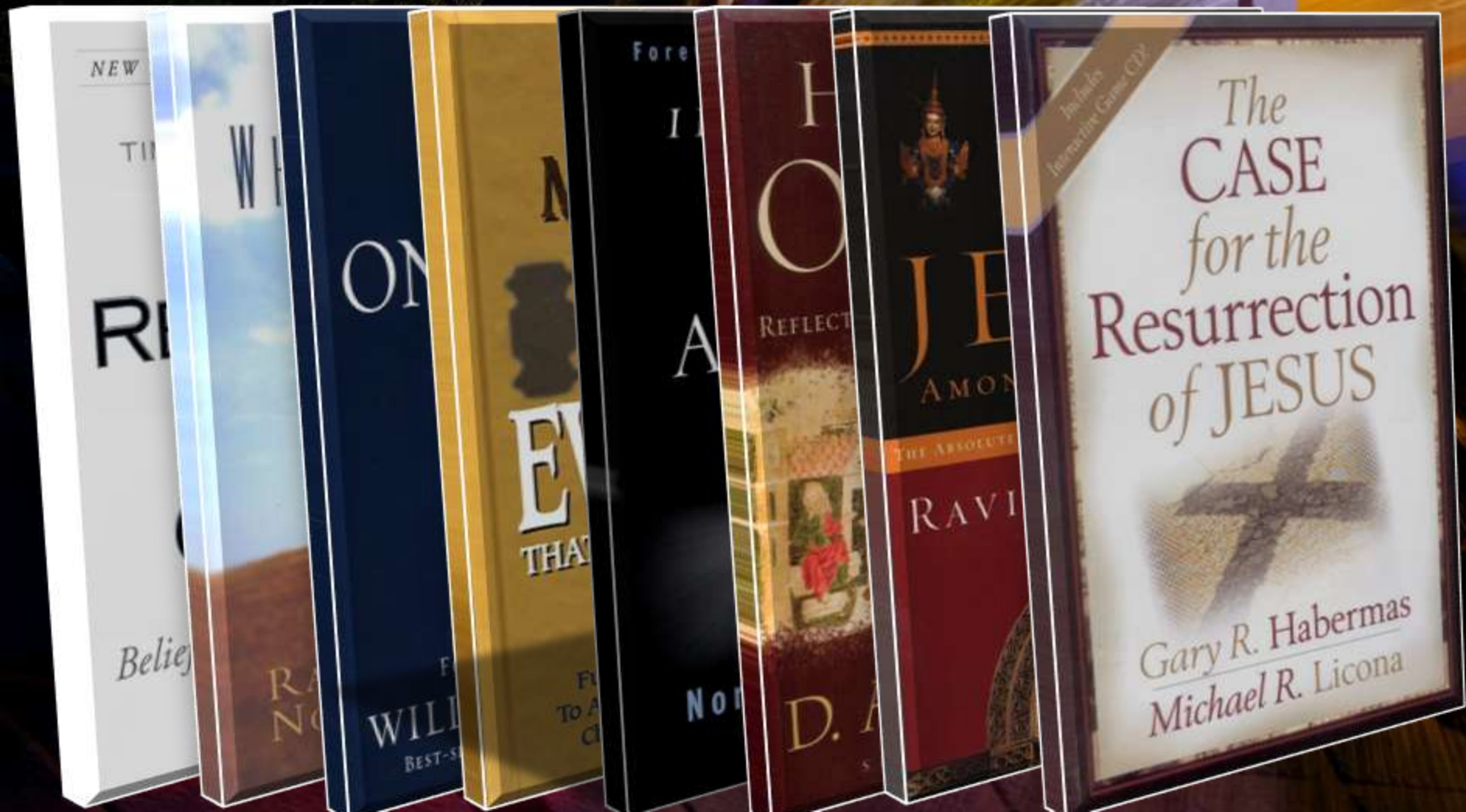
