

The Resurrection: How We Know It Is a Fact

1. **Accepted as historical.** Most critical scholars accept that the events around Christ's death are accurate. It's been verified that Jesus was crucified, that His disciples reported his appearances after His death, and that their lives were, as a result, transformed.
2. **The empty tomb.** There is no evidence for any other explanation for what became of Jesus' body.
 - The Romans: they wanted to keep the peace so they wouldn't have stolen it.
 - The Jewish leaders would have quickly revealed the body if they could have in order to dispute the claims of the disciples.
 - The disciples were martyred for their belief in the resurrection so if the resurrection was a lie one of them would have broken and revealed where the body was if they had stolen it.
3. **Biblical testimony.** The New Testament has 17 eyewitness accounts of Jesus' appearances after His resurrection. This is valuable evidence because there is more support of the authenticity of the New Testament documents than for any other document of ancient history.
4. **Transformed lives.** Seven weeks after the resurrection, 12 men- who had been so afraid that they had locked themselves in an upper room- became articulate and powerful evangelists. They ended up suffering terrible opposition and death. Why? Because they were so confident that Christ had risen. They took the message of the risen Christ to the ends of the Roman Empire before the end of the first century and changed the world forever.

Why is the historical, bodily resurrection of Christ central to the Christian faith?

1. **It proves Christ's claim of deity** (Rm. 1.4).
 - It was when the disciples recognized the risen Christ that they truly believed in Him.
2. **It validates Jesus' authority to forgive sins** (Rm. 4.25).
 - If Jesus had not risen from the dead, then what He did through His death on the cross would have been meaningless.
3. **It proves that Jesus' words were true**, as He had prophesied that He would die and rise again (Mt. 20.18-19). Thus, His resurrection proves that everything else He said was true.
4. **It also proves the Old Testament as being accurate** by fulfilling David's prophecy that his son would reign eternally (Ps. 16.10,11).
5. **It gives us confidence** in His promise that **we too will be raised** from the dead (Jn. 14.19).
6. **It is the crux of our faith:** "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rm. 10.9). (I Cor. 15)