

John 19-31-20-10
The facts of the resurrection!

1. Preamble
2. Prayer for illumination
3. Sermon introduction
 - a. Without Bill Gates there would be no Microsoft
 - i. Without Steve Jobs there would be no Apple computers
 - ii. Without the internal combustion engine there would be no cars
 - iii. Without wings there would be no airplanes
 - iv. Without football there would be nor super bowl.
 - v. Without Elon Musk there would be no Tesla.
 - b. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ there would be no Christianity.
 - i. In other words, the resurrection is the lynch pin of Christianity.
 - ii. It is the sine qua non (without which not).
 - iii. If the resurrection is not a historical fact, then Christianity is false, and we are wasting our time this morning.
 - iv. On the other hand, if the resurrection actually happened than everything changes.
 - v. Christianity is true, and Jesus Christ must be worshipped, by everyone.
 - c. That is interesting Dave.
 - i. I'm glad that you're a person of faith. But I'm not a person of faith.
 - ii. I don't have the faith to believe that some dude named Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead 2000 years ago.
 - iii. I don't believe in fairy tales (i.e., the tooth fairy) I believe in science...
 - iv. Unfortunately, many people think that faith is something we do when we run out of evidence.
 - d. Faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is based on evidence.
 - i. We don't believe because we lack evidence, we believe because we see the evidence.
 - ii. There is plenty of evidence for the resurrection. Like what?
 - iii. Too much to cover in one sermon.
 - iv. But we will examine the evidence for the resurrection from this specific text under three headings.
 1. *Jesus really died.*
 2. *Jesus really rose.*
 3. *Jesus really lives.*

1. First, Jesus really died.

a. **John 19:31-34 (ESV) – 31** Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high

day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. **32** So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. **33** But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. **34** But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

b. **John 19:38–40 (ESV) — 38** After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. **39** Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. **40** So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

- c. According to these verses Jesus really died on the cross.
- i. This seems obvious from these texts, but some doubt.
 - ii. Some argue that Jesus did not really die. Therefore, he did not really rise from the grave.
 - iii. Let's examine a few objections to Jesus death.

d. **Objection one- The Swoon Theory**

i. This theory argues that Jesus did not actually die on the cross. While on the cross he was given drugs to make it seem like he was dead. This would ensure that he would be cut down from the cross and then be nursed back to life by his accomplices. This theory was put forward in the 1976 movie "The Passover Plot."

ii. This theory has many problems.

1. Problem one-

- a. All the non-Christian historians of Jesus day report that Jesus died.
 - i. Josephus
 - ii. Tacitus
 - iii. Thallus
 - iv. Jewish Talmud
 - v. There are no historical documents that teach the swoon theory.

2. Problem two-

- a. The Romans soldiers in charge of Christ's crucifixion were professional executioners, and they were convinced for several specific reasons that Jesus was dead. More on those reasons in a moment.
- b. In addition, since they thought he was dead, they did not break his legs. Breaking his legs would have sped up his death, because crucifixion victims usually died of asphyxiation because

they could not push themselves up to breath. With broken legs, one could not lift their body to breath.

c. Furthermore, they knew that they would face death if they allowed a prisoner to survive crucifixion. (Wallace, 14)

i. Would they really be foolish enough to remove a living person from the cross?

3. Problem three-

a. There is no way that any human being would remain living after experiencing the things that Jesus experienced.

i. Like what???

ii. He was whipped repeatedly to within an inch of his life.

iii. He was stabbed four times with 7 inch led nails.

iv. Later he was stabbed in the side with a roman spear causing water and blood to flow forth (which modern medicine says is proof that he was dead).

v. He was then wrapped in 75 pounds of bandages and spices. (John 19:39)

vi. He was then laid in a cold dark tomb with no water for three days while in critical condition.

vii. Furthermore, let's say he remained alive. How would he be able to roll back a two-ton rock with pierced hands and feet and then get passed elite Roman guards (who would be killed for letting it happen)???

4. Problem four-

a. Contemporary medical scholars believes that he died.

i. Writing in the March 21, 1986, edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association, three medical doctors, including a pathologist from the Mayo Clinic, concluded:

ii. "Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between his right rib, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge." (Geisler, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, 305).

iii. *The objection known as "the swoon theory" has way too many problems. This brings up the next objection.*

e. Objection two- The Muslim Theory

i. This is similar to the swoon theory.

