

## The Authenticity of Jesus' Crucifixion and Death: A Legal and Theological Review in Response to Polemical Allegation

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**Abstract:** The rise of interpretations from non-Christian religious leaders about Christian teachings is the highlight of the researcher in this study, especially the wrong interpretation of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Non-Christian figures interpret that Jesus was never crucified, but it was someone else who was crucified because Jesus could disappear, besides that the opinions of the interpreters do not agree with each other, some say, Yudah Iscariot, Simon the Cyrenian, Simon the Arab, Barsabas and others. This interpretation contradicts the Christian Faith and the testimony of the Bible, so researchers want to prove with this research to prove that Jesus was really crucified and died on the cross. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods through literature studies supported by historical documents. From the results of the research, it was found that the undeniable fact according to the law that Jesus was crucified on the hill of Golgotha and died, and rose on the third day, as witnessed by eyewitnesses, also reinforced by the testimony of philosophers and early church fathers, as well as testimony from non-Christians that Jesus Christ was really crucified and died on the cross, was buried and rose on the third day.

**Keywords:** crucifixion, death, resurrection, evidence

## INTRODUCTION

Social media has begun to be widely used by scholars as well as evangelists from various religions to convey the truth about their religion and beliefs (Simon et al., 2021). This is fine, even according to researchers, this is a very easy, cheap, and right-on-target way for the general public because today, almost all levels of society from various circles have social media that can freely and freely access various information, so they can get to know the religion broadcast through social media such as *YouTube*, *TikTok*, *Facebook*, and other social media. Such ways of religious broadcasting are not prohibited by law, and therefore, religious leaders and/or people who understand their religion broadcast their religion freely and are felt to be very useful for various groups. However, it will become a social problem, a matter of principles and beliefs of other people/religions and contrary to the law, if religious leaders interpret other people's

religions freely and broadcast on social media, especially if the interpretation is not in accordance and even interpreted freely and contrary to the theology of the religion.

In Indonesia, some provisions strictly prohibit interpreting other people's religious teachings in the wrong way, but even though there are legal provisions that prohibit, there are still many religious figures who make wrong interpretations and broadcast them on social media so that anyone can easily see and hear the wrong interpretation, whereas in the case of wrong interpretation and not by the teachings of a particular religion that is interpreted, there are legal sanctions that can ensnare the perpetrators of the wrong interpretation. Mutual interpretation and defamation of other religions is no longer a secret in the world of social media, even on social media, there are often debates between religions that lead to mutual defamation/desecration of other religions, which leads to legal proceedings from people who do not accept their religion being defamed/desecrated. For example, the title of a video on YouTube entitled *Shaken People Ahead of Christmas must. Zuma & ust. Nandar dies blind but knows the Bible is beaten*. The debate listened to from YouTube; it is clear that polemicists who do not have Christian understanding interpret the Christian Bible by cutting verses and interpreting in a wrong way and tend to desecrate the Christian faith (Hutapea, 2024).

As a researcher working in the realm of law, the researcher wants to answer the baseless accusations of polemicists who often interpret Christian teachings that contradict the Bible and Christian theology to answer the empty accusations of polemicists by apologetics, which is to defend the faith by conducting literature, history, and archaeological research, the researcher wants to answer these baseless, empty accusations so that Christians are not misled in ways that are not true by irresponsible people. Lasmaria Nami Simanungkalit, in her research titled: *Responding to Theology Religionum in Christian Religious Education*," states that "Christian religious education plays an important role in addressing misinterpretation by promoting religious pluralism and mutual respect. By fostering an environment of understanding and cooperation, education can help mitigate the negative impact of misinterpretation and promote a more accurate understanding of Christian theology (Simanungkalit & Putrawan, 2021).