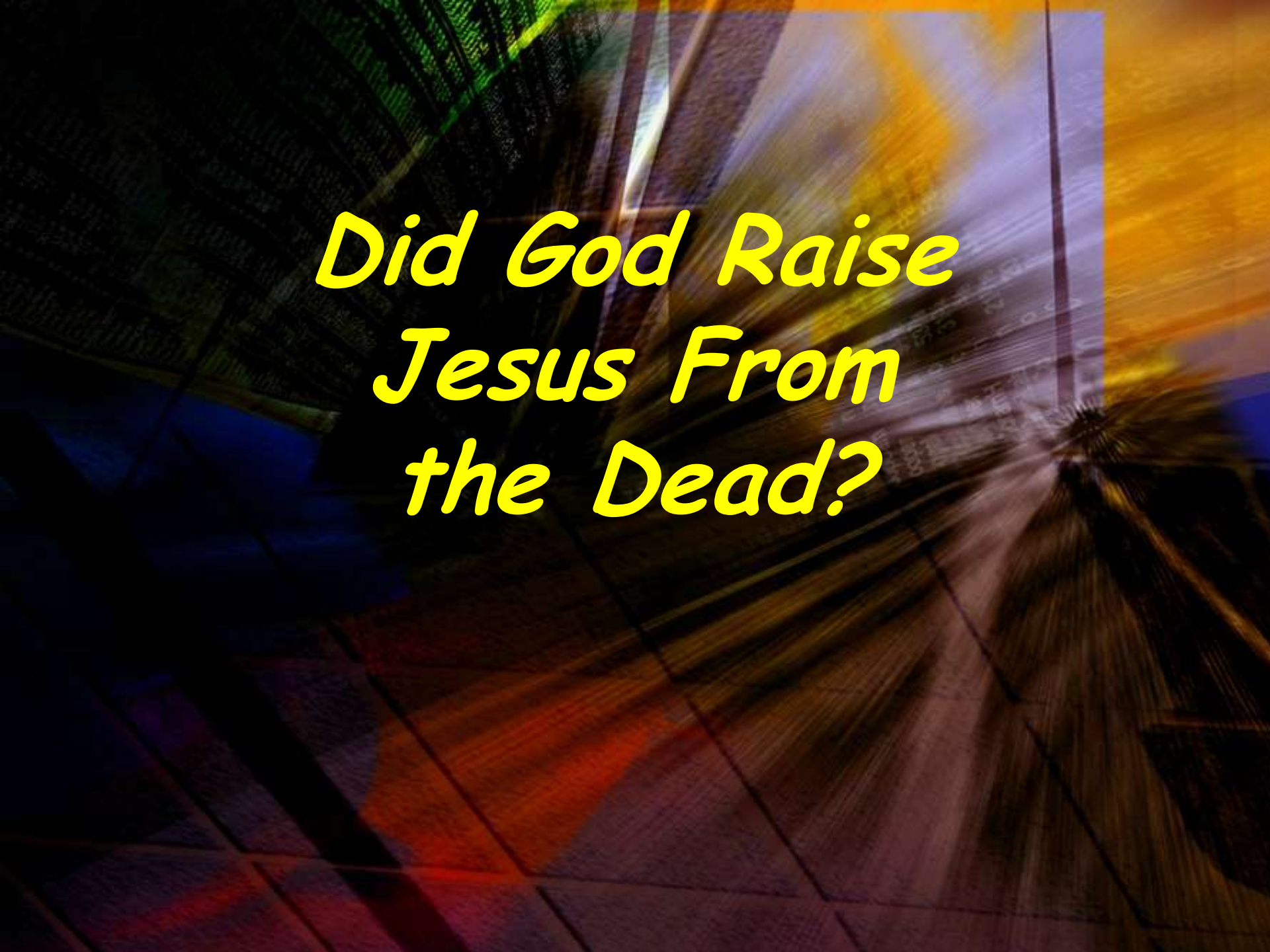


