

EASTER

1 Corinthians 15:1-19 – Is The Resurrection Historical Fact Or Fiction?

April 9, 2023

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. Hebrews 2:14–15 (ESV)

1. What evidence supports the resurrection as a historical fact?

A. The Evidence Of The Church

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (ESV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers (one who attacks another's reputation with their words), nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (ESV emphasis mine)

B. The Evidence Of The Bible

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures... 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 (ESV)

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:25–27 (ESV)

But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matthew 12:39–40 (ESV)

"Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." Acts 2:29–31 (ESV)

For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. Psalm 22:16–18 (ESV)

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:5–6 (ESV)

C. The Evidence Of The Eyewitnesses

...and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 1 Corinthians 15:5-7 (ESV)

- Jesus appeared to Peter.
- Jesus appeared to the disciples.
- Jesus appeared to the five hundred.
- Jesus appeared to James.

D. The Evidence Of Paul, A Unique Eyewitness

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 1 Corinthians 15:8-10 (ESV)

E. The Evidence Of The Common Message

Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.
1 Corinthians 15:11 (ESV)

F. The Evidence Of Secular History

We have thirty-nine documents that record history from the time of Jesus. Twenty-two of those documents discuss the death and resurrection of Jesus. Eleven of those twenty-two are non-Christian in origin. —John Warwick Montgomery, Evidence for Faith: Deciding the God Question, 1991, p. 9.

2. What happens if the resurrection was historical fiction?

A. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we will not rise from the dead.

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 1 Corinthians 15:12-13 (ESV)

B. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, the church is a joke.

*And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.
1 Corinthians 15:14 (ESV)*

C. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christians are dishonest people.

*We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.
1 Corinthians 15:15 (ESV)*

D. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we have no forgiveness for our sins.

*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.
1 Corinthians 15:16–17 (ESV)*

E. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, there is no hope of seeing our loved ones.

*Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
1 Corinthians 15:18 (ESV)*

F. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, those who follow Christ are fools.

*If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.
1 Corinthians 15:19 (ESV)*

Conclusion

- If the resurrection was historical fiction, we have everything to lose.
- Since the resurrection is a historical fact, we have everything to gain.
- Have you trusted in Jesus' death and resurrection to forgive your sin? Have you asked Jesus to take charge of your life?