- ii. Muslims deny that Jesus died on the cross. Instead, they claim, that at the last-minute God subbed Jesus off the cross and subbed somebody else onto the cross who looked like Jesus. The imposter died in Jesus' place.
- iii. This has major problems.... The only evidence for this is the Quran, which was written by one man, in a different culture, six hundred years later.
- iv. Plus, this implies that everyone who watched (friends, family, guards, Jews) were deceived about Christ's identity. Really?
- v. This is like saying that everyone present at Abraham Lincoln's murder on April 14th, 1865, (Mary Lincoln, the bodyguard, the guests, and everyone else) was delusional. Abe really was not murdered, someone else was murdered in his place, and we know this because a totally unrelated guy, living 600 years later, is right and all the eyewitnesses are wrong.
- vi. There is simply zero historical evidence for the Muslim theory. Furthermore, the Quran itself contradicts this objection, since it tells Muslims that the Bible is trustworthy.

f. Did Jesus really die on the cross? Was his torment fatal? Yes

- i. Jesus' death on the cross is not contested by any historians (Christian or non-Christian).
 - 1. Gary Habermas has done the most extensive work on the resurrection in the history of resurrection scholarship.
 - 2. He collected 1,400 of the most critical scholarly works published from 1975-2003.
 - 3. He concludes that virtually all scholars (liberal unbelievers and Bible thumping fundamentalists) believe that certain things are established historical fact-
 - a. Jesus Christ of Nazareth really lived.
 - b. Jesus Christ really died by Roman crucifixion.
 - c. Jesus Christ really was buried in a private tomb.
 - d. Jesus Christ's tomb was empty very soon after his interment.
 - e. Jesus followers had experiences *that they believed* were actual appearances of the risen Jesus.
 - f. Jesus followers lived transformed lives as a result of these experiences.
 - g. Jesus followers proclaimed the historicity of the resurrection in Jerusalem very shortly after Jesus died.
 - h. Just a few years later Saul of Tarsus claims that he was converted by the risen Christ.

g. Jesus really died. This is a historical fact. But thankfully there is more to the story, which brings us to the next point.

i. First, Jesus really died.

2. Second, Jesus really rose.

- a. **John 20:1–7 (ESV) — 1** Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. **2** So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” **3** So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. **4** Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, **7** and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.

i. Brief exposition...

1. Mary saw the empty tomb.
2. Peter and another disciples (probably John) saw the empty tomb.

- b. How do we know that Jesus really rose? According to these verses, his tomb was really empty.

i. So how do people account for the empty tomb?

ii. There are only five options ever put forward. Let’s examine each one...

c. First, the witnesses went to the wrong tomb.

i. This is highly unlikely because Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent man with a prominent tomb in a small town.

ii. Furthermore, if they went to the wrong tomb, the Romans could have easily gone to the right tomb and paraded his body around Jerusalem.

iii. Furthermore, did all the Jews and Romans really have a “collective Amnesia” about where the body was? Highly unlikely.

d. Second, the disciples stole the body.

i. If the disciples stole the dead body, the disciples obviously knew he was dead and had not risen.

ii. People are willing to die for something they believe is true but not something they know is false.

1. “And then, you’re left with the disciples. Could they have stolen the body, disposed of it, and then have spent the rest of their lives propagating a lie, particularly when the heart of their teaching was to

be committed to proclaiming the truth? Does anyone seriously believe that these men who were discouraged, defeated, and who feared for their lives, would go out, steal Jesus' body, and then proceed to boldly preach the Resurrection to hostile crowds? What would motivate them to do this? Why face prison, torture, and death, all the while knowing that Jesus' dead body lay in some hidden place?" (Reflections, 218)

iii. Furthermore, how in the world did this rag tag group of men with no military experience get past 20-30 professional Roman soldiers to steal the body?

1. These guards were highly disciplined and trained.
2. Subject to brutal punishment, more than likely death, for failure.
3. The tomb was sealed with a two-ton stone.

e. Third, his enemies stole the body.

i. If this were true, the Jewish authorities and the Romans would have paraded Jesus dead body around the city, proving that he did not rise from the dead.

ii. "Why didn't the Jewish or Roman authorities simply parade Jesus' body around the city? That would have ended Christianity once and forever. They would have loved to do so, but apparently, they couldn't because the tomb really was empty." (Geisler, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, 302)

f. Fourth, this account was copied down wrong!

i. In other words, we simply can't trust the biblical account of the empty tomb or the resurrection.

ii. Response

1. The NT documents we have are better preserved, more numerous, and closer to the date of their writing than any other document in the ancient world.
2. We have over 5,600 Greek manuscripts for the NT from the ancient world to support the reliability of the NT. Including other languages, we have 24,000 pieces of manuscript evidence for the reliability of the NT.
3. Nothing else from the ancient world even comes close...
4. Show chart from bottom of document.
5. Furthermore, there is overwhelming historical evidence that these documents have not been changed since they were written.
6. If we can't trust these documents, we can't trust any documents.

g. Fifth, Jesus rose from the dead which is why the tomb was empty.

i. His friends said the tomb was empty...

