

Why Am I A Christian? (Apologetic Series)

I want to start an apologetic article series that will appear regularly in this bulletin answering the question “*Why am I a Christian?*”, and I hope that such a series will prove helpful to you in figuring out the answer to that question for yourself, while also providing a Christian evidences resource to share with friends and skeptics alike.

The answers I’m going to provide over the length of this series are simply solutions I’ve had to discover for myself. They’re the answers I provide others with whom I’m studying. They’re going to be colored by my own unique biases and fallible understandings. It’ll be the same for you, but even so, the most important question for you to answer for yourself is: Why are YOU a Christian?

Why am I a Christian? *Second, because God raised Jesus from the dead.*

I would have to say that in my experience the most important question one has to figure out for themselves is whether or not Jesus rose from the dead. The answer to the question will either support your faith or cause it to crumble. Here’s why. If Jesus rose from the dead, that is, if we determine that is a historical fact, that this Jewish man rose from the dead – then we have to obey him, and we have to adopt his view of sacred writ. But if we determine, based on the evidence provided, that he did not, in fact, resurrect then what does it matter what he said or taught? Because it would all be false, after all.

I am a Christian because I believe the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is a historically proven fact, that the evidence supports that hypothesis.

Listen. The burden of proof doesn’t lie solely upon Christians. No; you must bear the weight of your own beliefs too. You have to explain the following phenomena outside of a genuine resurrection if, in fact, Christ did not raise:

- *There was an empty grave.* The earliest resources tell us that Jesus’s body was not found in the grave. For example, when Peter preached his sermon in Acts 2 he noted that of the patriarch David, they still had his grave and knew his body was in it. But of Jesus’s body – no one knew where it was. How do we explain this?
- *There was a multitude of eyewitnesses.* Among the multitude that heard the earliest news of Jesus’s resurrection were antagonists who could have proven the claims false and given reasonable explanations. But they didn’t. Instead we read that there were even over 500 eyewitnesses to his new life after life after death. Among the eyewitnesses? Paul himself who was one of the earliest persecutors of the Christian faith, so devout he was in his Judaism. There stands nothing to gain for this man by leaving his Judaistic prestige for the persecuted work of a Christian evangelist – and yet he chose that path. Why? Because he *saw* the resurrected Jesus (1Co.15.1-8).
- *Women were considered the first eyewitnesses.* Imagine this scenario: you’re one of the apostles and you can’t believe Jesus is dead so you concoct this elaborate religion based on the idea that Jesus actually rose from the dead – so you make the first eyewitnesses

to this phenomenon *women*, in not one but all four of the gospel accounts. Women. Women whose testimony was not even admissible as evidence in court. Either you're an extremely ignorant apostle with no sense whatsoever...or you told the story that way because that's what actually happened. One of the earliest skeptics and antagonists to the Christian faith, Celsus, once stated that the faith shouldn't be believed since it was based on the testimony of hysterical women.

- *The 2000 year Christian movement.* How do you explain the pervasiveness of Christianity today? Now, of course, you could ask the same question of any religion and we know that just because many believe it to be true does not necessarily make it so. But this must account for something? As Pascal once wrote, "I believe those witnesses that get their throats cut." So many lives lost in faith that Jesus's resurrection is a fact.

What other rational explanation can there be for the preceding phenomena besides the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Now you might object of my appeal to the Bible as an authority on such matters. But how is that really all that different from appealing to the authority of scientists? "Because the Bible tells me so," is at the heart not too different from "Because the scientists tell me so" because in the end it's a statement of faith without firsthand experience for a majority of people.

Where do you place your faith?