

# GENERATION

# for JESUS



A DEFENCE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH - 2  
—Answers a Believer ought to know.

The distinct world-views and skeptics deny the fact of the Death and Resurrection of our LORD Jesus Christ. Following are the answers:

## 1. DID JESUS REALLY DIE ON THE CROSS?

Perhaps the most cruel, vindictive, torturous death anyone at anytime in history could have ever experienced was to be crucified. In the process of crucifixion flogging is involved where the Roman scourge, also called the "flagrum"- a short whip made of two or three leather thongs or ropes connected to a handle is used. The leather thongs are knotted with a number of small pieces of metal. The victim is then tied to the flogging post and the whip is used to hit the victim repeatedly. The flagrum was designed to reach into the skin, latch on to it and rip it out. It literally tore the flesh off of Jesus. People would bleed to death at the flogging process, some people's intestines fell out during the flogging process. Cicero-A Roman Historian & Philosopher records that people's arteries and veins were laid bare at the lashes. Torn flesh, exposed muscles and excessive bleeding would leave the victim "half-dead." The Centurion in charge would order the "lictors" to halt the flogging when the criminal was near death. After a persons skin is hanging off in ribbons they are then placed on the cross. The Romans were very spiteful of the jews and so Jesus was flogged worse than the average person. Jesus was carrying the cross beam to the place of his crucifixion bleeding. He was nailed through the median nerve , 7inch nail through the legs . Jesus was speared through the side , no single person ever survived a full roman crucifixion .

After Jesus was scourged, it was recorded to say, "When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man" (John 19:5)! What Pilate was really saying was, "Look at this man! Isn't this enough? He's hardly recognisable as a human being. Look at Him!" Even with this bloody pulp of a Man, they still screamed, "Crucify Him" (John 19:6)!

They also attached a crown of thorns that were likely 1 to 2 inch thorns of briar that were hard as oak and they likely penetrated not only through the skin but penetrated parts of the skull bone. This would have caused a large loss of blood and created severe haemorrhaging of the brain tissues. By the time Jesus went to the cross, He had pieces of His flesh hanging off of Him and He had large open wounds that bled profusely.

**AN ABSOLUTE EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT IN A MEDICAL PERSPECTIVE : John 19:31-35**  
John, a disciple of Jesus, was raised as a fisherman. It is clear that he had no medical training. Yet look at what he reports in his gospel:

The Jewish leaders at the time of Jesus' crucifixion wanted to be certain of His death and had His body removed with the others before the Sabbath that would begin at sundown that evening. They asked the Roman Governor, Pilate, to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Once a person is hanging in the vertical position, crucifixion is essentially an agonisingly slow death by asphyxiation. The reason is that the stresses on the muscles and diaphragm put the chest into the inhaled position and in order to exhale, the individual must push up on his feet which is merely impossible once the person's legs are broken

When the soldiers came to hasten the deaths of those on the cross by breaking their legs, they noticed that Jesus was already dead. To confirm this assumption, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. That's an important observation, given that the gospel writers were not coroners or medical doctors.

"Before Jesus died, the hypovolemic shock (of losing vast amounts of blood from His scourging prior to the cross) would have caused a sustained rapid heart rate that would have contributed to heart failure, resulting in the collection of fluid in the membrane around the heart, called a pericardial effusion, as well as around the lungs, which is called a pleural effusion ... When the Roman soldier came around and, being fairly certain that Jesus was dead, confirmed it by thrusting a spear into His right side ... so when the spear was pulled out, some fluid – the pericardial effusion and the pleural effusion – came out. This would have the appearance of a clear fluid, like water, followed by a large volume of blood. While the gospel writers might expect to see blood, their observation of the water is somewhat surprising. It is certainly consistent with the fact that Jesus was already dead when stabbed by the guard , as the eyewitness John described in his gospel." "There was absolutely no doubt that Jesus was dead."

#### HISTORICAL EVIDENCE:

For those who reject the Gospel accounts, history records ancient sources outside of the Bible to corroborate the death of Jesus on the cross

In the reports of non-Christian historians from around the time when Jesus lived. Three of these historians mentioned the death of Jesus.

Lucian (c.120 – after c.180 ) referred to Jesus as a crucified sophist (philosopher).

