PROVING THE RESURRECTION

I. THE CRUCIAL QUESTION: DID JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Peter said the resurrection is the anchor for our hope for heaven.

> **1 Peter 1:3-4** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...

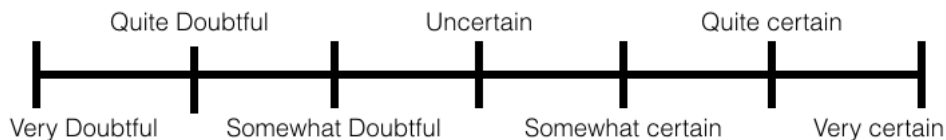Jesus said the resurrection was the ultimate proof of his ministry.

> **Matthew 12:38-40** Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

The Call to Defend: Christians are called to provide a defense of their faith.

> **1 Peter 3:15** ... in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect

II. PROVING THE RESURRECTION

Principles for Historical Proof
- Multiple, independent sources
- Enemy attestation
- Embarrassing self-disclosures
- Eyewitness testimony
- Early testimony

III. PROOFS FOR THE RESURRECTION
The "Minimal Facts" Argument

This approach "considers only those data that are so strongly attested historically that they are granted by nearly every scholar who studies the subject, even the rather skeptical ones."
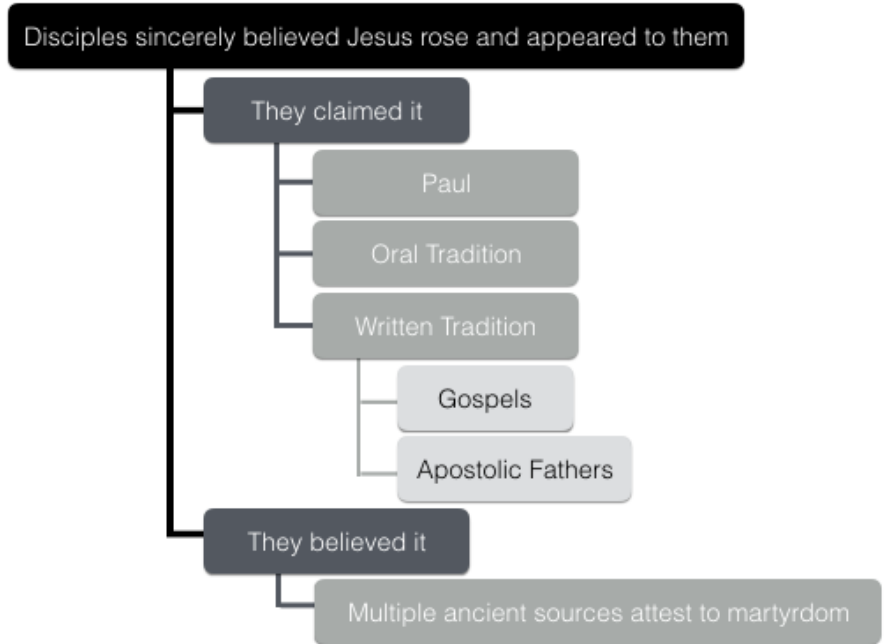
The Undisputed Facts:
1. Death by crucifixion.

Disciples sincerely believed Jesus rose and appeared to them

They claimed it

Paul

Oral Tradition

Written Tradition

Gospels

Apostolic Fathers

2. Disciples believed he rose and appeared to them.

3. Jesus' closest followers, skeptical observers and sworn enemies changed radically.

They believed it

Multiple ancient sources attest to martyrdom

4. The Tomb was empty.

IV. ANSWERING OBJECTIONS
Legend Theories

Fraud Theory

Apparent Death Theory

Hallucination Theory