APOLOGETICS 101: **LESSON 12: THE CASE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**





*Did God Raise
Jesus From
the Dead?*

1 Cor. 15:1-8 - The Apostolic Gospel

- 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.**



*Is this account
historically
reliable?*

Fact #1 - Jesus died by crucifixion on the cross.

- 1. All four gospel accounts**
- 2. Four reliable secular sources (e.g. Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian)**



"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. **He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross,**



those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day."

Josephus, "Antiquities"

XVIII, iii, 3



"But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration. Hence, to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians,

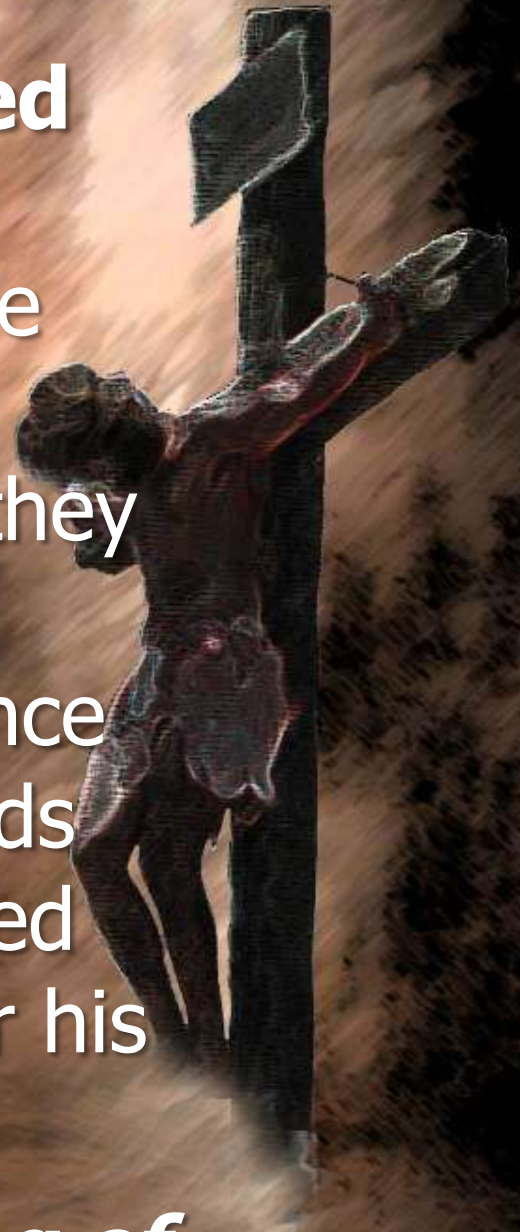


"who were hated for their enormities. **Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius:** but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome..."

Tacitus, "Annals" xv, 44



"...the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world...Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers one of another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws.



Lucian, "The Passing of Peregrinus" 12, 13.

Fact #2 - Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

- 1. Early Creed (c. 36 A.D.)** - Jesus' burial is attested in the very old tradition quoted by Paul in I Cor. 15.3-5.
- 2. Mark's Gospel (c. 55-70 A.D.)** - Mark 15:42-47
- 3. Joseph of Arimathea** - As a member of the Jewish court that condemned Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea is unlikely to be a Christian invention.

Fact #2 - Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

According to the late John A. T. Robinson of Cambridge University, the burial of Jesus in the tomb is “one of the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus.”

John A. T. Robinson, *The Human Face of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), p. 131.

Fact #3 - The Empty Tomb

1. The historical reliability of Jesus' burial supports the empty tomb.
2. Story of the empty tomb is independently reported very early (early creed; gospels and Acts)
3. Mark's simple story lacks legendary development (Mark 15:42-47).

Fact #3 - Mark 15:42-47

⁴² This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. As evening approached, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. (Joseph was an honored member of the high council, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.) ⁴⁴ Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he had died yet.

Fact #3 - Mark 15:42-47

⁴⁵ The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. ⁴⁶ Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid.

Fact #3 - The Empty Tomb

4. The discovery of the empty tomb by women. (not credible legally, low social status)
5. The earliest Jewish response (Matt 28:11-15) presupposes an empty tomb.
6. The 'Jerusalem Factor' helps to preclude any talk of deception, hallucination, wrong tomb or swoon theory.



