

“Chris Morphew is like Tim Keller for teens. In this short book, he tackles some of today’s tough questions with Scripture, wisdom and clarity—and just the right amount of fun to keep young readers turning the page. I cannot wait to put this book into the hands of my three children.

**CHAMP THORNTON**, Pastor; Author, *The Radical Book for Kids* and *Why Do We Say Good Night?*

“Chris Morphew has given families such a gift with *How Do We Know That Christianity Is Really True?* As I read it with my 13- and 10-year-old children, we laughed at his stories, discussed the questions that came up, and learned things we didn’t know before. I watched as their faith was strengthened and their heart for the lost grew. I highly recommend this book to parents, youth and children’s leaders, and Christian schools. We look forward to reading the other books in the series.”

**CATHERINE PARKS**, Author, *Empowered and Strong*

“I’ve loved reading through *How Do We Know That Christianity Is Really True?* with my 10- and 13-year-old children. What a rare combination—taking seriously our children’s real faith questions while also offering engaging, brief chapters. This book is a gift for parents as our children ask great questions, which we can work through together in these pages.”

**ED DREW**, Director, Faith in Kids; Author, *Meals With Jesus*

“What an excellent series—seriously excellent! I am certain Chris Morphew’s chatty style, clear explanations, relevant illustrations and personal insights will engage, inform

and equip tweens as they work through some of the big questions they and their peers will be asking.”

**TAMAR POLLARD**, Director for Families, Children and Youth Ministry, Grace Community Church, Bedford

“Chris has a knack for making complicated things simpler, making confusing things make sense, and making everything fun. He takes your questions—and you—seriously and knows where you can find real, honest-to-God answers.”

**DR NATASHA MOORE**, Research Fellow, Centre for Public Christianity

“Questions and doubts aren’t bad at all. Chris Morphew gives us big truths in simple and clear words to help us grow. Pick this book up, follow the evidence and see where it leads.”

**BARBARA REAOCH**, Former Director, Children’s Division, Bible Study Fellowship; Author, *A Jesus Christmas*

“Maybe you’ve been singing songs about God, Jesus and the Bible since you were little. And maybe, over the years, you’ve had questions about whether the things you’ve been taught about Christianity are actually true. Or perhaps you’re hearing about Jesus for the first time, and you have questions about that too. Well, I think you’re going to love spending time with Chris Morphew in this book as together you dig up solid, helpful, satisfying answers to lots of questions—including some you didn’t even know.”

**COLIN BUCHANAN**, Singer/Songwriter

**HOW DO  
WE KNOW**



that



*Christianity*  
**IS REALLY**  
**TRUE?**



**CHRIS MORPHEW**

*Illustrated by Emma Randall*

the**good**book  
COMPANY

*To John Dickson,  
For helping me see the truth about  
Jesus more clearly.*

How Do We Know That Christianity Is Really True?

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# Chapter 1

## THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

All across the world today, millions of people are living their whole lives based on a claim from ancient history that, when you think about it, is kind of hard to believe.

They say that, around 2,000 years ago, a man named Jesus of Nazareth was arrested and sentenced to death. He was dragged outside the city of Jerusalem in Israel and nailed to a cross. Jesus died and was buried.

That's not the part that's hard to believe, though. After all, everyone dies at some point.

It's the *next* part that might sound ridiculous.

See, these millions of people are convinced that, a few days after his burial, Jesus came back to life again. They believe that a few weeks after that he returned, alive, to heaven—and that he's still alive today.

On the other hand, all across the world today, there are plenty of *other* people who think the idea of a person rising from the dead is absolute nonsense.

Some of them think that Jesus didn't exist at all. Others think he probably *did* exist but that he was just an ordinary human being with some nice things to say about loving one another—an ordinary human being who died and then *stayed* dead.

So who's right? Did Jesus *actually* come back to life, or didn't he?



The reason I ask is that I'm convinced that answering *this* question is the surest way to figure out if Christianity is worth taking seriously.

But first... I wonder how you've ended up holding this book.

Maybe your family thinks Jesus is a big deal, and so far you've just kind of gone along with that, but now you're starting to ask yourself if you can *really* trust that Christianity is true.

Or maybe you've made the decision to follow Jesus for yourself, but your friends or your family think he's a fairytale, and you're beginning to worry that they might be right. Or maybe they follow a different religion completely, and now you don't know *what* to believe.

Or maybe *you're* the one who thinks Jesus is a fairytale, but someone's given you this book because they're trying to convince you that he's worth taking seriously after all.

Or maybe you're somewhere in the middle. Maybe you've got a sneaking suspicion that Jesus might be who the Bible says he is, but you want to know if there's any solid evidence.

However you've come to have this book, I'm so glad you're here, because it turns out there really *is* solid evidence that Christianity is true—and like I said, it all comes down to one question:

*Did Jesus really come back to life?*

In fact, I'm convinced that this is the second-most-important question anyone can ever ask.

(Oh, and don't worry—by the end of this book, we'll get to the *most* important question too.)



Why does it matter so much whether Jesus rose from the dead?

