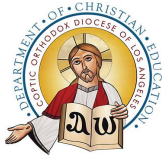


# Logically Arguing Christianity

Department of Christian Education



# Introduction

**BASIC PREMISE:** When something exists (e.g, an idea), there may be factors that promote, or go against its survival.

The promoting factors must be greater than the factors against it in order for the idea to survive.

- Probability of Christianity surviving as a faith: The “movement” of Christianity.
  - Logical argument without influencing the reader using faith-based statements (NO faith based/Biblical text will be used)

The approach is based on the following:

- The movement (Christianity) is extremely improbable to succeed
- There are several odds against its survival
- These odds are extremely high to the point that this movement's survival against these challenges is extremely improbable
  - Overcame many foes

**THE MAIN PREMISE:** The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead).

This movement also involves practices (Liturgical life) that its followers live by on a daily basis.

# Introduction

**Most religions fall into three main categories in terms of growth catalysts:**

- Forcing people to believe
- Growing in a civilized time with laws protecting freedom of belief
  - New faiths that grew at the end of the nineteenth century and after that
- Philosophies that are based on meditation started by a leader
  - Turned into a belief system.

**To make it harder on ourselves, we will increase the odds against the conviction of the new movement, the following will be ignored:**

- Lovely teachings of Christ.
  - The behavior of those who saw Him after the Resurrection will be used
- Evidence of the fulfilled OT prophecies

# Factor I

## The Message of Christianity

**The message of Christianity itself can be considered the first and highest factor as an odd AGAINST the faith spreading:**

“God became Man (out of LOVE) and was crucified, and Rose from the Dead, and Ascended back to Heaven”

**This message is extremely difficult to accept.**

- Person A: Where is Christ?
- Person B: “He ascended, so you just have to believe me.”

**St. Paul calls it “The foolishness of the Gospel” in his epistle to the Corinthians.**

- Person A: Why should I believe it?
- Person B: “The Resurrection, people saw Him after He resurrected. Those who saw Him behave differently.”

# Factor I

## The Message of Christianity

**Those who preach this message have a completely different view about:**

- The importance of life.
- The importance of Love.
- The contempt of worldly possessions,
- The contempt of death as they love those who tortured them.

**Summary:**

- The message of Christianity:
  - Logically difficult to accept
  - Contradicts the worldview of most
  - Involves belief in things unseen.

# Factor II

## The Way the Message Was Spread

### There are 3 ways to spread a message:

- Secretly with deceit
- With power and compulsion
- Openly with conviction and tolerating what happens to you

### Obstacles to the message spreading OPENLY

- There is no “political correctness” where you can “freely” speak of Christ.
- The religious opponents are the Jews,
- The Intellectual Opponents are the Greeks
- The political opponents are the Roman empire (it became a fierce religious opponent also)
- The punishment is either severe torture, imprisonment, or death
  - cannot “sue”

# Factor II

## The Way the Message Was Spread

**The following are examples from the same time period of history of religious lies and what happened:**

Theudas & Judas. (from Josephus, Antiquities book 20, chapter 5): *For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.*

- Two leaders each started a movement that died after a short-lived success.
  - Some leaders initiated a message in order to gather people around them
    - Messages were not sustainable → leaders and its followers vanished.

# Factor II

## The Way the Message Was Spread

**This faith growing is counter-intuitive because of the following:**

- Those who preach have no richness, no political strength, etc.
- They are tortured,
- They preach love and peace and do not fight back,
- God whom they are preaching does not come and save them from death, although they are dying for Him.
- They call for self-control, denouncing the world and all its desires (that are natural), including food

What is making people follow this faith??!!



