



## Easter Apologetics!

1. Easter isn't \_\_\_\_\_
2. Christian Apologist and Bible Scholar Wes Huff argues that Easter is \_\_\_\_\_ of pagan origin, calling such claims "nonsense" and a mix of misinformation and fiction. He asserts that the holiday centers on the biblical resurrection of Jesus and that connections to Babylonian or Germanic deities are historically \_\_\_\_\_.

### Key Points on Wes Huff's View:

3. Name Origin: Huff explains that "Easter" comes from historical language development rather than pagan worship. He notes that most languages use *Pascha* (from Passover) and claims that linking "Easter" to the goddess "Ostara" relies on a \_\_\_\_\_, often misunderstood 7th-century source.
4. Pagan Accusations: He maintains that the notion of substantial pagan roots collapses under historical \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Traditions (Eggs/Bunnies): He views modern traditions such as bunnies and eggs as originating from mundane, non-religious European springtime \_\_\_\_\_ rather than from pagan rituals.
6. The "Genetic Fallacy": Huff argues that judging the validity of a celebration based solely on its origins, rather than its current meaning (the Resurrection), is a logical \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Huff argues that the connection between the Germanic goddess **Eostre (or Ostara)** and the Christian holiday of Easter is often overstated or misunderstood, asserting that the name "Easter" has a more mundane origin. He contends that only \_\_\_\_\_ 7th-century source (Bede) mentions her, suggesting her role is not widely supported.

### Key Points from Wes Huff's Analysis:

8. **Source Scarcity:** Huff points out that the sole, or primary, historical source for the goddess Eostre is the 7th-century monk, who may have been \_\_\_\_\_, according to some scholarly perspectives.
9. **Linguistic Origin:** The name "Easter" is likely derived from *Ostarmanath*, a Germanic name for the \_\_\_\_\_ during which resurrection celebrations occurred, rather than a direct adoption of a goddess's name.
10. **Rejection of Pagan Origins:** Huff argues that the association between Easter and Ishtar or Ostara is an "\_\_\_\_\_ fallacy" based on similar-sounding words, rather than shared historical, cultural, or etymological roots.
11. **"Passover" Roots:** Most languages (e.g., Greek, Latin, Spanish) use derivatives of the word "*Pascha*" or "*Passover*" to refer to the celebration of Jesus's resurrection, highlighting the \_\_\_\_\_ rather than pagan foundation.
12. **European Tradition:** While he dismisses the pagan root, he notes that modern traditions like eggs and bunnies are \_\_\_\_\_, not necessarily rooted in pre-Christian religious worship, but are rather \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
13. In summary, Huff contends that claims of Easter's direct pagan origins are largely \_\_\_\_\_, emphasizing the holiday's focus on the resurrection of Jesus.

For a verbatim explanation, check out Wes Huff's YouTube Channel and watch "Easter isn't Pagan."

## Part 1: Proof that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_!

14. The historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth is firmly \_\_\_\_\_ through early Christian writings, non-Christian Roman/Jewish historians (Tacitus, Josephus), and archaeological findings, making his existence as a first-century Palestinian Jew \_\_\_\_\_ by virtually all modern \_\_\_\_\_. Evidence includes descriptions of his crucifixion under Pontius Pilate and his ministry.

### Key Historical and Apologetic Proofs

#### 15. Non-Christian Sources (Roman/Jewish):

- a) \_\_\_\_\_: First-century Jewish historian who mentions Jesus twice, including a reference to his brother James and a description of his role as a teacher and execution by Pilate.
- b) \_\_\_\_\_: Roman historian who recorded that "Christus" was executed by Pontius Pilate during Tiberius's reign.
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_: Roman official who wrote around AD 110 regarding Christians singing hymns to Christ "as to a god".
- d) \_\_\_\_\_ Traditions: Mention "Yeshua Hannotzri" (Jesus of Nazareth) and mention his execution, confirming his existence from a hostile source.

#### 16. Early Christian Testimony:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ from Church \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_ of Rome, \_\_\_\_\_ of Antioch, and \_\_\_\_\_ (early 2nd century) provide early, direct testimony of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection.
- b) The Gospels: Even \_\_\_\_\_ scholars view the Gospels as \_\_\_\_\_ documents.

17. The "\_\_\_\_\_ Factor" (Apologetic Argument): Early Christian writers included \_\_\_\_\_ details—such as Jesus being rejected, misunderstood, and dying a \_\_\_\_\_ death by \_\_\_\_\_

crucifixion—that they likely would not have invented, indicating they were recording genuine history.

18. \_\_\_\_\_ Witness Affirmation: Second-century \_\_\_\_\_ of Christianity, such as the philosopher \_\_\_\_\_, never \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus's existence; they instead attributed his miracles to sorcery.
19. The \_\_\_\_\_ consensus among \_\_\_\_\_ is that Jesus was a \_\_\_\_\_ historical figure, and the evidence for his life exceeds that of many other prominent figures from the same era.

## Part 2: Proof of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.

20. We know Jesus died on the cross through a \_\_\_\_\_ of early Christian testimonies (the Gospels), Roman historical \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ analysis of the crucifixion process. Roman soldiers, who were \_\_\_\_\_ in execution, confirmed his death, often by piercing his side, ensuring his death before he was taken down.

