone and present the corpse to be finally rid of this nuisance.

3. THEY NEVER DO!

4. Even after 50 days in tomb, JC's corpse would still be recognizable

a. Arid climate: Hair, stature, distinctive wounds

b. [40] Enemy Attestation

i. The agreements and compliments of someone's enemies makes that fact MORE likely to be true (no bias for, and even bias against!)

ii. JC's enemies indirectly admit the empty tomb

1. [41] Earliest accounts of this from Jewish sources report Jews claiming the disciples stole the body (not that the tomb was not empty).

2. Indirect admission that the body was NOT available for display (no MATTER the condition)

iii. **If the tomb was not empty, Jewish leaders would have been showing his body to all the Christians claiming he'd risen!**

1. **But instead they gave another narrative as to WHY the tomb was empty**

2. **Disciples stole the body**

a. **But tacitly confirmed the empty tomb!**

c. [42] Testimony of Women – criterion of embarrassment

i. If story was an invention, it's safe to assume the inventor would NOT knowingly invent data that would hurt the credibility of their story

ii. [43] Women listed as primary witnesses to empty tomb and the resurrection

iii. Women lowly esteemed in both Jewish and Roman Cultures

1. Their testimony regarded as questionable, far less credible as a man

2. Jewish Talmud and Josephus make CLEAR their testimony not even admissible in court

3. Corroborated by fact that male disciples initially scoffed and disbelieved the women's empty tomb reports!

iv. Very unlikely to be invented as primary witnesses unless it was what actually happened (a fact they were likely embarrassed of).

v. Makes empty tomb account all the more likely historical

d. Empty tomb fact by itself doesn't prove resurrection (disciples could have stolen body!) but when standing together with the other facts (disproving the fraud theory, etc) it becomes quite convincing indeed

e. [44] **As skeptical scholar and author D. H. van Daalen points out, "It is extremely difficult to object to the empty tomb on historical grounds; those who deny it do so on the basis of theological or philosophical assumptions."**

16.[45] So, in summary, we have 5 Reliable Historical Facts

a. JC died by crucifixion

b. The disciples believed JC rose and appeared to them

c. Paul was suddenly changed

d. James was suddenly changes

- e. The tomb was empty
17. Based on those five facts

a. [46] What's the best explanation of the evidence?

b. Other theories:

i. [47] It's just a fictitious story – invented much later by Christians

1. Doesn't deal with evidence for life and death of Jesus multiply attested including outside NT:
 - a. Doesn't deal with empty tomb
 - b. Doesn't explain conversions of enemies Paul and James

ii. [48] Legendary embellishment

1. Already shown not possible as we have record of multiple early original eyewitnesses who attest to JC's resurrection
2. Additionally we've shown an early Christian creed even atheist skeptical scholars date to within just a few years after the cross.
3. So can't be embellishments over time – just doesn't fit the evidence

iii. [49] Myth derived from other religions

1. Lots of problems with this one
2. But simply, it also doesn't fit the evidence of the empty tomb or the conversions of enemies Paul & James

iv. [50] Fraud

1. Already covered
2. This was the favorite theory claimed by Jewish authorities
3. Doesn't make sense of the martyrdom of the original eyewitnesses
4. Their martyrdom for their claims doesn't prove the truth of their claims, But does show they actually believed it – NOT FRAUD!
5. Nor explains the conversions of enemy Paul & James

v. [51] Jesus wasn't really dead

1. Popular among Muslims as the Koran says in Surah 4
2. Swoon theory / Apparent Death Theory
3. JAMA March 21, 1986 famously looked into medical effects of JC's pre-crucifixion scourging and the effects of the crucifixion itself, using biblical, historical, and medical data, including the spear to the side causing a gush of blood and water
 - a. Piercing of pericardium and right side of heart
 - b. Confidently assert jc could NOT have survived it.
 - c. No possible credibility to Swoon Theory
4. Neither accounts for conversions of Paul as result of GLORIOUS appearance of risen Jesus

