

Why Christianity?

Human beings have three categories of need: physical, emotional, and spiritual. What symptoms do you notice when your needs in any of these categories goes unmet?

You can probably figure out how to meet the needs of the first two categories ... but how do you know where to go to meet your spiritual needs?

The foundation of Christianity is a historical event.

What does the Bible say about this event?

Mark 10:33-34 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

Jesus claimed that he would be killed, and that he would _____ after three days.

Matthew 28:1,5-7 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb... ⁵ The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead ...’”

According to the Bible, Jesus _____ the Sunday after his crucifixion.

Acts 2:22-24,32 “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But 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... ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.”

The message of the first century church was: “God _____ Jesus from the dead.”

Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all ...

1 Corinthians 15:3-4,14 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

Christians believed that people should become Christians because Jesus was _____.

Matthew 27:62-66 The chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.” ⁶⁵ “Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Even Jesus’ enemies knew that Jesus’ entire message hinged upon his _____.

Case closed? What’s the possible loophole in this proof that Jesus is the true God and that Christianity is the true religion?

What does history say about this event?

“At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. It was reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians named after him, has not disappeared to this day.” - Flavius Josephus; Jewish Antiquities; xviii, 65

Secular history admits the possibility that Jesus _____ after three days.

“Therefore to scotch the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled ‘Christians.’ Christ, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself, where all things horrible or shameful collect and find a vogue. First then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast numbers were convicted, not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race...” – Cornelius Tacitus; Annals; xv, 44

“A great many people of every age and class, both men and women, are being brought to trial, and this seems likely to continue. It is not only the towns, but the villages and rural districts too, which are infected through contact with this wretched cult.” – Pliny the Younger; Letters; x, 96

Secular history also relates to us that Christianity _____ in a hostile environment.

Why was Jesus' tomb empty?

The “Theft Theory” suggests that the disciples did steal the body and spread a lie about Jesus rising. What are some serious logical issues with this theory?

The “Swoon Theory” suggests Jesus wasn't really dead. He later revived and walked out of his tomb. What are some serious logical issues with this theory?

The “Fraud Theory” suggests that the disciples fabricated the whole thing. What are some serious logical issues with this theory?

This is considered one of history's great mysteries! How did this massive spread and influence happen, when it had everything working against it?

- Began in tiny, unimportant Judea
- The founder was crucified
- Leaders were uneducated, lower-class men who became outcasts of their society
- When Jesus was crucified, the movement had no power or momentum
- Context of everything Jesus taught was wiped off the planet in 70 AD
- Jesus' teachings are offensive to every culture on earth
- Christians suffered massive persecution for entire 1st century and beyond

After examining the evidence, the probable cause for the rise of Christianity is the event of Jesus' _____.

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic, on the level of a man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up as a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense of him being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” – C.S. Lewis, “Mere Christianity”

We pay attention to Christ's teachings, because he proved his worth by virtue of his _____.