Spread on social media some time ago, where there was a debate between a Christian figure and a non-Christian figure, as quoted from the YouTube channel. The Christian figure only quoted what was the expression of apostates who had converted to Christianity and who expressed their opinion about their old religion. How angry the debate viewers were who uncontrollably protested as if the Christian apologist was making his interpretation when it was clearly explained that he had said he followed the testimony of apostates from the TikTok media (Natu, 2024). Preachers, especially converts, who do not have a good and correct knowledge of Christian theology, do not understand the Christian understanding of the original language of the writing of the Bible, make wrong interpretations when they preach and broadcast on social media stating that "Lord Jesus," the God worshipped by all Christians, is a God who is afraid of death, so that during the process of traveling to the place of crucifixion, Jesus disappeared and was replaced by another person who was likened to Jesus.

The testimonies of the defendants, which contradict each other, are difficult to use as a benchmark in assessing the correctness of the theology of the ustad, which raises the question of whether they have different kinds of literature or whether they have different knowledge and such testimonies cannot be trusted as scientific testimony according to the law. The researcher

elaborates on this topic on the basis that legally, Christians are reluctant to carry out legal proceedings against misinterpretations that are not by Christian theology and which are contrary to the law therefore, in this study, the researcher takes a stand to reveal and straighten out the wrong interpretation rather than making a legal effort as is usually done by other believers if someone interprets the contents of their holy book.

The defense of faith by means such as in this study is the correct way and has been applied in the fourth and fifth centuries, as Ando stated in his research entitled "Pagan Apologetics and Christian Intolerance in the Ages of Themistius and Augustine" that in the fourth and fifth centuries, Christian apologetics continued to develop, often in response to pagan criticism. This period saw a fusion of Christian and Platonic thought, as apologists such as Augustine engaged with contemporary philosophical debate (Ando, 1996). In contexts where Christianity is a minority, such as in South Africa, apologetics can take on a polemical tone, as seen in the works of Ahmed Deedat. His approach highlights the defensive nature of apologetics in environments where religious beliefs are disputed (Westerlund, 2003).

Research with the Authenticity of the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus from a Legal and Theological Perspective, Answering Polemical Accusations studied by this researcher, is new because no previous researcher has conducted research with this title. Several researchers examined the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus, but the substance of the discussion is not the same as what the researchers discussed in this study. Zacharias, Samuel, and David Ming Muner Daliman. In his journal entitled "The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus in Historical Medical Perspective." Researching the historical aspects of the crucifixion and death of Jesus (Zacharias et al., 2022). Likewise, Adiatma, Daniel Lindung. "The Event of the Crucifixion of Jesus Viewed from the Historical and Theological Perspective of John, also discusses the crucifixion and death of Jesus from a Historical perspective (Adiatma, 2022).

The purpose of this research is to answer the accusations of polemicists with data and facts about the truth of the Death of the Lord Jesus on the Cross, who rose on the third day as proof that Jesus died. Therefore, the framework in this paper will explain what is the urgency of Christians to maintain the historicity of Jesus' crucifixion, the authenticity of Jesus' crucifixion and death from a biblical perspective, how the testimony of the Church Fathers and philosophers about the crucifixion and death of Jesus, as well as the existence of non-Christian testimony about the crucifixion and death of Jesus. From a legal perspective, the researcher also elaborates on the prohibition of interpreting religions that are not their beliefs according to the law, as well as the authenticity of the Truth of the Crucifixion of Jesus from the perspective of legal analysis and conclusions from the research results. The researcher elaborated on this topic based on the idea of many other religious leaders interpreting the Christian faith in the wrong way, thus offering an element of novelty related to this research.

## **METHOD**

The method used by researchers in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach, a literature study supported by historical documents collected and analyzed, including the study of relevant archaeological sites, artifacts, and findings related to the period of Jesus' crucifixion. Contains narratives about the crucifixion of Jesus, including biblical texts and writings of early

Christians, church fathers, and early-century theologians, analyzing first-century theological literature that discusses the crucifixion of Jesus. The relationship between theology and historical science presents methodological challenges, especially in fundamental theology. Theological research must consider the temporality of divine revelation and its interpretation, which depends on historical data. This requires a critical and self-conscious approach to historiographical doctrines (Krauze, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The Urgency of Christians Maintaining the Historical Crucifixion of Jesus*

For Christians, Jesus Christ is not an ordinary man who came suddenly and claimed to be the Messiah, but the history of the Bible states that Jesus Christ is part of the Trinity of God who will one day become incarnate as a human being. The birth, life, death, agony, and ascension of the Lord Jesus to Heaven are an integral part of the Christian Faith of redemption and eternal life. Christians believe that the creation of man by God (Gen. 1:26-27), the promise of salvation after man fell into sin (Gen. 3:15), and a series of prophecies about the Messiah such as the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 53), the prophecy of the prophet Micah (5:2) are the basis for Christians to continue to defend and defend the truth of the Bible as an important document of Christian faith that Jesus died on the cross.

