

Fact #4 The Unlikely Conversion of a Jealous Brother

The Bible records that Jesus' brothers didn't believe in Him while He was alive (John 7:5). Even so, His brother James became the Pastor of the church in Jerusalem soon after Jesus' death. Why would James faithfully serve a dead Jesus when he wouldn't follow a living One? Something caused James to change his mind. The earliest Christian tradition records that the risen Jesus appeared to His brother James (1 Corinthians 15:3-9). In the end, James was tortured and killed for believing in Jesus. Why?

Because James was convinced that he had in fact met the risen Christ.

Fact #5 The Empty Tomb

In the aftermath of Jesus' crucifixion, belief in Jesus began spreading rapidly. Jesus had been killed for the express purpose of preventing this outcome. Both Jewish and Roman governments had every reason to intervene so as to limit the growing influence of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Jesus was proving to be a bigger problem dead than He ever was alive.

Nothing would have smothered Christianity in the cradle more effectively than tying Jesus' rotting corpse to a donkey-cart and parading it through Jerusalem for all to see. But that never happened. Why not?

The tomb that Jesus was buried in was the property of a well-known Jewish statesman familiar to both Jewish and Roman governments. They didn't forget where they put Jesus. In fact, on the third day He just wasn't there anymore – but His clothes were.

Did the disciples come out of fearful hiding to steal Jesus' body, and then lie about it for the rest of their lives to no personal benefit – even enduring torture and death to preserve their lie? Why didn't any of them break?

Because Jesus IS Risen.

Why Does it Matter?

If Jesus is in fact risen, then **Jesus IS in fact** Who He claims to be. **HE IS** God; **HE IS** with God; and **HE IS** the Lamb of God given to save the world. Jesus IS Love come down to die, so that in Him you can be raised up to live. Because Jesus is risen, His Word is true and trustworthy. His question for you is:

"Who Do You Say I AM?"

Isaiah 53 – Matthew 16:15 – Acts 4:8-12

Is Jesus Risen?



If **HE IS**, then Easter is not just a fun story for children – it's the most important event in human history.

If He isn't, then on the Bible's own admission – those who follow Jesus "are of all men the most pitiable"
1 Corinthians 15:19.

So the question is...

Is He or Not?

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“Just the Facts”

There are five historical facts surrounding Jesus Christ. These facts are agreed upon by an overwhelming majority of historical scholars whether they believe in God or not. Not only do you have to decide what best explains each fact. You must decide what best explains them all.

Fact #1

Jesus Really Lived, and Was Executed By Crucifixion

History remembers Jesus of Nazareth as an itinerant Jewish preacher and the adopted son of a Galilean carpenter. Following a brief but lively public ministry, Jesus was tried by Jewish and Gentile courts on a charge of blasphemy for His claim to be uniquely “One” with God. For this, Jesus was rejected by the leaders of Israel, and then scourged and crucified to death by a band of professional Roman soldiers.

The life and death of Jesus are witnessed by the 27 books of the New Testament.

In fact, Jesus’ life and death are established by independent Roman and Jewish sources as well (Josephus, Tacitus, and The Talmud).

Fact #2

Jesus’ Disciples Believed They Saw Him Risen

Prior to His death, Jesus’ disciples anticipated that as the long-awaited Messiah, Jesus would deliver Israel from political subjugation to Rome. The furthest thing from their minds was the possibility that their Messiah would be arrested and put to death.

When He was, Jesus’ followers abandoned Him and hid themselves away lest they join Him in being tortured and killed.

Soon after, all but Judas Iscariot (who had betrayed Jesus and then died at his own hands) began boldly teaching that they had seen Jesus risen – and that eternal life with God is promised to those who place their love and trust in Jesus Christ for life and the forgiveness of sins.

The disciples had nothing material to gain from their teachings. Indeed, they suffered poverty, torture, and death for following Jesus. Yet not one of them changed their story. Some profound experience changed each of these men – but **what was it?**

The disciples were convinced that they had **in fact** met the risen Christ.

Fact #3

The Unlikely Conversion of a Sworn Enemy

Saul of Tarsus was a student of the eminent first-century Jewish Rabbi Gamaliel. Saul was a Pharisee who saw Christianity as a vile heresy to be quickly and decisively stamped out. He oversaw the execution of Christians, and travelled far and wide to pull Christians out of their homes to face torture and death. Saul was a soldier of inquisition.

It was on such a journey that Saul met the risen Jesus (Acts 9). In the aftermath of that meeting, Saul of Tarsus became better known as Paul the Apostle.

Paul is the most influential Christian missionary of all time. Indeed, it was the sworn enemy of Jesus Christ who eventually wrote down 2/3 of the New Testament – and greatly influenced the rest of it.

Something profound caused Paul to change his mind. Ironically, Paul was tortured and killed for following Jesus.

Why? Because Paul was convinced that he had **in fact** met the risen Christ.