Josephus (c.37 – c.100 ) wrote, "At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man, for he was a doer of amazing deeds. When Pilate condemned him to the cross, the leading men among us, having accused him, those who loved him did not cease to do so."

Tacitus (c. 56 – c.120) wrote, "Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty ... at the hands of our procurator, Pontius Pilate. Other sources are from Mara Bar-Serapion, The Talmud and 9 other ancient sources which affirm the death of Jesus on the cross.

#### Extended Contact Mark 15:43-46

"So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council... ...bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock."

But stop and think about it for a minute. The disciples had to remove the nails, collect the body, carry it some distance to the tomb, treat the body thoroughly with the customary ointments and spices used in such situations, wrap the body and then place it in the tomb. While we can read through this process in minutes, it takes a lot longer to actually complete. Surely the disciples were also deeply grieved by the death of Jesus. In all this extended contact with his body, do we really think they wouldn't do everything possible to prove to themselves that he wasn't really dead? In all of this time, is it reasonable to believe that they wouldn't have noticed the three inconvenient properties of dead bodies?

These properties surely appear when a heart stops beating:

Loss of Temperature, Rigidity, Lividity- (Mortis Triad)

Dead people lose warmth until they eventually reach the temperature of their environment (Algor Mortis). They begin to feel "cold to the touch". In addition, chemical reactions begin to take place in the muscles after death occurs, resulting in stiffening and rigidity known as (Rigor Mortis). Dead people become rigid, retaining the shape they were in when they died. Finally, when the heart stops beating, blood begins to pool in the body, responding to the force of gravity. As a result, purple discolouration begins to become apparent in those areas of the body that are closest to the ground (Livor Mortis). In essence, dead bodies look, feel, and respond differently from living, breathing humans. Dead people, never respond to their injuries, don't flinch or moan when touched. Is it reasonable to believe that those who removed Jesus from the cross, took possession of His body, carried Him to the grave, and spent time treating and wrapping His body for

burial would not have noticed any of these conditions common to dead bodies?

### SWOON THEORY OR RESUSCITATION THEORY:

Skeptics would argue that Jesus was not truly dead at this point and, instead, only appeared to be dead. Perhaps, it was the drug he was offered that knocked Him out (Matt 27:34), or the suffering on the cross that rendered Him unconscious. Then, while resting in the tomb for three days, Jesus' body begins to heal and recuperate with enough strength to roll away the stone, overpower the Roman guards, take a fourteen-mile hike to Emmaus with a couple of Christ followers, and appear before the disciples as the death-defying, conquering King! Seriously! If you have that much faith to believe a story like that, you have more than enough faith to believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus. If the skeptics were right Jesus wouldn't convince the discouraged and defeated disciples that He had triumphed over the grave! Their lives were transformed by a living and victorious Savior – not a half-dead, pathetic zombie.

The evidence of Jesus' death on the cross is overwhelming. He died for you and me so that we may be reconciled to God. He paid a debt He did not owe for a debt we could not pay. The cross demonstrates the value of your life to God. He says, "You are worth dying for!"

### 2. DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

The Resurrection - If you rule out miracles before you start the investigation you are not being fair, your being biased in your belief.

Christianity hinges on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ 1CORINTHIANS 15

Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ a historical event that really happened, or is it only a myth, as many atheists claim? Many people swore they saw the risen Christ after his death, and their lives were never the same. Archaeological discoveries continue to support the Bible's historical accuracy. We tend to forget that the Gospels and book of Acts are eyewitness accounts of the life and death of Jesus.

The Empty Tomb: is the strongest proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Two major theories have been advanced by unbelievers: someone stole Jesus' body or the women and disciples went to the wrong tomb.

On that Sunday morning the first thing that surprised the people who approached the tomb was the unusual position of the 2 ton stone which was rolled away. The stone was rolled away not just from the entrance but completely from the entire massive sepulchre. All the Gospel writers mention it. There exists no document from the ancient world, witnessed by so excellent a set of textual and historical testimonies .

Now, if the disciples had wanted to come in, tiptoe around the sleeping guards, and then roll the stone over and steal Jesus' body, how could they have done that without the guards' awareness? The disciples lacked the motive to steal the body or to create a lie. The Jewish authorities took many precautions to make sure the tomb was guarded and sealed Matt 27:66. The Roman seal stood for the power and authority of the Roman Empire. The consequences of breaking the seal was execution by crucifixion upside down. So People feared the breaking of the seal. Could Jesus' disciples who forsook Him and fled away (Mark 14:50) dare to steal His body or lie that Jesus was alive? Absolutely Not!

