

Spring 2019!

Life Group Quarter

Week 3

Message Date 4/21/19

MY STORY

- 1) What do you traditionally do on Easter Sunday?
- 2) What was your takeaway from last week's study?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, what caught your attention?

The Goal

This week we will be doing something slightly different. We will be unpacking the resurrection of Jesus from a historical facts perspective. We will be discussing the 12 minimum facts about the resurrection that are widely accepted by Christian scholars and more interestingly, non-Christian scholars. The Goal this week is to help our people gain more confidence in their faith through understanding what can be known through the historical evidence. This week may feel a little more scholastic, but I believe there is great application in a deeper understanding of historical facts. If your group has further questions, please have them email me at justino@baysidech.com. I will be including references of where they can find further information on the content of this study.

DIGGING DEEPER

1Peter 3:15 (ESV)

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, 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, ⁱ

- 4) According to this verse, what are we supposed to be prepared to do?

[Make a defense or give the reasons why.](#)

- 5) What does it mean to make a defense?

[To explain or give the reasons why.](#)

- 6) How are we supposed to present our defense?

This week we are going to do something a little different. We are going to be examining what is known as the "minimum historical evidence for the resurrection". These are 12 facts about the resurrection of Jesus that are widely accepted by Christian and non-Christian scholars. Many of these are also accepted by skeptics of the Christian faith. We will be

unpacking some of these facts so that we can do what 1 Peter 3:15 suggests. We will have a clear reason based on history, not just on faith. I am not saying that faith is not important. I am suggesting that we have a great reason to believe what we believe because the resurrection of Jesus is the best conclusion for all of the evidence that will be presented. All of the 12 facts are found in the Bible (I have included some, but not all of the references that support these facts), but they are also found in other documents throughout history.

The 12 minimum historical facts about the resurrection of Jesus:

Fact 1. Jesus died by crucifixion. (Luke 23:46)

Fact 2. He was buried. (Luke 23:53)

Fact 3. The death of Jesus caused the disciples to despair and lose hope, believing that His life was ended. (Luke 23:13-24, Mark 16:7-8)

7) Why are these three facts important?

Jesus was a real person! He really died and was buried. The disciples knew this and they despaired because of it.

Fact 4. Although not as widely accepted, many scholars hold that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was discovered to be empty just a few days later. (Mark 16:1-6)

8) Why is an empty tomb a big deal?

If there was a body when the disciples claimed Jesus had risen from the dead, those who opposed the Christian movement could have provided evidence that He did not rise from the dead.

Fact 5. The disciples had experiences they believed were the literal appearances of the risen Jesus. (Luke 24:36-48)

Fact 6. The disciples were transformed from doubters, who were afraid to identify themselves with Jesus, to bold proclaimers of His death and resurrection. (Acts 2:14-46)

9) The word "believe" is in Fact #5 because skeptics don't want to admit the possibility that it could be true. What, if any, are other possible explanations for Facts 5 and 6?

Some claim hallucination, some claim it was a lie. But the best explanation of the facts is that they are true.

10) Many claim that the disciples could have hallucinated. What is the problem with large group hallucinations?

It is not how they work. When we look into the horizon on a hot day and see what looks like water, it is really a misinterpretation of the visual information. The heat waves cause the appearance of water. There has never been a time in history when a group of people in different locations and different times experienced the same hallucination. This is implausible as an answer.

Fact 7. This message was at the center of preaching in the early church. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

Fact 8. This message was especially proclaimed in Jerusalem, where Jesus died and was buried shortly before. (Acts 2:14-46)

Fact 9. As a result of this teaching, the church was born and grew. (Acts 2:37-41)

11) What is the significance of rapid church growth in the place where Jesus was crucified? If the resurrection was a lie this is the last place where it would begin because there was too much opposition.

Fact 10. Sunday became the primary day of worship.

Fact 11. James, who had been a skeptic, was converted to the Christian faith when he also believed he had seen the resurrected Jesus. (1 Corinthians 15:7, James)

Fact 12. A few years later, Paul was converted by an experience that he likewise believed to be an appearance of the risen Jesus. (Acts 8:1-3, Acts 9:1-9, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8)ⁱⁱ

These last two facts are some of the most compelling. First, because James was the half-brother of Jesus, and a skeptic (see Matthew 12:47, Mark 3:32, Luke 8:20). Secondly, Saul (Paul) was a persecutor of the church. His conversion took place while on his way to imprison believers.

12) What would it take to convince a half-brother that Jesus was the Son of God? This is no small thing. James grew up with Jesus, they were children together. And he became a leader in the Jerusalem church. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

13) In thinking about Paul, why is his conversion so powerful? Paul was an enemy of the church. He had zero personal gain in coming to faith. The best explanation for his radical conversion is seeing the risen Jesus.

14) How hard is it to convince a person to change their deeply-held religious beliefs? Very hard!!!

TAKING IT HOME

15) In thinking about these 12 Minimum Facts, what is the best explanation for them all? That Jesus did in fact rise from the dead!

16) Which one do you find most compelling to trust and why?

17) What is your takeaway for this week's study?

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

This week, read through all the passages associated with the 12 Facts and answer the following questions.

18) Is there anything that I need to shift in my faith because of these?

19) How can I grow in my faith because of historical facts?

ⁱ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Pe 3:15.

ⁱⁱ Gary R. Habermas; Antony Flew. *Did the Resurrection Happen?: A Conversation with Gary Habermas and Antony Flew* (Veritas Books) (Kindle Locations 179-184). Kindle Edition.