

Simple Facts about the Resurrection of Jesus

The Facts: The Minimalist Approach for Talking about the Resurrection, by Relevant Belief
Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • April 8, In the year of our Lord, 2018
Scripture Reader and Reading: Phil Joseph – First Corinthians 15.3–8
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – No Suggestions

Prelude:

I. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the cornerstones of our faith.

Persuasion:

I. Why the Resurrection of Jesus Matters

A. Who do you think Jesus is?

1. Just a wise but dead teacher?
2. A liar but a dead one?
3. The Son of God?

B. Did He die and then rise from the dead?

C. We can investigate:

1. 1Co 15.3–8

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time (1 Corinthians 15.3–8).

2. Then Paul showed why it is important:

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 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 (1 Corinthians 15.13–19).

D. Is this merely *our* truth?

1. Paul showed it is not simply personal
2. If Christ not raised:
 - a) We harm people by persuading them to believe a lie
 - b) We should throw away our Bibles
3. The resurrection is an historical event:
 - a) Shows Jesus is divine
 - b) Shows that there is life after death
 - c) Shows that only Jesus can save

II. What Are the Facts?

A. A preliminary statement:

1. Resurrection not true because it is in the Bible
2. It is in the Bible because it is true

B. Five basic facts:

1. Jesus was crucified
2. His disciples believed that they saw a resurrected Christ
 - a) They suffered and died for their declaration
 - (1) Acts 4.1–2

1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4.1–2).

- (2) Acts 26.22–25

22 “Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I

stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” 24 Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!” (Acts 26:22–24).

- b) As we saw, Paul affirmed it in 1Co 15
 - c) All four Gospel Accounts affirm it
3. The resurrection changed Paul
- a) He had persecuted the church
 - b) Gal 1.13

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it (Galatians 1.13).

4. The resurrection converted James, the brother of Jesus
- a) John 7.2–5

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 (John 7.1–5).

- b) Became a leader in the Jerusalem Church
 - c) Wrote a Book of the Bible
5. The tomb of Jesus was empty
- a) Less than two months later, the disciples preached His resurrection
 - b) His enemies could have shown Jesus in His tomb
 - c) No one worshiped at the tomb of Jesus, for He was not in it

- C. If Jesus did not rise, Christians have been deceived and are deceiving
- D. If it did happen, we had better listen to the teachings of Jesus Christ

III. Investigating the Resurrection

A. Historians act as detectives

1. Detectives look for Probable Cause
 - a) to arrest a suspect and
 - b) to get a search warrant
2. Probable Cause means there is strong evidence a crime occurred

B. Probable Cause in relation to the resurrection

1. Critics do not deny something happened, they just seek to reinterpret
2. Did the resurrection happen?
3. Or are there other explanations?

C. Hallucination Theory

1. Did the disciples hallucinate and persuade multitudes?
2. Hallucinations do not happen to groups
3. Does not explain the empty tomb

D. Wrong Tomb Theory

1. Jewish leaders would have gone to the right tomb and shown the body
2. Wrong tomb does not explain all the appearances of Christ
3. It was not the empty tomb that persuaded multitudes, but seeing Jesus

E. Swoon Theory

1. Claims Jesus merely fainted and came to later
2. And then He moved the stone and fought off Roman guards!

F. Stolen Body Theory

1. Matt 28.11–15

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the

city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day (Matthew 28.11–15).

2. This means all the conspirators suffered for what they knew to be a lie
 - a) It did not gain them power
 - b) It did not gain them money
 - c) It did not gain them women
 - d) What could have been their motive?
 - e) If only one disciple would have broken under pressure
 - (1) that would have sunk the whole thing
 - (2) None ever did

G. Substitute Theory

1. Islam claims this
2. JWs claim He borrowed a crucified body, but why?
3. Could a substitute fool His friends and family?

H. Disciples Wanted to Belief Theory

1. This claims they created the resurrection and used Scripture to support it
2. However, they all doubted it initially
 - a) Mark 16.14

14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen (Mark 16.14).

b) John 20.24–28

24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” 26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” 27 Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20.24–28).

I. The Resurrection Happened

1. Accounts for:

- a) the empty tomb
- b) the conversions of the disciples
- c) the willingness of the witnesses to suffer

2. But you have to be willing to admit the divine

Exhortation:

I. The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth shows

A. Jesus is the Son of God

- 1. Rom 1.4 because it was a self-resurrection
- 2. Thomas in John 20

B. Jesus can forgive your sins

- 1. 1Co 15.17

17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! (1 Corinthians 15.17).

- 2. Forgiveness needed for the Judgment – Acts 17.30–31

30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17.30–31).

C. Jesus had power over death

1. Heb 2.14–15

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2.14–15).

II. Believe this good news