If we think in terms of Christian faith, a question arises: why is Jesus willing to give Himself to be crucified and die on the cross? This is certainly not a sudden thing, but if you study the history of the fall of man into sin, God showed His love for His creation and designed how the concept of salvation through His incarnate identity as the man Jesus, as the redemption of His creation. The crucifixion is seen as the fulfillment of the theory of redemption, in which the suffering and death of Jesus were instrumental in reconciling mankind with God. The act of being crucified, a method associated with condemnation and shame, underscores the depth of Jesus' self-emptying and humility (Williams, 2017).

Why do non-Christians create narratives that continue to be socialized through mass media, social media that Jesus was not on the cross, Jesus did not die, while Christians still maintain that Jesus was crucified and died? Christians should also recognize this because it shows that the Lord Jesus has magic so that he can avoid death and disappear to be replaced by someone else. However, such recognition is contrary to Christian faith and theology, so believers must defend and prove the truth of salvation through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Apart from being the fulfillment of the prophecies of the prophets, Jesus' death on the Cross also has a deep understanding of Christian faith as a sacrifice for human sin (John 3: 16, Romans 5: 8), as a sign of victory over death and the power of sin (1 Cor 15: 55-57), apart from that the crucifixion of Jesus reminds Christians of God's infinite love for humans (John 3:16) and Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection provide hope for eternal resurrection and salvation for Christians. Such is the importance of Jesus' death that, for Christians, the crucifixion of Jesus is sacred and part of God's saving work for humanity.

Jesus' death on the cross has deep meaning for Christians, symbolizing the ultimate act of love, sacrifice, and redemption. This event is central to Christian theology, representing how humanity is reconciled with God. The crucifixion is not only a historical event but also a

theological cornerstone that influences Christian belief and practice. Jesus' death is the basis for the concept of forgiveness in Christianity. It exemplifies perfect and total forgiveness, serving as a model for believers to forgive others, thus restoring a broken relationship (Hulu, 2019). The word of God in John 3:16 for Christians becomes a firm conviction of faith in Jesus Christ. These words of God mean that God loves the world so much that Jesus was sacrificed to save mankind. God came down in the human form of Jesus as a sacrifice for human sin, and God decided to save mankind from sin and death. This is a guarantee of eternal salvation, so the series of works of salvation for mankind carried out by Jesus, including His death on the Cross, are an integral part of the work of salvation and are events that are as important as the events of the Nativity, and Resurrection and His ascension to Heaven.

The death of Jesus is the event where Jesus was crucified on the cross. The gospels record that Jesus had announced His death and resurrection to His disciples. Jesus' death is seen as atonement for the sins of mankind. These are the tenets of the Christian faith that must be defended and proven legally and scientifically based on Biblical and legal evidence that can be divinely and scientifically accounted for. The defense of the crucifixion also intersects with broader debates in religious and secular contexts, where Christian apologetics must address issues such as spirit-body dualism and the uniqueness of human destiny in Christian theology. These challenges require a nuanced understanding of traditional beliefs and modern scientific perspectives (Dodds, 2022). This means that an understanding of Christian theology must look at multiple perspectives rather than relying on theological interpretations alone.

From the above opinion, it is answered that the prophecies about the coming of Jesus Christ by the prophets, as well as how Jesus showed His Divinity by declaring His death explicitly as in the Gospel of Matthew 16 verse 21 that He will go to Jerusalem to suffer the elders, chief priests, and scribes, then be killed and resurrected on the third day. This verse debunks the baseless narratives of the polemicists that Jesus did not die on the cross but was crucified by Judas Iscariot, Simon the Cyrenian, Simon the Arab, Barsabbas, and others who were likened because Jesus disappeared before being arrested by the Romans.

