

## **A Doubter's Guide to Easter**

**Our Mission: To take as many people to Heaven as we can before we die. Period.**

...for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. **Mark 9:31-32 NRSV**

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas..was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side." Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them...Jesus[appeared]...among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."  
**John 20:24-29 NLT**

**Do the resurrection accounts as told in the Bible pass the 3 tests of historicity?**

**External evidence test:** An examination to see if other historical documents confirm or deny the internal testimony of the documents themselves.

**Internal evidence test:** An examination to see if the author or authors discredits himself.

**Bibliographical test:** An examination of the textual transmission by which documents reach us.

**The Bible accounts of the resurrection of Christ are well supported by outside historical documents that were contemporary to the biblical times. (External Evidence Test)**

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 180 Irenaeus was a student of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had been a Christian for 86 years, and was a disciple of John the Apostle) wrote: "Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews (i.e., Jews) in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church there. After their departure (i.e., death, which strong tradition places at the time of the Neronian persecution in 64), Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter's preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the gospel preached by his teacher. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast (this is a reference to John 13:25 and 21:20) himself produced his Gospel, while he was living at Ephesus in Asia."

Josephus' Anitquities. A Jewish historian working for the Romans in the first century. "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became

his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”

“...the fact that neither he [Josephus] nor any other contemporary of the apostles make any attempt to refute the Resurrection is significant.” - Geisler and Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, p.204.

“...conformity or agreement with other known historical or scientific facts is often the decisive test of evidence, whether of one or of more witnesses.” – Louis R. Gottschalk, *Understanding History*.

Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. **1 Corinthians 15:6 NRSV**

**The Bible accounts of Christ’s resurrection have no internal contradictions. (Internal Evidence Test)**

The apostles appealed to common knowledge about Jesus and his resurrection from the dead, even to their enemies. If they would have been wrong in their accounts of Jesus, it would have been shoved back in their face.

“People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus of Nazareth by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know.” **Acts 2:22 NLT**

Suddenly, Festus shouted, “Paul, you are insane. Too much study has made you crazy!” But Paul replied, “I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. I am speaking the sober truth. And King Agrippa knows about these things. I speak frankly, for I am sure these events are all familiar to him, for they were not done in a corner! King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do—” Agrippa interrupted him. “Do you think you can make me a Christian so quickly?” **Acts 26:24-28 NLT**

“At the time they (the synoptic gospels) were written or may be supposed to have been written, there were eyewitnesses and their testimony was not completely disregarded...This means that the gospels must be regarded as largely reliable witnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.” – Robert Grant, *New Testament Scholar*, University of Chicago.

**The Biblical accounts are the most documented of all historical documents from any period of time in history. (Bibliographical Evidence Test)**

Aristotle’s poetics were written in 343 B.C., and the earliest copy (MSS) we have is dated A.D. 1100, nearly a 1400 year gap. No scholars doubt the historicity of his documents.

Caesar's writing of the Gallic Wars between 58 and 50 B. C., and its manuscript authority rests on 9 or 10 copies (MSS), dating 1,000 years after his death.

The Iliad is the 2nd highest, and therefore most legitimate bibliographically covered writing with 643 MSS.

The New Testament has over 20,000 MSS to date. This is not copies, this is historical documents passed down through generations.

"The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established." Sir Frederick Kenyon, director and principal librarian at the British Museum; arguable the foremost authority on issuing statement on manuscripts (MSS).

**Conclusion: He is risen! He is risen indeed!**

"I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead." – Dr. Thomas Arnold, chair of Modern History, Oxford University.

"Jesus promised, 'I AM the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again.'" **John 11:25 NLT**

### **Further Resources**

[More than a Carpenter, Josh McDowell](#)

[Evidence That Demands A Verdict, Josh McDowell](#)

[Why I Believe, D. James Kennedy](#)

[When Skeptics Ask, Geisler and Brooks](#)

[10 Most Significant Discoveries in the Field of Biblical Archaeology, Tim Challies](#)

**Message Notes: The Holy Bible, New International Version, New Living Translation. When Skeptics Ask, by Norman Geisler and Ron Brooks. More Than A Carpenter, by Josh McDowell. Why I Believe, by D. James Kennedy.**