Fact #4 - Eyewitnesses See the Risen Christ

1. The fact of Jesus' postmortem appearances

- Paul's list (1Cor. 15:3-8)
- Peter
- The 'twelve'
- 500 brethren
- James, brother of Jesus



Fact #4 - Eyewitnesses See the Risen Christ

2. *The independent gospel accounts*

- Women at the tomb
- all the apostles
- Peter and John
- Saul of Tarsus
(Acts)



Fact #4 - Eyewitnesses See the Risen Christ

3. *The bodily nature of the appearances*

- Paul (1Cor. 15:42-44)
- Appearance not vision (cf. Acts 7 - Stephen)
- Gospel accounts: physical/bodily appearances (e.g. Thomas)



Fact #4 - Eyewitnesses See the Risen Christ

Jesus appeared to a multitude of eyewitnesses over a period of 40 days in a variety of different locations.



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

The transformation of the disciples

- **Their leader was dead.** And Jews had no belief in a dying, much less rising, Messiah. The Messiah was supposed to throw off Israel's enemies (= Rome) and re-establish a Davidic reign—not suffer the ignominious death of criminal.



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

The transformation of the disciples

- According to Jewish law, Jesus' execution as a criminal showed him out to be a heretic, a man literally under the curse of God (Deut. 21.23).



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

The transformation of the disciples

- Jewish beliefs about the afterlife precluded anyone's rising from the dead to glory and immortality before the general resurrection at the end of the world.



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

The transformation of the disciples

- Despite all this, the original disciples believed in and were willing to go to their deaths for the fact of Jesus' resurrection.



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

The transformation of the disciples

- N. T. Wright, an eminent British scholar, concludes, *“that is why, as a historian, I cannot explain the rise of early Christianity unless Jesus rose again, leaving an empty tomb behind him.”*

N. T. Wright, “The New Unimproved Jesus,” *Christianity Today* (September 13, 1993), p. 26.



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

- *Conversion of Paul (Persecutor of the church)*
 - His conversion (Acts 9,22,26; cf. 1 Cor. 15:9-10; Gal. 1:13-16; Phil. 3:6-7)
 - His suffering (2Cor. 11:23-28; Acts 14:19; 16:19-24; 17:5, 13-15; 18:12-13; 21:27-36; 23:12-35)
 - His martyrdom



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

- *Conversion of James (skeptical brother of Jesus)*
 - He was an unbeliever prior to Jesus' death (Mark 3:21, 31; 6:3-4; John 7:5)
 - Risen Jesus appeared to him according to early creed (1Cor. 15:7)
 - His conversion
 - He became a leader in the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:12-2; Gal. 1:19)
 - His martyrdom (recorded in Josephus)



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

- *'Jesus of Nazareth was crucified in Jerusalem by Roman authority during the Passover Feast, having been arrested and convicted on charges of blasphemy by the Jewish Sanhedrin and then slandered before the governor Pilate on charges of treason. He died within several hours and was buried Friday afternoon by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb, which was shut with a stone.'*



Fact #5 - The Belief Of The Disciples

- *“Certain female followers of Jesus including Mary Magdalene, having observed his interment, visited his tomb early on Sunday morning, only to find it empty. Therefore, Jesus appeared alive from the dead to the disciples, including Peter, who then became proclaimers of the message of his resurrection.”*

William Craig, On Guard, p. 243.

A photograph of a stone archway leading into a dark, empty tomb. The arch is constructed from large, roughly-hewn stone blocks. The interior of the tomb is completely black, suggesting it is empty and unlit. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the stone and the depth of the shadow.

Six Possible Theories To Explain the Empty Tomb

1. The Conspiracy/Fraud Theory

- **Major problems:** Unlikely that they would have concocted a story which included women as the primary witnesses in that culture.
- First century Jews were looking for a triumphant Messiah, not a crucified and risen one.
- Moreover, they were looking for a universal resurrection of everyone at the end of history.

