

THE THIRD DAY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

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A DEFENSE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION – PART 1

“Only one conclusion is justified by the
evidence: Jesus is dead”
- Atheist Richard Carrier

THE FACTS OF THE RESURRECTION

APPLICATION OF MINIMAL FACTS APPROACH



1. Strong historical evidence supporting the claim
2. Vast majority of scholars agree on the claim

Scholarly Historical analysis uses three criteria to support the above:

1. Relevant sources
2. Responsible method
3. Restrained results

THE UNDISPUTED FACTS OF THE RESURRECTION

1. Jesus was murdered and buried
2. Three days afterward, His body went missing
3. There were appearances of Jesus over the course of 40 days to various people, including His disciples and unbelievers
4. Christ's appearance transformed His followers and some previous skeptics, and became the central focus of their teaching

Note: These facts are undisputed. Scholars – whether atheist, agnostic, or Christian – who have thoroughly studied the case of the resurrection all agree to these four facts.

The question before us is this: What best explains these facts?



EXPLANATION

I demand one

Appeal to the Best Explanation

Sometimes called the 'cumulative case method' or 'abductive argumentation', it is an explanatory hypothesis that best accounts for a wide range of facts about a particular event or act.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

“If one had any real evidence that, indeed, Jesus did return from the dead, then that is the beginning of a dropping of a series of dominoes that takes us to all kinds of wonderful things. It assures an afterlife and all kinds of things that we would all hope are true.”

-Hugh Hefner
Playboy founder
Interview with Lee Strobel

EVIDENCE FOR JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

- Burial recorded in all gospels
- Joseph of Arimathea petitioned Pilate for body
- Joseph put Jesus in his own tomb – Sanhedrin member: unlikely that this would be a lie
- Burial witnessed by close friends
- Tomb guarded by soldiers
- Jews never denied that Jesus was dead and buried



“On the eve of Passover Yeshua was hanged ... since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!”

– Jewish Talmud, Sanhedrin 43a.

“The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites and was crucified on that account...

these misguided creatures ... deny the gods of Greece and worship the crucified sage and live after his laws”

- Lucian of Samosata, 2nd Century Critic

“One of the most certain facts of history is that Jesus was crucified on orders of the Roman prefect of Judea, Pontius Pilate.”

- Agnostic skeptic Bart Ehrman

“That he [Jesus] was crucified is as sure
as anything historical ever can be.”

~John Dominic Crossan

Liberal Theologian
Leader of Jesus Seminar

EVIDENCE FOR JESUS' MISSING BODY

- Empty tomb viewed by Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, Peter and John
- Jewish leaders devised lie to cover up the resurrection
- Jewish leaders never refuted claim that the body was gone
- Non-Christian historians record Christian's claims of Jesus being alive and the body being gone



