

I Corinthians 1:22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

John 20:24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “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.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then **Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

I Corinthians 15:13 For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ must still be dead.¹⁴ And if he is still dead, then all our preaching is useless and your trust in God is empty, worthless, **hopeless**;

A. Did Jesus exist in history?

We have not just 2 sources, but 42 sources within one hundred and fifty years showing proof of the historical Jesus. If you eliminate biblical references, we still have 9 sources: (Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Phlegon, Lucian, Celsus, Mara Bar-Serapion, Suetonius and Thallus.)

B. Did Jesus die on a cross?

As we shared before death by crucifixion was used effectively by the Roman empire as a deterrent to keep people from committing all sorts of terrible acts, including insurrection against the empire.

Crucifixion was common then and is still considered among the worst forms of torture unto death. They perfected the process to know just how much pain a person could withstand before going into shock or passing out. Their goal was to keep them conscious and in as much pain as possible, sometimes keeping them alive in this state for days, if the authorities so desired.

The spear – “Clearly the weight of the historical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view of that spear, thrust between his right rib, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge” (Journal of the American Medical Association, March 21, 1986, 1463)

C. Did Jesus rise from the dead? - Evidence for the Resurrection:

1. **Eye witnesses:** Matthew 28:1 & John 20:10-18 Mary and Mary Magdalene, Mark 16:1 and Salome, entered the garden, Luke 24:13-35 two men on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:36-44 & John 20:19-23 the eleven, John 20:24-29 Thomas and the other disciples, John 21:1-14 Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John, two others in Galilee while fishing, 1 Corinthians 15 to Peter, the twelve, more than 500, James [the brother of Jesus], to all the apostles, to Paul, Acts 1:15 Acts 2 [specifically 2:32] 120 “witnesses of the fact”.
2. **The inability to produce the body of Christ** –
There are **theories** which have attempted to give other **explanations** as to what happened to **the body** of Jesus. Some say he never died, but was in a **limited coma**, then came back and **got out of the tomb**. Some say his **body was stolen** from the tomb by the disciples, who were really in a **conspiracy** with Jesus to create a new **worldwide false religion**. Some say he **never left the tomb**. In all this, **if Jesus did not raise** from the dead, **no one** has been **able to disprove** it by producing the body.
3. **The willingness to die for what they knew to be truth** -
(Reference) Fox's Book of Martyrs gives powerful **indications** which are supported in the Bible that **all twelve apostles** and others went through beating, flogging, prison, torture and most died **horrific deaths** and were given the opportunity to recant, but were **steadfast in their conviction**.

How many do you suppose would **have died** knowing it all was a lie? History also tells us the only reasons people fabricate stories in collusion is for power, sex or fame. They received none of these.

4. Dr. Frank Turek uses the 8 'E's' to explain the evidence for the resurrection. He also confirms that no single one necessarily proves the resurrection but when taken all together presents a convicting case. The 8 'E's' are:
 - a. **Early testimony** (refer point A.)
 - b. **Eyewitness testimony** (refer point A.) – “the language used is highly suggestive of eyewitnesses or writers who had direct access to eyewitnesses. Even seeming Gospel contradictions are explainable if different witnesses were writing from their own perspectives.” (Strobel in The Case for Christ as a legal investigative reporter explains that if the stories were exact would actually point to collusion and not verification of truth.)
 - c. **Embarrassing testimony** – “The Gospel stories record embarrassing facts about the apostles, including Peter putting his foot in his mouth and the fact that women were the first to discover the empty tomb. (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20)” We do not understand the cultural rub in these stories such as women being the first to see Jesus and relaying the message of the resurrection. All to say if they were directing a false narrative, they would never have had women be the first to meet the resurrected Christ.
 - d. **Excruciating testimony** – “The Apostles endured hardship and death (refer to #3) and while some death accounts have been questioned essentially all historians agree that there is no record of any of the Apostles ever recanting their statements.” Non-Christian sources verify the martyrdom of Peter, Paul and James, the brother of Jesus, recorded by Josephus and Clement of Rome, both before the close of the first century. Others verify persecution and killings (Tacitus, Suetonius, Roman governor Pliny the Younger).
 - e. **Embedded Confirmations** – also called undesigned coincidences. These are incidences where a scripture from one of the gospels completes an idea, or event from one of the other accounts.
 - f. **Extra biblical testimony**
 - g. **Expected testimony** – refers to the fulfillment of Old Testament **prophecies**, of which Jesus **fulfilled more than 300**, (see Isaiah 53). Josh McDowell says that there are **60 major prophecies** foretelling something **about Jesus's life**. Harold Hartzler of the American Scientific Affiliation confirms that **coincidence is ruled out** using modern **science of probability**. If only **8 prophecies were true** the chances of these just happening would be **10 to the 17th power**. (reference: Evidence that Demands a Verdict, page 175, by Josh McDowell)
 - h. **Explosive growth** of the early church – Psychology describes something called an 'impact event'. A life event that is burned into your memory and often results in drastic changes in behavior and choices. The resurrection would certainly qualify as an impact event.
5. **Significant eyewitness** – Some believe the most significant witness to the resurrection of Jesus was that of His brother James. James did not follow or believe that His brother Jesus was the Son of God (John 7:1-5). But then after Jesus' death James had a complete turnaround and became a believer, disciple and eventually leader of the church (Acts 15:13-21) in Jerusalem.
6. **Accounts of unbelief** – There are places in the New Testament where there are accounts of doubt or disbelief. If they were certain of what they believed, then it stands to reason they had nothing to hide and were free to share anything they observed, even unbelief. (Matthew 28:16-20, note verse 17, Acts 2:5-13, note verse 13)
7. **Transformed lives today**
8. **God at work today – proving Himself to you**

