

## DID JESUS CHRIST RISE FROM THE DEAD?

JOIN US MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>, THURSDAY AT 7:00 PM  
WINEBRENNER HALL, ROOM 121  
HOWARD PAYNE UNIVERSITY, BROWNWOOD, TX  
FREE SNACKS AND ADMISSION  
Q&A AFTERWARDS

WE WILL EXAMINE AND APPLY THE MINIMAL FACTS APPROACH:

- WAS THE TOMB OCCUPIED?
  - WAS JESUS BURIED IN AN UNKNOWN TOMB OR THE WRONG TOMB?
  - WAS THE RESURRECTION STORY JUST A LEGEND?
  - DID PEOPLE HALLUCINATE THE RISEN JESUS?
  - WAS THE RESURRECTION EXISTENTIAL OR SPIRITUAL?
- WAS THE TOMB EMPTY?
  - WAS THE BODY STOLEN?
  - DID JESUS MERELY PASS OUT ON THE CROSS?
  - WAS IT A CONTRIVED PASSOVER PLOT?

# A Minimal Facts Approach

## Student Handout

### ABSTRACT

This is a lesson developed by the author along with material from Dr. Craig Hazen and Dr. Sean McDowell of Biola University.

**Dan Britton**

Introduction to Apologetics

**LESSON 5 – THE RESURRECTION**

Our entire faith rests on the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*1 Corinthians 15:12-14* – But now if Christ (the Messiah) is preached as raised from the dead, how is it that some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not risen; And if Christ has not risen, then our preaching is in vain [it amounts to nothing] and your faith is devoid of truth and is fruitless (without effect, empty, imaginary, and unfounded).

Most material for this lesson is taken from a course taught by Dr. Craig Hazen, head of the Christian Apologetics department at Biola University.

**TEACHING NOTES:**

- 1) Start with the current view on the Resurrection
- 2) Message of the Resurrection
- 3) Present 12 undisputable facts about the Resurrection
- 4) Apply these facts to the 12 popular theories against the Resurrection

**CURRENT VIEW**

- A. The Jesus Seminar \_\_\_\_\_ on the Resurrection
1. Biblical Jesus was a myth \_\_\_\_\_ created by Christians eager to start a church movement
  2. Real Jesus was no more a child of God \_\_\_\_\_ than anyone else
  3. Jewish peasant \_\_\_\_\_ - probably not first born, probably illiterate
  4. Spell binding itinerant preacher
  5. Social revolutionary \_\_\_\_\_ who brought peaceful but brazen challenges to both Roman and Jewish elite
  6. He had healer's touch \_\_\_\_\_ but performed no miracles
  7. He was executed almost casually after causing a disturbance in Jerusalem during Passover
  8. He lived on in the hearts of His believers, but did not physically rise from the dead
  9. Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and thrown into a shallow, anonymous grave and probably eaten by wild dogs
- B. What Is the Jesus Seminar?
1. Started in 1985 by Dr. Robert Funk in Berkley, California
  2. Began with 30 New Testament "scholars" – "experts" who met twice yearly
  3. Currently, have around 200
  4. Claim only 18% of the sayings and 16% of the deeds in the Gospels are true
  5. High profile makes this organization a darling of our liberal media

**Our Father** in the heavens,  
your name be revered.  
<sup>10</sup>Impose your imperial rule,  
enact your will on earth as you have in heaven.  
<sup>11</sup>Provide us with the bread we need for the day.  
<sup>12</sup>Forgive our debts  
to the extent that we have forgiven those in debt to us.  
<sup>13</sup>And please don't subject us to test after test,  
but rescue us from the evil one.

#### The Voting of the Jesus Seminar

- **Red**—Jesus undoubtedly said this or something very like it.
- **Pink**—Jesus probably or might have said something like this.
- **Gray**—Jesus did not say this, but the ideas are close to His own.
- **Black**—Jesus did not say this; it represents a later tradition.

## CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE RESURRECTION

### A. Eight Basic Propositions

1. The Gospels have been found to be trustworthy  
(**TEACHING NOTE:** Reference our lesson on the Bible.)
2. In these records, Jesus claims to be God
3. In all four Gospel accounts, Christ's death and bodily resurrection are described in detail
4. Excellent reasons to believe Jesus rose from the dead
5. The Resurrection confirms the claims of Jesus
6. If Jesus is God, whatever He says is true
7. Jesus used the Old Testament as the Word of God
8. The Old Testament and New Testament contain religious, philosophical and ethical absolutes

### B. However...

(**TEACHING NOTE:** We can't use the Bible as proof because many regard it as mythical at best.)

## 12 FACTS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

1. **Jesus died by crucifixion**
2. Jesus was buried
3. Jesus death caused the disciples to despair and lose hope, believing Him dead
4. **Jesus tomb was found to be empty a few days later**
5. **Disciples had experiences they believed to be the literal appearances of the risen Jesus**
6. Disciples were transformed from doubters to proclaimers
7. Jesus' death and Resurrection was central to the preaching of the early church
8. Jerusalem received the strong initial teachings of the early church
9. **The church grew as a result of this teaching**
10. Sunday became the primary day of worship
11. James formerly a skeptic and Jesus' brother was converted to faith when he also saw what he believed to be the resurrected Jesus  
(**TEACHING NOTE:** There are five James, two of whom were apostles (son of Zebedee, son of Alphaeus), James the younger (Mark 15:40), James the father of Judas (Luke 6:16) and "James the Just," regarded as Jesus' brother and is generally accepted as the author of the book of James.)
12. The apostle Paul was converted a few years later by, what he believed to be, an appearance of the resurrected Jesus

(**TEACHING NOTE:** Bolded items are considered "minimal facts approach.")