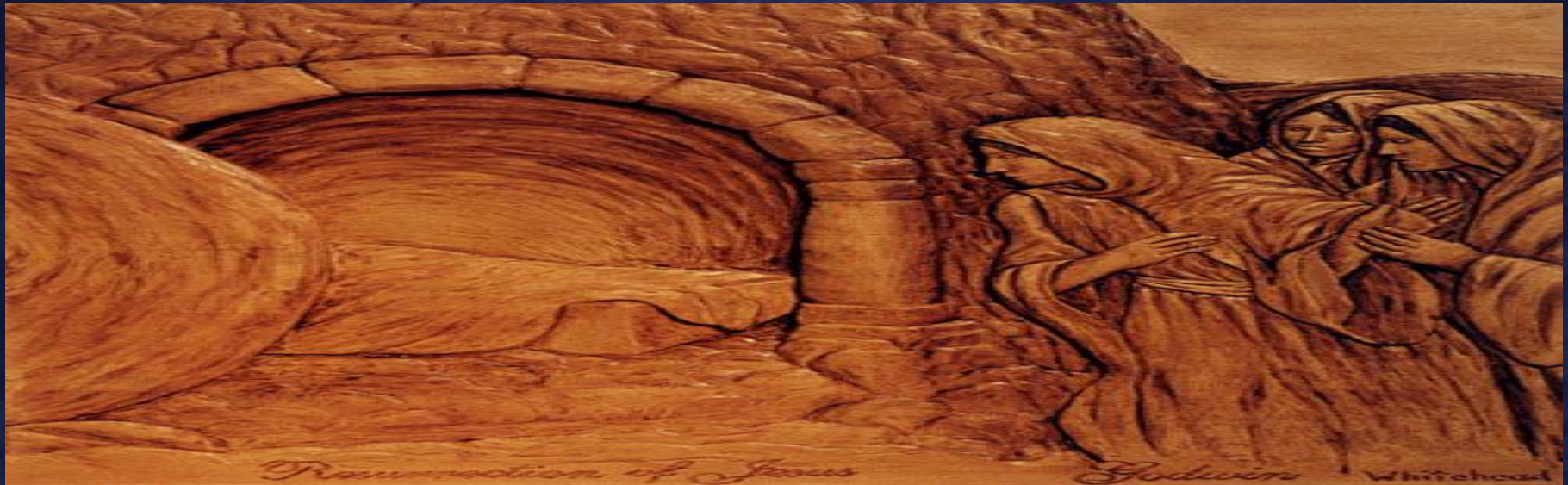
THE EMPTY TOMB AND THE JERUSALEM FACTOR



Jesus was publicly executed in Jerusalem and His appearances took place there, and His resurrection was proclaimed there. If the body had still been in the tomb, it would have been very easy to stop Christianity's message in its origins by simply going to a well-known tomb and producing the body.

But that's not what happened.

WOMEN REPORTED AS FIRST WITNESSES



“But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex” – Josephus, Antiquities 4.8.15

“Any evidence which a woman [gives] is not valid, also they are not valid to offer”
– Talmud, Rosh Hashannah 1.8

If the disciples or gospel writers were going to make up a lie that would stick in the first century, they certainly would not have invented the story of women being the first witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

“All the strictly historical evidence we have is in favor of [the empty tomb], and those scholars who reject it ought to recognize that they do so on some other ground than that of scientific history.”

~ William Wand

Oxford University Church Historian

EVIDENCE FOR JESUS' APPEARANCES

	Appeared to	Where	When	References
1	Mary Magdalene	Jerusalem	Sunday	Mark 6:9-11; John 20:11-18
2	Other Women	Jerusalem	Sunday	Matt 28:9-10
3	Peter	Jerusalem	Sunday	Luke 24:32; 1 Cor. 15:5
4	Emmaus disciples	Emmaus	Sunday	Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12
5	10 disciples	Jerusalem	Sunday	Mark 16:14; Luke 24:26-42; John 20:19-25
6	11 disciples	Jerusalem	A week later	John 20:26-31; 1 Cor. 15:5
7	7 disciples	Galilee	?	John 21:1-25
8	500 brethren	Galilee	?	1 Cor. 15:6
9	James	?	?	1 Cor. 15:7
10	11 disciples	Galilee	?	Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18
11	11 disciples	Jerusalem	40 days later	Acts 1:3-12

WHY BELIEVE THE GOSPELS?

- All Gospels written before A.D. 90 and likely much earlier; Paul's 1 Corinthians written nearly 15 years after the crucifixion
- Early writing is important because eyewitnesses can refute error; Paul requested just such a thing in 1 Corinthians 15:5-8, where he references 500 witnesses to Christ's resurrection
- No case in history of myth entering into a historical account where two generations had not passed

“The interval, then, between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”

- Sir Frederic G. Kenyon,
former director/principal librarian of the British Museum
“The Bible and Archaeology”

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

-Gerd Ludemann, Atheist
Guttingen University, Germany

WHY BELIEVE PAUL?

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."
(1 Corinthians 15:3-5; A.D. 55)

One of the earliest creeds, circulating in the first century. Historians believe Paul learned it within five years of Jesus death.

