CRUCIFIXION
Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
Crucifixion was a common form of execution used by the Romans at this time. All four gospel accounts claim Jesus died by crucifixion. Paul and the rest of the New Testament writers affirm it. Non-Christian sources include Josephus, Tertullian, and the Talmud. Examinations of the medical evidence described in the accounts of Jesus’ death have led experts to conclude that surviving the crucifixion would not have been possible. Even the highly critical scholar John Dominic Crossan, writes, “That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be.”

APPEARANCES
After his death, his disciples had experiences that they believed were appearances of the risen Jesus.
Paul, the oral tradition of the early church, and the written works of early church leaders all attest that the disciples believed that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to them. In I Cor. 15:3-5, Paul quotes what scholars consider a creed from less than 5 years after Jesus’ death, which claims that Jesus appeared to the disciples. This was also attested unanimously in the gospels, written within 20-50 years after the crucifixion, and by extra-biblical sources Josephus, Tertullian, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr.

TRANSFORMATION
The disciples were transformed from fearful panic to boldly preaching his resurrection, and were willing to die for their beliefs.
The entire New Testament and earliest chapters of church history testify to the transformation of the apostles from a group of cowards who scattered, hid, and denied Christ to bold proclaimers of his resurrection. Clement, Tertullian, Josephus, Mara Bar-Serapion, Pliny, Hegesippus, and Eusebius attest to the martyrdom of the disciples and that they did not recant their faith. While men will die for things they believe to be true that are actually false, they will not die for something they know is a lie.

EARLY PROCLAMATION
The proclamation of his resurrection was a central message of the Church, starting in Jerusalem very early, not decades later.
Contrary to popular theories claiming Christians invented Jesus’ deity and resurrection as legends hundreds of years later, evidence shows that the disciples proclaimed his resurrection immediately, in Jerusalem where he was killed (and where claims could be easily disputed). While many facts from antiquity rest on just one ancient source, and 2 or 3 sources generally render the fact unimpeachable, the early proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection appears in over 10 independent sources, dating within 5 to 50 years after Jesus’ death.

JAMES’ CONVERSION
Jesus’ unbelieving brother, James, was converted by what he believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.
Multiple sources report that James was cynical regarding Jesus’ public ministry, even seeking to remove him from the public eye—believing him insane. They also record that a few years after Jesus’ death, James had become the leader of the early church at Jerusalem. The I Cor. 15 creed reported that prior to this transformation, the risen Jesus appeared to James, a claim he was willing to die for. His martyrdom is attested by Hegesippus, Josephus, Eusebius, and Clement.

PAUL’S CONVERSION
Paul, former persecutor of Christians, was converted by what he believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus.
In his letters to the churches in Corinth, Galatia, and Philippi (all accepted by critical scholars), Paul writes of his conversion from persecutor of Christians to proclaimer of Jesus’ resurrection, willing to suffer continuously for the gospel, to the point of death. These facts were also documented by Luke, Clement, Polycarp, Tertullian, Dionysius, and Origen.

When even skeptical experts accept these essential historical facts, they are compelled to address the evidence. Popular theories like the Swoon Theory, the Stolen Body Theory, the Hallucination Theory, and Legend Theory, etc., all fall short of these requirements. The resurrection is the most reasonable explanation. And if Jesus was raised from the dead — there are significant implications for our lives!