

- Fact #1 Belief in the resurrection of Jesus was well developed within a few , beginning of the church in Jerusalem.
- Fact # 2 Jesus died on the cross.
- Fact # 3 Jesus' death caused the disciples to despair and lose hope.
- Fact #4 Jesus was buried in a tomb discovered to be empty within a few days.
- Fact #5 The disciples had experiences that they believed were literal appearances of the risen Jesus.
- Fact #6 The disciples who had been afraid became the first leaders of the church, and were willing to face persecution for their testimony to the resurrection.
- Fact #7 Sunday became the day of assembly for Christian congregations early in the history of Christianity.
- Fact #8 James, the brother of Jesus was an unbeliever during Jesus' lifetime, but a believer soon after Jesus' death. He became an important leader in the church and was a witness to a resurrection appearance.
- Fact # 9 Paul, a fierce opponent of Christianity, was converted by his experience of the resurrected Jesus.

Skeptical Attempts to Deny the Resurrection

The Pious Fraud Hypothesis: the disciples of Jesus believed in him so much that, after his death, they began to report that they had seen him in his resurrected state. Even though they knew this was not true, they felt it was ultimately pleasing to God who wanted people to believe in Jesus.

The Stolen Body Hypothesis: Some of the disciples of Jesus stole the body to encourage the belief that Jesus had risen from the dead. See Matthew 28:11-15.

The Coma Hypothesis: Jesus, suffering from exhaustion, beatings and the rigors of the crucifixion, passed into a coma on the cross, and so was mistakenly allowed to be taken from the cross and buried. In the cool of the tomb, he revived and came out, to be seen by some of his closest followers. So began the story of his resurrection.

The Hallucination Hypothesis: Some of the grief-stricken disciples had hallucinations or visions of Jesus risen from the dead. As they told their experiences, others had similar hallucinations, and so the story of the resurrection became well established among Christians.

The Legend Hypothesis: As the Christian community spread from Jewish to more Gentile cultures, different, competing groups of Christians began to describe Jesus more and more in terms of legends of pagan gods and heroes, some of whom died and were resurrected.

The Competition Hypothesis: Different groups of followers of Jesus found themselves in competition with each other for converts. Claimed resurrection appearances became one way for competing groups of Christians to claim primacy for their favored leader or source of authority. All of this happened in the period before the main resurrection stories were written down in the Gospel.