

The Answer is the Resurrection

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Renewing the Mind, Equipping the Church, Engaging the World

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What Is Apologetics?

- Apologetics – comes from the Greek word **apologia** meaning ‘a defense’, ‘a reasoned argument’
- *“Apologetics is the rational defense of Christianity. Christian apologists use reason and evidence to present a convincing case for Christianity, challenge unbelief, expose errors, and defend the message of the gospel.” Pat Zukeran, *The Apologetics of Jesus**
- Paul used the word twice in Philippians:
 - for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in **the defense** and confirmation of the gospel. Phil. 1:7
 - I am here for **the defense** of the gospel Phil. 1:17

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What Are We Defending and When?

- In his first letter to Asia Minor, Peter tells us all to be apologists
- When anyone asks for the reason you believe
 - *always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.*
1st Peter 3:15b
- What is the hope you are defending
 - *By God's great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you, who by God's power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* 1st Peter 1:3-5



What is the real question being asked?

- The person asking the question may have many different reasons for asking
 - Why do you believe in a God and insist on calling yourself a Christian
 - How can Jesus have the power to offer you eternal life?
 - Do you think I need to change my religion?
 - How can the creator God have enough love for us to allow Jesus to be crucified for us?
- The death and resurrection of Jesus answers these questions and more!



The Answer is the Resurrection

- Any barrier raised up against the gospel can be torn down through the resurrection of Jesus
- When sharing the gospel be sure to focus on Jesus' death, burial and resurrection
- Paul wrote
 - *I would remind you of the gospel . . . **as of first importance** . . . Christ died for our sins . . . He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures and that He appeared to . . . more than five hundred . . .*
 - And if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is futile and your faith is empty** 1 Cor 15:3-6, 14



Ten Reasons for Confidence

- Our faith and eternal reward are based on the resurrection of Jesus
- *“The evidence for the resurrection is better than for claimed miracles in any other religion. It’s outstandingly different in quality and quantity, I think, from the evidence offered for the occurrence of most other supposedly miraculous events.”*

Gary Habermas, *My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism* An Exclusive Interview with Former British Atheist Professor Antony Flew



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

1. The accurate pictures and predictions

–Precursors of Jesus sacrifice

- The Passover Lamb saving the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt
John 1:29

Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our **Passover** lamb, has been sacrificed.

- The lamb on the Day of Atonement taking away the sins of the nation of Israel
1st Cor 5:7

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the **Lamb** of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

- The serpent lifted up to save the Israelites from the penalty for their sin
John 3:14

And as Moses lifted up the **serpent** in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

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10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

1. The accurate predictions (cont)

–Prophecies from hundreds of years prior

- Of the nature of His birth
Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

- His suffering for our sins and redeeming us from our penalty
Isaiah 53

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.

- Of the nature of His death
Psalm 22

a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet . . . they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

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10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

1. The accurate predictions (cont.)

–During Jesus lifetime

- For three years, Jesus was telling his followers and others of His coming crucifixion and resurrection
- Jesus told the Jewish leaders of His plan from the beginning
John 2:19

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

- This early prediction made such an impression on Jesus’ followers, that John 2:22 tells us,

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

2. The attesting miracles

- Jesus’ resurrection was not a sudden miraculous conclusion to an otherwise normal life.
- Jesus consistently showed His authority over the material universe
 - turning water into wine,
 - walking on the water,
 - calming the storm,
 - healing the sick,
 - the resurrection of Lazarus.



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

2. The attesting miracles (cont.)

– Look at Jesus raising Lazarus from the grave in John chapter 11

- Why did Jesus raise Lazarus? John 11:41-43

So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”

- What did Jesus tell Martha John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

2. The attesting miracles (cont.)

– Peter reminded his audience of this in his first public testimony for Jesus' resurrection and no one disputed his claim.

Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — Acts 2:22



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

3. His agonizing death

- Given Jesus great power, we know He arranged His crucifixion.
 - Earlier Jesus had walked through those who were trying to stone Him John 8:57-59
 - Jesus had numerous opportunities to avoid a fatal confrontation with the Jewish leaders and Roman authorities.
 - **No one is going to go through a Roman scourging and crucifixion as a hoax.**
- On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus spent hours in prayer asking His Father for some way to avoid the cross.
Matt 26:39

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."



