

## There are three Historical truths about the resurrection which are so strong that they are accepted by all serious historians, even non-Christians.

1. The tomb in which Jesus was buried was discovered empty by a group of women on the Sunday following the crucifixion.
2. Jesus' disciples had real experiences with one whom they believed was the risen Christ.
3. As a result of the preaching of these disciples, which had the resurrection at its center, the Christian church was established and grew.

## Evidence for the Resurrection Appearances

There is evidence that Jesus' disciples had real experiences with **someone who they believed** was Jesus risen from the dead. People don't argue this fact because we have testimony from the disciples themselves saying they saw, touched, and ate with Jesus after He had been crucified.

There is a Christian creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 which was given to Paul way before 1 Cor. was written.

**1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NLT)** I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter—and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers—at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

It is generally agreed by critical scholars that Paul received this creed from Peter and James between 3-5 years after the crucifixion. Now, Peter and James are listed in this creed as having seen the risen Christ. Since they are the ones who gave this creed to Paul, this is therefore a statement of their own testimony. As the Jewish Scholar Pinchahs Lapide has said, this creed "may be considered the statement of eyewitnesses."

Their testimonies are also recorded in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Of course, just because they claimed to have seen Jesus alive again after He was crucified and buried, doesn't mean they actually did. There are three possible explanations:

1. They hallucinated
2. They were lying
3. They really saw the risen Christ

### Did the disciples hallucinate?

**First**, the disciples record eating and drinking with Jesus, as well as touching him. This cannot be done with hallucinations. There is no physical nature to hallucinations.

**Second**, it is highly unlikely that they would all have had the same hallucination. Hallucinations are highly individual, and not group projections. Imagine, if I came in and said, "Wasn't that a great dream I had last night?" Hallucinations, like dreams don't transfer that way.

**Third**, the hallucination theory cannot explain the conversion of Paul, three years later. Was Paul, the persecutor of Christians, so hoping to see the resurrected Jesus that his mind invented an appearance as well?

**Fourth**, and perhaps most significantly, the hallucination theory does not explain the evidence for the empty tomb.

### Were the disciples lying?

To make a decision on this, it's important to note that each of the disciples suffered greatly throughout their lives in order to defend their claim that Jesus was the Messiah and that He had risen from the dead. They took these claims to their grave.

#### How the Disciples/Apostles of the Bible Died

*Disclaimer: Other than Judas & John, these are not Scriptural. Some are historical; some passed down by Christian traditions and are consistent with how they would have been treated in their time.*

**Andrew (brother of Peter):** Martyrdom by crucifixion (bound, not nailed, to an "X-shaped" cross) at Patræ, Achaia [southern Greece]. Hung alive for two days, exhorting spectators all the while.

**Bartholomew (Nathaniel):** Martyrdom by being skinned alive and crucified, head downward by the idolaters of Armenia (Western Asia near Turkey). The most travelled of the Disciples after Jesus death, Preached the Gospel in Mesopotamia [Iraq], Persia [Iran], Ethiopia, Arabia and India.

**James the Greater (son of Zebedee / brother of John):** Beheaded or stabbed with a sword by Herod Agrippa around 44 AD near Palestine and not far from where he was a local missionary to the Jews in Judea. His accuser was converted by James' courage & the two were beheaded together.

**James the Lesser [son of Alphaeus]:** Was first Bishop of Jerusalem Martyred in his early 90's by being thrown from a pinnacle of the Temple at Jerusalem, then stoned and head bashed in with club

**John (The Beloved) (son of Zebedee / brother of James):** Natural Death The only apostle who did not meet a martyrs death. Banished by Roman Emperor Domitian to Isle of Patmos where penned Revelation, the last book in the Bible. Was later freed & went to preach in Turkey and died at 100.

**Jude (Thaddeus):** Wrote Book of Jude. Martyred by being beaten with a club then crucified 72AD at city of Edessa [Turkey] while on a missionary trip that went to Persia (Iran).

**Matthew (Levi):** Martyred about 60 AD by being staked and speared to the ground. Preached the Gospel in Ethiopia (Africa) and was killed for questioning the morals of the king.

**Simon Peter:** Martyrdom by crucifixion at Rome by Nero. Crucified around 68 AD up-side-down at his request because he did consider himself worthy to be crucified like Jesus.

**Philip:** Said to have been tortured, impaled by iron hooks in his ankles and hung upside down to die. Preaching to death 54 AD in Heliopolis, Egypt. Preached in Phrygia which was in the Roman Province of Asia near Ephesus [Turkey].

**Simon [The Canaanite]:** Called "The Zealot" because he was associated with that sect. Thought to have ministered mostly in Jordan. Martyred by crucifixion in Britain in 74AD and then sawn in half.

**Thomas [Didymus]:** Martyred thrust through by spear in India .Preached the Gospel in Parthia [Iran] and in Kerala, [southern India] where yet today the Mar Thoma Church exists.

**Mark (John Mark):** Was dictated to writing the Book of Mark. Martyred - dragged to death.

**Luke:** The Physician. Wrote Luke and Acts. Was hanged on an olive tree

**Matthias [Disciple who filled the place of Judas Acts 1:20-26]:** Was stoned and beheaded at Jerusalem.

**Apostle Paul (Saul):** Wrote half of the New Testament was beheaded by Emperor Nero at Rome

**James (The half-brother of Jesus):** Thrown 100 feet off a wall - done to him after he repeatedly refused to deny his faith in Jesus. He survived the fall and was beaten to death with clubs

## Apologist Sean McDowell carefully states this position:

"The apostles spent between 1.5 to 3 years with Jesus during His public ministry, expecting Him to proclaim His kingdom on earth. Although disillusioned at His untimely death, they became the first witnesses of the risen Jesus and they endured persecution; many subsequently experienced martyrdom, signing their testimony, so to speak, in their own blood. **The strength of their conviction, marked by their willingness to die, indicates that they did not fabricate these claims; rather, without exception, they actually believed Jesus to have risen from the dead.** While in and of themselves these facts prove neither the truth of the resurrection in particular nor Christianity as a whole, they do demonstrate the apostles' sincerity of belief, lending credibility to their claims about the veracity of the resurrection, which is fundamental to the case for Christianity."

### New Testament Scholar Craig Keener:

"People of course die regularly for values that are false; they do not, however, ordinarily die voluntarily for what they believe [or know] is false. Intentional deception by the disciples is thus implausible."



The disciples were not lying and could not have been hallucinating. There is **only one possible explanation** left: the disciples *believed* that they had seen the risen Jesus because **they really had seen the risen Jesus.**

#### Information drawn from these sources:

- William Lane Craig's *Reasonable Faith & The Son Rises*
- J.P. Moreland's *Scaling the Secular City*
- Gary Habermas' *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus & Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?*
- [desiringgod.org/articles/historical-evidence-for-the-resurrection](http://desiringgod.org/articles/historical-evidence-for-the-resurrection)

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# Historical Evidence for the Resurrection Appearances



There is solid historical ground for the truth that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.



### "Inference to the Best Explanation"

A method commonly used today to determine the historicity of an event.

William Lane Craig describes this as an approach where we, "begin with the evidence available to us and then infer what would, if true, provide the best explanation of that evidence." In other words, we ought to accept an event as historical if it gives the best explanation for the evidence surrounding it.