

I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ because...

Even those who claim to deny His deity are troubled that He lives (27:62-66).

His resurrection was historically validated by several different sources (28:1-10).

Intentional lies have never stopped His ongoing presence in our world (11-15).

Questions for Discussion:

Do you know someone who has rejected Jesus Christ?

What has been the extent of your conversations with him or her concerning Jesus Christ?

What are some of the arguments for the resurrection of Christ* that could be used to challenge his or her unbelief?

Have you been able to present any of these arguments to him or her?

If so, what was the result?

If not, can you envision an opportunity to use them? When and where?

*Hank Hannegraaf has written a helpful book entitled *Resurrection* (Word, 2000) that uses the acronym F-E-A-T to outline arguments for the resurrection of Jesus Christ (see notes following).

Resurrection

By Hank Hannegraaf

McDowell (Evidence Demands Verdict): "After more than 700 hrs studying this subject and thoroughly investigating its foundation, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic fact of history."

Hank Hannegraaf uses acronym **FEAT** to catalog the evidence for the resurrection:

Fatal Torment - of Christ *He suffered & died through an excruciating execution*

Hematidrosis: Tiny capillaries in sweat glands ruptured, mixing sweat with blood. Skin becomes very fragile to touch, let alone flogging. Arrested, beaten, spat upon, thru night, with no sleep.

Then mockery of trials, stripped, flogged with whip containing razor sharp bones and lead balls, reducing the skin to ribbons of bleeding flesh. A crown of sharp thorns was pressed into His scalp, after which they proceeded to repeatedly strike Him on the head.

Then a heavy wooden beam for the cross was placed upon His shoulders to be carried Himself until He collapsed.

All leading to crucifixion, Roman execution was designed to produce maximum pain. Word from which get excruciating "out of cross." Drove 7" spikes thru His hands and feet, lacerating the nerves.

Breathing would be agonizing as He pushed body up to gasp for air, rubbing lacerated His back against cross with each breath.

Hung for 9 hrs before Roman soldier drove spear thru ribs into heart, releasing water/blood, conclusive medical evidence He had died.

Some say, "He didn't really die. Just resuscitated in cool of tomb." Absurd.

If Jesus suffered nothing else, spear thru side into heart would have killed Him. But crucifixion is fundamentally death by asphyxiation. Tough to fool a Roman execution squad of one's inability to breathe for any length of time.

"Myth" of resuscitation would have been miracle itself:

-Required Jesus to survive three days without medical attention after what He had been through.

-Managed to get out of tightly wrapped linen burial cloth.

-Then single handedly moved stone from the entrance to tomb, subdued armed guards, walked away on pierced feet.

-Proceeded to convince disciples to proclaim He had conquered death, risking their own lives in process, while He went into hiding.

Dr. Alexander Metherell, physician who after studying the historical and medical facts of Christ's death, concluded:

"Such a one would never have inspired disciples to proclaim 'He's Lord of life who had triumphed over grave.'

After suffering all that trauma, He would have looked so pitiful disciples would have felt sorry for him, tried to nurse him back to health."

It's preposterous to think that if he had appeared to them in that awful state, His followers would have been prompted to start a worldwide movement based on hope someday they too would have a resurrection body like his."

To believe a myth other than the fact Jesus Christ suffered "Fatal Torment" truly an irrational leap of blind faith.

Peter, who witnessed crucifixion, said: "Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust"

Empty Tomb – of Christ *His body was gone*

Two facts:

1) *The stone was rolled away – if not Jesus, then who moved it?*

Some say disciples went to wrong tomb to begin with. That makes them out to be complete idiots.

Others say Jesus' disciples moved it. (Matt 28:13)

Unlikely for disciples get by Roman guards, one of greatest offensive/defensive fighting machines ever conceived.

Then break the seal, a cord stretched across rock, fastened on either end with clay, stamped with official seal of Rom gov. – Think twice!

Two English professors at Georgia Tech. est. stone weighed 1½ tons. This stone moved by men who fled in fear when Jesus arrested.

2) *The body was missing from tomb.*

If disciples couldn't get past guards to stone to move it, not them.

Religious leaders only wished they could produce body to shut down subsequent reports of resurrection.

Guards? When Roman guard lost prisoner, the guard took the place of the prisoner – crucifixion not worth the risk. And why?

So-called scholars, likes of John Dominic Crossan, cofounder of Jesus Seminar maintains:

"Tales of entombment and resurrection were latter day wishful thinking. Jesus' corpse went the way of all abandoned criminal's bodies."