3. His agonizing death (cont.)

- Jesus submitted to the cross because it was necessary to pay for our sins and He knew that He had the authority to conquer death. 1 Peter 2:24-25

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

4. The angry authorities

–After word of Jesus' resurrection began to spread, the Jewish authorities wanted to put a stop to people believing in Jesus.

1. they put a guard around Jesus' tomb,
2. after Jesus was gone from the tomb, they spread false stories blaming the disciples for stealing His body Matt. 28:12-30
3. they threatened those who were preaching and demanded that they stop talking about Jesus, and
4. they began to arrest and kill known followers of Jesus.



4. The angry authorities (cont.)

–Their actions did not work

Acts 5:27-42

The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have **filled Jerusalem with your teaching . . .**" But Peter and the apostles answered, " We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. . . But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them. . . . they flogged them and **ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus. . .** And every day both in the temple courts and from house to house, **they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus was the Christ.**



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

5. The absent body

- The angry authorities wanted to stop people from following Jesus. Producing the body of Jesus would accomplish this. Even with support from the Romans, they were never able to produce a body:

So give orders to secure the tomb until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may come and steal his body and say to the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "Take a guard of soldiers. Go and make it as secure as you can." So they went with the soldiers of the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone. Matthew 27:64-66



5. The absent body (cont.)

- Those guards knew their lives were at stake if they failed in their duty, but on the third day Jesus was gone. Once they regained their senses, the guards "reported to the chief priests all that had happened." Why did they take this risk? Because they knew that there was no body to recover.

(the elders) gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'" Mt 28:12b-13

- the best the authorities could do was to bribe the guards to report that they had fallen asleep on duty. They did not suggest that they were not guarding the tomb. Too many eyewitnesses had seen the guards take up their posts around the tomb.



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

6. The anxious disciples

- After Jesus arrest, most of His disciples fled (Matt 26:56)
- Some viewed His crucifixion from a distance (Luke 23:49)
- Then they hid in the upper room fearing that the Jewish authorities might come for them next (John 20:19).
- Two of Jesus' disciples knew the tomb was empty, spent several hours with their risen Lord, listened to him explain the Scriptures to them and only recognized Him just before He disappeared from their sight.

Then he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?" Luke 24:31b-32



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

6. The anxious disciples (cont.)

- To the disciples, Jesus appeared defeated as He suffered at the hands of the authorities. After His humiliating death, it was hard for them not to believe that the authorities had removed His body.
- Their skepticism and shock showed that they clearly were not co-conspirators in a preplanned hoax.
- Clearly, they **despised the cross and discounted the resurrection.**



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

7. The agreeing eyewitnesses

- After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to over 500 people. They testified to His resurrection. We do not have a record of anyone disputing their testimony; saying “I was there with them, and it was a hoax”

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

1 Cor 15:3-8



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

7. The agreeing eyewitnesses (cont.)

- Peter pointed out that he was an eyewitness when teaching the churches of Asia Minor

For we did not follow cleverly concocted fables when we made known to you the power and return of our Lord Jesus Christ; no, we were eyewitnesses of his grandeur.

2nd Peter 1:16



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

8. The abiding martyrs

- People don't die for something they know to be a hoax. Yet, many of these eyewitnesses accepted death rather than deny the resurrection of Jesus.
- Stephen was a disciple dragged before the authorities because the Jews could not refute his powerful teaching about Jesus. As a result, he was stoned to death. Acts 7
- King Herod had James, the brother of the apostle John, put to death by the sword (Acts 12:1-2).
- Only the miraculous intervention of God's angels prevented Herod from doing the same thing to Peter.



8. The abiding martyrs (cont.)

- Later both Peter and Paul would be martyred for their faith
- It is one thing to be willing to die for a lie that you really believe is the truth and another to be willing to die for a lie that you know is a lie.
- These disciples were in a position to know if Jesus' resurrection was real or just a story.
- They were willing to give up their lives because they knew it was true.