### ***The Authenticity of Jesus' Crucifixion and Death from a Perspective***

The Bible is the Bible of the Christian faith because various prophecies about Jesus Christ, the Messiah, were made in the Old Testament, and these prophecies are fulfilled in the New Testament. The various prophecies in the Old Testament about the suffering and death of Jesus are as follows: The Messiah will suffer, be rejected, and be tortured for the sins of mankind. (Isa 53:3-5), the Messiah will be tortured, beaten, and pierced (Isa 50:6), the Messiah will be crucified and His bones will be seen (Ps 22:16-18), the Messiah will be pierced and people will weep (Zech 12:10). If these prophecies are not fulfilled then the death of Jesus that Christians believe is a lie, then it is necessary to note the fulfillment in the New Testament of several eyewitnesses who explicitly state the death of Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27: 32-56, Mark 15: 22-41, Luke 23: 33-49, John 19: 17-37).

The Bible, as the main benchmark of the Christian Faith, tells everything about the Birth, Life, and Works of Christ, His sufferings through his death on the Cross, burial and resurrection on the third day, and ascension to heaven. These were witnessed by the apostles and disciples

of Christ with their own eyes and written down in the Bible so that their testimonies were true and trustworthy. The Bible is portrayed as the true and perfect Word of God, with its teachings remaining relevant despite advances in technology and society. This perspective emphasizes the divine inspiration of the Bible and its role as a moral and spiritual guide (Saenom Saenom & Marthen Mau, 2023).

In the law of evidence, an event that is known by more than two people, then the testimony can be used as true legal evidence. Therefore, the testimony of the apostles and disciples of Christ is legally accountable because they are eyewitnesses who saw and witnessed the process of crucifixion and the death of Jesus. Here, we present the testimonies of the apostles and disciples of Christ, who wrote clearly about the events of Christ's death on the cross.

Matthew: An apostle of Jesus wrote his testimony that "They came to a place called Golgotha, which means: The Place of the Skull. They gave Him wine mixed with gall. When He tasted it, He did not want to drink it. And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments by lot (Matthew 27: 33-35). Matthew's gospel reflects elements of Jewish mysticism and apocalyptic thought, especially through the use of peshar interpretation, which reinterprets Old Testament prophecies as fulfilled in Jesus. This method, similar to that used by the Qumran community, highlights Jesus as the culmination of Divine revelation (Iatan, 2023). With the Qumran community highlighting the divinity of Jesus, it further confirms the Jewishness of Jesus as reviewed in Matthew. Mark: They took Jesus to a place called Golgotha, which means The Place of the Skull. They gave him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. Then, they crucified Him and divided His garments, casting lots on them to determine each one's share. Mark's passion narrative uses literary techniques such as intercalation, placing the crucifixion at the heart of the story to reflect its theological significance as the moment at which Jesus is revealed as the crucified Messiah and Son of God (Moloney, 2008). The Messiahship of Jesus is affirmed by the author of Mark for all readers of the gospels.

Luke: When they came to the place called Skull, they crucified him there and the two criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. (23:33). In Luke 1 verses 1-4, Luke states unequivocally that everything about the events that happened concerning Christ that was originally told by eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word was carefully investigated and therefore written down so that mankind could know and believe that they were true. The crucifixion described by Luke represents the climax of the conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities. While they regarded his death as a vindication of their authority, the narrative reveals it as the moment of Jesus' proclamation as Messiah-King (Kingsbury, 1994). John: Taking up his cross, he went out to the place called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew: Golgotha. And there he crucified them and with him two others, one on each side, Jesus in the middle. (19:17-18). The truth about everything about Christ has also been emphatically stated by the Apostle John in 1 John 1 verse 1 that everything that has existed from the beginning that has been heard, has been seen and witnessed with his own eyes, has been touched with his own hands about the Word (Christ) is written so that everything about Christ is true.