### Key Evidence for the Death of Jesus:

21. **The \_\_\_\_\_ Gospels and \_\_\_\_\_ of Other Scriptures:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (written within 30–60 years of the event) all document the trial, crucifixion, and death, providing detailed, consistent accounts. 1 Corinthians 15:3 (died for sins), Galatians 3:13 (redeemed us by becoming a curse), 1 Peter 2:24 (bore sins on the tree), and Philippians 2:8 (death on a cross).
22. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Records: *Non-Christian historians such as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ record that Jesus was executed by Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect of Judea (AD 26–36).*
23. **Medical/Physical Evidence:** *Roman soldiers usually broke the legs of other executed individuals to hasten death, but they skipped doing this to Jesus because they saw he was already dead, and a soldier pierced his side, causing \_\_\_\_\_ **and water to flow**—a sign of **circulatory shock** (hypovolemic shock - low blood volume) and or*

**cardiac rupture** (heart muscle tears or ruptures). Also, the severity of Roman \_\_\_\_\_ (*flagrum*) and the physiological certainty of death due to blood loss and shock, verified by \_\_\_\_\_ experts.

24. **Roman Protocol:** The ***soldiers tasked*** with the crucifixion were ***highly trained*** in \_\_\_\_\_ death. Allowing a prisoner to escape death would result in the penalty for the soldiers, making it \_\_\_\_\_ that a \_\_\_\_\_ person would be \_\_\_\_\_ down.

### **Part 3: Proof of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus.**

25. Jesus was buried in \_\_\_\_\_ of Arimathea's tomb, which is a "\_\_\_\_\_ fact" accepted by most modern scholars. It was a \_\_\_\_\_ tomb, which was subsequently found empty. Strobel presents evidence that the tomb's location was known to both believers and critics, and early \_\_\_\_\_ of the resurrection immediately followed the discovery of the empty tomb, making a \_\_\_\_\_ unlikely.

### **Key Evidence for the Burial of Jesus:**

26. \_\_\_\_\_ **Law and Archaeological Evidence:** Despite claims that crucifixion victims were left on the cross, the Roman \_\_\_\_\_ (Roman legal writings/law) permitted the \_\_\_\_\_ of bodies for burial, and archaeological findings have confirmed that crucified victims were sometimes given proper burials.

27. \_\_\_\_\_ Tomb \_\_\_\_\_: The empty tomb of Jesus is supported by several key lines of historical evidence, including the testimony of women, early admission by opponents, and the rise of Christianity in Jerusalem.

28. \_\_\_\_\_ Accounts: The earliest accounts of the resurrection of Jesus, according to historical analysis, are not the Gospel narratives themselves but rather early creedal formulas, the most notable of which is 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. Scholars suggest this oral tradition

- dates to within 3-6 years of the crucifixion (roughly AD 30-33), listing appearances to Peter, the twelve, 500+ people, James, and Paul.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ Testimony: Lee Strobel's case for the burial of Jesus hinges heavily on early and diverse eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Jesus, which logically necessitate that the tomb was emptied after his burial. Strobel argues that this testimony is not legendary because it was documented too close to the events and originated from over 500 people, including skeptical individuals.
30. \_\_\_\_\_ Appearances: According to Lee Strobel, Jesus appeared to more than \_\_\_\_\_ people in over a dozen instances after his death. Strobel highlights that these group appearances included skeptics and believers in both indoor and outdoor settings, with witnesses who talked to, touched, and ate with the resurrected Jesus.
31. \_\_\_\_\_ Witnesses: In *The Case for Christ*, Lee Strobel highlights diverse eyewitnesses to Jesus' post-burial appearances, arguing their variety and testimony strengthen the claim of a historical resurrection. These witnesses include individuals and groups, featuring skeptics and **women** whose testimony was unconventional for the era.
32. Early \_\_\_\_\_: Early documentation of the resurrection of Jesus, primarily found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, dates to within months of the event, with Paul recording appearances to over 500 individuals, the disciples, and others, often cited by scholars as a formulaic creed established shortly after the crucifixion. These eyewitness reports, later formalized in the Gospels, include diverse accounts from women (like Mary Magdalene) and men, both individually and in groups, often featuring specific details such as appearances to Peter, James, and the eleven on multiple occasions.
33. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Disciples: In *The Case for Christ*, Lee Strobel argues that the disciples' radical transformation from fear-filled, doubting followers to bold proclaimers of a resurrected Jesus—willing to die for their testimony—is a key historical evidence. Their conviction was based on firsthand accounts from post-crucifixion experiences rather than mere myths.

## Challenging Theories Debunked:

34. *The \_\_\_\_\_ Theory:* Jesus didn't die, he just fainted (unlikely after torture). The swoon theory, which proposes Jesus only fainted on the cross and revived in the tomb, is overwhelmingly dismissed by scholars and medical experts. It is debunked by the intense severity of Roman crucifixion, designed to guarantee death, the piercing of Jesus' side causing fatal asphyxiation, the inability to move a massive stone while gravely injured, and the logistical impossibility of appearing as a resurrected "conqueror" while needing intensive medical care.
35. *The \_\_\_\_\_ Theory:* Disciples stole the body (why die for a known lie?).
36. The Theft Theory—which suggests Jesus' disciples stole his body to fake the resurrection—is largely considered implausible by scholars due to a lack of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. The theory is undermined by the disciples' fear-filled, discouraged state and their subsequent willingness to die for their belief, making it unlikely they were perpetrating a known hoax.

## Why does it matter?

37. \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_
38. \_\_\_\_\_ of Salvation
39. \_\_\_\_\_ doubts and concerns that could cause others to not even \_\_\_\_\_ a relationship with Jesus Christ!
40. Remove the \_\_\_\_\_ that the Bible is \_\_\_\_\_ a collection of \_\_\_\_\_ tales, and help people see that it is the \_\_\_\_\_ word of God.

Anything you would like to discuss next time, I will note it now.