

Here is an interesting question that I addressed on the blog exactly five years ago today, one that continues to be relevant and significant;

QUESTION:

Another very very popular evidence put forward for the resurrection is “the disciples would not have died for what they knew was a lie, therefore it must have happened.” I hear this all the time. You note that they really believed they saw Jesus after he died so they were not lying. However, is there evidence (historical or literary) that they were killed because of their belief in Jesus’ resurrection?

RESPONSE:

Ah yes, if I had a fiver for every time I’ve heard this comment over the years, I could retire to a country-home in Maine.... Several other people have responded to this question on the blog by saying that we have lots of records of lots of people who have died for a something that they knew, literally, not to be true. I am not in a position to argue that particular point. But I can say something about all the disciples dying for believing in the resurrection.

The way the argument (by Christian apologists) goes is this (I know this, because I used to make the same argument myself, when I was a Christian apologist!): all the apostles were martyred for their faith, because they believed Jesus had been raised from the dead; you can see why someone might be willing to die for the truth; but no one would die for a lie; and therefore the disciples - all of them - clearly believed that Jesus was raised from the dead. And if they *all* believed it, then it almost certainly is true (since none of them thought otherwise, they must have all seen Jesus alive after his death).

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