

The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus – Part One
1 & 2 of the “4+1” Facts
4/2/2017 Sunday AM

Scripture: John 19:17-26

Introduction

- We are three Sundays away from Resurrection Sunday aka Easter Sunday.
- What happened on the first Resurrection Sunday was the single greatest happening in all the world.
- Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave! This showed that he was and is who he said he is.
- He died on the cross to pay our sin debt and he rose from the dead to show his sovereignty over death.
- Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection are extremely important to Christians all over the world.
- However, Christ is the single most disputed figure that has ever walked the earth.
- Among the many things people dispute about Jesus is his resurrection.
- This morning and for the next two weeks we will explore The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus.
- We will look at the “4 + 1” facts that make up the minimal facts approach of how to make the case.
- This morning we will look at the first two facts in this approach.

I. The First Fact: Jesus died by crucifixion

- The Bible records Jesus’ crucifixion in all four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

John 19:17-26

¹⁷So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸Here they crucified him, and with him two others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. ²¹The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." ²²Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." ²³When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did. ²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," ²⁷and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

- Outside of the Bible, there are a number of non-Christian sources that report the event as well.
 1. **Josephus** – “When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified...”
 2. **Tacitus** – “Nero fastened the guilt [of the burning of Rome] and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate.”
 3. **Lucian of Samosata** – “The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account.”
 4. **Mara Bar-Serapion** – “Or [what advantage came to] the Jews by the murder of their Wise King, seeing that from that very time their kingdom was driven away from them?”
 5. **The Talmud** – “on the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged.” Yeshu is Joshua in Hebrew. The equivalent in Greek is Iēsous which is Jesus in the English. Being “hung on a tree” was how crucifixion was described in ancient times.

- John Dominic Crossan is a highly critical scholar that co-founded the Jesus Seminar writes this, “That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be.”
- So what we have is four different gospel writers along with all of the other biblical evidence, two ancient non-Christian historians (one Jewish and one Roman), a Roman writer, a Roman philosopher, the Jewish holy scriptures, and a modern-day non-believing scholar.
- I do think that it is quite safe to say that it is a fact, that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified over 2000 years ago.

II. The Second Fact: Jesus’ disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them

- Again, the gospels themselves record Jesus’ resurrection and his appearances to the disciples and others.
- Paul’s writings make up much of the New Testament and his writing corroborate what the gospels say.
- It is important to remember that Paul was Jewish, and worked for the Jewish leaders to persecute Christians.
- On his way to persecute Christians in Damascus, he was converted by the risen Jesus in Acts 9.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

- In these verses Paul mentions that Jesus appeared to all of the disciples and to many others.
- The Bible is clear that the disciples claimed to have seen the risen Jesus, but we know they also believed it.
- We know they believed it because they were willing to suffer for their beliefs.
- The Book of Acts records many of the persecutions that took place during the early church.
- Outside of the Bible, two Apostolic Fathers attest to Jesus’ resurrection:
 1. **Clement of Rome** – In a letter to the Corinthian Church he wrote, “Therefore, having received orders and complete certainty caused by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and believing in the Word of God, they went with the Holy Spirit’s certainty, preaching the good news that the kingdom of God is about to come.”
 2. **Polycarp** – In a letter to the Philippian Church in 110 A.D. he wrote, “Paul himself and the other apostles...For they did not love the present age, but him who died for our benefit and for our sake was raised by God.”
- The disciples did not only claim to have seen Jesus, but they were willing to suffer and die for their beliefs.
- Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified upside down. Philip was said to be crucified, Thomas was burned in an oven, James was thrown down from the Temple tower and then beaten to death at age 94.
- There are 7 ancient sources that attest to the disciple’s willingness to suffer and die for their beliefs:
 1. The Book of Acts (5:17-42)
 2. Clement of Rome
 3. Polycarp
 4. Ignatius
 5. Dionysius of Corinth
 6. Tertullian
 7. Origen
- None of the disciples would have died for something they knew was a lie.
- Each one of the disciples faced intense persecution and most were martyred.
- All of the evidence, both biblical and non-biblical proves the disciples claimed He rose, and believed it.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Who’s Who in the Bible? – Joseph Mary’s husband.