The Gospel of John and other early Christian texts affirm the factuality of the crucifixion, countering contemporary skepticism and reinforcing its significance as a transformative event for believers, marking the shift towards eternal life (Adiatma, 2022). Apostle Peter: Acts 2:32 This Jesus God raised, and of this we are all witnesses. Acts 4:10 Know therefore by you all,

and by all the congregation of Israel, that it is in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead that it is because of this Jesus that this man now stands in health before you. Peter presents a special account of the crucifixion, emphasizing the miraculous elements and anti-Jewish sentiments. It includes unique features such as the talking cross and Jesus' cry from the cross, "My power, power, you have forsaken me (Foster, 2007).

Another piece of evidence that corroborates Jesus' death is his resurrection. The Bible records that many eyewitnesses witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who appeared to his disciples, to his apostles, and even to more than 500 other people after his resurrection. Jesus' resurrection is His victory over death and the foundation of the Christian faith. In Matthew 28:1-10, Matthew tells the story of how Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who went to the tomb early in the morning to see Jesus there, where there was a strong earthquake that frightened the guards of Jesus' tomb, and the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary and said that don't be afraid, the Jesus you are looking for, who was crucified is not here, He has risen therefore go to tell the disciples, but on the way Mary Magdalene and the other Mary met the Lord Jesus and they hugged the feet of the Lord Jesus and worshiped Him. The eleven disciples also went to Galilee, and they met and talked with the Lord Jesus. The same story is also witnessed through the writings of Mark in his Gospel, Mark 16 verses 1-14, as well as Luke 24 verses 1-6, which tells the testimony of the resurrection of Christ. The Apostle John also tells his testimony in the Gospel of John 20, verses 1- 19, which tells how Jesus appeared to Mary and also appeared to His disciples.

The apostles are described as the primary witnesses of the Resurrection, having seen and interacted with the risen Christ. This eyewitness testimony is crucial, as it forms the basis of Christian proclamation and apostolic mission. Jesus himself appointed the apostles as witnesses, empowering them through the Holy Spirit to testify to the Resurrection and its significance for salvation. The role of the apostles as witnesses underscores the importance of personal experience and testimony in the transmission of the resurrection narrative (Moldovan, 2014). The apostles' testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, as well as confirming the fact of what happened in that event.

The testimony of these eyewitnesses shows that the death of Jesus, as evidenced by His resurrection, is a historical fact that is legally and correctly recorded in the Bible, and according to the law, the testimonies can be accounted for. The resurrection of Christ is essential to Christian doctrine, as it confirms the divinity of Jesus and sustains the hope and faith of believers. Umboh and Siging emphasize that the resurrection is a foundational teaching documented by the apostles and biblical writers, serving as a catalyst for missionary zeal and countering skepticism about its validity (Umboh & Siging, 2021). With the resurrection of Jesus, there is less room for skepticism in people who doubt the event of His resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus has deep meaning for Christians, serving as the cornerstone of their faith. It is not only a historical event but also a present and future reality that shapes Christian doctrine and life. The resurrection affirms Jesus' divine nature, provides hope for eternal life, and inspires mission-driven living among believers. Below, we explore these aspects in detail. A central tenet of Christianity, it is also a subject of debate and interpretation. Some see it as a metaphorical or symbolic event rather than a literal historical occurrence.

Nonetheless, for believers, the resurrection remains a powerful testament to the divinity of Jesus and the promise of eternal life. The resurrection is a unique claim that distinguishes Christianity from other religions, emphasizing the belief that God raised Jesus from the dead (Joseph, 2015). His resurrection is a final certainty that leaves a trail of evidence both from history and from internal witnesses themselves.

### ***Testimonies of Church Fathers and Philosophers on the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus***

#### *Testimony of Thallus*

One historian, in around 55 AD, wrote a three-volume account of the eastern Mediterranean world from the fall of Troy to around 50 AD. Although most of his work has been lost, an excerpt remains in the *History of the World*, written by Julius Africanus around 220 AD. This work of Africanus has also been lost, but an excerpt was included in the *Chronicle*, written around 800 AD by the Byzantine historian Georgius Syncellus. About the crucifixion of Jesus, Thallus states that the crucifixion of Jesus was a real historical event, even though it required a natural explanation for the darkness that pervaded the world at that time (Josh McDowell, 2004, p. 44).

