

DID JESUS TRULY RISE FROM DEATH?

What is resurrection?

- *1 Corinthians 15:17 - If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*

22 Reasons to Believe in Jesus' Resurrection

1. Jesus' resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament
 - *1000 B.C. - Psalm 16:10 -...you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*
 - *700 B.C. - Isaiah 53:7-11 - He was oppressed, and he was afflicted...like a lamb that is led to the slaughter...By oppression and judgment he was taken away...he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people...they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death...Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days...Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.*
2. Jesus prophesied His resurrection in advance
 - *Mark 8:31 - ...he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.*
 - *Mark 9:31 - ..."The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."*
 - *Mark 10:33-34 - "...the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."*
3. Jesus died
4. Jesus' tomb location was well known
 - *Luke 23:50-53 - Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid.*
5. Jesus' tomb was guarded by the Roman government
 - *Matthew 27:62-66 ...the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.*

6. Jesus' empty tomb was found by women
 - *Luke 24:1–3, 10 - On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus...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.*
7. Jesus' disciples were transformed from cowards to courageous
8. Jesus appeared to crowds upwards to 500 people over 40 days
 - *1 Corinthians 15:3-6 - 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, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.*
9. Jesus' followers remained loyal to Him
10. Jesus' tomb was not enshrined
 - Edwin Yamauchi has immersed himself in no less than 22 languages and is an expert in ancient history, including Old Testament history and biblical archaeology, with an emphasis on the interrelationship between ancient near Eastern cultures and the Bible. He is widely regarded as an expert in ancient history, early church history, and Gnosticism. He has published over 80 articles in more than 3 dozen scholarly journals and has been awarded 8 fellowships. His writing includes contributing chapters to multiple books as well as books on Greece, Babylon, Persia, and ancient Africa. He reports that was common in Jesus' day for the tombs of holy men to be enshrined. In Palestine at that time, the tombs of at least fifty prophets or other religious figures were enshrined as places of worship and veneration. (Edwin Yamauchi, "Easter: Myth, Hallucination, or History? Part One," *Christianity Today* 18, no. 12, March 15, 1974, 4–7.)
 - Yet, according to James D. G. Dunn, there is "absolutely no trace" of any veneration at Jesus' tomb. (James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 67–68.)
11. Jesus' followers worshipped Him as God
12. Jesus' family worshipped Him as God
 - *Acts 1:12–14 - Then [after Jesus' ascension] they returned to Jerusalem...And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*
13. Jesus' followers changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday
 - *Revelation 1:10 - I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.*
14. Jesus' followers practiced communion and baptism
15. Jesus' enemy Paul was converted
 - *1 Corinthians 15:8–9 - Last of all...he [risen Jesus] appeared also to me [Paul]. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

16. Jesus' resurrection was recorded shortly after it occurred
 - *1 Corinthians 15:6* - *Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.*
17. Jesus' resurrection is unique in history
18. Jesus' resurrection is verified by history
 - Josephus, a Jewish historian born a few years after Jesus died. His most celebrated passage, called the "Testimonium Flavianum" from *The Antiquities* (18.63-64) says: About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.
 - Suetonius (AD 70-160) was a Roman historian and annalist of the Imperial House. In the *Vita Nero* 16.11-13 "Punishment [persecution] was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition [the resurrection]."
 - Pliny the Younger (AD 61 or 62-113) became governor of Bithynia (northwestern Turkey) in the early 2nd century. In a letter written around 111 to the emperor Trajan explaining early Christian worship he says: "I have never been present at an examination of Christians. Consequently, I do not know the nature of the extent of the punishments usually meted out to them, nor the grounds for starting an investigation and how far it should be pressed...They also declared that the sum total of their guilt or error amounted to no more than this: they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day [Sunday] to chant verses alternately amongst themselves in honor of Christ as if to a god..."
19. Jesus' Church has stood the test of time
 - *Matthew 16:17-21* - *Jesus answered him...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it...From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.*
20. Jesus is alive and changing lives to this day
21. Jesus' resurrection pre-dates the odd pagan versions of "resurrection"
 - N.T. Wright: "In so far as the ancient non-Jewish world had a Bible, its Old Testament was Homer. And in so far as Homer has anything to say about resurrection, he is quite blunt: it doesn't happen." The idea of resurrection is denied in ancient paganism from Homer all the way to the Athenian dramatist Aeschylus who wrote, "Once a man has died, and the dust has soaked up his blood, there is no resurrection." According to Wright, "neither in Plato nor Aristotle do we find any suggestion that resurrection, the return to bodily life of the dead person, was either desirable or possible." Wright says, "Christianity was born into a world where its central claim was known to be false. Many believed that the dead were non-existent; outside Judaism, nobody believed resurrection." Wright concludes: "Nobody in the pagan world of Jesus' day and thereafter actually claimed that somebody had been truly dead and had then come to be truly, and bodily, alive once more." In summary, death, in ancient paganism, was a one-way street.

- After thoroughly researching ancient beliefs about resurrection, theologian N. T. Wright concludes: "Nobody in the pagan world of Jesus' day and thereafter actually claimed that somebody had been truly dead and had then come to be truly, and bodily, alive once more." (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 76.)
- After a lifetime of careful academic study on this issue, Edwin Yamauchi has concluded that there is no possibility that the idea of a resurrection was borrowed because there is no definitive evidence for the teaching of a deity resurrection in any of the mystery religions prior to the second century. In fact, it seems that other religions and spiritualities stole the idea of a resurrection from Christians! For example, the resurrection of Adonis is not spoken of until the second to fourth centuries. Attis, the consort of Cybele, is not referred to as a resurrected god until after AD 150. (Edwin Yamauchi, "Easter: Myth, Hallucination, or History?" *Christianity Today*, March).
- Some have postulated that the taurobolium ritual of Attis and Mithra, the Persian god, is the source of the biblical doctrine of the resurrection. In this ritual, the initiate was put in a pit, and a bull was slaughtered on a grating over him, drenching him with blood. However, the earliest this ritual is mentioned is AD 160, and the belief that it led to rebirth is not mentioned until the fourth century. In fact, Princeton scholar Bruce Metzger has argued that the taurobolium was said to have the power to confer eternal life only after it encountered Christianity. (Lee Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 174–75; and Bruce M. Metzger, *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1968), 11.)

22. Jesus' resurrection defies any alternate explanation

What are the primary objections to Jesus' resurrection?

1. Swoon theory (Taught by Christian Science and Islam)
2. Spiritual not physical resurrection (Taught by Jehovah's Witness cult)
3. Everyone went to the wrong tomb (Joseph of Arimathea, Roman government, women, and disciples all knew Jesus' burial location)
4. Jesus' body was stolen (This was the first Jewish alternative explanation and assumes the Roman government failed to secure the tomb but doesn't explain how Jesus' dead body returned to life)
5. Jesus had a body double (How could family and friends be tricked for 40 days, including Thomas who saw the scars?)
6. Jesus' resurrection was a mass hallucination (1 Cor. 15 says he appeared to groups as large as 500 over 40 days)

What is the hope of Jesus' resurrection?

- *John 11:25 - Jesus said..."I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies..."*
- *1 Corinthians 15:20-22 - ...in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*