

The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus, by Gary Habermas and Mike Licona, in 10 Questions

1. Would you Recommend this Book?

Absolutely, no book outside of the Bible has given me more confidence in the historicity of the Christian story.

2. What is the Main Point?

Habermas and Licona here outline their now very well-known “Minimal Facts Approach” to the resurrection of Jesus. Though elsewhere they convincingly defend 12 or more facts as most likely historically true, in this argument they narrow it down to the 5 facts that even the most skeptical scholars will agree are most likely historically true, and then they ask what the best explanation is of those lowest common denominator facts, considering all significant possible options that have been proffered over the last two millennia. These facts are the crucifixion of Jesus, the genuine belief of the apostles, the change (or conversion) of Paul, the change (or conversion) of James, and the final one which they say holds a slightly thinner consensus among modern scholars, though still an overwhelming majority, is the empty tomb. After considering all of the other options, Habermas and Licona conclude that the best explanation of even these minimal facts is that Christ truly and physically rose from the grave on the Sunday morning after his crucifixion.

3. Which Parts should I read if I'm short on Time?

It isn't particularly long, but if short on time, read chapters 1-4, and the conclusion.

4. Why does this book Matter?

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” ([1 Cor 15:14-18](#)). The resurrection is the fulcrum on which Christianity turns, the linchpin on which it all hangs. If Christ did not rise from the dead as he said he would, none of it is true; however, if he did rise from the grave, then no matter what you think about everything else in the Bible, it's all true and we must bow.

5. Is this Book an “Easy-Read?” (Include Length)

Yes, Habermas and Licona wrote the book particularly for the general audience and it feels that way from the beginning.

6. Who is this Author and what did you think of their writing?

Gary Habermas has likely studied the resurrection more than any other human in history, and Licona has been alongside him for a large majority of this research.

7. What is One Key Take-Away or Application for my life?

Well the truth of the thesis changes everything, since Christ rose, nothing can ever be the same and everything throughout the universe is centered around that gravitational black-hole moment 2,000 years ago. Beyond this, this book gives great confidence to the Christian in why we believe what we believe, as there is no more central apologetic issue than this one. I enjoy all kinds of apologetic arguments, such as arguing from the beginning of the universe, or its intricate design, or more philosophically from beauty, or ontology, or the existence of numbers, or arguing for the historicity of the gospels or from the hard to explain growth of Christianity or from its other-worldly impact on the earth; however, this question and argument is the crucial and central one on which all else hangs. In my evangelistic conversations that turn apologetic, I am always wanting to bring people back to the resurrection as it has the power to trump all else. If you can learn this evidence well, there is no atheist, even militant, that you cannot have a meaningful evangelistic conversation with with great confidence.

8. What was One point of Disagreement?

A danger of any apologetic book that is wanting to speak clearly to the skeptic or non-Christian is that the need for regeneration to have eyes to see may be underemphasized, implying instead that intellectual persuasion is enough to bring repentance when this isn't indeed the case. Another issue some Christian scholars have had with Habermas and Licona's minimal facts approach is that it simply doesn't do justice to the many other truths that are right and true regardless of the secular world's opinions of them; one key example here is the reliability of the gospels which weighty apologists like the McGrew's would argue Habermas and Licona should fight harder for and include in their argumentation.

9. What are any other things that stood out to You?

The chapters on the opposing views stood out to me due to the clear and obvious weakness of all of the alternatives. Honestly, it's hard to believe that people could actually believe that there were mass hallucinations for instance, even though that view has been perhaps the most predominant one throughout this conversation historically. It is no surprise that particularly since Habermas's work, the vast majority of prominent atheists or skeptics simply refuse to take a position about what happened because of the weakness of all propositions besides Christ truly rising.

10. Have you read any books similar to this one that you would recommend one to read first to help with this one?

I don't know that one needs to read anything else before this one, though perhaps even shorter options like William Lane Craig's chapter in *On Guard* or Geisler and Turek's section in *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist* could be helpful groundwork. I would encourage further reading and deeper steps with Sean McDowell's *Fate of the Apostles* which covers perhaps the most critical of the minimal facts with great depth, Licona's *The Resurrection: A Historiographical Approach*, or chiefly Habermas's magnum opus which he is still working on called *On the Resurrection*, which is 4 1000+ page volumes on the topic. The 3rd volume was just released in May 2025, and the final volume is slated for summer 2026.