

JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD

Easter Sunday 2026. 1 Corinthians 15:14-19.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. April 5, 2026.

THE CHRISTIAN CLAIM

Christians claim that Jesus rose from the dead.

- The earliest followers of Jesus proclaimed the resurrection:
 - Mary Magdalene: *“I have seen the Lord”* (John 20:18)
 - The apostle Peter: *“God has raised this Jesus; we are all witnesses of this”* (Acts 2:32).

BUT ... the question most skeptics ask is, “Yes, I know the New Testament claims that Jesus rose from the dead, but did he really?”

- Is the resurrection a hoax or history? My answer is, HISTORY.
- But before we look at the reasons for my answer, let’s talk about why the resurrection matters.

WHY THE RESURRECTION MATTERS

The Christian faith depends on the resurrection of Jesus.

- A passage in Corinthians 15 makes that plain:

1 Corinthians 15:14-15, 17-19 (CSB) ... if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. 15 Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ... 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. 19 If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

Without the resurrection:

1. **Christianity is just powerless religious talk:** *“Our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith”* - empty, powerless, useless - verse 14.
2. **The Christian faith is based on a lie:** *“Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God”* - verse 15.
3. **God’s plan of salvation has failed:** *“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins”* - verse 17.
4. **There is no afterlife:** *“Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished”* - verse 18.
5. **We’ve been ripped off:** *“If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone”* - verse 19.

THE “MINIMAL FACTS” FOR THE RESURRECTION

Is there any reliable evidence outside of the Bible?

- Yes, there is. This is evidence that even skeptical, agnostic, or atheist scholars of ancient history are willing to accept.
- These minimal facts were developed by Dr. Gary Habermas.¹ There are around 12 facts, but we’ll focus on three.

FACT ONE: JESUS DIED BY CRUCIFIXION

- Christian, Jewish, skeptical, and atheist researchers all concede that Jesus was executed by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate.
- Tacitus, the Roman historian, writes: *“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 Pilatus ...”* (Annals 15.44).
- Dr. J.D. Crossan: *“It’s as sure as anything historical can ever be.”*

¹ <https://crossexamined.org/the-minimal-facts-of-the-resurrection/>

FACT TWO: THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS BELIEVED THE RESURRECTION HAPPENED AND PRESERVED THAT BELIEF IN CREEDS

- We have around eighteen first-century creeds that attest to the resurrection.² One such creed is preserved in 1 Corinthians 15:

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (CSB) For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. 6 Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time...

- That creed is dated to within two-three years of Jesus' death.³
- The earliest Christians went from hiding in fear to boldly proclaiming.

FACT THREE: PAUL, THE PERSECUTOR, WAS TRANSFORMED

- Paul was a zealous Jewish scholar who oversaw the executions of Jewish-background Christians. But he experienced a dramatic turnaround. Why?
- He claimed to have encountered the risen Christ.

"It is a historical fact that some of Jesus' followers came to believe that he had been raised from the dead soon after his execution" - Bart Ehrman.

WHAT IS THE BEST EXPLANATION FOR THE FACTS?

Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Therefore, we cannot ignore him.

- Jesus is who he said he was: the Son of God, God with us, who would die and rise again to save us from our sins and restore us to God.
- Research for yourself: 1) Read the Gospel of John; 2) Read or watch Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ*; 3) Search: Habermas, minimal facts.

² www.perplexity.ai/search/what-biblical-passages-does-ga-_AGpuOXnRFSPcqk9j6BXEQ#0

³ ³ Gerd Lüdemann, *The Resurrection of Jesus: History, Experience, Theology*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 38.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's April 5th teaching and study guide.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

1. Visit the church website to read a list of resurrection results that have practical implications for today: FamousGod.com/groups. Scroll down to the Small Group Leader Resources and click on the "Implications" link. Read through the list as a group, then pick three or more results to discuss together. Look up the relevant Bible passages, survey the brief descriptions, and then answer question 2 below.
2. How does the resurrection affect your daily life? It is not only ancient history but also the power to live right now. Discuss the meaning and application of 1 Corinthians 15:14-19, Ephesians 1:18-23, and Romans 6:4-13.
3. What has helped you to believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Is it blind faith or something else? What would you say to a skeptical friend who asks you why you believe Jesus is alive?

Prayer Focus

- Our 247 prayer: "Lord, please add daily to the Cornerstone those who are being saved."
- Pray for more opportunities to share the good news message of Jesus Christ, the risen Savior.