

## Did Jesus' Resurrection Really Happen?

The central celebration of Christian faith is Easter. It is the time when we remember Jesus' resurrection from the dead. There have been some high-profile attacks on the resurrection in recent years by noted atheists like Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Richard Dawkins, but attacks on the historicity of the resurrection are nothing new, going all the way back to ancient times.

The resurrection of Jesus is attested by a number of documents found in our New Testament. These documents were written while people who were alive at the time of Jesus were still alive and could easily have refuted false claims made by these writers. Theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg puts it like this: "The evidence for the resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live."

The actual resurrection of Jesus is also the best explanation for the transformation of the disciples. They changed from being fearful men, who were hiding in Jerusalem following the crucifixion of Jesus, into being extraordinarily brave men who dedicated their lives to boldly proclaim the resurrection throughout the known world. Eleven

of them were put to death rather than deny their faith in the resurrected Jesus, and one was exiled.

Ultimately, accepting the resurrection is a matter of faith. But it is a faith that rests on some pretty good historical & logical foundations. I'll write more about the meaning of the resurrection in a later piece.