vi. [52] Mass hallucination theory

1. Disciples so stricken by grief that they hallucinated risen Jesus out of overwhelming desire to see him alive

2. 1st problem is that for this to happen, his disciples would need to be predisposed to believe Jesus would/could rise from the dead.
 - a. But this doesn't account for fact that 1st century Jews were ABSOLUTELY NOT PREDISPOSED to believe in resurrection of person before end of world
 - b. That's why they were so devastated at JC's death.
 - c. They were NOT predisposed to be looking for him to rise
3. 2nd major problem: We now know all hallucinations are private experiences.
 - a. Even rare accounts of mass hallucinations (same shared frame of mind, but still hallucinations are individual – and not the same. Contrary to popular misconception
4. Yet NT records multiple group appearances
 - a. 1 Cor 15 says JC appeared 1st to Peter, then to the 12
 - b. Then to more than 500 at once time
 - c. Finally to all the apostles (seeming to indicate same time)
 - d. All report seeing SAME THING
5. Also doesn't account for evidence of empty tomb, conversion of Paul, conversion of James (neither grief stricken, looking for JC's resurrection!)

vii. [53] Jesus had an identical twin brother

1. Dr. Robert Greg Cavin, a professor at the University of California, Irvine, scholar on the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. He had written his doctoral dissertation on the subject and was thoroughly familiar with the evidence
2. In it, he argues that *Jesus had an unknown identical twin brother* who was separated from him at birth, came back to Jerusalem just at the time of the crucifixion, somehow stole Jesus's body out of the guarded grave, and presented himself to the disciples, who mistook him for their dear friend Jesus risen from the dead!
3. It's utterly absurd
4. Can be dismissed out of hand because there's absolutely no evidence for this. Rather it's the grasping of a desperate mind

viii. Shows the lengths to which people must go to avoid what seems the most REASONABLE conclusion:

1. **[54] that God actually raised Jesus from the Dead!**

18. So, if Jesus actually has been raised from the dead, what does that mean?

- a. God exists (no naturalistic explanation)
 - i. And he is the God of the Bible
- b. Jesus was who he claimed to be: The Divine Messiah – Lord of all in human form
 - i. No place for "he was just a good teacher" here.
 - ii. A resurrected Jesus is de facto the Lord.
- c. **So, if it's reasonable to conclude that Jesus really did rise from the dead, as it seems we've shown, then**
 - i. **[55] it is therefore REASONABLE to believe in Jesus as Lord!**

d. Who do you say Jesus is?

- i. This is the absolute most important question you'll ever answer!

19. Applications:

20. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus,

a. [56] (1) Consider the evidence we've shown today for his life, death, and resurrection

- b. Consider the most reasonable explanation for that evidence
- c. And as we've shown today, Jesus is most reasonably still alive and able to engage personally
 - i. Why not open yourself up to him in prayer, ask him to reveal himself to you. Confirm the evidence.

d. Why not take that next step of faith and believe, put your trust in Him. Take that free gift!

- i. [57] "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." – Romans 10:9

21. For those of us who have chosen to believe in Jesus as Lord

a. [58] (2) – Gain confidence in your faith by digesting this evidence!

- i. And let it turn your heart toward God in worship
- ii. This is part of discipleship!

b. [59] (3) – Take a step forward in being better able to explain to others who may ask why you believe in Jesus

- i. [60] 1 Peter 3:15 - ...in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect
- ii. Grow as an ambassador for Christ in our world. (2 Cor 5:11)
- iii. Your neighbors are literally dying for the hope of the Good News you carry
 - 1. And GOD IS at work bringing people back to himself
 - 2. And he does that by bringing people TO YOU. And to Me.
 - 3. Are you ready to give reasons for your faith in JC and his Word?
 - a. To answer their questions with reason, gentleness, and respect?
 - 4. Grow as a mature, capable disciplemaker

c. [61] (4) - Consider how you may need to believe MORE FULLY in Jesus as Lord.

