

Introduction:

- 3 Friends were discussing death and one asked the group: What would you like people to say about you at your funeral?
 - First guy: "At my funeral, I would like people to say: He was a great humanitarian, who cared about his community."
 - Second guy: "I would like people to say, He was a great husband and father, who was an example for many to follow."
 - Third guy: "I would like people to say, Look, he's moving!!"
- *"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."* (Acts 1:1-3, NKJV) Tekmerion - Infallible proofs..."that which causes something to be known or verified." God did that! For the disciples and for us! He wants us to be assured.
- The Resurrection is the center of the Christian faith. Without it we have no Christianity and our faith is in vain.
 - It is our hope that we too shall live! The cross was but a gateway to the message of the third day...He's Alive!
 - Note to self: There is a huge difference between being raised from the dead and resurrected from the dead. The resurrection is not a resuscitation, a restoration, or reviving. Jesus was resurrected, whereby coming out of the tomb with a new body!
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ay_Db4RwZ_M The Resurrection Argument, by Gary Habermas

I. The Historical Evidence of the Resurrection

- A. Serious historians of all types accept the following truths.
 1. The tomb in which Jesus was buried was discovered empty by a group of women on the Sunday following the crucifixion.
 2. Jesus' disciples had 'real experiences' with one whom they believed was Jesus, the risen Christ.
 3. As a result of the preaching of these disciples, which had the resurrection at its center, the church was established and grew. These are three historical facts accepted by the majority of serious historians today. Let's look closer at them.
- B. The Empty Tomb
 1. The resurrection is first preached in the very city where Jesus was buried. You could not do that if Jesus had not been resurrected from the dead, no one would believe you.

2. The earliest Jewish arguments admit to the empty tomb. Mt 28:11-15. The leading priests pay off the guards who came to report the tomb was empty. They tell them to lie and say that his disciples stole the body while they slept. Dr. Paul Maier calls this "*positive evidence from a hostile source. In essence, if a source admits a fact that is decidedly not in its favor, the fact is genuine.*"
 3. Marks Gospel is the first Gospel that is closest to the resurrection. It is not a far off legend.
 4. The empty tomb was discovered by women. Women were not close the top of societal class in Jesus day. If it was legend men would have discovered the empty tomb.
 5. The Jews and Romans wanted Jesus bones in the grave. End of story. The disciples certainly were not looking to be beaten and martyred for preaching resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is not just the best explanation for the empty tomb, it is the only 'sane' explanation worth mentioning!
- C. Eye Witness Statements - The experience of the followers of Jesus.
1. "*Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.*" (Galatians 1:18, NKJV) Gr. historasai - to see, to interview, to investigate. For 15 days, Paul, James and Peter compare notes. They are making sure it is the same Jesus and the same message they are preaching.
 2. Paul declare, "I pass on to you what I received." 1 Cor 15:3-8 "*I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve.*" (1 Corinthians 15:3-5, NLT) He lays out a creed and speaks of others who have also seen the Resurrected Lord.
 3. These disciples were not lying nor hallucinating (hallucinating...all having the same hallucination at the same time?)
- D. The third historical fact: The Beginning of the Christian Faith, the church.
1. The resurrection is the basis of Christianity. Christianity is not the basis of the resurrection/Christianity did not create the resurrection. The resurrection created Christianity.
 2. Christianity is not borrowing from other failed attempts at religion. A Jew would never do that because of their faith.
- E. Most scholars today accept the Bible as authentic history, not necessarily truth (they remain skeptic but acknowledge the historicity of the Bible, the disciples and Paul.) If you deny the resurrection you have to come up with three independent natural explanations. And trying to put three separate explanations together is highly unlikely. As Gary Habermas has said, "*Combining three improbable theories will not produce a probable explanation.*"

II. The Resurrection Is the Best Explanation For An Empty Tomb

- A. The resurrection is the most important truth in the world. All the other Bible stories are just that, stories, without the truth the resurrection. So many implications for us who bear the name of Christ.
- B. The resurrection proves to be true what Jesus said about Himself.
1. His identity: He is the Son of God. *"and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Romans 1:4, NLT) If Jesus would have stayed in the tomb it would be foolish to believe that He is God. But if He is resurrected it would be foolish not to believe it.
 - a) Even demons believe, *"You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?"* (James 2:19-20, NLT)
 - b) You must have a faith that expresses/deeds itself through love...of God and others. Not just that He exists.
 2. His diety: He is God. If Jesus rose from the dead, then this validates that He is God. This was the sign He spoke of to the Pharisees. And because He is God what He has spoken is true. And He speaks with certainty and authority.
 3. His Lordship: He is ruler over all. Jesus is the only religious leader to have been resurrected from the dead. Therefore, He and only He, is the way, truth and life.
- C. The resurrection proves Christ's power to forgive sin, justify sinners and grant eternal life to those who believe.
1. *"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) If we reverse this scripture it would read, *"Christ has been raised, our faith is very meaningful and we are no longer guilty of our sins!"*
 2. By rising from the dead, Jesus proved His authority and power to break the bonds of sin and to assure forgiveness and eternal life to all who accept His gift of salvation.
- D. The resurrection proves and reveals Christ's power over death. Death was a fruit of sin in the Garden of Eden. All men died as a result of that sin. But Jesus was the sinless Son of God. And when the man Jesus died, death had no authority to keep Him down.
1. *"And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him".* (Romans 6:8-9, NLT)
 2. *"For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus(Ephesians 2:6, NLT) "*.

- E. The resurrection proves that God will one day judge the world. We will have to give an account of ourselves. Believer or skeptic. There is a big difference between the two, especially from an eternal perspective.
- F. The resurrection of Christ provides genuine hope for eternal life. Why? Because Jesus says that by trusting in Him, we will be forgiven of our sins and thereby escape being condemned at the judgment.

III. This Is The Gospel!

- A. The Gospel is the gift of God, eternal life, offered to us.
- B. The Foundational Doctrines of the Christian Faith is:
 - 1. Jesus is the Son of God.
 - 2. The Son of God died for us.
 - 3. He was resurrected from the dead.
 - 4. Because He was resurrected, the resurrection proves that those who trust in Christ will not be subject in eternity to a torment beyond understanding.
 - a) It proves that our bodies will be resurrected one day too.
 - b) Because of the resurrection of Christ, believers will one day experience, forever, the freedom of having a glorified soul and body.

Conclusion:

- Historians now believe the resurrection of Jesus to be a historical fact.
- Jesus presented himself to His disciples: visible present (touch me); give me something to eat; restores relationship (Peter in John 21); He did this multiple times.
- God wants you to know Him personally.