"This is the sort of data that historians of antiquity drool over."
- Dr. John Rodgers, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry

“But Polycarp [disciple of John] also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia Having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles.”

-Irenaeus

A. D. 69-155

Polycarp was martyred in Smyrna around the year 160 at the age of 86. In his letter to the church at Philippi, he mentions the resurrection of Jesus five times, one of which is:

“For they did not love the present age, but him who died for our benefit and for our sake was raised by God.”

- Letter to the Philippians, 9:2

EVIDENCE FOR THE DISCIPLES TRANSFORMED LIVES

Then all the disciples left Him and fled."(Matthew 26:56)

"As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. . . . On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. . . . Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply."(Acts 4:1-14)

“Therefore, having received orders and complete
certainly caused by the resurrection of our Lord
Jesus Christ and believing in the Word of God,
they [the disciples] went with the Holy Spirit’s
certainly, preaching the good news that the kingdom
of God is about to come.”

- Clement, Bishop of Rome

A. D. 30-100

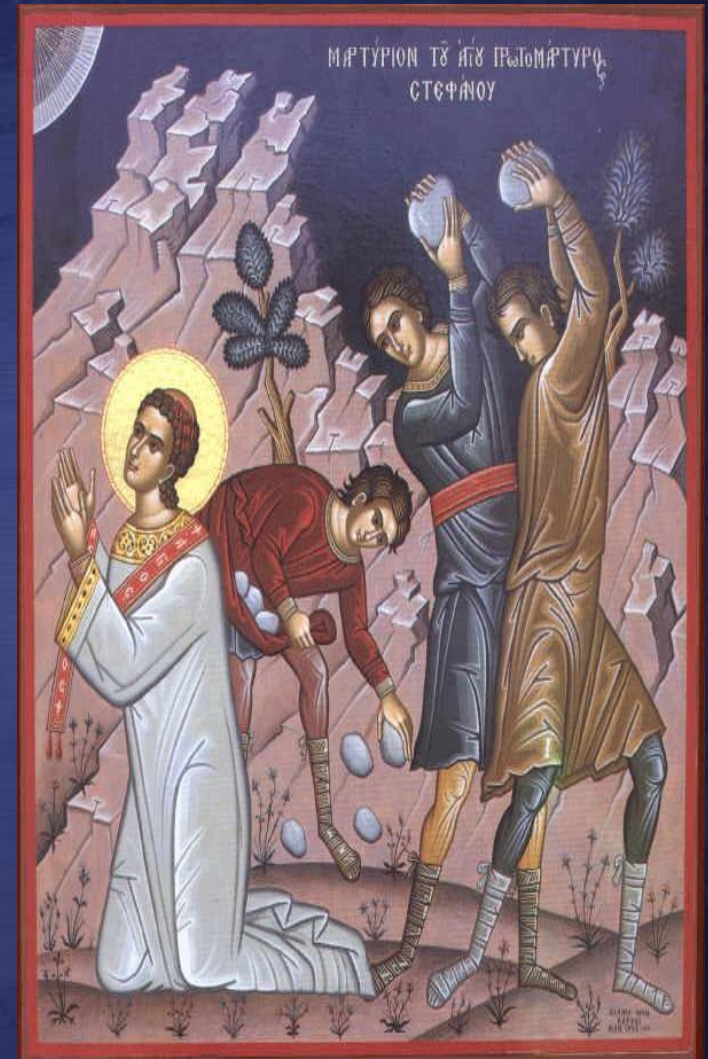
(perhaps Clement referred to in Phil. 4:3)

“Why, then, did some of the disciples claim to see Jesus alive after his crucifixion? I don’t doubt at all that some of the disciples claimed this. We don’t have any of their written testimony, but Paul, writing about twenty-five years later, indicates that this is what they claimed, and I don’t think he is making it up. And he knew at least a couple of them, whom he met just three years after the event.”

