

# THE RESURRECTION

*Can Rational, Critical, & Intelligent People Genuinely Believe in the Resurrection?*

Five accounts in the first 20 to 60 years & 11 accounts within the first Century. Very rare in history that you have that many sources for a single event.

Ancient Judaism - Josephus (90 years later)  
Alexander the Great - Arrian (400 years later)  
Ancient Persian Wars - Herodotus (70 years later)  
Middle Ages - St Bede (200 years later)

By Historical Standards the Resurrection is very exceptional.

Earliest Account - 53-55 A.D:

Hallucination?

1. Too Many People
2. No Expectation
3. Would have called it a Vision
4. Only could conceive of a physical bodily resurrection
5. An Empty Tomb

Standard Rule of Historical Methodology:  
“When you’re dealing with an ancient document that claims to write history and reads like history, treat it like history. If a historian thinks that an ancient document that claims to write history and reads like history is not reporting history, then the burden of proof lies with the historian to prove it wrong, it is not on the document to prove itself right.”

If ever you have reason to believe anything in history actually happened you have every reason to believe this account is true.

## Three Options

### 1Corinthians 15.1-8

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. [It is arguable that Paul received this within 3-4 years of the event, at most 5 or 6. See Galatians 1,2.]

### John 20.1-8

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

Four Qualities Scholars Look For:

1. Different Accounts
2. Irrelevant Detail (see Mark 10:23)
3. Counterproductive Detail
4. Historically Significant Detail

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”— John 14.9

\*All texts quoted from the TNIV unless otherwise noted.

## Story Details vs Teachings

### A “Love Your Enemy” Day

#### Danger of Celebrating an Event Only

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.—**C.S. Lewis**

# FABRICATED FANTASY

## *The Rational Irrationality of The Lie Theory*

Jesus existed - Pliny, Tacitus, Josephus  
James and Ananus - Josephus  
Wonder worker - Josephus, Celsus  
Wise man, Teacher - Josephus  
Followers regarded as Divine - Pliny  
Crucified - Tacitus, Lucian, Josephus  
Pontius Pilate/Tiberius - Tacitus, Josephus  
Darkness of Crucifixion story- Thallus  
Catalyst for Growth - Tacitus  
Claudius in 49 A.D. - Suetonius  
Nero in 60's A.D. - Tacitus  
Governor of Bithynia in 100 A.D. - Pliny

**Undisputable Facts:** Sometime in the first third of the 1st Century (30,40,50 A.D.) there is a band of Jewish folks who went out into the world proclaiming a message. (A lot of different sources.\*) That Jesus Christ, who was a contemporary of theirs, lived an extraordinary life, to the point where he had a reputation of being sinless. They claimed that he did these miracles, they claimed that he made these outrageous claims (especially in a Jewish environment) that he had come down from heaven and that he was the son of God, and most importantly they claimed that he rose from the dead. They went out into a hostile environment, starting in Palestine and then very quickly spread throughout the Roman empire. They went out and proclaimed that he was the Savior of the World. And they suffered a lot of persecution because of it. We know from Tacitus (Roman Historian) that Christianity had grown so large and so fast that by the year 62,63, 64 AD, that the Roman Emperor Nero could plausibly blame the burning of Rome on these Christians. And that justified trying to exterminate them on his campaign to try and kill all the Christians. (And it was as brutal as anything in history affords us.) Even the hardened Tacitus comments that Nero's treatment of the Christians was barbaric even according to Roman standards. We find the basic message of the early Christians in the Gospels and Paul's Epistles (the earliest writings) These folks were willing to die for this message that this contemporary of theirs, Jesus, made Divine claims, rose from the dead, and lived an extraordinary life, and did these miracles to verify the claims he was making.

### The Lie Theory

#### Question 1: Why would these men do this?

No Motive.  
Heretical by traditional Jewish Standards  
Publius (or Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus (AD 56 - AD 117)

#### Question 2: Could they have pulled this lie off?

Easily Falsified  
Not long, long ago, in a place far, far away.  
Jesus was a fellow Jew whom they knew and they presumed their audience knew. (James Jesus' brother)  
Lived in Palestine where they were preaching.

"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."— John 14.9

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Died very recently

Big names are used (Pilate the Governor, Caiaphas the High Priest, Joseph of Arimathea)

No evidence that they were the kind of people who would lie.

Christianity was seen as a pernicious cult that needed to be stamped out and although there are many charges against Christianity in the first Century, never is the charge made that they made it all up! (They don't deny that Jesus did miracles.) We can't find any ancient person who accuses the early Christians of making the whole thing up!