The other assumption that women who had mistakenly gone to the wrong tomb is ruled out because if the resurrection-claim was merely because of a geographical mistake, the Jewish authorities would within no time produce the body of Jesus from the proper tomb, thus effectively quenching for all time any rumour resurrection.

Such an action would have destroyed Christianity—not in the cradle, but in the womb!

**THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE RESURRECTION ACCOUNT :** The notion that women were the first witnesses powerfully supports the idea that the Gospel writers and early church did not invent the Resurrection. At the time, the testimony of a Jewish woman was not allowed in court, so it makes no sense, if one is creating a story, to claim that women were the first eyewitnesses. It would be far more believable to claim that well-respected men like Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus were the first to discover the empty tomb. The fact that women were the first witnesses of the empty tomb and of the risen

Lord testifies to the authenticity of the account. If somebody was trying to fabricate the resurrection story they wouldn't have woman as their first eye witnesses .

### IS RESURRECTION A HALLUCINATION?

Explanations claims that the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection were either illusions or hallucinations. While individuals have hallucinations, there are no examples of large groups of people having the exact same hallucination. While a short, momentary group hallucination may seem reasonable, but a long, sustained, and detailed hallucinations are denied as hallucinations. The risen Christ was reported seen on more than one occasion and by a number of different groups. A large crowd of more than 500 eyewitnesses saw the risen Jesus Christ at the same time.

The Apostle Paul records this event in 1 Corinthians 15. This was the earliest creedal affirmation which was written in a span of 2-3 years after the ascension of Jesus. Paul states that most of these men and women were still alive when he wrote this letter. He intended his readers to verify with the witnesses about the fact of resurrection .

Today, psychologists say it would be impossible for a large crowd of people to have had the same hallucination at once. Therefore Resurrection of Jesus was not a hallucination but an UNDENIABLE FACT.

### TIMID DISCIPLES TRANSFORMED.

After the crucifixion, Jesus' apostles hid behind locked doors, terrified they would be executed next. But something changed them from cowards to bold preachers. Anyone who understands human character knows people do not change that much without some major influence. That influence was seeing their Master, bodily risen from the dead. Christ appeared to them in the locked room, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and on the Mount of Olives. After seeing Jesus alive, Peter and the others left the locked room and preached the risen Christ, unafraid of what would happen to them. They quit hiding because they knew the truth. They finally understood that Jesus is God incarnate, who saves people from sin. Risen Jesus transformed them from essentially cowards to essentially bold enough to not to be afraid of death. Countless people have died for Jesus, absolutely certain that the resurrection of Christ is a historical fact.

**SKEPTICS TRANSFORMED:** Over and over again, people comment that Jesus was seen alive after His death and burial only by His friends and followers. But He also appeared to those who were hostile or unconvinced. Changed lives are yet another proof of the resurrection. James, the brother of Jesus, was openly skeptical that Jesus was the Messiah. Later James became a courageous leader of the Jerusalem church, even being stoned to death for his faith. Why? The Bible says the risen Christ appeared to him 1 Cor15:7. What a shock to see your own brother, alive again, after you knew he was dead. James and the apostles were effective missionaries because they have seen the risen Christ. The conversion of Paul records the most drastically changed life in the Bible. As Saul of Tarsus, he was an aggressive persecutor of the early church. Saul despised Christ and persecuted Christ's followers. When the risen Christ appeared to Paul he became one of the greatest witnesses for the truth of the resurrection. Finally the Roman emperor Nero had Paul beheaded because the apostle refused to deny his faith in Jesus. Paul would never risk his life if the resurrection was a Legend.

Jesus died the most horrendous death ever contrived by human beings in all of history but the grave couldn't hold Jesus. Why? It is because Jesus had never sinned and so no grave could hold a sinless Saviour. It is a historical fact that "God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (Acts 2:24). He hung on that cross for 6 hours in utter agony after being tortured all night. This shows just how much God loved you and me. To die such a horrific death is just too much to try and describe. Since He died for you, why not place your trust in Him today and then you will never die but have eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. If not, you will face Him as your Judge on that Day (Rev 20).

