EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

1. JESUS'S DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION

Corroborated by 5 ancient non-Christian sources:

- **Josephus** – 37-100 AD secular Jewish historian, said Jesus was condemned to be crucified by Pontius Pilate.
- **Tacitus** – 56 –120 AD Roman Senator & Historian, said Jesus suffered the "extreme penalty" (crucifixion) under Pontius Pilate.
- **Lucian –** 125 – 180 AD, a satire writer, artist, mockingly called Jesus the "crucified lawgiver"
- **Mara Bar-Serapion** 73- AD Stoic philosopher and writer, called Jesus "wise king of Jews" and "unjust execution"
- **Talmud -** A collection of Jewish Rabbinical writings, hostile to Jesus, says "on the eve of Passover they hanged Jesus the Nazarene".

Considered a universal fact by many Christian and atheist scholars alike

2. JESUS'S DISCIPLES BELIEVED HE ROSE

Considered universal fact the disciples claimed and believed Jesus rose

- Oral tradition (Creeds)
- Written tradition (Gospels, Paul, and early church fathers)

7 ancient sources attest to their willingness to suffer and die for their claim:

- **Acts –** Records the suffering and death of some of the apostles
- **Polycarp** - 69 – 155 AD, Early church father, mentored by John the apostle, martyred for his faith, wrote the apostles suffered for the Lord.
- **Tertullian** – 155 – 220 AD, author, theologian, apologist 1st Latin writer to use "trinity" to describe God, wrote about Peter's crucifixion and Paul's execution.
- **Clement of Rome** – 35 – 100 AD, 1st Century apostolic leader, mentored by Peter, documents the suffering and death of Peter and Paul, martyred for his faith
- **Ignatius** – 35 – 107 AD, Early Christian Bishop of Antioch, martyred for his faith
- **Origen** – 185 – 253 AD, Early Christian Scholar and theologian, he was tortured for his faith, first to write that Peter was crucified upside down, and wrote Paul was beheaded.
- **Dionysius of Corinth** – 100 – 180 AD, 2nd century bishop, wrote that Peter and Paul were martyred in Italy about the same time.

People may suffer and die for something that is false, but they believe to be true...But no one suffers and dies for something they know to be false. Acts 1:3 CSB

3. FROM PERSECUTOR TO BELIEVER

Paul was a Christian persecutor who killed numerous Christians. Paul's conversion is attested by Acts, himself, and was known by early Christians.

His suffering and martyrdom attested by:

- Paul
- Luke
- Clement of Rome
- Polycarp
- Tertullian
- Origen
- Dionysius of Corinth

4. FROM SKEPTIC TO BELIEVER

James was Jesus's half-brother and he was skeptical of Jesus throughout His ministry.

Conversion attested by:

- Gospels (before conversion) **John 7:5 CSB**
- Early creeds **I Corinthians 15:1-8 BSB**
- Paul and Acts identify James as church leader (after conversion) **Galatians 1:15 BSB**

Martyrdom attested by:

- **Josephus** – Records the execution of James, "The brother of Jesus who is called Christ" in 62 AD
- **Hegesippus** – 100 – 180 AD, He described James, the brother of the Lord as a sacrificial leader who was martyred by scribes and pharisees
- **Clement of Alexandria** – 147 – 215 AD, wrote James, the half - brother of Jesus, was thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple, then beaten to death with a club.

5. THE TOMB WAS EMPTY!

Jerusalem Factor

If Jesus's body was there, the Romans would've produced it to destroy the claim that he rose, but they did not. Jerusalem was small in Jesus's day, about 200 – 250 acres. It was about the size of a large university or large neighborhood. You could walk across the city in about 20 minutes. It would not have been hard to find Jesus's body if it was there or if it was stolen.

Enemy Attestation

Jewish leaders claimed the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus proving the tomb was empty. The enemies of Jesus acknowledged the tomb was empty.

Testimony of Women

In Jesus's day, the testimony of women was considered unreliable. Therefore, if the writers wanted to invent a story they wanted people to believe, they would not have had women find the tomb since it was considered embarrassing. Historians use the inclusion of embarrassing details to show the writers cared about the truth, not about making themselves look good.

Most common objections to the empty tomb

A. **The Swoon Theory** – Proposes that Jesus did not actually die on the cross but passed out, fainted or went into a coma and then revived inside the tomb and escaped.

The Romans were experts at crucifixion. There is no record in history of anyone surviving a crucifixion. The Roman soldiers would be killed themselves if someone survived their execution.

B. **The Hallucination Theory** – Proposes that Jesus's disciples experienced grief-induced visual and auditory hallucinations.

Scientists have concluded that mass hallucinations do not exist. Hallucination is an individual, internal neurological experience.

C. **The Body Was Stolen Theory** – Proposes that Jesus's body was removed from the tomb by the gardener, the disciples or some other group.

It is illogical to believe that the apostles would risk their lives taking on Roman soldiers, break the seal of Rome, steal his body and then die for something they knew was a hoax.

> **If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. Romans 10:9-10**

Source: The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus by Gary Habermas and Michael Licona