

Did the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Happen?

Lesson 2 – The First Two Facts

History 101

1. Multiple _____ witnesses are better than one witness.
2. Affirmation by a neutral or hostile source is better than a _____ source.
3. People don't make up _____ that weaken their position.
4. _____ testimony is better than secondhand testimony.
5. An _____ testimony from very close to the event is more reliable than one years later.

The first fact

What one fact do all of the following 11 different ancient writers record regarding Jesus?

- Matthew 27:35, 50 (Apostle, written ~AD 50-70)
- Mark 15:24, 37 (John-Mark, companion of Peter, died AD 68)
- Luke 23:33, 46 (Luke, companion of Paul, died AD 84)
- John 19:1, 18, 30, 34 (Apostle, born/died ~AD 6/AD 100)
- 1 Corinthians 2:2, 8 (Paul, an apostle, born/died ~AD 5/AD 67)
- 1 Peter 3:18 (Peter, an apostle, died ~AD 67)

- Josephus (Jewish historian, born-died AD 37-100) “and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross...”¹

- Tacitus (Roman historian, born-died AD 56-117) “Nero fastened the guilt [of the burning of Rome] and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus...”²

- Lucian of Samosata (Greek satirist, born-died AD 125-180) “The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account.”³

- Mara Bar-Serapion (Stoic philosopher from the Roman province of Syria, writing somewhere between AD 73 and the 3rd century) “Or [what advantage came to] the Jews by the murder of their Wise King, seeing that from that very time their kingdom was driven away from them?”⁴

- The Talmud (a central text of Rabbinic Judaism) “on the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged.” *Yeshu* is *Joshua* in Hebrew; the Greek equivalent is *Jesus*. The term “hung on a tree” is a reference to crucifixion (see Gal 3:13, Acts 10:39, Deuteronomy 21:22-23)

Fact #1: Jesus _____ .

Note a For the 12 facts see *The John Ankerberg Show* “Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?”

<https://jashow.org/?s=did+jesus+rise+from+the+dead>

¹ Josephus, Flavius ; Whiston, William: *The Works of Josephus : Complete and Unabridged*. Peabody : Hendrickson, 1996, c1987, S. Ant 18.64

² Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44 (written around AD 115).

³ Lucian of Samosata, *The Death of Peregrine*, 11-13.

⁴ Craig A. Evans, *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* edited by Bruce Chilton, 1998 455-457

There are 2 major problems with “apparent death” or “swoon” theories:⁵

- 1)
- 2)

The second fact

What one fact do all of the following sources record regarding Jesus’ disciples?

- 1) The testimony of Paul about the disciples:
 - a) In Galatians 1:15-19, 2:1-2, 6-9, who does Paul talk with in Jerusalem and why?
 - b) In 1 Corinthians 15:3-11, what is preached and who preached it?
- 2) The oral tradition that passed through the early church:
 - a) Note that 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 has a different style/feel than the writing around it.
 - b) In Acts 2:14 and 24, who preached and what was preached?
- 3) The written works of the early church:
 - a) Clement⁶ was the bishop of Rome in the late first century. He wrote a letter to the church in Corinth around AD 95 in which he stated the following about the disciples: “Therefore, having received orders and complete certainty caused by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and believing in the Word of God, they went with the Holy Spirit’s certainty, preaching the good news that the kingdom of God is about to come.”⁷
 - b) Polycarp was a 2nd century Christian bishop of Smyrna. In the early 2nd century he wrote about “Paul himself and the other apostles”: “For they did not love the present age, but Him who died for our benefit and for our sake was raised by God.”⁸
 - c) According to these church fathers, what did the apostles believe about Jesus?

Most all the apostles died martyr’s deaths for their beliefs. What fact is clear from the above evidence?

Fact #2: Jesus’ disciples believed that He _____ and _____ to them.

⁵ See March 21, 1986 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association for effects of scourging and crucifixion.

⁶ Irenaeus, an early church father, AD 185 wrote: “Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing, and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone, for there were many still remaining who had received instructions from the apostles. In the time of this Clement, no small dissension have occurred among the brothers at Corinth, the Church in Rome dispatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians.”

Tertullian around AD 200 wrote: “For this is the manner in which the apostolic churches transmit their registers: as the church of Smyrna, which records Polycarp was placed therein by John; as also the church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter.”

⁷ *First Clement* 42:3

⁸ *Letter to Phillipians* 9:2

Note b Ignatius, bishop in Antioch, about AD 110, wrote that, after the disciples saw Jesus, they were so encouraged that “they also despised death.”

Note c Atheistic NT scholar Gerd Ludemann concludes, “It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus’ death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ.”

Note d In an interview by Peter Jennings in *The Search for Jesus* in July of 2000, Paula Fredriksen of Boston University comments, “I know in their own terms what they saw was the raised Jesus. That’s what they say and then all the historic evidence we have afterwards attest to their conviction that that’s what they saw. I’m not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. I wasn’t there. I don’t know what they saw. But I do know that as a historian that they must have seen something.”