- i. The life of the Christian is a lifestyle of repentance.
 - 1. Over and over turning again back to Jesus as our Lord
 - 2. We have to let Jesus be right about things, about us.
 - 3. How do you need to repent and believe MORE FULLY in the Lordship of Jesus?
- ii. All of us who claim Christ are still in process of living more fully in line with that reality.
 - 1. Old habits are hard to break
 - 2. Especially habits of the mind, of the heart
- iii. The way we actually live our lives betrays our truest beliefs
 - 1. We may say we believe Jesus is who he claimed to be: God come to save and adopt us, but then live like practical atheists:

- a. worrying over our provisions
 - b. prioritizing the accumulation of earthly wealth over Kingdom investment
 - c. insecure about your worth, your identity
 - d. cold hearted towards neighbors
 - e. unforgiving toward others
 - f. joyless and anxious
 - g. consumeristic toward church
 - h. Selfish with our time, energy
 - i. Distracted by stuff, status, and sensuality
 - j. Pushing our kids toward worldly success over eternal greatness
 - k. Choosing comfort time and time again over promptings toward good works that would include discomfort, suffering or potential suffering
2. We need to let Jesus be right about life
- a. Let HIM be Lord - More and More and more
 - b. Such that we would follow wherever he would lead us, beyond our comfort zones, into our neighborhoods with the Good News
 - i. Multiplying his Kingdom here and rippling farther out
3. Because he really did live, die, and rise from the dead.
- a. Someone like that, changes..... everything.

22.[62] Pray

Reaching Out with REASON



Reaching Out with REASON



“...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” – 1 Peter 3:15

Reaching Out with REASON



Why Believe in Jesus?

Reaching Out with REASON



Why Believe in Jesus?

EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. – 1 Corinthians 15:17-19

Two white ceramic cups filled with coffee, one with a dark espresso shot and the other with a lighter latte, sit on dark brown saucers. They are placed on a rustic, dark-stained wooden table with prominent grain patterns.

Why Believe in Jesus?

EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

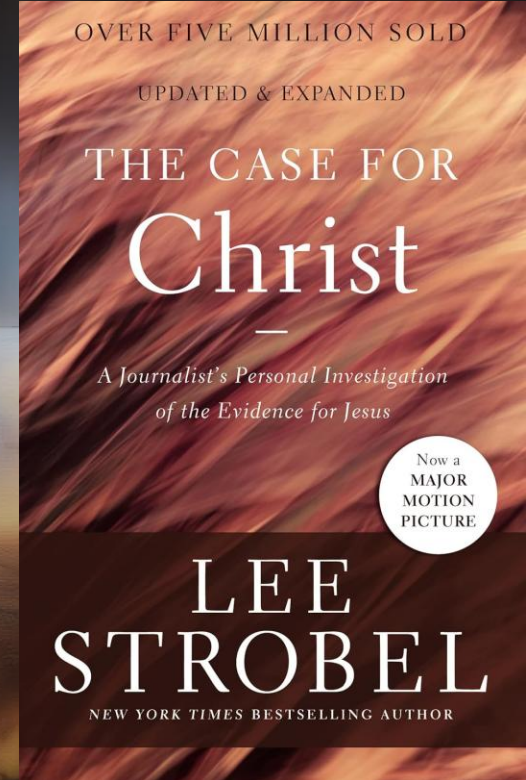
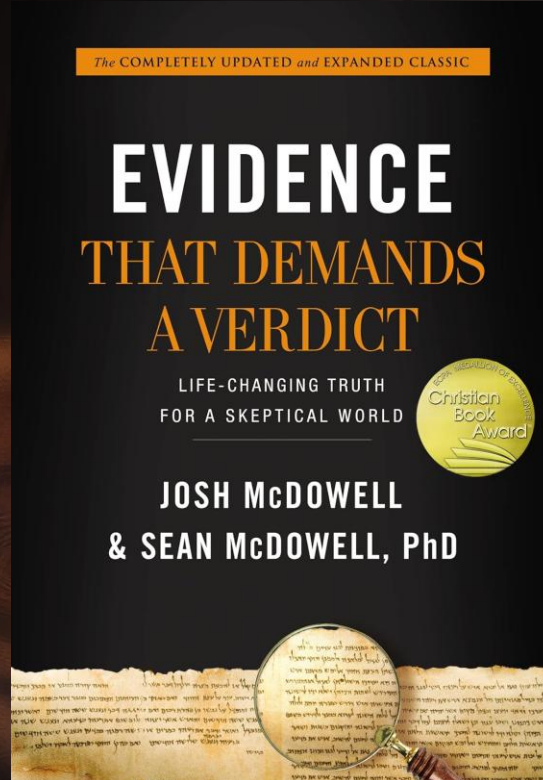
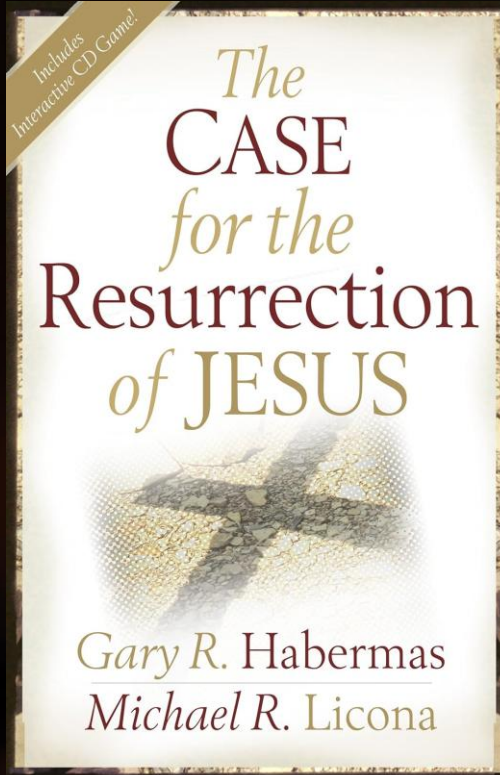
Reaching Out with REASON



