

The Resurrection Notes

The Resurrection of Jesus is the “Center of Gravity” for Christianity

1. Requirement of salvation (Rom. 10:9)

2. Vindicates and Validates Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 10:31-33 Matt. 16:1-4; Jn 2:18-21).

3. Authenticates Christianity empirically as exclusively true, ruling out all opposite beliefs.

- a. Paul – if Christ did not rise then Christianity is false. Logical opposite is true. (1 Cor. 15:14-19).
- b. This is our go to with comparative religions.

How do you know you have the right religion and everyone else is wrong?

The Easy Way or the Hard Way

Consider other systems that try to validate through a subjective appeal.

- i. Islam says read the Quran, it is so beautiful it must be from God.
- ii. Mormons say, read the book of Mormon, you will feel a burning in your bosom.
- iii. Jesus says, destroy this body and I will raise it up (physically, empirically falsifiable). **UNIQUE!**

Christ could have easily said I will raise spiritually, there would be no way to falsify or verify it.

Jesus allows His exclusive truth claims to be put to an empirically falsifiable and verifiable test.

John 14:6 If true... then all other opposing religions are ruled out as false.

4. Real life application: Validates our indestructible reward in eternity (1 Pet. 1:2-4).

Those 4 significant reasons give us a glimpse at why the resurrection is vital to Christianity.

The apostle Paul put's it all together:

1 Corinthians 15:14-18:

¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith is also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

So how do you we *know* that the resurrection occurred 2000 years ago?

If someone challenges you and says how do you know it is true?

The way that most of us know it to be true is not the way that we show it to be true.

There is a major difference between what we know and what we can show

Knowing and Showing

Most of us know the Jesus rose from the dead through the internal witness of God's Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:17

if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Romans 8:11,16

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you... The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God

That is how we *know* Christianity to be true and that is a perfectly valid claim.

The problem we run into is an outsider can protest and say how is that any different than the Mormon's claim?

Remember, the Muslim and Mormon can make appeals to internal subjective claims as well.

Just because they profess counterfeit experiences, does that invalidate our genuine experience?

Illustration

I know (internally) I am going to be a Navy SEAL, I know I am willing to die before I quit.

Show with 173 guys ...How many willing to die b4 quitting?

We all make the same claim. We won't all make it. Most of these guys are wrong.

The fact that so many insist on their counterfeit claim shouldn't cause me to doubt my genuine claim.

So how do we work this out? Do we sit around a table and talk about how sure we feel we are right?

You work it out in the arena of SEAL training.

Through an external process that everyone can see we will find out if you have what we can't see.

The frauds will be exposed.

In a similar way, the battle of theological truth is like a look left, look right mental picture.

Except on graduation day, there will only be 1 still standing there.

Do we sit around a table a debate over who has the legit internal experience?

You work it out in the arena of evidences

But what if we are challenged to *show* it is true?

The resurrection is *theological* and *historical*

The way I know I am going to be a SEAL is internal

The way that I show what I know is external and I am put to the test through battle of SEAL training

So how do we expose the religious counterfeits? It is through external battle; we drag them to the cross

The resurrection of Jesus is our finishing move!

If we take the Bible and look at it as a historian would, look at it as 66 historical documents there are certain things that you can know with greater certainty than others.

1. Early Source (Testimony that gets as close to the action as possible)
2. Multiple Independent Sources (The more independent sources the better you can triangulate)
3. Embarrassment (When people fabricate stories they don't make themselves look bad)
4. Eyewitnesses (An eye-witness is going to carry more weight than second or third-hand info)
5. Enemy Attestation (An enemy vouching goes further than friends or even neutral parties)

The resurrection is our finishing move!

1. Jesus was crucified and buried by Joseph of Arimathea
2. His disciples *claimed* and *sincerely* believed He rose again and appeared to them.
3. Saul the church persecutor was radically changed from terrorist to teammate
4. James the half-brother of Jesus was radically changed from unbeliever to prominent leader
5. The tomb was discovered empty

Fact #1 Jesus was crucified and buried

The Gospels, Jewish and Greco-Roman sources

- Josephus
- Tacitus
- Lucian
- Mar Bar-Serapion
- Jewish Talmud

Josephus

Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest est standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified. . .

Tacitus

"Nero fastened the guilt [of the burning of Rome] and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, 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, tors, Pontius Pilatus."

Lucian

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

Mar Bar-Serapion

"Or [what advantage came to] the Jews by the murder of their Wise King, seeing that from that very time their kingdom was driven away from them?"

Jewish Talmud

"on the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged."

John Dominic Crossan

"That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be."

Fact #2 Jesus disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.

