

The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus – Part Two
3 & 4 of the “4+1 Facts”
4/9/2017 Sunday AM

Scripture: Acts 9:1-9,

Introduction

- Last week we began our series on The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus.
- We are building a solid case for the bodily resurrection of Jesus using a set of facts we call the “4+1 Facts.”
- Last Sunday we looked at the first two: 1) Jesus died by crucifixion. 2) Jesus’ disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
- We noted that the Bible attests to these facts throughout the New Testament and we looked at 5 sources outside of the Bible that attested to the facts.
- There is no dispute as to Jesus of Nazareth being a real historical figure who lived and then was crucified.
- It is well documented that His disciples believed that He rose from the dead, and that He appeared to them afterwards.
- Not only is this what they claimed, but they believed it to the point that they were willing to suffer and die for their beliefs.
- Not many people would allow themselves to be killed for having a belief that they knew was not true.
- This morning we will look fact 3 & 4 as we see two very unlikely men become Christians and even leaders within the early church: Paul and James.

III. The Third Fact: The Conversion of the Church Persecutor Paul

Acts 9:1-9, 15-16

¹Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ²and 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. ³As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. ⁶"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. ¹⁵But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

- Saul was also named Paul as **Acts 13:9** tells us. Paul was his Roman name.
- He was a Roman citizen from the city of Tarsus. **Acts 22:3**
- Paul was a Jew and self-identified as a Pharisee, who were religious leaders of the day. **Philippians 3:5**
- Right from vv. 1-2 of Acts 9 we can see what Paul’s mission was, to persecute “the Lord’s disciples.”
- He asked for a letter from the high priest, and he got the letter that he wanted and set out for Damascus.
- While on his way, Jesus appeared to him and sent him to Ananias for further instructions.
- Paul’s instructions were to carry the name of Jesus “before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.”
- The Book of Acts and Paul’s letters record Paul’s vast ministry and complete conversion.
- So basically, we have a Jewish Roman citizen that was trained by the religious leaders of Jesus’ time, who personally persecuted early Christians, getting a personal appeared from the resurrected Jesus and changing completely.
- This is not only attested by the Bible, but Paul’s conversion is also confirmed by Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Tertullian, Dionysius of Corinth, and Origen.

- Paul was also martyred for his beliefs. He was beheaded by Roman Emperor Nero according to Eusebius.
- Paul was widely known for his conversion as **Galatians 1:11-23** tells us.
- There is no doubt that Paul once persecuted the church, then made a dramatic turn around and began to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.
- One has to ask, Why the sudden turnaround?
- More importantly, why did Paul suffer so much for Christ and eventually be beheaded for something he knew was a lie?

IV. **The Fourth Fact:** The Conversion of the skeptic James the brother of Jesus.

- There is not a lot of historical information on the life of James like there is for Paul.
- However, we have enough information to conclude that after Jesus was resurrected, James, Jesus' brother converted to Christianity because he believed the risen Jesus appeared to him.
- We get to this conclusion by looking at the following:
 1. The Gospels report that Jesus' brothers were unbelievers during His ministry. We know James was one of these brothers from **Mark 6:3**.
 - **John 7:5** – “For even his own brothers did not believe in him.”
 2. **1 Corinthians 15:3-7** contains a list of people that Christ appeared to and v. 7 says, “⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,” This is how we know that Jesus appeared to James.
 3. After this appearance, James is spoken about in the Bible as a leader in the Jerusalem Church. **Acts 15:12-21 and Galatians 1:19**
 4. Not only did James convert to Christianity, his beliefs in Jesus and his resurrection were so strong that he died as a martyr because of them. James's martyrdom is attested by Josephus, Hegesippus, and Clement of Alexandria. It is said that he was thrown from the top of the Temple, survived, and then was beaten to death.
- Like Paul, James' conversion is well documented by biblical information and the testimony of others.
- These two were some of the most unlikely people to convert to Christianity given their pasts.
- However, we must deal with facts as they are presented.
- So far we have seen the 4 Facts:
 1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
 2. Jesus' disciples believed that He rose and appeared to them.
 3. The conversion of the church persecutor Paul
 4. The conversion of the skeptic James
- We cannot act as if these facts do not exist, and since they do, we have to deal with them.
- Knowing these 4 Facts, you can ask a non-believer the most hated question “why?”
- If Jesus wasn't who he said he was, why did he allow himself to be crucified?
- Why did his disciples allow themselves to suffer and die is what they claimed and believed wasn't true?
- Why did Paul and James both make a dramatic turnaround in their lives and begin to follow Jesus, after his death? Why did they become martyrs if what they said happened, didn't?
- Next Sunday is Resurrection Sunday and we will be looking at the greatest fact of all, the +1: The Empty Tomb.