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

9. The agnostic historians

- Some skeptics claim that Jesus did not really live on this earth or if he did live his followers did not believe that He was the resurrected Son of God.
- However, non-Christian historians living in the 1st century reported that Jesus was reputed to have risen from the dead and that his followers were willing to die rather than recant their belief in Jesus. Cornelius Tacitus (55-117 A.D.)
- Tacitus described how Nero had blamed Christians with the burning of Rome in 64 A.D.
“Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their (abominations). Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius.” (Annals, XV.44)



9. The agnostic historians (cont.)

- Josephus, a first century Jewish leader and historian, wrote the following:
About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he . . . wrought surprising feats. . . . He was the Christ. When Pilate . . . condemned him to be crucified, those who had . . . come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared . . . restored to life. . . . And the tribe of Christians . . . has . . . not disappeared
- These authors from the 1st century had no interest in promoting Christianity, but their histories state that Jesus was crucified and his followers believed He was the resurrected Son of God.



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

10. The assuring Holy Spirit

- Over the centuries, the Holy Spirit continues to convict unbelievers and assure believers that Jesus is risen. As Peter testified, before the Jewish council, the Holy Spirit is a witness to the truth about Jesus.
- *“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; **and so is the Holy Spirit**, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” Acts 5:30-32*



10 Reasons We Can Be Confident

10. The assuring Holy Spirit (cont.)

- The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment and assures us that Jesus is the Son of God (John 16:8-14).
- The Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:15) and joint heirs with Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit is given to us as a pledge or guarantee of our eternal inheritance (2 Con 1:21-22, Eph 1:13-15) which we received through faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- Neither you nor I are eyewitnesses of Jesus resurrection, but the Holy Spirit is an eyewitness that gives us confidence that Jesus is our Lord and our God.



Using These Attesting Facts in a Defense

- Ask the person why they don't believe in the resurrection
- Point out the most relevant attesting facts
 - A fictional story with no eyewitnesses
 - The abiding martyrs, the agnostic historians, the agreeing eyewitnesses
 - The apostles made it up for their own glory
 - The abiding martyrs, The anxious apostles, the angry authorities,
 - No reason to believe Jesus was special
 - The abiding martyrs, the attesting miracles, the accurate pictures and predictions,



Conclusion

- We don't believe in the resurrection **in spite of the facts.**
- Instead, we believe in the resurrection **in light of the facts.**
- In Acts 1:8, we learn that through the power of the Holy Spirit we are to be witnesses to everyone we encounter in every place.
- To what end? So that everyone will “confess with their mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that God has raised Him from the dead” and thereby be saved to eternal life. Romans 10:9



Conclusion

- When we witness, we want people to ultimately believe in the resurrection, God raised Jesus from the dead.
- Thinking through the different aspects of Jesus death and resurrection help prepare us to share the gospel
- If you can defend your belief in the resurrection, then you are already positioned to respond to other questions people may have about your faith.
- You can respond to objections by asking, “Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus?”.
- If the answer is no, then you may want to focus on the evidence for the resurrection as a foundation for addressing their other concerns.



The Resurrection and Objections

- Objections to the gospel:
 - I have trouble believing in Christianity because of the evil in the world, other religions, no active god, no life after death, etc. etc. etc.
 - Those things cannot make a religion not true
 - If the resurrection is true, those objections fall away.
- If the resurrection is a fairy tale, “we are of all people most to be pitied” 1 Cor 15:19
- Let’s look at some examples



The Resurrection and Objections

- If there was a god involved in creation, I don't see any sign of him caring for us today.
 - The resurrection clearly is an act of God.
 - The purpose of Jesus death and resurrection clearly shows that God cares deeply for people today.
- I don't see God caring about my life
 - The resurrection provides a way to eternal life for all mankind
 - God made the ultimate sacrifice to make eternity available to you



The Resurrection and Objections

- How can anyone know the truth about what comes after death of our bodies
 - As God, Jesus knew about life beyond our earthly bodies before the world was created
 - Jesus' resurrection shows that He also experienced it
- My sins are too great. Jesus cannot help me.
 - If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, how much more, since we have been reconciled, will we be saved by his life?
 - Paul was chief among sinners for persecuting the church, but when he recognized the risen Lord he was forgiven.



