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The center of our Christian faith is that Jesus was raised from the dead. Without the resurrection, there is no Christianity. We celebrate this on Easter Sunday, and every Sunday! Christians worship on Sunday because Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday.

But non-Christians find our faith very strange. “Dead people stay dead,” they say!

So, in this article, I’ll share with you some reasons why we believe in Jesus’ resurrection, to help you talk to non-Christian friends about your faith.

1) The most obvious objection is that dead people stay dead! The first Christians agreed with this observation. Sometimes we get the idea that ancient people were superstitious or gullible and easily believed wild stories, but that’s not true. Ancient people knew just as well as we do that dead people stay dead! If they didn’t believe this, then there wouldn’t have been anything special about Jesus.

2) Another objection is that when early Christians said “Jesus rose from the dead” they meant something like “I saw the ghost of Jesus” or “I had a vision of Jesus in heaven.” But this is a bad interpretation of the New Testament. The stories about Jesus are not stories about ghosts or visions. The risen Jesus made a big point of eating in front of his disciples and letting them touch his body—even his wounds! He wasn’t a ghost or a vision. He was a living man.

3) Here’s something Christians do say: Jesus is the only dead person who ever rose again. We don’t say that the resurrection happens all the time. In fact, we say it happened only once! The Bible has a few stories about the dead coming to life again, but these are not really resurrections. The people who were raised, like Lazarus, went back to normal life but eventually they died again, just like everyone else. Jesus is the only person who died, rose again, and is now beyond the reach of death.

4) Throughout the world, the tomb of a religious founder has always been honored. But Jesus’ tomb was abandoned for the first three hundred years after he was buried! It was only “rediscovered” when a Roman emperor became Christian. (We’re not even sure he found the right tomb.) Why didn’t the early Christians care about their founder’s tomb? Because Jesus rose from the dead. There was nothing special about the tomb anymore. It was empty. Jesus wasn’t there anymore.

5) If the Christian faith is based on a mistake or a lie about the resurrection of Jesus, it’s hard to explain how it grew so fast. All of the New Testament writings are based on Jesus’ resurrection. Could a mistake, a lie, or a superstition convert the very empire that executed Jesus on the cross—and eventually become the biggest religion in the world? Pretty unlikely! The better explanation is: Jesus rose from the dead, and everything changed for the apostles—and the world.

Happy Easter!