# Factor III

## The Roman Empire's Persecution of the "Movement"

### The Roman Empire

- 300 years doing every effort to get rid of this "new sect"
- Worshiping idols is not optional
- Worshiping idols is serving the country
  - Serving in the army to defend the empire
- Christians would not worship the idols,
  - The goal was to annihilate Christians

### Christian Behavior within the Empire

- Christianity did not threaten the fabric of the Empire:
  - 1 - The financial system
  - 2 - The family fabric
  - 3 - the employment fabric (the masters and slaves)

# Factor III

## The Roman Empire's Persecution of the "Movement"

### Christians in the Roman Empire

- Christians preach Peace
  - BUT they defend the country if enlisted in the army.
- Christians preach accepting the government
  - DO NOT worship idols
- Christians asked the slaves to obey the masters
  - no social revolution

### Non Christian Family:

- Christians urged husbands who believe in Christ
- Christians urged wives who believed NOT to leave the spouse, if the spouse is willing to stay in the marriage.

# Factor III

The Roman Empire's Persecution of the  
"Movement"

## 1 - Christianity respected the Financial system:

- Rom 13:1 - Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.
- Rom 13:7 - Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

# Factor III

## The Roman Empire's Persecution of the "Movement"

### 2 – Christianity respected the bonding of Husbands and Wives in the Empire:

- *1 Co 7:13-15 - And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.*

# Factor III

## The Roman Empire's Persecution of the "Movement"

### 3 – Christianity did not disrupt the Master / Slave fabric of the Empire:

- *Eph 6:5-8 - Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*
- *Eph 6:9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

# Factor III

The Roman Empire's Persecution of the  
"Movement"

This "new" movement respected the Empire's  
Fabric: So they are truly model citizens:

- Economical Fabric (customs, taxes, ...)
- Family Fabric (marriage, social cohesion)
- Master / Slave Fabric (Employment and social fabric)

**Roman empire:**

- Hated this higher moral code
- Aimed to remove Christians.
  - No law prohibiting this
  - No legal system for the Christians to appeal to.

# Factor III

The Roman Empire's Persecution of the  
"Movement"

**So, given the following:**

- Christ is not here, He ascended
- Christians have no army to fight back, they are just people
- They are ridiculed all the time due to their beliefs and way of "pure" living.

**Therefore:**

- First Roman Emperor should have no problem killing them all
- Would have resulted in Christianity being annihilated!!

# Factor III

## The Roman Empire's Persecution of the "Movement"

Ten Roman Emperors over 300 years tried to do that by publicly torturing and killing Christians, and yet they were not able to get rid of Christianity.

Moreover, in 312 A.D., Christianity became an accepted faith of the Empire. Based on the facts it does not make statistical sense.

### Diocletian (Reign 284 – 305 AD)

- The last and worst of the major Roman persecutions of Christians occurred under Diocletian (The Great Persecution: 303-311/12).
- Diocletian published four edicts of 303-04 ordering the burning of Christian books and churches.
- This extreme violence "did not succeed in annihilating Christianity but caused the faith of the martyrs to blaze forth instead."



# Factor III

The Roman Empire's Persecution of the  
"Movement"

## Eyewitnesses: Eusebius of Caesarea

- "Even the wild beasts, he says, not without rhetorical exaggeration, at last refused to attack the Christians, as if they had assumed the part of men in place of the heathen Romans; the bloody swords became dull and shattered; the executioners grew weary, and had to relieve each other; but the Christians sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving in honor of Almighty God, even to their latest breath."

# Factor III

## The Roman Empire's Persecution of the "Movement"

### **Eyewitnesses: Justin Martyr**

- "Though beheaded, and crucified, and thrown to wild beasts, and chains, and fire, and all other kinds of torture, we do not give up our confession; but, the more such things happen, the more do others in larger numbers become faithful."

### **Eyewitnesses: Philip Schaff**

- "No other religion could have stood for so long a period the combined opposition of Jewish bigotry, Greek philosophy, and Roman policy and power; no other could have triumphed at last over so many foes by purely moral and spiritual force, without calling any carnal weapons to its aid."

# Conclusion

**Given the factors discussed above, what are the odds or likelihood of success of this movement?**

- The probability of success is extremely low against all these odds UNLESS the Resurrection is true, in which case, there is another factor in FAVOR of Christianity that defeats all the other factors against it.