Because the world is *full* of great teachers and leaders saying, “Here’s the way to find God”, or “Here’s the truth about the world”, or “Here’s how you can have the life you’ve always wanted”—but Jesus said something completely different.

Jesus didn't say, “Here is the way”, or “Here is the truth”, or “Here is the life”.

He said, “I *am* the way and the truth and the life” (John 14 v 6).

Jesus claimed to be God himself, the one true King of the universe who made us and loves us.

Jesus claimed that every single human being who has ever lived has made a mess of their relationship with God and that we need *him* to come and rescue us.

Jesus claimed that by dying on the cross, he was healing our broken relationships with God.

Jesus claimed that if we put our trust in him instead of trusting in our own efforts or goodness, we can have life with him—life to the full, here and now, and perfect life forever with him when he returns to heal God’s broken world and make it our perfect home again.

And here’s the thing: if Jesus really *did* come back to life, *those aren’t just claims*.

They’re *true*.

If Jesus’ resurrection is real, it’s all the proof we need that he really is who he says he is—because only God himself has that kind of power.

Of course, on the other hand, if Jesus *didn’t* come back to life, he was either lying or crazy or both—and we shouldn’t listen to a word he said.

If Jesus *didn’t* come back to life, all of those millions of Christians are wasting their lives following a dead man.

Or, as one of the Bible writers put it: “If Christ [Jesus] has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith” (1 Corinthians 15 v 14).

This is why the question of whether Jesus rose from the dead is such a big deal—because there’s no third option in the middle. If Jesus came back to life, he’s the King of the universe and *everyone* should follow him—but if Jesus *didn’t* come back to life, it’s all a bunch of garbage and *no one* should follow him.



So how do we figure out whether to believe in Jesus’ resurrection?

Well, some people say it’s basically a choice between *evidence* and *faith*.

They say people who believe in gravity or climate change or the Big Bang are relying on *evidence*—on solid facts and information and research.

And they say that people who believe in God and the Bible and all that stuff are relying on *faith*—that they’re choosing to *ignore* the facts and information and research, and believe in something else instead.

According to this way of looking at things, *evidence* and *faith* are basically opposites—the more *evidence* you have, the less faith you need; the more *faith* you have, the less you care about having any actual evidence.

This is a *really* common way of thinking about evidence and faith, and it's what most people assume the Bible means when it talks about having *faith* in Jesus' resurrection.

But this is *not* how the Bible describes faith at all!

In the Bible, faith means *being convinced by the evidence*. So when the Bible talks about putting your *faith* in Jesus, it's not talking about believing in him *without* any evidence; it's talking about believing in him *because* of the evidence.



Here's a different example to explain what I mean.

I have faith in my parents. I have faith that they love me and want what's best for me. And that faith didn't just come out of nowhere. It's based on years and years of evidence.

It's based on all the time they've spent feeding me, and clothing me and taking care of me. It's based on all the times they've *told* me they love me, and all the times they've *shown* me their love through their actions.

Because of all that evidence, I have faith in my parents' love for me.

Now, I could be wrong.

My parents might not love me at all.

Maybe they've just been *pretending* to love me for the past 35 years. Maybe they're not even my real parents. Maybe

they're aliens from a distant galaxy dressed in really convincing human suits.

It's possible. But it would be pretty ridiculous for me to assume that was true—because there's a *ton* of evidence for the “my parents love me” theory, and *zero* evidence for the “my parents are aliens” theory.

When I look at all the evidence, the *most reasonable conclusion* is that those two people living in my parents' apartment are my *actual human parents who really do love me*—and so that's the truth I put my faith in.

Now, if I suddenly uncover a whole bunch of *new* evidence—if I find a laser blaster under my parents' couch, and a spaceship in their garage, and a pile of dirty human suits in their laundry basket—then I'm going to need to go back and reconsider my beliefs a bit.

But in the meantime, I'm going to go right on assuming my parents are real human beings who really do love me.



This is exactly how we need to treat the resurrection of Jesus: we need to follow the evidence and see where it leads.

And the good news is, because the Bible makes *historical* claims about Jesus, we can use the tools of historical investigation to help us figure out if those claims are true.

That's what we're going to do in this book.

First, we'll ask the question, *Can we trust what the Bible says about Jesus?*

There are a bunch of tests that historians use to figure out how much they can trust an ancient document. We're going to put the Bible through some of those tests and see how trustworthy it actually is.

Now, as a follower of Jesus, I believe that the Bible is *so much more* than just another set of ancient writings. I believe it's God's word and that everything it tells us is absolutely trustworthy and true.

But for the next few chapters, I'm going to put all that aside. I'm not going to be exploring what *Christians* believe about Jesus. I'm going to be outlining what *historians* generally agree about Jesus whether they're Christians or not.

Once we've done that, we'll move on to our next question: *Can we trust that Jesus rose from the dead?* Because, like I said, I'm convinced it's the second-most-important question anyone can ever ask—the question the whole Christian faith depends on. And then, once you've decided on your answer to that question, you'll be ready for the most important question of all: *If Jesus really did come back to life... what am I going to do about it?*

Because if the resurrection is true, it's not just some amazing thing that happened, way back in the past. It has the power to completely transform your life today.

If the resurrection is true, it changes everything.