

Who Moved The Stone?

That [Jesus](#) existed, there is no doubt. There is a great deal of written historical evidence, both from Christian and non-Christian writers, supporting the fact that Jesus was a genuine historical figure, living at the beginning of the first century AD. When applying the standard criteria of historical investigation, virtually all New Testament and Near East historians assert the historicity of Jesus as certain.

[Dr Michael Grant](#) (1914-2004) wrote "Jesus: An Historian's View of the Gospels," published in 1977. In it, he applied the standard disciplines of the historian's profession and reached the conclusion that the four Gospels are sufficiently reliable to deserve the utmost respect. Subsequent discussions about the historical Jesus widely reference his work.

"If conventional standards of historical textual criticism are applied to the New Testament, we can no more reject Jesus' existence than we can reject the existence of a mass of pagan personages whose reality as historical figures is never questioned." – Michael Grant, *Historian*

Nearly all modern scholars are also in agreement about two key events in Jesus' life, which they consider to be accurate and certain – that of his baptism and of his crucifixion.

"There is a consensus of sorts on the basic outline of Jesus' life" in that most scholars agree that Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist, and over a period of one to three years debated Jewish authorities on the subject of God, gathered followers, and was crucified by Roman prefect Pontius Pilate who officiated 26–36 AD." – [Amy Jill Levine](#)

The [criterion of embarrassment](#) is used as the metric for establishing events such as Jesus' baptism and crucifixion.

Both events are considered to be accounts which would cause a high degree of embarrassment to the author and would therefore have no reason to be invented. Christians simply would not have invented the painful death of their leader, nor the baptism of Jesus by John, as it is a story in which John baptised for the remission of sins and Jesus was viewed as without sin. The conclusion then is that these events are historically accurate.

The Resurrection of Jesus – Who Was He Really?

The debate therefore is not whether Jesus existed, but whether he was who he said he was. He claimed to be the son of God (John 5:25, John 10:36, John 1:4, John 17:1). He claimed to be the promised deliverer of the Old Testament (John 11:25; Luke 4:17-21, John 18:37, Luke 24:27). Not only that, he claimed that he would be betrayed, put to death and after three days would be resurrected to life again.

“The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead.” – Mark 9:31, NLT

It is easy to discount these claims as the words of a highly charismatic Jewish prophet, who met a cruel death at the hands of Roman power.

“That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be, since both [Josephus](#) and [Tacitus](#) ... agree with the Christian accounts on at least that basic fact.” – John Dominic Crossan

What is more difficult to explain is how Jesus could have orchestrated his own death in such a way so as to corroborate with prophecy, or, more to the point, why he would even want to.

What is more confusing and unexplainable is the effect that Jesus' death had on his followers. If, as history supposes, Jesus was a common man who lived a somewhat extraordinary life, it is hard to explain the complete explosion of the Christian faith in the years that followed. It was, after all, founded on the basis of "a risen Christ". If this was a fabrication, the rulers only had to produce the body to prove the assertion to be false. If the disciples themselves had stolen the body, it seems psychologically improbable that their story, or their conviction, would be believable or maintainable, they themselves knowing it to be false.

We have the account of Thomas, the doubter, Peter, the denier, a small group of fishermen, a gathering of a few women – simple and ordinary people without status or connections who, within a relatively short passage of time (only some six or seven weeks), were completely transformed by a profound conviction.

"The actual position is peculiar and, I believe, quite unique in history. It is that the whole party, including the nine men who had fled at the arrest, and certain independent persons who have not previously come into the story, were convinced that something had occurred which changed their entire outlook. It turned their dejection into triumph and their sorrow into an intense joy." – Frank Morrison

Despite perhaps wanting to believe otherwise, the story of the arrest, death and resurrection of Jesus carries a strange ring of authenticity. Nothing can account for the strangeness of the narrative in the Gospels. The moved stone, the empty tomb, the baffled religious leaders, the transformed disciples – let's be honest – *"by the ordinary standards of human reasoning, the mystery attached to the person of Christ ought to have terminated with his death and burial"* (Frank Morrison).

It isn't our intention in this post to prove conclusively the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It is simply to bring the reader's attention to a subject, which on first glance, is assumed by many to be fabrication, but on closer inspection seems to arrive at no other explanation than that which is claimed – that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead, as asserted in the Bible!

Who Moved The Stone?

This article is an extremely condensed summary of the excellent book by Frank Morrison, entitled "Who Moved The Stone?" For anyone with a genuine interest in examining the historical accuracy of the Bible's claims regarding the resurrection of Jesus, this book is highly recommended.

Frank himself confesses that he set out to write quite a different book. He first began to study the life of Christ as a young man and did so with a very definite feeling that the history of Jesus rested on very insecure foundations. He wasn't wrong in his concerns – there was an entire school of thought throughout the 'nineties that denied even the historical existence of Jesus. Frank Morrison didn't find himself in this group at all – he says that *"for the person of Jesus Christ, I had a deep and almost reverent regard."* but he wanted to write an article, more for his own peace of mind than publication, about the supremely important and critical phase in the life of Christ – his last seven days. Ten years later, the opportunity fully arrived to study the subject as he had first wanted, and *"slowly but very definitely the conviction grew that the drama of those unforgettable weeks of human history was stranger and deeper than it seemed."*

The Christian faith hinges completely on this key doctrine of the literal resurrection of Jesus. Without the veracity of this event, Christianity falters. [The Gospel](#) isn't the good news of anything and we would have to concede that the world had been duped by one of the great delusions in history.

Of course, this conundrum is for every person to consider and decide for themselves. However, there are certain questions and discrepancies that cannot be easily explained away. We believe that an honest examination of all the facts leads to an irresistible logic of their meaning.