Why Believe in Jesus?

EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



BASICS FOR THIS INVESTIGATION



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2. Five things that support historical claims:

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Multiply Attested in New Testament



#1: JESUS DIED BY CRUCIFIXION

Extrabiblical Sources



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Extrabiblical Sources

1. **Josephus** - *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.63

“At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day.”



#1: JESUS DIED BY CRUCIFIXION

Extrabiblical Sources

2. Tacitus - *Annals*, 15.44

“...called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus”



#1: JESUS DIED BY CRUCIFIXION

Extrabiblical Sources

3. Talmud - *Sanhedrin 43a*

"On the Eve of Passover, they hung Jesus of Nazareth for sorcery and enticing Israel [to idolatry]."

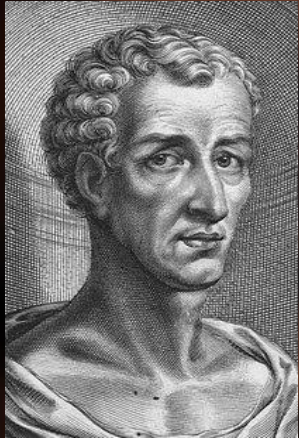


#1: JESUS DIED BY CRUCIFIXION

Extrabiblical Sources

4. **Lucian** - *"The Passing of Peregrinus"*

"The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account ... You see these misguided creatures ... worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws."



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Biblical & Extrabiblical Sources

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1. Early Creedal Statements



#2: DISCIPLES BELIEVED HE ROSE & APPEARED

1. Early Creedal Statements

1 Corinthians 15:3-5 (ESV)

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in accordance with the Scriptures,

⁴ **that he was buried,**

that he was raised on the third day

in accordance with the Scriptures,

⁵ **and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.**



#2: DISCIPLES BELIEVED HE ROSE & APPEARED

1. Early Creedal Statements

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“Even radical scholars like Gerd Lüdemann think that ‘the elements in the tradition are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion... no later than three years after the death of Jesus.’” - Gary Habermas

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1. Early Creedal Statements
2. The Gospel Accounts



#2: DISCIPLES BELIEVED HE ROSE & APPEARED

1. Early Creedal Statements
2. The Gospel Accounts
3. Early Church Fathers' Writings



#2: DISCIPLES BELIEVED HE ROSE & APPEARED

1. **Early Creedal Statements**
2. **The Gospel Accounts**
3. **Early Church Fathers' Writings**
 - Clement of Rome
 - Polycarp



#2: DISCIPLES BELIEVED HE ROSE & APPEARED

1. Early Creedal Statements
2. The Gospel Accounts
3. Early Church Fathers' Writings
4. Disciples' Willingness to Suffer and Die for their Claim



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1. Early Creedal Statements
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4. Disciples' Willingness to Suffer and Die for their Claim

- Stephen & James the brother of John [Acts]
- James, brother of Jesus [Eusebius]
- Peter & Paul [Clement of Rome, Tertullian, Origen]



#2: DISCIPLES BELIEVED HE ROSE & APPEARED

1. Early Creedal Statements
2. The Gospel Accounts
3. Early Church Fathers' Writings
4. Disciples' Willingness to Suffer and Die

"It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus's death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."