- They claimed it

POW

- Paul (1 Corinthians 15:10)
- Oral Tradition** (1 Corinthians 15 Creed, Acts sermon summaries)
- Written sources (Polycarp and Clement of Rome)
- The Gospels

- They sincerely believed it

TOPIC AD

- Tertullian** (prior 200), Nero drew fire first... Peter and Paul, public record "Live of the Caesars"
- Origen** (185-254) *Contra Celsum*– The disciples so persuaded they could laugh at death
- Polycarp** (110) "ultimate endurance" of apostle/disciples, suffering like Him & with Him now.
- Ignatius (110)** – The disciples handles the risen and despised death (probably demonstrated)
- Clement of Rome** Records the sufferings and martyrdom of Peter and Paul
- Acts**- records disciples' willingness to suffer and die throughout book.
- Dionysius of Corinth (170) (E)**– Ecclesiastical History 325, resources available. Peter, Paul.

So they were willing to die for it... Big deal!

Well, what if they weren't willing to die when put to the test? What would that do?

What if they bailed out and recanted? Christianity wouldn't get traction.

- **Publicly traded company** (Mike Licona)
- **Battlefield leaders retreating**

Can you imagine if you are charging into battle and your assault leader bails out and retreats?

"The ability to maintain control of emotions and actions regardless of circumstances"

Because they knew the legacy of Christ was true.

"In the worst of conditions I will rely upon the legacy of those who have gone before me..."

President Bush during 9/11

The disciples did not recant, but went from cowards deserting and hid during Jesus' greatest hour of need.

Christianity would have never gotten off the ground. No evidence to suggest they ever recanted.

But then they were radically changed from deserting cowards to courageous proclaimers.

Seeing the risen Jesus is a game changer! Do what you want to this body, do me the favor!

So what if they were willing to die. That doesn't make it true. You bring up Bush and 9/11...

What about the 9/11 Hijackers?

The disciples were uniquely positioned to know if what they suffered and died for was true.

Prominent NT Scholar and Critic Dr. Gerd Lüdemann

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

Fact #3 Saul the church persecutor was radically changed from terrorist to teammate

Who was Paul?

Highly educated Pharisee, top of his class.

Leading the charge and running the show when Stephen was stoned to death

Acts 8:3 NIV

"Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison."

Acts 9:1-2 NIV

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

Saul is on a murderous rampage, attempting to destroy the church, dragging people off in chains in hopes of executing them.

It is while he is in route to Damascus to conduct another capture and kill operation that every changed!

1 Corinthians 15:8

“Then... He was seen by me also!”

From terrorist to teammate just like that because seeing the risen is that kind of a game changer

Paul personally testifies of his own transformation in Galatian, Corinthians and Philippians and it is independently confirmed by Luke in Acts.

Galatians 1:22-23

²² And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. ²³ But they were hearing only, “He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to destroy.*”

This verifies that others were aware of his pre-Christ actions.

Acts records his pre-Christian actions against the church as well as work and sufferings for the church.

This is as though Osama Bin Laden was radically transformed.

Not only did he change from terrorist to teammate but he suffered and died for it!

Sufferings recorded in the NT and death document by:

COLD PT – Clement of Rome, Origen, Luke, Dionysius, Polycarp and Tertullian record Paul's change.

Focusing in on the *cause* of Paul's transformation is key!

Fact #4 James the half-brother of Jesus was radically changed from unbeliever to prominent leader

James and his slinging's were not believers in Jesus during his earthly ministry

See Mark 3:21, 31; 6:3-4; John 7:5

John 7:1-5 nkjv

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. ³ His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” ⁵ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

His brother's basically dare Jesus to perform in an attempt to call Him out. Prove it!
So in the Gospels we see that James was a skeptic from the start!

Imagine what it would take to convince you that your own sibling is God's chosen Messiah!

Then Jesus' trial and execution for committing blasphemy would only serve to verify James' unbelief.

So what happens with James after all these things?

Well, the next time we see James he is the leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem.

So what happened between

1. 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 creed: "then He appeared to James..."
2. After the resurrection James the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:12-21; Gal. 1:19).
3. He died for his belief in the resurrection: Josephus, Clement of Alexandria (E), Hegesippus (E).

Multiple, early witnesses both Christian and non-Christian to the reality of James conversion and martyred.

Fact #5 The empty Tomb

"it is accepted as a fact of history by an impressive majority of critical scholars. Gary Habermas discovered that roughly 75 percent of scholars on the subject accept the empty tomb as a historical fact."¹

Jerusalem Factor

Jesus was publicly executed in Jerusalem

Christianity would have never gotten off the ground if the corpse was still in the tomb

There was never so much as an attempt at arguing for a still occupied tomb

Critics of Christianity would have jumped on the opportunity to silence them by parading a corpse

Christianity could have been falsified empirically!

Jesus never said, destroy this body and I will raise it in spirit.

It was destroy this body and I will raise it up... An empirically testable proof!

The critics are completely silenced on the claim of the empty tomb.

This is not an argument from silence.

A recent attempt to explain away the empty tomb was that the corpse would have been unrecognizable

¹ Gary R. Habermas;Michael Licona. The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus (Kindle Locations 618-619). Kindle Edition.