"Was probably barely covered with dirt, vulnerable to wild dogs that roamed the wasteland of execution grounds."

Multitudes have uncritically accepted their assertions.

Reason for conclusion: Begins with the assumption supernatural can't happen, rejecting resurrection without an investigation.

Such scholarship would never stand up in court room today.

Angel: "He is not here – He is risen"

The tomb was empty!

Appearances of Christ *He appeared numerous times to many after resurrection*

Referred already to message of resurrection by apostles – eyewitnesses!

(Acts 1:3) “Many convincing proofs.”

Paul records: (1 Cor 15:3-8) Appeared to Cephas (Peter) then the twelve, then to hundreds.

C. H. Dodd, Cambridge NT Scholar: “Hardly any purpose in mentioning the fact most of five hundred still alive, unless Paul saying in effect, ‘the witnesses are there to be questioned.’”

Suppose I were to tell you I played 18 holes of golf with Tiger Woods, beat him! You said, “no way!” I’ve witnessed your golf game!” Even if I could snow you into thinking I had an outside chance, you could contact him, to ask him personally.

Same opportunity for Corinthians to confirm witnesses, Paul encouraging them to do so. But then appeared to Paul on road to Damascus.

Disciples hallucinating:

Philosopher Michael Martin: “Not beyond realm of psychological possibility, that in 1st cent Palestine, among unsophisticated people who believed in divinity of Jesus, one disciple’s hallucination of Jesus could have triggered corresponding hallucinations in the others.”

Reality: No evidence hallucinations are contagious; rather individual experiences, not seen by a group.

Christ appeared to all kinds of personality types, then His appearances stopped abruptly.

Furthermore, Jewish beliefs about life after death would have led disciples to believe Jesus was translated rather than resurrected.

Disciples hypnotized:

Suggest disciples saw what they wanted to see. Not a shred of evidence to substantiate this.

In contrast to some religions, such as Hinduism, of which one guru believes: “goal to create new man, one who is happily mindless,”

Judeo-Christian tradition has high view of mind. Jesus said greatest commandment: (Matt 22:37)

Such altered states of mind foreign to Judeo/Christian teaching.

Disciples open to hyper-suggestion:

The disciples were fantasy prone. Luke dispels such suggestions from start of gospel: (Luke 1:1-4)

Rather fearful disciples after crucifixion became fearless proselytizers after resurrection.

Jesus said, “Look at my hands and my feet. It is I, myself!”

Christ appeared, disciples were convinced.

Transformation of the Apostles *Eyewitnesses risked own lives preaching message of X’s resurrection.*

A small band of seemingly insignificant followers succeeded in (Acts 5:28), then in (Acts 17:6) turning an entire empire upside down.

An entire community of Jews willingly changed age-old sociological and theological traditions such as Sabbath, sacrifices, sacraments.

Paul: Christian persecutor (Acts 8:3) (Gal 1:13) transformed into apostle of Christ himself, following encounter with Him (Acts 9:20-21).

Oxford professors, Gilbert West & Lord Lyttleton set out to destroy the basis of the Christian faith. West to demonstrate fallacy of resurrection; Lyttleton to prove Saul of Tarsus never converted to Christianity. Both men came to opposite conclusion, became followers of

Jesus. Lyttleton: “The conversion and apostleship of Saint Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be Divine revelation.”

Apostles not only risked their lives, gave their lives:

James: Put to death by King Herod w/ sword.

Peter: Crucified upside down, because felt unworthy to be crucified in same manner as Lord.

Andrew, James, son of Alphaeus, Philip, Simon the Zealot, Bartholomew: crucified

Thaddeus: Killed by arrows

Thomas: Killed by spear thrust

James: Jesus’ half-brother, writer of James, in 62 A.D. thrown from top of temple, stoned.

Paul: Beheaded

Only John, writer of Book of Revelation died natural death, banished to Isle of Patmos.

But some say, many have died for lie, so what? True, but died because thought it true.

McDowell: “It would be hard to find eleven people who died for a lie, knowing it was lie.”

“These who claimed to be eyewitnesses to resurrection would have died knowing it was a lie!”

Paul Little: “Are these men, who helped transform the moral structure of society, consummate liars or deluded madmen?”

Michael Green, principal of St. John’s College, Nottingham, England: “The resurrection was the belief that turned heartbroken followers of a crucified rabbi into the courageous witnesses and martyrs of the early church. This was the one belief that separated the followers of Jesus from the Jews and turned them into the community of the resurrection. You could imprison them, flog them, kill them, but you could not make them deny their conviction that on the third day he rose again.”

Peter on day of Pentecost: “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.”