1. The Conspiracy/Fraud Theory

*"To the Greeks of the period, who believed in the soul's immortality, the declaration that the man Jesus had been resurrected was quite laughable (Acts 17:32)" – Paul Barnett, *Is The New Testament Reliable?* , p. 120*

- Nor does this view explain the conversions of James and Paul.
- Moreover it is improbable because it does not explain the transformed lives of Jesus' followers.

2. The Swoon/Apparent Death Theory

- **Major problems:** Most improbable because of the physical trauma and certainty of death, in addition the appearances of Christ are inconsistent with a physically traumatized/nearly dead man.
- JAMA (3/21/86) published an article describing death by crucifixion, finding that when accompanied by scourging, the inevitable result would be death.
- Romans were merciless in their executions.

2. The Swoon / Apparent Death Theory

- Nor does this view explain the conversions of James and Paul.
- Moreover it is improbable because it does not explain the transformed lives of Jesus' followers.

3. The Wrong Tomb/ Displaced Body Theory

- **Major problems:** Jewish burial custom would have precluded a wrong tomb scenario; the women who found the empty tomb were among those who help bury Jesus.
- Joseph of Arimathea and/or his servant s could have shown others the burial place if the women had gone to the wrong one.
- It does not explain the appearances of Christ to his disciples.

3. The Wrong Tomb/ Displaced Body Theory

- Nor does this view explain the conversions of James and Paul.
- Moreover it is improbable because it does not explain the transformed lives of Jesus' followers.

4. The Hallucination/Vision Theory

- **Major problem:** Does not explain the empty tomb.
- Hallucinations are individual events, like dreams, and are not shared.
- There are too many varied occurrences with differing experiences for these to be discounted as hallucinations. Too many people (500+), for too many days (40), saw Christ in too many settings (inside, outside) for these to be called hallucinations.
- Christ was touched and therefore physical; he also ate food.

4. The Hallucination/Vision Theory

- *'...for someone in the ancient world, visions of the deceased are not evidence that the person is alive, but evidence that he is dead!'*
– William Craig, *On Guard*, p. 255
- It does this view explain the conversions of James and Paul. Especially Paul, who took pride in his strict following of the law; and by all accounts he was a happy and successful Jew.
- Moreover it is improbable because it does not explain the transformed lives of Jesus' followers.

5. The Myth/Legend Theory

- **Major problems:** Most improbable because critical scholarship has shown that any apparent parallels to the resurrection of Jesus are unfounded.
- Legendary development need more time to develop than we have for the beginnings of the early church .
- First century Jewish beliefs regarding the Messiah would tend to militate against the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

5. The Myth/Legend Theory

- Does not explain Paul independent belief in the risen Christ.
- Does not explain the transformed lives of Jesus' followers.

6. The Risen Savior (Theory)

- **Major problem:** One must believe in God and miracles. Otherwise this is the most plausible of all the theories.

6. The Risen Savior

*"In conclusion, then, three great, independently established facts - **the empty tomb, the resurrection appearances, and the origin of the Christian faith** - all point to the same marvelous conclusion: that God raised Jesus from the dead. Given that God exists, this conclusion cannot be barred to anyone seeking the meaning of existence."*

*– William Craig, *On Guard*, p. 262*

6. The Risen Savior

"It is striking that the letters of the mission leaders - James, Peter, John and Paul - never argue for the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. The writers assume that the readers accept its reality as well established and not in contention."

*Paul Barnett, *Is The New Testament Reliable?* , p. 113*

Conclusion - There Are Three Possible Responses

1. **Deny** that this is true, despite the historical evidence to the contrary.
2. **Acknowledge** that this account of Jesus and Christianity is historical but refuse to accept that Jesus as your personal Savior.
3. **Confess** that Jesus is risen and accept his offer of salvation by believing that his death on the cross purchased your salvation. Because Jesus died in your place and for your sin and by faith you can receive life eternal and have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

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