The Resurrection and Objections

- Aren't there many ways to God? Can Jesus be the only way?
 - Jesus resurrection clearly shows He is a way to God.
 - His crucifixion shows He is the only way. If there were multiple ways to God, Jesus would not have gone to the cross. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed,

Jesus prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

Matt 26:39b
 - Jesus was saying if there is any other way to redeem people from their slavery to sin and death, don't ask me to go to the cross. But, there was no other way.
 - Jesus clearly stated that no one comes to the Father except through Him.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

John 14:6



The Resurrection and Objections

- Every religion teaches us a way to be reunited with God. Why should I believe Christianity is the only way.
 - Every major religion is based on what you need to achieve to be reunited with God.
 - Christianity is based on what God did to allow you to be reunited with Him for eternity
 - Jesus resurrection demonstrated that faith in Him is **one way** to heaven. His agonizing death showed that He is **the only way** to heaven.



Applying the Resurrection to Objections

Example #1: Every religion has their holy books. How can we know that the Bible is truly God's revelation?

- **Jesus' Resurrection** confirms that Jesus is the source of truth and knows which holy book is truly revelation from God.
- Jesus affirmed the inspiration of the Old Testament.
- Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead the apostles as they shared Jesus teaching through the New Testament.
- The gospel of John states:

So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. John 2:22

- Jesus resurrection caused His disciples to believe the Bible, it is certainly sufficient to cause me to believe.



Bridge the Gap with ACT

- Always pray before starting anything
- If you don't know about a person's religious background, ask them what and how strong.
- **A**sk entry question
 - Something they can inform you about that sets up the challenging thought
- **C**hallenging thought
 - Make them think about what they believe
- **T**ransition
 - Would it be alright if I share what I have learned?



Muslims: Bridging the Gap with ACT

- Ask Entry questions:
 - How do you know that you have done enough?
 - Do you ever do something you know would displease God?
- Challenging thought:
 - Knowing that you could not do enough, is it possible that God reached out to bridge the chasm between you and heaven?
- Transition question:
 - Personally, I realized that I was separated from God. Could I share with you how I found God's way back into His eternal presence?
 - Optional step for cultural Muslims: Could I share with you something I learned about the Qur'an that points us toward the answer I discovered?



Unaffiliated View #1 Scientism

- Entry question:
 - Clearly there was no life at the Big Bang. How do think life got started in this universe?
- Challenging thought:
 - After 70 years with no progress on this question, many scientists are finding evidence there must be an intelligent designer behind life. Do you think that is possible?
- Transition question:
 - I am not an origins scientist, but I have found an answer I believe explains our current condition. Would you mind if I shared it with you?



Unaffiliated View #2 No Crutches

- Entry question:
 - Would you say you are part of a major religion?
- Challenging thought:
 - What do see as the major deficiencies in religions in this country? Followers of this religion:
 - Try to convince people to believe in a fairy tale god
 - Say their religion is the source of truth and can distinguish right from wrong
 - Focus on an afterlife and ignore saving the earth
 - Promote the supremacy of white men
- Transition question:
 - I can see why you might feel that way. Could I share with you a response that addresses your concern?



Unaffiliated View #3 Temporals

- Entry question:
 - Do you ever wonder what happens when you die?
- Challenging thought:
 - If there were something you could do now that would greatly improve your life forever, would you spend some time considering it?
- Transition question:
 - Many people don't believe they can do much about their life. Could I share with you what I discovered gives me confidence now and forever?



Unaffiliated View #4 Fixers

- Entry question:
 - What worries you most about the future on this earth?
- Challenging thought:
 - Is there anything you have seen in religions that would help allay your concerns?
- Transition question:
 - Many people share your concern. I think they are right to be concerned as mankind repeatedly failed to improve their natures. Could I share with you what I discovered that gives me a living hope?

