

Did he really rise?

Did he really rise – The Facts?

What do you believe about the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?

- 2009 NCLS fact sheet on the resurrection (show graph)
 - 31 % believe the resurrection was an actual historical event
 - 34% neither agree nor disagree
 - 35% disbelieve

Does it matter?

1 Cor 15:13-19 - if Jesus has not been raised then Christianity is nothing

The resurrection is the only plausible explanation for the evidence there is.

Evidence to build our case.

Firstly - a high degree of certainty

... not seeking to prove it 100%

Secondly –The sort of evidence we are looking for

- 1) Multiple independent sources
- 2) Evidence from those who are opposed or neutral.
- 3) Real, honest evidence
 - Eg: embarrassing admissions or mistakes
- 4) Eye witnesses accounts
- 5) Evidence close to the time

What are these facts?

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion
 - all four gospels record the reality Jesus is crucified.
 - independent and hostile - Tacitus, Lucian of Samosata, Mara Bar-Serapion and the Talmud

“That Jesus was crucified is as sure as anything historical can be”

- 2) Jesus disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them

Sceptic - Norman Perry - “The more we study the tradition with regard to appearances, the firmer the rock begins to appear upon which they are based”

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Atheistic NT scholar, Gerd Ludemann, 'it may be taken as historical certainty that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ'.

3) The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed

... because he encountered the risen Jesus.

4) The sceptic James, brother of Jesus was suddenly changed

Sceptical scholar Reginald Fuller - if the resurrection had not occurred we would have to invent it as an explanation of why James changed from sceptic to his elevation as leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem.

5) The tomb was empty

Firstly, they could not produce the dead body

- Celcus - did not mention a dead body still in the tomb

Secondly, the enemies of Jesus admit the tomb was empty.

Finally, the first people to discover the tomb was empty were women

More next week ...