Thank you to Eric Mason who was a great help in the research process!

References –

- J. Warner Wallace** - He graduated Los Angeles Sheriff's Explorer Academy in 1978. bachelor's degree in design from California State University at Long Beach and a master's degree in architecture from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).^[1] In 1988, attended the Los Angeles Sheriff's Academy as a recruit for the Torrance (CA) Police Department. Law enforcement career, Wallace served on a number of assignments, including SWAT, Gang Detail, and Robbery Homicide. He was also one of the founding members of the Torrance Police Department's Cold-Case Homicide Unit.

As a homicide detective, Wallace investigated a number of high-profile cold-case murders. Cases featured on Dateline (NBC)^[2] and North Mission Road (truTV). As a founding member of the Torrance Police Department Cold-Case Homicide Unit, earned the Sustained Superiority Award from the South Bay Police and Fire Medal of Valor committee.^[3] 2015 California Peace Officer Association COPSWEST Award for best solved cold case.^[4]

In 1996, Wallace became a Christian at the age of 35, after investigating the gospels as potential eyewitness accounts to the life of Jesus. Wallace joined the staff of Saddleback Church, while continuing to serve as a cold-case homicide detective. enrolled in Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, earning a master's degree in theological studies. Wallace was investigating the Bible for invalid arguments to help him disprove Christianity, but was convinced of the opposite, and was converted to Christianity.^[1]

Wallace began applying the principles of cold-case homicide investigation to Christian apologetics. He has written four books addressing the evidence for Christianity: *Cold-Case Christianity*, *Alive, God's Crime Scene*, and *Forensic Faith*.
- Lee Strobel** – Atheist and former investigative reporter for several papers including the Chicago Tribune and legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, journalism degree from the University of Missouri and Masters of Studies in Law degree from Yale – written books such as “The Case for Christ” “The Case for Faith”
- Josh McDowell** – former agnostic and as a college student convinced that intellectualism trumped any belief in Christ or Christianity. Studied at Kellogg College, degree at Wheaton College, M Div at Talbot Theological Seminary. Since 1961 on staff with CRU, has spoken to more than 46 million people, giving over 27,200 talks in 139 countries. In 1991, Josh founded Operation Carelift to meet the physical and spiritual needs in orphanages, hospitals, schools, and prisons in the former Soviet Union. Since that time, Operation Carelift has delivered humanitarian aid (food, clothing, and medical supplies) worth more than \$46,000,000. That is the equivalent of 278 forty-ton containers. Nearly one million children have received school supplies, food items, hygiene items, and toys from the volunteers that traveled twice a year to share God's love with them.

Received two significant honors from the Russian people. The only non-Russian to receive an honorary doctor of pediatrics degree from the Russian Academy of Medicine, the only foreigner to become a member of the prestigious Russian Club of Scientists. Operation Carelift, which has grown into one of the largest humanitarian aid organizations based in the United States, is now a part of UNTO (formerly known as Global Aid Network). Written or co-authored 151 books in 128 languages including: More Than a Carpenter — over 27 million copies, Evidence That Demands a Verdict — named one the twentieth century's top 40 books and one of the thirteen most influential books of the last 50 years on Christian thought by *World Magazine*. been nominated 36 times for the Gold Medallion Award and has received that award on four occasions.

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