

## Resurrection: Fact or Fiction?

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: 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 Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

### 1. Did Jesus actually exist?

#### Josephus (Jewish Pharisee), c. AD90, *Antiquities*

"... a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ"

#### Tacitus (Roman Historian), c. AD110, *Annals of Imperial Rome*

"... Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. 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 Pilate."

#### Pliny (Roman Governor of Bithynia), c. AD112, *Letters to Emperor Trajan*

"... It was their habit on a fixed day to assemble before daylight and recite by turns a form of words to Christ as a god"

### 2. How reliable are the primary documents about Jesus?

1. How soon after the events was it written?

Event	Date	First written record	Gap (years)
Alexander the Great's death	323BC	AD130 (Historian Arrian)	450+
Jesus' death	AD30	AD50-100 (New Testament)	20-70

2. If the original is lost, how many copies exist, and how close are they to the original?

Event	No. of copies	Date of original	Oldest surviving copy	Gap (years)
Homer, <i>Iliad</i>	650	800BC	AD100	900
Tacitus, <i>Annals of Imperial Rome</i>	1 0 1	AD110	Books 1-6: AD850 Books 7-10: lost Books 11-16: AD1000	740 n/a 890
New Testament	5000	AD50-100	AD125-200	<150

Q. But isn't any record written by a follower inherently unreliable/biased?

### 3. How do you explain the empty tomb?

#### A. The "swoon" theory

#### B. The Jews and/or the Romans hid the body

#### C. The disciples stole the body

### 4. How did people at the time respond to the claim that Jesus was alive?

#### "Doubting" Thomas Didymus

John 20:25 "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

#### Saul of Tarsus

1 Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

### 5. So what?

1 Cor 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

1 Cor 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

### 6. "Beyond ANY doubt" or "beyond REASONABLE doubt"?

#### Chief Justice Lord Darling

"There exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true."