If the account from the book of Acts is correct, the disciple waited about 50 days (Pentecost is 50 days after Passover).

Therefore, the critics didn't even bother to try to produce the corpse.

2 problems with that view:

1. The climate of Jerusalem would have allowed distinctive characteristics & wounds to be identifiable.
2. Regardless of how decomposed a body might have been, something would be greater than nothing.

Enemy Attestation

Your mom vouching for you is one thing, but an enemy vouching for you says much more.

The early opponents of Christianity tacitly testified to the empty tomb by saying the disciples stole away the body.

Why would they have to say that the body was stolen if the tomb was not empty but occupied?

They had to account for the empty tomb somehow!

Boom!

(Matt. 28:12- 13; Justin Martyr, Trypho 108; Tertullian, De Spectaculis 30).

Criterion on Embarrassment (Women were the first discoverers of the empty tomb)

People who fabricate stories typically attempt to make themselves good in the process.

“Stolen Valor”

“The FBI estimates that there are 300 SEAL Imposters for every living Navy SEAL”²

When someone wants to popularize and fabricate a story they will like to embellish to further their agenda

Stolen Valor is a case in point. Guys put it on their resumes in hope of advancing their career.

The last thing you would expect them to put is something like:

I am never on time, no military experience, I tend to not be trusted... Just being brutally honest and I hope to still get the job!

What do you say to someone like that? Ok, well... We appreciate your honesty; we will call you back if we decide to move forward.

A person like that doesn't intentionally lie to make themselves look bad while clinging to a serious hope that they will get the job.

The criteria of Embarrassment in a nutshell is:

² https://videos.extremesealexperience.com/Fake-Navy-Seal-Verification_Scourge-Of-Seal-Imposters-1

“People don’t lie to make themselves look bad, they lie to make themselves look good.”

Historians look for embarrassing details as markers of truth and that is exactly what we find with the first discoverers of the empty tomb!

Women! A handful of girls!!!

1ST century women occupied the lowest rung of the social ladder in Greco-Roman & Jewish culture

To get a picture check this out:

Talmud Sotah 19a

“Sooner let the words of the Law be burnt than delivered to women.”

Talmud, Kiddushin 82b

“Happy is he whose children are males, and woe to him whose children are females.”

Josephus, Antiquities 4.8.15

“But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex ... since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment.”

Given that a woman’s word and worth was so lowly esteemed to Jews and Gentiles alike in the 1ST century it makes no sense at all if the Gospel writers were inventing the empty tomb story for them to insert women as their first and primary key witnesses of the empty tomb!

If the empty tomb was a fabricated story, surely they would have had written in Peter, James and John as the first discoverers of the empty tomb as they comforted the hysterically crying women!

If the story was an invention, the apostles wouldn’t have been the hiding cowards but the hero’s.

But it is not recorded that way is it.

The apostles were cowards, that abandoned Jesus in His greatest hour of need.

They fled the scene, hid and even denied any relation with Him “I don’t know the man!”

And while the disciples hid like cowards it was women that boldly went to the tomb and discovered the tomb empty.

Women, whose word wasn’t considering valid in the court of law at the time!

Why would the Gospel writers record that? Because that’s how it went down.

It passes the **criterion of embarrassment** with flying colors.

Thus the empty tomb passes historical reliability on criteria of enemy attestation and embarrassment

JET

Jerusalem Factor – If the tomb was not empty, Jerusalem is the last place you want to start Christianity

Enemy Attestation – Opponents admit the empty tomb by accusing the disciples of stealing it

Testimony of Women– As the first and key primary witnesses, credibility is added via embarrassment

Historical facts have been presented that are accepted by the majority of historical scholarship and this has been done without appealing to the inerrancy or inspiration of Scripture.

That means that one cannot reject the resurrection of Jesus because they reject the Bible as divine

Review

1. Jesus' death by crucifixion
2. Jesus disciples believed he rose and appeared to them (signing their testimony in blood)
3. The church persecutor Paul believed he encountered the risen Jesus and became a proponent.
4. James (half-bro to Jesus) went from skeptic to sold out after seeing the risen
5. The tomb is empty

The best explanation that accounts for all of these facts is that God raised Jesus from the dead and appeared to his disciples, transforming them from abandoning cowards to courageous proclaimers. Paul was transformed from an enemy terrorist of Christianity to MVP and James which radically changed from doubting skeptic to leader of the mothership church in Jerusalem. Jesus provided forensic, empirical proof by raising the very body that was crucified. All the opponents needed to do was go to the tomb and put the body on display which would have put an end to Christianity but they couldn't because the Tomb was empty, because God raised Jesus from the dead.

He is risen and His resurrection is what we believe and confess

His resurrection that vindicates and validates Him as the unique Son of God

His resurrection is the crushing blow that falsifies all opposing religious system

His resurrection is the promise of our future resurrection...That though a man shall die, he shall live.