*“Now, let me ask you something profound yet troubling. If you became believers because you trusted the proclamation that Christ is alive, risen from the dead, how can you let people say that there is no such thing as the resurrection. If there’s no resurrection, there’s no living Christ. And face it – if there’s no resurrection for Christ, everything we’ve told you is smoke and mirrors, and everything you’ve staked your life on is smoke and mirrors. Not only that, but we would be guilty of telling a string of bare-faced lies about God, all these affidavits we passed on to you verifying that God raised up Christ – sheer fabrications if there’s no resurrection. If corpses can’t be raised, then Christ wasn’t, because he was indeed dead. And if Christ weren’t raised, then all you’re doing is wandering about in the dark, as lost as ever...but the truth is, Christ **has** been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries.” 1 Corinthians 12-20, MSG*

To purchase “Who Moved The Stone” by Frank Morrison, [Click Here](#)

Building Resilience

Resilience can sometimes be mistaken for indifference, unaccountability or emotional disconnection but in reality, resilience is the complete opposite of these things. It is the ability to truly face reality, to be responsible for our actions and to be emotionally vulnerable, if necessary. It is the inner strength that enables us to bounce back after facing unexpected challenges or setbacks. Resilience can be equated to mental fortitude and it lives in the small moments, as well as the large ones.

Resilience Isn't Endurance

It can be easy to think that resilience and endurance are alike but they're not really the same thing. While they both require mental or physical fortitude in moments of crisis or challenge, endurance simply hunkers down and waits for the worst to pass. Endurance is employed somewhat momentarily – once the crisis or challenge is over, things return to normal. Resilience, however, says, "I will get through this and come out the other side stronger, perhaps wiser and having gained something of value. Things will have changed, because of this experience." Resilience sees the challenge or crisis is an opportunity for growth and moves confidently towards it.

We don't get to decide if we will deal with life's challenges; they arrive whether we want them or not. But we do get to decide how well we'll get through them and what lessons we'll learn from them. Learning to be resilient means learning to be open, resourceful and accepting of those challenges or changes as they come.

It would be very easy to endure all kinds of trouble and yet learn nothing from it or remain unchanged by the experience. Resilience is what develops from these experiences, if we allow it. We all have the capacity for great resilience yet,

like every acquired skill, it needs to be practiced and challenged in order to grow and develop.

The idea of growing resilience is commented on by James, the brother of Jesus, when writing his letter to the believers in his time.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” – James 1:2-4, NIV

James confirms that challenges are not meant to be just endured; they are meant to change us. We’re being developed into [our authentic selves](#) in Christ and these challenges form part of that process.

Resilience Is The Enemy Of Fear

Learning to be resilient actually means learning to be unafraid of things like failure, rejection, embarrassment or abandonment. At the core of resilience is the ability to be realistic about the potential for things to go wrong, coupled with positive optimism that things will go right. It’s being grounded firmly in the here and now, in reality, but hopeful of better things. It’s learning to deal with all the challenges we encounter with a growth mindset, not a fixed mindset. Resilience is the difference between “I can’t do this”, and “I can’t do this yet”. Resilient people don’t just endure challenges, they’re proactive about moving through them and coming out stronger. Where resilience lives, fear cannot flourish.

Resilience And Faith Are Friends

Hebrews 11 is known as the great chapter on faith. Yet it’s also a list of a great number of individuals who, in essence,

had developed resilience in their life and, because of that resilience, were able to undertake great things.

“And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.” – Hebrews 11:32-34, NIV

We realise from reading Hebrews 11 that resilience and faith are intrinsically linked. When we choose to believe in God’s existence and His plan for us, we choose to put our faith in something greater than ourselves. This faith forms a large part of accepting God and embracing what He is doing for us. It also gives us a great deal of comfort that we are not alone and that God is working in our lives to bring about our good. Perhaps one of the best ways to start growing resilience, or at least begin our pursuit of it, is to acknowledge that we have worth to God and that He has a purpose for our lives. Continually reinforcing to ourselves how much God really loves us and that our lives are infinitely precious lays down a positive foundation for beginning to build resilience.

“We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.” – 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, NLT

How To Build Resilience

There are certainly many practical ways to grow resilience and learning those skills and developing inner strength doesn’t happen overnight. Here’s some ways to start developing your

inner strength and learn to face your challenges with confidence:

Get Friendly With Failure – your ability to cultivate resilience relies on your ability to acknowledge failure, without allowing it to cripple you. We all make mistakes, we don't always get things right the first time. But learning from our mistakes and growing through them is a key aspect of developing resilience.

Use Empathy – taking the time to consider another person's life or situation can really help when dealing with difficult situations or experiences. Instead of reacting in emotional ways, we should try to see things from their point of view and work to support and encourage them. Learning to deal with these people or situations, despite the challenges, develops our own level of resilience and inner strength.

Exercise Forgiveness – forgiveness allows us to move fully beyond a setback or disappointment and leave it in the past. It doesn't mean that we forget the situation. However, instead of feeling victimised or indulging in bitterness or self-righteousness, forgiveness give us an opportunity to learn from the experience and constructively try to resolve the setback. Forgiveness is first and foremost a gift to ourselves. Coupled with learning to forgive is also learning to apologise to those we've hurt or mistreated. This is a crucial aspect of developing our own sense of accountability for the choices we make in our life.

Don't Compare – remember that we are all created as unique individuals and, despite what we may see on social media or how we perceive other's lives to be, everyone has their good days and their bad days! Not only that, we all have different talents and skills, different personalities and different cultural backgrounds. God doesn't require us to be as good as someone else – just the best version of ourselves.

"I know how to live humbly, and I know how to abound. I am accustomed to any and every situation—to being filled and being hungry, to having plenty and having need. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." Philipians 4:12-13, BSB