

Is Jesus' Resurrection credible?

“Humanity has meaning only if God and immortality exist.”

William Lane Craig
Talbot School of Theology

1 Peter 1

“3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into **a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

The resurrection is central to the Gospel message.

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, . . . For I delivered to you as **of first importance** what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to . . .”



Gospels



birth, teaching,

miracles, of Jesus

The Cross and Resurrection

What is of first importance to the Gospel?



Epistles

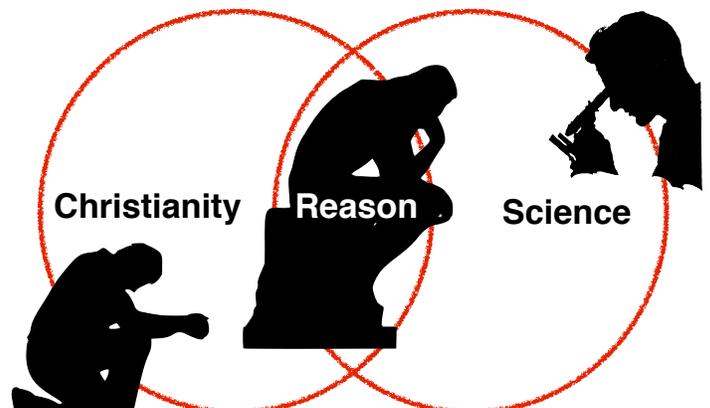
The resurrection authenticates the atonement.



1 Corinthians 15:17

“if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

Empirical reason is where Christianity and science meet.



Christian faith exists

The disciple's belief in Jesus' resurrection is the best explanation for the Christian faith.

The empty tomb and "eyewitnesses" to "Jesus (?)" are the best explanation of the disciple's belief.

Jesus resurrection is the best explanation for the empty tomb and his appearances.

Three concessions

1. It is not certain - I cannot prove that Jesus rose from the grave.

Commitments are never based on certainty but rather on reasonable probability.

2. It is not natural - It is contrary to all that we know about nature.

Exactly; it claims to be a miracle.

3. It is more about faith than science - without faith, no one would buy it.

Faith is not without reason.

1 Peter 3:15

"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always **being ready to make a defense** to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence,"

Serious questions in an age of science deserve answers.



1 Corinthians 1:23-24

"but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a **stumbling block**, and to Gentiles **foolishness**, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power of God and the wisdom of God.**"

Christian Faith is not based on reason alone.



How does anyone come to Christian faith?

Primary causes

- The mysterious work of God's Spirit.
- The basic neediness of fallen nature.

Secondary means

- The Word of the Cross - Biblical story of redemption.
- A personal crisis experience.
- The relationship witness of others.

Scientific observation and reason

- Do not prove or disprove the faith.
- Can illustrated and verified the faith.
- Should refine the faith.

How do we encounter life?



Spirituality



The Sciences



Faith Reason

truth



The Arts & Humanities

“I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand.”

Anselm of Canterbury

“Stories of miracles lead to two possibilities:

1. The account is genuine,
2. Those making the report are deluded or dishonest.”

David Hume

“Man the battle stations!

Someone’s coming who wants to reason with us.”

Ashleigh Brilliant

“We sometimes get all the information, but we refuse to get the message.”

Cullen Hightower

Reasons to believe that the Gospel accounts of the resurrection can be trusted.

- They were distinct from Jewish views of resurrection.
 - They described Jesus’ new body as unique and not easily recognized.
 - They failed to tie the accounts to the Old Testament.
 - Women were the first witnesses.
- The emphasis is on Jesus’ credentials not the disciples benefits (which came with Paul’s writing).
- The early church was unanimous and convinced of it.
- The instant & dramatic change of the disciples.
- The alternative explanations are weak.

Historical Critical Theory of the development of Christianity

The historical Jesus ...



We know very little about the historical Jesus.

... became the Christ of faith ...



The early church invented Jesus as the Christ.

... recorded in the Gospels.



The Gospels were written to support the theology of the early church.

Problems with the resurrection of faith theory

1. The disciples had lost their faith at the cross. There is no indication that they were trying to find some reason to hang on to it.
2. The resurrection of Jesus is described as both a historical (space time) event and an experience of hope and power.
3. Faith, according to I Cor.15 was based not on an existential encounter but on a historical event.
4. Paul’s writings assume that the resurrection was an established fact too soon after the event for it to be an evolved legend.

Josh McDowell George E. Ladd Ben Witherington III N.T. Wright