#### *Testimony of Polycarp (69 - 155 AD)*

A disciple of the apostle John who was zealous and faithful to Christ, he died a martyr's death for demonstrating his belief in the accuracy of the Bible. He was the bishop of Smyrna and the teacher of Irenaeus. The one surviving work of Polycarp's writing is a letter to the Philippians, written around 110 A.D. "Therefore, let us unceasingly hold fast to our hope and to the guarantee of our righteousness, Jesus Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the tree, who did not sin, nor did deceit find in his mouth, but for our sake, he endured all things, that we might live in him." (Josh McDowell, 2004).

#### *Didache 95 AD*

The *Didache*, a church manual, was written towards the end of the first century. It quotes from the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer and gives other teachings based on material found in the gospels. The *Didache* shows that the early church, within seventy years of the crucifixion, believed that the Gospel accounts were accurate descriptions of the life of the historical Jesus (Josh McDowell, 2004). What McDowell argues confirms is that the crucifixion of Jesus was, historically speaking, a thing that happened.

#### *Testimony of Ignatius (117 AD)*

A friend of Polycarp stated; But be fully persuaded concerning the birth and the passion and the resurrection, which took place during the reign of Pontius Pilate, the governor, that these things are true and must have happened to Jesus Christ we hope that none of you will depart from this hope.

## ***Non-Christian testimonies of the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus***

### *Testimony of Flavius Josephus*

A Jewish politician, soldier, and historian who lived around 37-100 AD. He is the "single most important" Jewish historian of the ancient world. The *Antiquities of the Jews* was written by Josephus to explain the Jewish people and their beliefs to the Romans in an attempt to reduce anti-Jewish bigotry. Two passages in *Antiquities* are important in the investigation of the historicity of Jesus. In Part One - The Identity of Jesus, *Antiquities* 18.3.3 (63-4), known as *Testimonium Flavianum*, Josephus writes Jesus lived as a wise man if he can be called a man. Because Jesus was a man who performed amazing miracles and a teacher of those who accepted the truth, he won the hearts of many Jews and Greeks. Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus was accused by the highest of the Jews, Pilate condemned him to be crucified and rose on the third day as the prophets of God had foretold and appeared to those who loved him (Josh McDowell, 2004).

### *Testimony of Tacitus*

Cornelius Tacitus was a Roman historian who was born around 52-55 AD and became a senator under Vespasianus, then served as Consul, and in 112-13 became proconsul or Governor of Asia. Tacitus is "generally regarded as the greatest Roman historian," and his *Annals* is "his best work and is generally recognized by modern historians as our best source of information about the period. His history dates from the time of Augustus to Nero. Tacitus explains what happened: "Therefore, to quell the rumors, Nero created scapegoats and subjected to the most refined tortures those whom the common people called "Christians," hated for their heinous crimes. Their name comes from Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate." Tacitus' writings confirm the NT biblical account that the crucifixion of Jesus took place when Tiberius was emperor, and Pilate was his appointed leader in Jud (Josh McDowell, 2004).

### *Rabbinic Traditions, The Jewish Talmud, and the Death of Christ*

The Babylonian Talmud is a commentary on Jewish law composed between 500-600 CE (Neusner/Green, 69). It contains a text about the death of Jesus. Tractate Sanhedrin (43a) contains this passage: Jesus was hanged on Passover night. Forty days earlier, the herald had cried out, "He is being brought out to be stoned because he has practiced witchcraft and led Israel astray and enticed them into apostasy. Whoever has anything to say in his defense, let him come and declare it." As no one came forward in his defense, he was hanged on Easter night (*The Jewish Talmud and the Death of Christ* | *Christian Courier*, 2023).