### **Question 3. Why are there no deserters?**

“Watergate involved a conspiracy to cover up, perpetuated by the closest aides to the President of the United States—the most powerful men in America, who were intensely loyal to their president. But one of them, John Dean, turned states evidence, that is, testified against Nixon, as he put it, “to save his own skin”—and he did so only two weeks after informing the president about what was really going on—two weeks! The real cover-up, the lie, could only be held together for two weeks, and then everybody else jumped ship in order to save themselves. Now, the fact is that all that those around the President were facing was embarrassment, maybe prison. Nobody's life was at stake.”—Chuck Colson

### **Questions 4: Why do the Gospels read the way they do in regards to their counter cultural dimensions?**

One example is Jesus' treatment of women.

# OF LEGENDS AND LORE

*Probabilistic Conclusions Based on Evidence Or Presuppositions of the Naturalistic Worldview*

## The Legendary Theory:

**Question 1: How do orthodox monotheistic Jewish men go against their most fundamental convictions within their own culture and begin to worship a contemporary Jewish person as the embodiment of Yahweh?**

Most anathematic act to Jewish Culture is the belief that a human being can be God.

John 19.7—The Jews insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

**Question 2: How could you go from an ordinary carpenter, in fundamental Judaism, to the revelation and embodiment of Yahweh Himself on earth over night?**

Huge Problem: You don't have enough time.  
(Alexander the Great - 4 centuries later.)  
(Buddha - 5 centuries later)

**1Corinthians 15.1-8**—Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

**Mark 15.21**—A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Paul's first epistles were written in 49 A.D. - 16 years after Jesus. (Passing on traditional creedal material that Jesus is thoroughly Divine. It is arguable that Paul received this within 3-4 years of the event, at most 5 or 6. See Galatians 1,2.)

Dating of Luke:  
Evidence from Book of Acts:  
Ends abruptly with Paul being on house arrest (62 A.D.)  
Does not mention the martyrdom of Paul which happened in 64 or 65 A.D.  
Doesn't mention the Jewish-Roman War that broke out in 66 A.D.  
Doesn't mention the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.  
Doesn't mention the persecution under Nero (64 A.D.) .  
Before 62 A.D. (Less than three decades after the original Jesus lived.)

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”— John 14.9

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**Question 3: How does a legend grow this fanatical with this number of followers when there are eyewitnesses still living, both hostile and friendly?**

James's (Jesus' brother)

**Question 4: Where is the cultural catalyst for this legend?**

Legends are born when cultures need strengthened.

The elements of the Jesus story are completely and entirely anti Jewish cultural needs for a story about a Messiah.

**Question 5: How does one reconcile the claim that this story is a legend with the claim of these men that they are giving eyewitness testimony?**

Legend: a nonhistorical or unverifiable story handed down by tradition from earlier times and popularly accepted as historical.

Claim of Disciples:

1John 1.1-5

. . . which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched . . . we have seen it . . . has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard . . . This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you . . .

Natural Laws are description of what we find most often in nature they are not prescription of what we MUST find in nature. The Absolute Rejection of the Miraculous cannot be based on evidence or reason, because we do not have the exhaustive evidence for it to be. Rather it is a conclusion that is based on the presupposition of the Naturalistic world view and therefore a biased belief.

To the extent that one's research and findings are based in a prior dogmatic assumption, such research cannot be considered critical or scientific research. – R.G. Collingwood (The Idea of History, p. 139)

An Open-Minded Scholarly Approach would be that if all available naturalistic explanations become implausible, we should consider explanations that go beyond our known natural laws.

Wolfgang Schadewaldt, one of the great Homeric scholars of this century, assessment of the historical reliability of the Gospels to Tubingen University Seminary in Germany—

“As someone who has acquired some knowledge of ‘literature’, I am particularly concerned here to note that when we read the Synoptic Gospels we cannot be other than captivated by the experiential vividness with which we are confronted. The conditions of their time stand before us: nature, the landscape of Palestine, the Sea of Galilee, places from the coast to the far side of the Jordan, and Nazareth with its sheer cliff. If only we read the text simply enough, we can imagine Jesus traveling here and there—a situation which we misunderstand if we miss the repeated ‘other way’—the most important words are spoken and actions performed ‘on the way’ as no more than literary decoration...I know of no other area of history-writing, biography or poetry where I encounter so great a wealth of material in such a small space.” (W.Schadewaldt in M. Hengel, “Studies in the Gospel of Mark”, p.102)