

The Resurrection Factor – Part 1

Josh McDowell

I. Introduction.

II. Background.

A. The speaker thought the resurrection could not be possible until he came to certain conclusions.

1. First, the Bible had to be historically accurate and historically reliable.
2. Second, the resurrection of Christ was historically accurate.
3. Third, that Jesus Christ was God incarnate.

III. The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A. The basis of everything in Christianity is the resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:13-17)

B. The skeptic Dr. Frederick Strauss said that the resurrection was decisive for the whole view of Christianity.

D. Christ predicted his resurrection.

1. Matthew 16.
2. Mark 9:9-10.
3. John 2:19-22.

E. The resurrection took place in time and space as we know it today in history.

1. The Apostles discerned the difference between fact and fiction.

a. 2 Peter 1:16, 1 Timothy 1:4, 2 Timothy.

2. The resurrection was more than a Greek myth.

b. Everyone knew that the Greek gods were myths, but people actually believed in the reality of Christ at His time.

3. Testimonies.

a. Thomas Arnold, historian, said that he knew of no other more established fact in history than the resurrection.

b. Dr. Brooke Wescott said nothing but the anteceded assumption that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency in the proof of it.

c. Dr. Paul Myer concluded that if all evidence is weighed carefully it is indeed justifiable to see that the tomb was actually empty on the third day.

d. Dr. John Copley said no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true.

e. Dr. Frank Morrison wrote the book called Who moved the Stone?

f. Dr. Simon Greenleaf a great legal mind, when challenged, said that the resurrection was one of the best established historical facts when the laws of legal evidence were applied.

g. The Jewish scholar Dr. Robert Gordis said there has been no other trial that has had a greater impact for good or for ill upon the lives of men than the trial and death of Jesus of Nazareth.

12. The doubt concerning Pilot's existence.

1. In Scissors, Israel, an inscription was found saying: Pontius Pilate prefect of Judea has presented the Tyberian to the Scissorians.

13. The doubt concerning the motives for the trial.

1. The political motive - Jesus claimed to be King of the Jews.

2. The Jewish problem - Jews were afraid that that the Romans would rise up against them if Jesus was not silenced.

3. A Roman problem - if Pilot refused to deal with Jesus, Tiberius would have been infuriated.

4. An economic motive - Jesus threw out the money changers in the temple.

5. A religious problem - so many people were following Jesus that people were questioning the authority of the temple leaders.

IV. Conclusion: the resurrection of Christ is the crux of the Christian faith.

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STUDY GUIDE

Part 1: What do you see?

1. What is the relevance of Christ's prediction concerning his own death and resurrection to the historical nature of it?

2. Summarize the objections to the historical nature of the resurrection in this passage and the speaker's responses.

3. Look up two of the following Scripture passages: 1 Timothy 1:4, 2 Timothy, 2 Peter 1:16. How does each passage uniquely demonstrate the Apostles' convictions that the resurrection was a historically grounded fact?

Part 2: What do you think?

1. Why is the resurrection of Christ the crux of Christianity?

2. List the possible motives for the trial of Jesus. Which are the most likely? Explain.

3. In your opinion, which scholarly testimony stood out the most to you? Why?

Part 3: What will you do?

1. How has embracing the resurrection of Christ affected your thinking? How should it?

2. In many ways Jesus led a life that disrupted the social fabric of the First Century. Had he not done this there would have been no crucifixion and no resurrection. In what regards should your life be different from the culture in which you stand?

3. Based on the content of this message, how will you defend the resurrection? What priority will it take in your discussions with both believers and nonbelievers in defending the faith?