**FACTS SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLES**

These facts tend to support Fact No. 6: The disciples' (and others) lives were transformed upon their experience with the Risen Christ.

<b>APOSTLE</b>	<b>DIED</b>	<b>METHOD OF DEATH</b>
<b>James, son of Zebedee</b>	44 A.D.	Beheaded (Acts 12:1-2)
<b>Philip</b>	54 A.D.	Tortured and crucified
<b>Matthew</b>	60 A.D.	Burned or stabbed to death, or beheaded
<b>James, brother of Jesus</b>	62 A.D.	Thrown from high structure in the Temple, then stoned to death.
<b>James, son of Alphaeus</b>	63 A.D.	Stoned to death or crucified
<b>Simon Peter</b>	64-67 A.D.	Crucified in Rome, possibly upside down
<b>Paul</b>	64-67 A.D.	Beheaded
<b>Andrew, Simon's brother</b>	65-69 A.D.	Crucified (possibly from an olive tree)
<b>Matthias</b>	70 A.D.	Burned, stoned or stabbed to death
<b>Bartholomew</b>	62-68 A.D.	Tortured and crucified or beheaded
<b>Thomas</b>	70 A.D.	Killed with a spear by Brahmans in India
<b>Thaddaeus (Judas, son of James)</b>	72 A.D.	Stabbed or beaten to death, or shot with arrows
<b>Simon the Zealot</b>	74 A.D.	Crucified, stabbed or hacked to death by an axe
<b>John, James' brother</b>	89+ A.D.	Died of natural causes in Ephesus

**THEORIES THAT ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE EMPTY TOMB**

## A. Unknown Tomb

1. Body was thrown into a common grave; disciples created this theory and the account of the Resurrection
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Facts 4-12

## B. Wrong Tomb

1. The women went to the wrong tomb
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Fact 4 fits (empty tomb), but 5-12 do not

## C. Legend

1. Resurrection is simply a fabrication that evolved over time to explain a leader that was long dead
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Misses ALL 12 facts

## D. Twin

1. Jesus had a twin that took His place after His death
2. Can explain most of the historical facts
3. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. It does not explain Fact 4 (the empty tomb)
  - b. It goes against Fact 11 (Jesus' brother)

## E. Hallucination

1. Jesus' appearance was a hallucination
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. People don't hallucinate the same thing (James and later, Paul)
  - b. Hallucinations are personable and testable
  - c. It goes against Facts 5 (literal appearance), 11 (James) and 12 (Paul)

## F. Existential Resurrection

1. Jesus only rose in our hearts
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Misses on Facts 4, 5, 11 and 12.

## G. Spiritual Resurrection

1. Jesus rose in spirit, not bodily
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Same arguments as "F": 4, 5, 11 and 12

## H. Disciples Stole Body

1. Disciples came to the grave, overpowered the guards and stole the body
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Facts 5, 6 (disciples transformed), 11 and 12
  - b. What would have happened to the Roman guards?

## I. Authorities Hid Body

1. Either Jewish or Roman authorities hid the body of Jesus
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Facts 5-12
  - b. Jewish – Would it not be in their interest to produce the body to stop the move of faith that was coming against their religious beliefs?
  - c. Roman – Would it not be in their interest to produce the body to stop believers that were causing dissension within their occupation of Judea?

## J. Swoon

1. Jesus fainted
2. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Jesus would have had to revive himself, unwrap himself, sit up, move the stone, make His way past the guards to the disciples

b. Facts 1 and 6 don't fit!

#### K. Passover Plot

1. Jesus deliberately set out to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of suffering servant and ruling king through mock death and resurrection, along with Joseph of Arimathea and a mysterious young man
2. Plan failed when Roman soldiers speared Jesus
3. Mysterious young man took Jesus' place as the risen Lord
4. Why doesn't it fit?
  - a. Facts 5, 6, 11 and 12

#### L. Jesus Was an Alien

1. Alien in a supernatural way
2. Why does it fit?
  - a. It can explain every fact, but requires a huge leap of faith to believe in aliens that have existed only in science fiction.

#### M. Bodily Resurrection

1. All the facts fit!

In Summary, the tomb of Jesus was either:

1. Occupied
  - a. Unknown tomb (4-12)
  - b. Wrong tomb (5-12)
  - c. Legend (1-12)
  - d. Hallucination (5, 11, 12)
  - e. Existential Resurrection (4, 5, 11, 12)
  - f. Spiritual Resurrection (4, 5, 11, 12)
2. Empty
  - a. Disciples Stole Body (5, 6, 11, 12)
  - b. Authorities Stole Body (5-12)
  - c. Swoon (1, 6)

- d. Passover Plot (5, 6, 11, 12)
- e. Jesus was an alien (all fit, but...)
- f. Jesus rose from the dead.