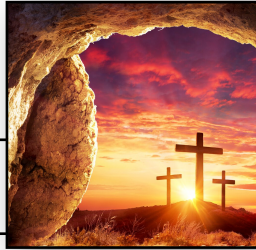


WHY the Resurrection Matters Today

"And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins." 1 Corinthians 15:17 NLT



"The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted on the minds of human beings—or it is the most remarkable fact of history." - Josh McDowell

Christianity would collapse without the resurrection. Christianity and the resurrection either stand together or fall together! Without the resurrection, there would be no Christianity! Anyone wishing to destroy Christianity has only one major objective—disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Many have tried—and ended up becoming a devoted follower of Christ.

The "Minimal Facts" Argument for Christ's Resurrection

The "minimal facts" argument for Christ's resurrection presents widely accepted historical facts (from ancient historians and the Bible) accepted even by the most vocal skeptics to argue that Jesus arose from the dead.

1. Jesus died by Roman **crucifixion**.
2. After his death, his disciples (and followers) claimed that they **saw Jesus alive**.
3. The appearance of Jesus **transformed the disciples** from being fearful into bold witnesses of his resurrection, even willing to die for their claim.
4. The resurrection of Jesus was a **central message** of the early church, starting soon in Jerusalem (creeds) and not a legend decades later.
5. Both **James**, the unbelieving half-brother of Jesus, and **Paul**, a persecutor of Christians, were converted by what they claimed was an appearance of the resurrected Jesus.

Central Lesson

The resurrection of Jesus Christ answers the critical questions people are asking today.

1. Does **GOD** Exist?

"God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this." Acts 2:32 NLT

If Jesus has risen from the grave and conquered death, then this seems to be powerful evidence for the existence of God. **Naturalism** (the belief that life and the universe were caused by natural material causes and not supernatural or spiritual forces—in short, no God, just nature) does not have the resources to account for a resurrection. There must be a **supernatural** explanation.

2. Which **RELIGION** Is True?

"And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins." 1 Corinthians 15:17 NLT

The resurrection separates biblical Christianity from all other world religions. World religions are based on philosophy, beliefs, and a code of conduct. In

contrast, Christianity is based upon a person and an event in history—the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Sean McDowell writes: **"This doesn't mean other religions are entirely false in everything they teach. Many religions offer profound insights about life. But it does mean that on core issues—the nature of God, salvation, and the afterlife—Christianity is uniquely true."**

3. Is there **LIFE** After **DEATH**?

"2 There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am." John 14:2-3 NLT "But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior." Philippians 3:20 NLT "19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. 20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died." 1 Corinthians 15:17-20 NLT

Jesus promised his followers that he was preparing a place in heaven for them to be with him in eternity. Followers of Christ are citizens of heaven. Jesus's resurrection shows that there is existence after death—there is life after this life! Accept and trust in Christ as your Savior, and you will have eternal life.

In the 1990 science-fiction movie *Flatliners*, some medical students want to know if there is life after death. Instead of studying religion or philosophy, they decide to flatline one another's hearts, resuscitate themselves back to life, and then give a report on what happens in the afterlife. While morbid, their thinking does make sense—if we want to know what's on the other side of life, we should ask someone who has been there and come back. Because of the resurrection, **Jesus has actually returned from the dead and can confirm that there is life after death.**

4. Is Jesus the **ONLY** Way to Salvation?

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'" John 14:6 NLT (Also Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5)

If Jesus has risen from the grave and conquered death, this supports His claim that there is only one road to heaven—faith in Him. No other leader of a world religion made this claim. Only Jesus died as a sacrifice for our sins. Only Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. Only Jesus claimed to be the exclusive path to God (His Father). Only Jesus died, was buried, and three days later arose from the dead, as foretold in OT prophecies and by Jesus himself (Luke 9:22), proving all that He claimed.

5. Does Jesus Have the **POWER** to Help Us with Life's Problems?

"No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded." John 10:18 NLT

If Jesus had the power to raise himself from the grave and conquer death, he would have the power to help us with any of life's problems. The leaders of all the other world religions could not raise themselves from the dead nor have the power to help us in everyday struggles. Only Jesus has this ability. The resurrection of Jesus Christ matters today!

Conclusion - The resurrection of Jesus Christ answers the critical questions people are asking today.

Action Steps: ► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.