

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . .
And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

- 1 Cor 15.14, 17

Otherwise Our Faith Is Meaningless

Resurrection 101, Supplement

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“I would remind you of the gospel. . .”

“For I delivered to you as of *first importance** what I also received . . .” (* *Greek: “in [with] the first things*”)

“That: Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures [and]

“That: he was buried [and]

“That: he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, *and*

“That: he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then . . . to more than five hundred brothers at one time, . . . to James, . . . to all the apostles. Last of all, . . . to me. . .”

1 Corinthians 15.1-8

“For I am the least of the apostles, . . . Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.” - 1 Cor 15.9, 11

Acts: Speeches Re: Jesus

(Sermons & Defenses)

- ◆ Eleven speeches: Acts 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26.
 - ◆ Jesus death - in 7 speeches (2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 17).
 - ◆ Jesus' burial - in 2 speeches, both to Jewish audiences (2, 13).
 - ◆ **Jesus' resurrection - in all 11 speeches.**
 - ◆ (Also implied in Paul's account of his conversion - 22.6-10)
 - ◆ Jesus' appearances - in 5 speeches (2, 3, 5, 10, 13)

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babblers wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign *divinities*" —
because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. - Acts 17.16-18

Current Events

*People “have been told over and over and over and over by the media, on the basis of some recent book or other [e.g., *The Davinci Code*], that the Jesus of the Gospels is historically incredible and that Christianity is therefore based on a mistake.*

“It simply will not do to declare this question out-of-bounds, to say that the church’s teaching will do for us, thank you very much, so we do not need to ask historical questions. You cannot say that to a serious and enquiring person who engages you in conversation on a train or to someone who wanders into a church one Sunday and asks what it is all about.” - N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*, 18*

** Or to church teens and young adults who have encountered counterclaims in reading, online, etc.*

Taking History Seriously

“If Christianity is not rooted in things that actually happened in first-century Palestine, we might as well be Buddhists, Marxists or almost anything else. And if Jesus never existed, or if he was quite different from what the Gospels and the church’s worship affirms him to have been, then we are indeed living in cloud-cuckoo land.”

— N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*, 18

¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . . ¹⁷ . . . your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. . . . ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. . . . ³² What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” - 1 Cor 15.14, 17, 19, 32

“In the current view, religion is not an issue of knowledge, of what the facts are, but of faith, of what is believed. This notion of the Resurrection as ‘existential meaning-making’ makes its actual occurrence irrelevant. . . .”

[Atheist] Antony G. N. Flew and [Christian theist] Gary Habermas . . . agree that the current view of religion is nonsense—*that there is no meaning if there is no event*. They agree that the question of the Resurrection must be settled in terms of the sufficiency of the evidence. . . . [emphasis added]

David Beck, “Preface,” *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? The Resurrection Debate*, paperback ed., ix

Retitled 2009: *Did the Resurrection Happen? A Conversation with Gary Habermas and Antony Flew*

“At least eleven events are considered to be knowable history by virtually all scholars [critical historians, philosophers, theologians, and Scripture scholars] and a twelfth event is considered to be knowable history by many scholars.” - *Habermas, 19*

** Note the measured way he states these events.*

1. Jesus died due to the rigors of crucifixion [Matt 27.50; Mark 15.37; Luke 23.46; John 19.30-37; 1 Cor 15.3].
2. Jesus was buried [Matt 27.57-61; Luke 23.50-53; John 19.38-42; 1 Cor 15.4].
3. Jesus' death caused the disciples to despair and lose hope [Matt 26.56, 58; 27.54-56; John 20.19].
4. Although not as a frequently recognized, many scholars hold that Jesus was buried in a tomb that was discovered to be empty just a few days later [Luke 24.1-3; John 20.1-2].

Habermas, Knowable Events, continued

5. Critical scholars even agree that at this time the disciples had real experiences that they believed were literal appearances of the risen Jesus [Luke 24.13-35, 36-49; John 20.14-23; 1 Cor 15.5-8].
6. Because of these experiences, the disciples were transformed from doubters who were afraid to identify themselves with Jesus to bold proclaimers of his death and Resurrection, even being willing to die for this belief [Matt 26.56; John 20.19; Acts 2.14, 22-23; 3.14-15; 4.13].
7. This message was central in the early church preaching [Acts 2.24; 3.15; 10.39-41; 13.32-34; 17.16-18, 32].
8. And was especially proclaimed in Jerusalem, where Jesus had died shortly before [Acts 2.5, 24; 5.27-28].

Habermas, Knowable Events, continued

9. As a result of this message, the church was born and grew [Acts 2.41-47].
10. With Sunday as the primary day of worship [Acts 20.7; 1 Cor 16.2].
11. James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic, was converted to the faith when he also believed he saw the resurrected Jesus [Mark 6.3; John 7.5; 1 Cor 15.7; Gal 1.19; Acts 15.6, 13; 21.18].
12. A few years later, Paul the persecutor of Christians was also converted by an experience that he, similarly, believed to be an appearance of the risen Jesus [Acts 8.1-3; 9.1-2; 21.40-22.11; Gal 1.13-17].

“The pivotal fact, recognized as historical by virtually all scholars, is the original experiences of the disciples. It is nearly always admitted that the disciples had actual experiences and that something really happened. Interestingly, varying critical positions that support the literal facticity of Jesus’ resurrection are currently popular.” - Gary Habermas, 20

The question: what historical event is sufficient to explain these things?

“So, as far as the New Testament is concerned, there is a great deal at stake in the question of whether or not Jesus actually rose from the dead: the very validity of the Christian faith. And it is more than a bit ironic that so many professed Christians today fail to grasp this aspect of the gospel.”

James T. South, “Just Jesus: The Evidence of History,” 121

Vital for Faith and Life

“... and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ...” (Romans 1.4)

- ♦ **Romans 4.25** — Jesus’ resurrection brings about acquittal [justification] from sin (cf. 8.33; 1 Cor 15.17).
- ♦ **Romans 6.1-11** — Jesus’ resurrection is the basis, model, and assurance for newness of life (the practical consequences are spelled out in vv. 12, 14, 17-18, 22-24; cf. 8.1-4).
- ♦ **Romans 8.34** — Jesus’ resurrection is vital for meeting present sufferings with hope (fleshed out in vv. 18, 23, 31b, 33-35a, 37-39).