- ii. His enemies implied the tomb was empty...
 - 1. The Jewish response to "he is risen" was "his body is stolen" not "go look in his tomb!" This proves that the tomb was in fact empty.
- iii. Even non-Christians admitted his tomb was empty...
 - 1. "Did the Roman writer Phlegon (born ca. A.D. 80) lie as well when he wrote in his Chronicles, 'Jesus, while alive, was of no assistance to himself, but that he arose after death, and exhibited the marks of his punishment, and showed how his hands had been pierced by nails'?" (Geisler, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, 307)
- iv. *The tomb really was empty since Christ rose from the grave. But why does this matter. This brings us to the last point.*
- h. *First, Jesus really died.*
- i. *Second, Jesus really rose.*

3. Third, Jesus really lives!

- a. **How do we know that Jesus lives? He appeared to eyewitnesses after the resurrection.**
 - i. Jumping ahead to next week's text, several eyewitnesses see the risen Christ.
 - 1. Mary Magdalene (20:11)
 - a. Why is she a credible eyewitness? Because she is a woman...
 - 2. The disciples (20:19)
 - 3. Doubting Thomas (20:24-29)
 - 4. And of course, the author of the gospel of John (John himself).
 - ii. 1 Cor. 15:1-11 (over 500 eyewitnesses)
- b. **This eyewitness testimony is believable for many reasons.**
 - i. According to the NT record...
 - ii. Jesus was seen in different places.
 - iii. Over a period of forty days
 - iv. He was seen eating and drinking.
 - v. Walking and talking
 - vi. By male and female alike
 - vii. He was seen over a dozen times.
 - viii. He was seen inside and outside.
 - ix. He was seen by over 500 people at once.

1. These people could have been cross-examined because they were alive.
 2. Let's say that I told you that I played catch with Brock Purdy yesterday... the quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers...
 3. He was so impressed that he asked me to join the team before next weekend.
 4. Then he got the GM to give me a five million dollar signing bonus.
 5. How would you find out if this was true or not? You would talk to Brock Purdy and John Lynch (the GM for the team).
- x. He was physically touched.
 - xi. None of the critics could produce his dead body.
 - xii. He was seen and believed by Jews.
 - xiii. This was all very public...

c. How else do we know that Jesus really lives? Transformed lives!

i. I admit that Life transformation does not prove the truth of an idea-

1. Look at Islam...
2. But the transformation of these monotheistic, non-Trinitarian, Jews is astonishing.
3. Don't forget that all the early followers of Jesus were Jews.
4. Within weeks of the resurrection over 10 thousand Jews converted to Christ. (Habermas)
 - a. This is astonishing considering the cost involved.
 - b. They went from non-Trinitarian to Trinitarian
 - c. They went from believing that it was blasphemy, (punishable by death) to worship Jesus to worshipping Jesus themselves.
 - d. They believed for two thousand years that God is one, and now they believe in the trinity. Wow!
5. People will die for something they think is true, but they will not die for something they know is false. The disciples were in a position to know for sure that the resurrection was either true or false.
6. Since the time of Christ billions of people have been transformed by their belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity is largest religion in the world. Currently, over 2 billion people worldwide find evidence for the resurrection compelling.

d. Jesus really died.

e. Jesus really rose.

f. Jesus really lives.

g. So what? Lets make some application...

4. Application

- a. The resurrection is based on historical fact.
 - i. The resurrection is not wishful thinking.
 - ii. It is not rooted in fairy tales.
 - iii. It is rooted in historical facts.
 - iv. This is good news for Christians who struggle with doubt. Discuss...
- b. In addition, the resurrection provides real hope.
 - i. Since Christ rose from the grave your sins will be forgiven.
 - ii. Since Christ rose from the grave your body will rise from the grave.
 - iii. Since Christ rose from the grave you will go to heaven.
 - iv. Since Christ rose from the grave you now have access to power to live a life that is pleasing to God. More on this next week.
 - v. Since Christ still lives, he is able to make intercession for you.
 - vi. Since Christ still lives, he will return someday.
- c. Furthermore, the resurrection challenges the skeptic.
 - i. If you're a skeptic, you have the burden of proof for your alternative theories.
 - ii. You must be willing to provide first century evidence contrary to the Gospel accounts.
 - iii. You must be willing to disregard eyewitness testimony.
 - iv. You must be willing to put forward an alternative theory that you can back up with at least 3-4 first century sources.
 - v. You must be willing to explain why 2 billion people worldwide are wrong.
- d. Finally, considering the strong evidence for the resurrection...
 - i. One thing you cannot do is ignore the claims of Christianity.
 - ii. If Christ rose and you ignore him, you will spend all eternity in hell.
 - iii. If Christ rose and you embrace him, you will spend all eternity in heaven.
 - iv. Apathy is not an option.
 - v. Please don't say, "I will investigate these claims at some point but just not right now."
 - vi. There may not be "a some point." Why wait, throw yourself into the evidence today.

5. Conclusion:

- a. Jesus really died.
- b. Jesus really rose.
- c. Jesus really lives.
- d. This changes everything for you and me. Let's pray...

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span between original & copy	Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copies
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7	----
Demosthenes	4th Cent. B.C.	1100 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1300 yrs	9	----
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000	10	----
Livy	59 BC-AD 17	----	???	20	----
Tacitus	circa 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20	----
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400	49	----
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193	----
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643	95%
New Testament	50-100 A.D.	130 A.D.	less than 100 yrs	5600	99.5%