The relationship between Rabbinic tradition, the Jewish Talmud, and the death of Christ is a complex and multifaceted topic. The Talmud, the central text in Rabbinic Judaism, contains references to Jesus that are often fragmentary and polemical. These references have been interpreted in various ways, reflecting historical tensions between Jewish and Christian communities. The Talmudic portrayal of Jesus and the Rabbinic discourse on capital punishment provides insight into how early Jewish scholars navigated their identity and authority in a predominantly Christian world. The Talmudic discourse on capital punishment is an important aspect of the Rabbinic tradition. Beth A. Berkowitz argues that the Rabbinic law

regarding the death penalty was not just a legal prescription but was used by the early rabbis to assert their authority in the context of Roman rule. This was part of a broader effort to establish a distinct Jewish identity and legal system after the destruction of the Temple (Berkowitz, 2006).

Jewish testimony regarding the crucifixion of Jesus is a complex topic that is interwoven in historical, theological, and cultural perspectives. The crucifixion, an important event in Christian theology, is also important in Jewish discourse, albeit from a different angle. This answer explores Jewish perspectives on the crucifixion of Jesus, focusing on historical involvement, theological implications, and cultural interpretations. In modern Jewish literature, the crucifixion of Jesus has been re-imagined as a symbol of Jewish suffering and identity. Freya Dasgupta highlights how Yiddish intellectuals used images of the crucified Jesus to explore themes of hybridity and cultural identity, reflecting on shared experiences of oppression and suffering (Dasgupta, 2022).

### ***Prohibition of interpreting religions that are not their beliefs according to the law***

In Article 1, paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and its amendments, it is clearly stated that Indonesia is a State of Law. The concept of the Indonesian State as a state of law (resistant), which has been outlined in the state constitution, is the basic state law, which is the highest position in the Indonesian legal order (Oksidelfa Yanto, 2020). As a state of law, all citizens, including the government, must uphold the law above all else so that the system of community life must be truly based on law, in other words, according to researchers, as a state of law, Indonesian citizens should view the law as the commander in chief in the State of Indonesia, so that all citizens without exception including the government must submit to the provisions of the law in force in Indonesia.

In fact, in the constitution/law of Indonesia, it has been expressly regulated that a person is prohibited from interpreting the religion and beliefs of others, but the prohibition is not obeyed by some citizens. The way of interpretation that is not by the teachings of religion and belief is expressly prohibited in the legislation of the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 / PNPS of 1965 concerning Prevention of Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion, namely Article 1 which states: "Every person is prohibited from deliberately in public telling, advocating or seeking public support, to carry out an interpretation of a religion adhered to in Indonesia or to carry out religious activities that resemble religious activities of that religion, which interpretation and activities deviate from the main teachings of that religion (*PENPRES No. 1 of 1965 concerning Prevention of Abuse and / or Blasphemy of Religion*, n.d.).

From the provisions of the legislation above, it is clear that the government has regulated in such a way as to strictly prohibit that do not interpret other people's beliefs, let alone the interpretation is contrary to the actual teachings and which is not believed by the interpreters, because the lawmakers do not want a division in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution if the interpretation causes chaos in the society. The government, as a regulator, and the police prosecutors, as law enforcement agencies, should play an important role in terms of blasphemy because, according to researchers, this is a social vulnerability that can have a very broad impact. After all, religious sensation is a risky thing.

There are still many non-Christian preachers who continue to interpret the Bible and Christian teachings broadcast through social media.

Abraham et al. In his research entitled "Examining the Case of Blasphemy by Rohaniawan from the Perspective of Law and Homiletics," he states that the rampant interpretation of other people's religions without the correct basis, government officials, such as the Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Religion, Attorney General of the Republic of Indonesia. The Minister of Communication and Information Technology can take a firm stance by reprimanding apologists and polemicists who interpret other people's religions in ways that are not by the theology of the religion, to create an atmosphere of harmony in religious life, society in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. But so far, the government has not been maximized so that the increasingly widespread cases of blasphemy in Indonesia (John Abraham; Simon, Simon; Sukrisno, 2024).

