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"UnBelievable Resurrection"

Review/This week - Evidence for the resurrection

If we look at *minimal facts* on the resurrection through historical accounts of Jesus, the proof is overwhelmingly *definitive*.

#1 Crucifixion/death

- Many independent sources from both Christian and non-Christian authors substantiate the crucifixion.

Tacitus - 2nd century Roman Historian wrote this (not a Christian)

"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular."

#2 Burial, the empty tomb and the Resurrection

- In a Roman crucifixion, the Romans would leave a crucified body on the cross as a sign of humiliation and a deterrent for crime. Bodies were later disposed of in an open pit.
- The Jewish leaders didn't want people hanging on crosses over passover. They solicited Pilot to have the legs broken of those being crucified so they would die sooner. (Psalm 34:20, John 19:31)
- Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body to be buried in a private tomb. (John 19: 38-42)
- Joseph is in the writings of early church historians Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Eusebius.

Luke 23:50-56 (NIV) Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, 51 who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. 54 It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

- Jesus was placed in a tomb, not a mass grave like common criminals.

Luke 24:1-6 (NIV) On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen!"

Dr. Gary Habermas, Scholar and Theologian

"The Gospels are unanimous in their claims that women were the earliest witnesses to the empty sepulcher. This is a powerful indication of the authenticity of the report, since a woman's testimony was generally disallowed in a law court, especially on crucial matters. To use women as the central witnesses in such a case would be intellectual suicide, unless they really were the first witnesses."

- The gospel listed women as the first to discover the empty tomb because that's what happened.

Matthew 28:12-13 (NIV) When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, 13 telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.'"

- The religious leaders claimed the Apostles stole the body.
- Everybody agreed that the tomb was empty.

#3 Jesus' appearances after His death

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (NIV) For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

- Christian and secular historians agree on the accuracy of the Apostle Paul's writing.
- Paul is a great source of proof - "For what I received, I passed on to you."
- What was preached by the Apostles after the resurrection was the deity, death, burial and resurrection of Christ for all to hear, in Jerusalem before many eye witnesses.

#4 Apostles willing to die for their faith

- If they had lied and fabricated the story would they be willing to die for a lie?
- Many who heard the Apostles' teaching were later martyred for their faith.
- There is little doubt Historians (Christian or not) believed the disciples believed in the resurrection and were eyewitnesses. What will you do with it?

Some have come up with theories that can't hold water.

- Swoon theory
- Hallucination Theory
- Conspiracy Theory

"I know how impossible it is for a group of people, even some of the most powerful in the world, to maintain a lie. The Watergate cover-up lasted only a few weeks before the first conspirator broke and turned state's evidence." Charles Colson

- How should we live in light of the resurrection?

- If you are a skeptic, surrender to Jesus and the overwhelming evidence of His resurrection.
- If you are a believer, live your life in the reality and power of the resurrection.
- Creatively share these evidences with your kids, family and co-workers. (1 Peter 3:15)

Luke 24:25-27 (NIV) He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

- By the resurrection, Jesus validates God's entire Word and expressed will for our lives.

Small Group Discussion Questions:

- How is your faith bolstered by historic evidence?
- What evidences are most meaningful to you? Why?
- How can you share these historic proofs with a skeptic/non-believer in a non-argumentative way?



Sample Small Group Questions
<https://bit.ly/GroupDiscussionQuestions>



The Overtime Podcast
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