Bart Ehrman

EVIDENCE FOR THE DISCIPLES TRANSFORMED LIVES

- Peter – crucified upside down
- Andrew – crucified on an X-shaped cross
- James (disciple) – beheaded by Herod
- John (disciple) – banished to Patmos; died natural death in Ephesus
- Thomas – martyred in India
- James (half-brother of Jesus) – thrown from the top of the temple, then stoned
- Bartholomew – filleted alive
- Matthew – killed with sword in Ethiopia
- Luke – hanged in Greece
- Matthias – stoned and beheaded
- Jude – murdered by archers
- Barnabas – stoned at Salónica
- Paul – beheaded in Rome



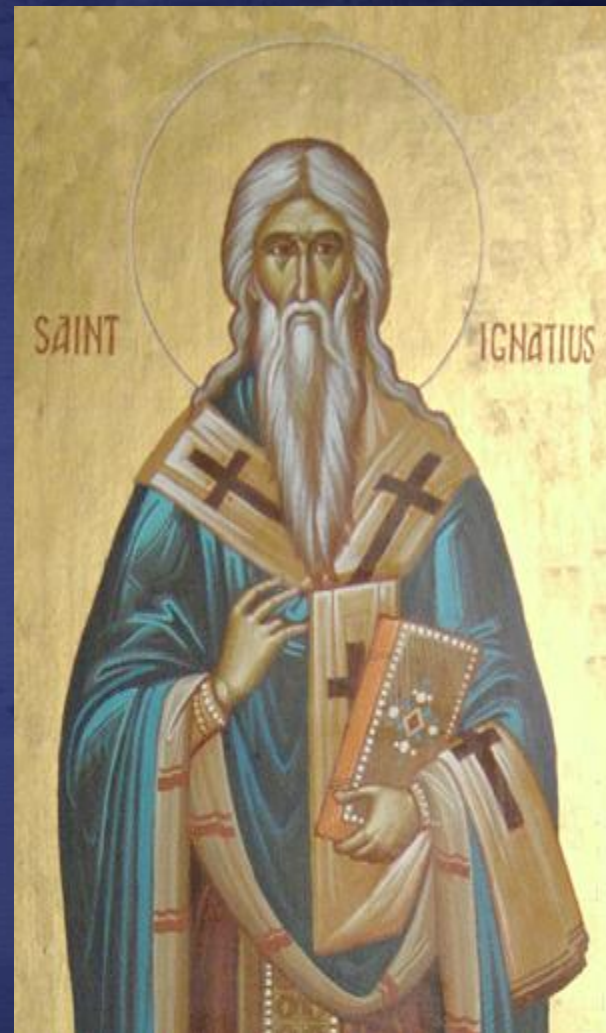
* Writings of Origen tell of Peter being crucified upside down and Paul's martyrdom in Rome by Nero.

“And when [Jesus] came to those with Peter, he said to them: “Take, handle me and see that I am not a bodiles demon.’ And immediately they handled him and believed, having known his flesh and blood.

Because of this they also despised death; but beyond death they were found.”

-Ignatius

Bishop in Antioch
Martyred in Rome, A.D. 110





“The disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 where not heading for a spiritual retreat experience; they were leaving town with their tails between their legs mumbling ‘we had hoped [past tense] that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel’ (v. 21) Their actions spoke as loudly as their words: they had abandoned such hope until fate; in the form of an appearance of a stranger, intervened.”

-Ben Whitherington III, *Jesus the Seer*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF JAMES

