

HOW DO WE KNOW that Christianity IS REALLY TRUE?

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

CHAPTER 1

- ▼ Think about the question on page 8: “Did Jesus *actually* come back to life, or didn’t he?” Who in your life would give different answers to that question?
- ▼ If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, what does that mean for him and his claims, and also for those who follow him now?
- ▼ How do some people define faith? How does Chris explain what “faith” is (p 12)?

CHAPTER 2

- ▼ What is some of the information about Jesus that can be found in sources other than the Bible?
- ▼ If every historical text, including the Bible, is biased in some way, can they still be useful? How?
- ▼ How many independent sources about Jesus are available to us and how does this compare to other figures from ancient history? Why does having multiple independent sources give us greater confidence about whether something happened?

CHAPTER 3

- ▼ How soon after Jesus’ time on earth were most of the accounts about him written? Does this seem like a long time or a short time to you?
- ▼ How can we work out if what we read in the Bible today is what was originally written?
- ▼ What did Jesus’ followers claim from the very beginning, according to the earliest sources (p 28)? Why is this important?

CHAPTER 4

- ▼ Some of Jesus' biographies were written by his followers. Did they paint themselves in a positive light? Give examples.
- ▼ Do the negative stories about Jesus' first followers make it more or less likely that they're telling the truth? Why?
- ▼ Some people say that Jesus' followers made up the claim that he rose again. If they invented the story, would they have chosen women as the first witnesses of his resurrection? Why not?
- ▼ How does what you've read in this chapter give you confidence that Christianity is really true?

CHAPTER 5

- ▼ Try making up your own story that doesn't match with history, like the one about Chris' iPhone on page 39. The other person has to work out which detail isn't true
- ▼ What did you learn in this chapter about whether the Bible matches up with history?
- ▼ Look at Luke 3 v 1-3 (on p 40-41). Why does the Bible writer Luke list out lots of details about who was in charge when Jesus was on earth?
- ▼ How has archaeology played a role in supporting the facts of the stories in the Bible?

CHAPTER 6

- ▼ By this point in the book, has anything you've read changed your mind about how trustworthy the Bible is?
- ▼ If you were a Jewish leader at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, what would be the quickest way to squash a rumour that Jesus had risen from the dead?
- ▼ How likely is it that Jesus' disciples would have had the courage and the opportunity to steal his body?

CHAPTER 7

- ▼ Can you imagine a situation like the one Chris describes on pages 51-52 happening today? At what point would you give up and admit you were lying?
- ▼ What did Jesus' followers claim happened after Jesus' death? What did they say they had seen or done?
- ▼ What risks did his followers take when they continued to claim that Jesus was alive? Why do you think they were prepared to take those risks?

CHAPTER 8

- ▼ How would you respond if your brother or sister claimed to be God?! How did Jesus' siblings react to his claims at first?
- ▼ How do we know that Jesus' brothers changed their minds about him? What prompted the change, do you think?
- ▼ Why is it helpful to consider that an enemy of Jesus like Paul changed his mind about him too?

CHAPTER 9

- ▼ What does the Bible say about who saw Jesus after he rose again?
- ▼ In what way did Paul, one of the Bible writers, invite his readers to check out the claims of the resurrection?
- ▼ If the 500 witnesses of the risen Jesus couldn't be found or turned out to be liars, what would have happened to Christianity back in Paul's day?

CHAPTER 10

- ▼ What was the outcome for all the other Jewish rebel leaders who rose up against the Romans?
- ▼ How did things go differently for Jesus and his first followers?
- ▼ What was Gamaliel's advice to the Jewish leaders about how they should respond to Jesus' followers? Was he right?
- ▼ How does what we've read in this chapter give you confidence that Jesus really did rise from the dead?

CHAPTER 11

- ▼ “If the evidence for Jesus’ resurrection is really as strong as you say it is, why doesn’t everyone believe it?” (p 76). How would you answer that question, having read this chapter?
- ▼ Do you know someone who says either that there’s not enough evidence for the resurrection or that it couldn’t have happened from a scientific point of view?
- ▼ If that person became convinced that the resurrection did happen, how easy would it be for them to start following Jesus? What other things might stand in their way?
- ▼ What would you recommend as a next step to a friend who became convinced that Jesus did rise from the dead? Pages 80-81 will give you some ideas. Are any of those steps that you want to take?