

Can all religions be right?



There is a Japanese proverb that says, “*There are many paths up Mt Fuji, but they all meet at the top.*”

If each religion were a different road to the top of the mountain, then we would expect them all to have the different rituals. But there is one thing that they should all agree on, right? They should all agree about the top of the mountain! And yet you could not find more vastly opposite views of God himself than those of the major religions.

Some people say that God is different for different people, but when you think about it: since God created us, he decided what we would be like but we don’t get to decide what he is like. God will be who he is—who he was before we even existed—not who I want him to be.

A better picture of religion is that of a large maze. Many paths look like they will take you out the other side, but only one will actually get you there.



When you are trying to figure out which way will take you to the other side, I think you should consider two things about Jesus Christ:

- His claim to be God
- His resurrection from the dead

The resurrection of Jesus means that our faith is not just hope, but it has a basis. It is faith in something solid.

Two kinds of truth

- *Spinach Truth:* truth claims like, “*Spinach tastes horrible.*” This kind of statement may be true for me but not true for you.
- *Bus Truth:* truth claims like, “*If you are run over by a bus, you will be squashed.*” It’s true whether a person believes it or not. All historical events are bus truth. Politicians may rewrite the history books, but the actual events still happened.

The historical event of Jesus’ resurrection, which forms the foundation of the Christian message, puts the Christian message into the category of Bus Truth.

Consider the eyewitness truth claim

Peter stated: “*We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.*” (Acts 10:39-43 in the Bible)

What evidence is there that Jesus rose from the dead?

I. Those who were there were absolutely convinced he had risen

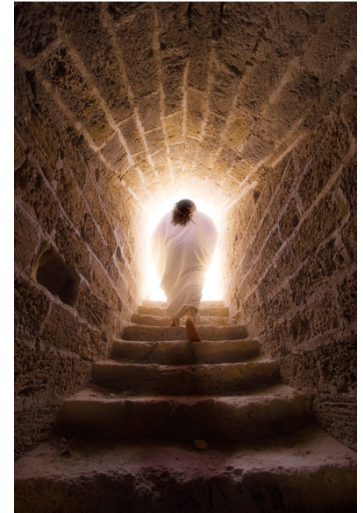
How do we know they were convinced? Not only did they claim to have spent time with him personally after his resurrection, but they were willing to die for this claim (all but one of Jesus’ disciples did). A person might die for something they believe in, but not for something they know to be a lie.



Topic 6 – Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

2. Jesus' body was gone from the tomb

There is no explanation for the existence of Christianity if Jesus' body was still in the tomb. Too many people in power wanted to stamp out this claim. But they never denied that the body was gone. Rather they tried to explain away its absence.



3. Many people saw Jesus alive

Here's what Paul, who violently opposed Christianity until he encountered the risen Jesus, said: *"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day... and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also."* (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

4. Jesus' disciples were transformed

Jesus' disciples abandoned him during his trial and after his crucifixion they were fearful, terrified men, hiding out. Then all of a sudden they were standing up in public making bold declarations about Jesus' resurrection. What brought about this transformation? God raised Jesus from death.

Four views of what happens after death

- *Nothing* – your existence, your meaning, and your life come to an end
- *Reincarnation* – you come back, maybe as a rat or as a king, depending on your past life
- *Remembered* – you live on in the memories of others and that's your existence
- *Resurrection* – this is what the Christian message teaches: death is the doorway into a wonderful future with God.

We need to stop and ask, what evidence is there for each of these views? Think about it. What makes the Christian message different from these other views is this: there is genuine historical evidence to back this up. Jesus has been dead and brought back to life. He is able to tell us the nature of life after death, and he has the authority to promise us life in the age to come.

What does it mean to me?

The invitation of the Christian message is not an invitation from me to you, inviting you to adopt a set of beliefs or practices. The invitation of the Christian message is an invitation from the living Jesus Christ directly to you. He is inviting you to put your faith in him—not in a belief system—in him personally, and to begin to walk through life in relationship with him.

Discussion questions (pick some to discuss)

- What do you think about Spinach Truth and Bus Truth? Is it a reasonable distinction?
- What do you feel when you think about dying?
- Do you think that people need to be 100% certain of the facts when considering things of God? Why do you think that?
- What do your friends think about death?
- Do you believe that someone could rise from the dead?
- What difference do you think it makes whether Jesus is alive or not?