Freedom of religion in Indonesia is regulated in Article 28E of the 1945 Constitution: (1) Article 28E (1) Everyone has the right to embrace a religion and worship according to his religion, choose education and teaching, choose a job, choose citizenship, choose a place of residence in the territory of the state and leave it, and has the right to return (2) Everyone has the right to freedom of belief, expression of thoughts and attitudes, by his conscience (History of the Constitution<sup>45</sup> Journey From 1945 to the Present, 2019, p. 79). Indonesia's legal framework includes constitutional provisions for freedom of religion, allowing individuals to choose their faith, worship, and express their religion. However, this freedom is limited by the requirement to believe in one Supreme God, as per Pancasila, and the recognition of only six religions by the state (Lathifah et al., 2022). The role of law in society is to ensure certainty and justice, in the life of society, there is always a difference between patterns of behavior or behavior that apply in society and patterns of behavior desired by legal norms (rules. (Murlinus, 2023).

### ***The Authenticity of Jesus' Crucifixion from the Perspective of Legal Analysis***

Based on the data found in this research, there is accurate evidence of the history of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, which is also proven by his resurrection from the dead on the third day after his death. The testimonies of the disciples and apostles of the Lord Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Peter collected in this research are that they were eyewitnesses or people who saw the events firsthand, and after seeing the events, they wrote them down in their writings which are believed to be true by all Christians and Catholics around the world as factual truth.

In addition to the testimonies of eyewitnesses, the philosophers and early church fathers described above in the discussion clearly state that there is no doubt about the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Apart from that, there are also testimonies from non-Christian figures who explicitly state that there is no doubt about the truth. Likewise, based on archaeological evidence that still exists today about the hill of Golgotha or the hill of the skull and the tomb of Jesus, as well as archaeological evidence that exists today that proves the disciples witnessed directly when Jesus ascended to heaven, can be explained as evidence that history of the Crucifixion, death, and evidence of Jesus' resurrection, and His ascension is valid and undoubted.

Thus, according to the law, Article 185, paragraph (4) of the *Criminal Procedure Code* regarding the testimony of several witnesses who stand alone about an event or situation can be used as valid evidence if the witness testimony is related to one another in such a way that it can justify the existence of a certain event or situation (*KUHAP, Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Acara Pidana. Complete With Explanations*, 1985). Likewise, according to civil procedural law based on HIR article 164 HIR, what is meant is letter evidence, witness evidence, suspicions, confessions, and oath (*RIB / HIR, Renewed Indonesian Regulations, Explanation*, 2019) . In addition, Article 172 HIR states, "In weighing the value of testimony, the judge must devote full attention to the consensus of the witnesses: The compatibility of the testimonies with what is known elsewhere about the matter in dispute; About the causes, which may exist in the witness to explain the case in this way or that; About the customary behavior and position of the witness, and in general everything that can cause the witness to be believed to be true or not. " (*RIB/HIR, Renewed Indonesian Regulations, Explanation*, 2019)

## CONCLUSION

Based on theological findings and historical facts, Christians have strong and accurate evidence of Jesus' crucifixion and death, supported by the direct testimony of disciples, apostles, first-century church fathers, and non-Christian Jewish figures who recognized the truth of the event. In addition, the archaeological evidence still preserved in Israel bears witness to this claim and attracts the attention of Christians from all over the world. This study was conducted as an apologetic response to the accusations of polemicists who interpret the Bible outside the context of the Christian faith, which, while recognized as a right of opinion, needs to be straightened out based on Christian faith and beliefs sourced in the Bible and history. Referring to 1 Peter 3:15, this study emphasizes the importance of giving the responsibility of faith with gentleness and respect as an obligation to explain the Christian doctrine of penance through the crucifixion and death of Jesus, which is the basis of human salvation and restoration of relationship with God. Although Indonesian positive law prohibits interpretations of scripture that harm people of other faiths, polemics related to Christian teachings still occur without adequate law enforcement. Based on theological studies and Indonesian evidentiary law, this study shows that the facts related to Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection can be legally accounted for while refuting unfounded accusations that Jesus did not die, was impersonated, or replaced by another person.

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