- Gert Lüdemann

#3: PAUL SUDDENLY CHANGED



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1. Luke's account in Acts 9
2. Paul's own Testimonies in Acts 22 & 26
3. Conversion multiply attested by Clement, Polycarp, Tertullian, Dionysius of Corinth, Origin
4. Died a martyr attested by Origin, Clement of Rome, Tertullian



#4: JAMES SUDDENLY CHANGED



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1. Identity confirmed in Gospels & Josephus
2. Unbeliever in Jesus confirmed in Mark 3, 6, and John 7
3. Jesus appeared to James after his death attested in Early Creedal Statement in 1 Corinthians 15



#4: JAMES SUDDENLY CHANGED

4. James identified as leader of Jerusalem Church afterward in Acts 15, Galatians 9
5. James died a martyr attested by Josephus, Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius



#5: THE TOMB WAS EMPTY



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1. Jerusalem Factor



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- Public execution there
- Burial location known



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The honorable burial of Jesus is one of "the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus" - John A. T. Robinson

#5: THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

1. Jerusalem Factor

- Public execution there
- Burial location known
- Resurrection first proclaimed there
- Yet no one ever presents the body!



#5: THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

1. Jerusalem Factor
2. Enemy Attestation



#5: THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

1. Jerusalem Factor

2. Enemy Attestation

- Jewish leaders claim the reason why the body is missing, but never that it was still in the tomb (Mt. 27:62-66; 28:4, 11-15)



#5: THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

1. **Jerusalem Factor**
2. **Enemy Attestation**
3. **Criterion of Embarrassment**



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- Women reported as primary witnesses to the empty tomb and Jesus' resurrection



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1. **Jerusalem Factor**

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3. **Criterion of Embarrassment**

- Women reported as primary witnesses to the

"It is extremely difficult to object to the empty tomb on historical grounds; those who deny it do so on the basis of theological or philosophical assumptions."

— D. H. van Daalen

5 HISTORICAL FACTS

1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
2. The disciples believed Jesus rose and appeared to them.
3. Paul was suddenly changed.
4. James was suddenly changed.
5. The tomb was empty.



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

1. Fictitious Story



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

1. **Fictitious Story**
2. **Legendary Embellishment**



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

1. **Fictitious Story**
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3. **Myth Derived from other Religions**



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

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BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

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5. **Jesus Wasn't Really Dead**



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

1. **Fictitious Story**
2. **Legendary Embellishment**
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5. **Jesus Wasn't Really Dead**
6. **Mass Hallucinations**



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

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3. **Myth Derived from other Religions**
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5. **Jesus Wasn't Really Dead**
6. **Mass Hallucinations**
7. **Jesus had an Identical Twin Brother**



BEST EXPLANATION OF THE FACTS?

1. Fictitious Story
2. Legendary Embellishment
3. Myth Derived from

GOD RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD!

He wasn't Really Dead

6. Mass Hallucinations
7. Jesus had an Identical Twin Brother



IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN JC



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1. **Consider the evidence, believe in Jesus as Lord.**



IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN JC

1. **Consider the evidence, believe in Jesus as Lord.**

- “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” – Romans 10:9



IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN JC

1. **Consider the evidence, believe in Jesus as Lord.**
2. **Gain confidence in your faith.**



IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN JC

1. **Consider the evidence, believe in Jesus as Lord.**
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3. **Grow in your ability to talk about this with others.**



IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN JC

1. **Consider the evidence, believe in Jesus as Lord.**
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3. **Grow in your ability to talk about this with others.**

- “...in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” – 1 Peter 3:15



IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE IN JC

1. Consider the evidence, believe in Jesus as Lord.
2. Gain confidence in your faith.
3. Grow in your ability to talk about this with others.
4. Consider how you need to more fully believe in Jesus as Lord, and take steps of repentance.



Reaching Out with REASON