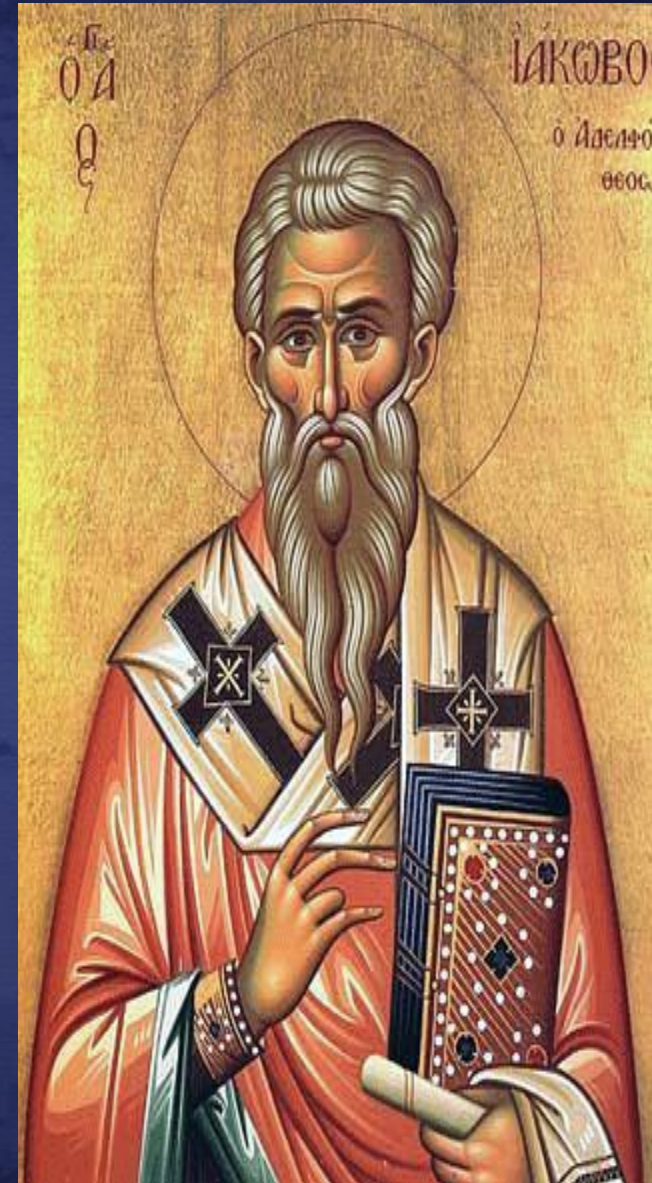
"For not even His brothers were believing in Him." (John 7:5)

Note: In the first century, it was embarrassing for a Rabbi to have his family not be followers.

"then He appeared to James"
(1 Corinthians 15:7)

"Festus was now dead, and Albius was but upon the raid; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered him to be stoned"

~Josephus
Antiquities 20.9.1



THE TRANSFORMATION OF PAUL

"Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison."(Acts 8:1-3)

"So, having obtained help from God, I [Paul] stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."(Acts 26:22-23)



“There is no doubt that Paul believed he saw Jesus’ real but glorified body raised from the dead.”

~ Bart Ehrman

FOUNDATION FOR THE UNDISPUTED FACTS



1. Multiple independent sources support the facts
2. Attestation by enemies of Christianity support the facts
3. Embarrassing admissions support the facts
4. Eyewitness testimony support the facts
5. Early testimony support the facts

From friend and foe alike ~ all validate the
facts of the resurrection

They are not in dispute

“I know in their own terms what they [the disciples] saw was the raised Jesus. That’s what they say and then all the historic evidence we have afterwards attest to their conviction that that’s what they saw. I’m not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. I wasn’t there. I don’t know what they saw. But I do know that as a historian that they must have seen something.”

-Dr. Paula Fredriksen
Boston University



EXPLANATION

I demand one

Appeal to the Best Explanation
So what best explains the resurrection given these facts?

THE RESURRECTION – A MIRACLE IN ONE OF 3 WAYS

1. Psychological: The disciples and others imagined a risen Christ, changed from unbelieving cowards into courageous evangelists, and went to their deaths for something they were wrong about or ultimately knew to be untrue.
2. Biological: Jesus survived the beatings, scourging, cross, and spear thrust into the heart, fooled his executioners, recuperated in the tomb, rolled away the stone, and had his 'resurrection' falsely proclaimed.
3. Theological: Christ's resurrection was a true, historically valid, and divine miracle where Jesus died and came back to life three days later, which is in keeping with the theme of miracles in the gospels.

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