



## All or Nothing

The foundation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The Bible itself admits that it is worthless without the resurrection. Paul says that “if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile” (1 Cor. 15:17). There are many arguments for the truth of the Bible, but the Bible stakes its claim for truth on the resurrection first and foremost. More specifically, it is the claim that the resurrection was a real historical event, not simply an allegory or parable. God asks us to believe him based on an action in history, not ideas or theories.

So the credibility of the entire Bible truly hinges on the resurrection. If the resurrection accounts prove to be historically inaccurate, then everything else the NT writers wrote is subject to suspicion. In fact, if the resurrection did not happen as an historical event, then the entire Bible is a lie and should not be trusted. It’s an all or nothing proposition. On the other hand, if the testimony about the resurrection is true, then the entire Bible is validated.

*“if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile” (1 Cor. 15:17)*

## Literal Resurrection

In 1 Cor. 15:3-8, the apostle Paul gives us some historically testable information. He says that Jesus was killed, buried, raised from the dead, and most importantly for our current purposes, **seen by many witnesses**. Paul is claiming that the resurrection is a real event in history. The apostle John also claims that Jesus’ body was physically raised from the dead (1 John 1:1-3). These passages are important because they demonstrate that the disciples believed Jesus was literally raised from the dead. It was not a vision, dream, parable, or myth (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

So can we believe the apostles’ testimony about the resurrection? Well, we can test their motives for telling the truth. If these men were going to get together and make up a story about Jesus’ resurrection, we should expect a motivation. Did they have anything to gain from lying? Did the apostles benefit from making up a resurrection story?

## Credible Testimony

By all accounts the apostles gained nothing from their message. In fact, their insistence that Jesus was raised from the dead actually made their lives worse. Historical tradition tells us that the apostles were put to death for their story. James was the first apostle to die for holding to the truth of the resurrection (Acts 12:2). The apostles gained no fame or wealth for telling the story of the resurrection. They are famous historically because of the Bible’s impact on the world, but they were not famous during the time they lived. The apostle Paul suffered great physical and financial harm because of his unwavering testimony in the resurrection of Jesus (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

The only credible explanation for their suffering and death is that the apostles truly thought that Jesus was literally raised from the dead.

The people of Jesus’ own day tried to discredit the resurrection as well. The Jewish leaders had every reason to disprove the resurrection and all they had to do was produce the body of Jesus. They claimed that Jesus’ body was stolen (Matt. 28:11-15). As we’ve just seen, however, that would mean that the apostles suffered and died for a lie that gave them no benefit. They produced no body and no credible reason to believe that the apostles were lying.

A more complete discussion of these issues is warranted than this short tract allows, but these are the main points that must be dealt with: 1) Jesus’ resurrection is always spoken of as literal, and 2) the testimony of the apostles is credible. The reasonable conclusion is that Jesus really did rise from the dead, and the only explanation for such an amazing event is the power of God the Creator. Based on the validity of the resurrection, our faith is not in vain, and the Bible proves to be the inspired Word of God.

*“but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31)*

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