

The evidence of Christ's resurrection is compelling

By **Letters to the Editor** - April 15, 2014

Almost two thousand years ago the single most important and profound event in the history of mankind is alleged to have occurred.

But is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead truly a fact of history or is it a myth that is still around simply because people want to believe it?

Consider that the rise of the Christian faith began in Jerusalem right after the crucifixion with a belief in the resurrection.

Some want to claim that Jesus was just a 'good guy' and all the deity and resurrection stuff only came along decades later. However, even noted Christian critic Bart Ehrman has recently concluded that based on the evidence the initial teaching of the resurrection could not reasonably be placed any later than two years after the crucifixion.

It is also noteworthy that the earliest converts to the Christian faith were almost exclusively Jewish. Being Jewish early in the first century far exceeded a mere religious belief; it was a comprehensive statement about that person's identity and it dominated every facet of their lives.

When a first century Jew converted to Christianity, they traded a lifetime of total commitment to monotheism, animal sacrifice, temple worship, a political Messiah, the Sabbath and all the special holy days for the trinity, the sacrifice of a servant Savior and church-based worship. Yet they converted by the thousands.

And how remarkable that the church rose in Jerusalem with this belief, in the very shadow of the cross and the tomb? Both Jewish and Roman leaders had a vested interest in stamping out this uprising, so they would have obviously produced the body if there had been a body to produce. Because of this and other pieces of evidence, historians overwhelmingly agree that the empty tomb is a virtual certainty of history.

So, soon after the crucifixion, a belief in the resurrection arose in the shadow of the tomb by thousands of people who gave up everything to follow a Galilean carpenter who had died a disgraceful death, all the while risking martyrdom, damnation and certain ostracism from everything they had always believed in.

What could possibly explain this if not the Resurrection being an actual historical event?

Combine this with many other evidences supporting the historicity of the Resurrection such as the conversion of the apostles from a ragtag, discouraged bunch to preaching the Resurrection all the way to martyrdom, the compelling case for the authenticity of the post-Resurrection appearances, the evidence that demonstrates the New Testament gospel authors told the truth, and the amazing testimonies of James and Saul and believers can feel very confident that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is, indeed, a historical event.

As British high court judge Sir Edward Clarke wrote, "To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling. As a lawyer I accept the Gospel evidence unreservedly as the testimony of truthful men to facts that they were able to substantiate."

The famous lawyer Sir Lionel Luckhoo put it this way, "I say unequivocally that the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt."

If the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historical event, then there is a Savior who loved us enough to die for us so that we might live. The question then becomes whether we choose to accept or reject his offer of love, forgiveness and freedom. God gives us the choice and will honor our decision. He stands at the door and knocks, desperately hoping you will choose to open it.

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