



## **CREDO 9**

### **Resurrection: God Saves**

Welcome, especially if you are joining us for the first time. We are working our way through a series that we've titled CREDO. We're going through the entire story line of the Bible, from **creation** to **new creation**. 12 studies in theology.

**THIS MONTH** — 9<sup>th</sup> study in CREDO series — we're dealing with the issue of the resurrection, that Jesus is alive

We will start by saying that apart from the resurrection of Jesus, **there is no Christianity**. The sequence of events **that form** the Christian faith is

The Incarnation (God become man in the person of Jesus)

His sinless life

His death on the Cross

His burial

And resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was a great teacher, but Christianity is not based on his teachings — the teachings of Jesus can't save us. Jesus was a great miracle worker, but Christianity is not based on His miracles — His miracles can't save us. Jesus was the perfect servant. He reached out to the outcasts of society, fed the poor and cared for the marginalized and the weak. But — Christianity is not based upon those things. We don't mean to minimize or trivialize any of those. All of those are incredibly important because they teach us a great deal about Jesus and the heart of God for man.

**BUT** — **Non-Christians** believe that Jesus was a great teacher, that he performed miracles and that he helped people. Many of them ask — What

does it matter? Everything! This is really the heart of what it means to be a Christian.

To be a Christian means that you believe that **Jesus is God who became man – lived a sinless life — died for your sins — and rose from the grave.**

**Resurrection is the doctrine** which states that after dying on a cross as the sacrifice for our sins, Jesus physically rose to life, conquering Satan, Sin, Death and Hell. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this doctrine. Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ Christianity would have to take its place alongside the rest human philosophy and man-made religious speculation. Simply stated — Without the resurrection of Jesus, the *life-giving power* of the Gospel is eliminated, the *deity of Christ* is eliminated, *salvation from sin* is eliminated, and *eternal life* is eliminated. A massive segment of humanity worships Jesus today as God — Without the resurrection of Jesus they are fools and their hope for a resurrection life after this life ends is the hope of silly fools. Paul the apostle said as much in **1 Corinthians 15:14; 17** *And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain...<sup>17</sup>And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup>Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup>If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

If Christ did not live past the grave, then surely we who trust in Him have no hope beyond the grave. Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus salvation could not have been *provided*, and without belief in the resurrection salvation *cannot be received*.

We'll walk through the doctrine of the Resurrection by setting forth a few essential points.

- 1.) The Christian faith is an objective faith.
- 2.) Christ is the OBJECT of our faith.
- 3.) The object of our faith is a "HISTORICAL" person.
- 4.) Our faith in the historical person Jesus Christ is based upon the accounts of eyewitnesses of the events of Christ's life, or recorded first hand accounts. (To get your head and heart around the reliability of those accounts please reference our 2<sup>nd</sup> Credo study — REVELATION: God Speaks)
- 5.) Jesus was a Man of History – But He claimed to be more than a man!

Jesus made direct claims to deity

***John 5:18** This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

He claimed to be the “I AM”

***John 8:56** <sup>58</sup>Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” <sup>59</sup>So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.*

He received worship — when He had Himself said —

***Matthew 4:8-10** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup>And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’ ”*

He claimed to be THE SOURCE OF LIFE!

***John 11:25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”*

***John 14:19** Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.*

So there is no getting around the fact that Jesus claimed to be MORE than a man. The PROOF that He is indeed “God manifest in the flesh” hinges upon His physical death and His bodily resurrection from the dead.

## **QUESTION #1 — WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE RESURRECTION**

***1 Corinthians 15:3-4** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*

When Paul says *I delivered to you*, he means he brought authoritative teaching. He did not *design* it. He only *delivered* what God had authored.

**1.) It was prophesied in advance.** I'll read this to you from **Isaiah Chapter 53**. By the way — Isaiah has been called by many the 5<sup>th</sup> Gospel because 700 years before Jesus He gives to us virtually the entire life of Jesus. His virgin birth, his sinless life, his betrayal, his death, his crucifixion between two thieves, his burial in a rich man's tomb, and his resurrection — all 700 years in advance.

**Isaiah 53:** — beginning in **Verse 6**.

**v. 6** *All we, like sheep* — that's you and me;

*have gone astray* — we've all wandered from God.

*We have turned everyone to his own way* — that is sin. *And the Lord that has laid on him* — that is Jesus — *the iniquity* or the sin *of us all*.

So, Jesus went to the cross and died in our place, for our sins. We looked at that in our last Credo study.

**v. 7** *He was oppressed and he was afflicted* — beaten and falsely accused and flogged and harmed.

*yet he opened not his mouth* — he didn't defend himself.

*like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*

**v. 8** *By oppression and judgment he was taken away.*

Jesus endured several false trials Jesus endured. Virtually every rule of Jewish jurisprudence was broken.

*and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living* — That's dead.

*stricken for the transgression of my people?* — he died in our place for our sins.

**v. 9** *And, they made his grave with the wicked* — Jesus was crucified between 2 thieves.

*And, with the rich in his death* —it was prophesized that Jesus would be buried in a rich man's tomb, though he himself was poor.

*although he had done no violence, And there was no deceit in his mouth* — he was sinless and perfect.

**v. 10** *Yet, it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for sin* — After Jesus died on the cross for our sins

*he shall see his offspring* — Resurrection. He'll come back.

*He shall prolong his days.* He'll still live again, after he dies.

*the will of the Lord* — that is salvation — *shall prosper in his hand.*

**v. 11** *Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied* —After he dies, he'll come back, he'll see the effects of his work and he'll be satisfied. Resurrection.

*And, by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous for he shall bear their iniquities* —pay the penalty for their sin.

AMAZING — Isaiah says 700 years in advance — Jesus is coming. He won't sin. You will kill him. He will be crucified between 2 thieves. You will bury him in a rich man's tomb. Then, he will return to life and be satisfied with the salvation that he provides.

**2.)** Jesus Himself repeatedly speaks of His own death, burial and resurrection.

**Matthew 12:38**

**John 2:18**

In Mark's Gospel we find several instances of this

**Mark 8:31** *And he began to teach them that the Son of Man*— that's a title that he adopted for himself from the Old Testament — *must suffer many*

*things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.* <sup>32</sup>And he said this plainly.

**Mark 9:31** <sup>31</sup>for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, — again, this is a common theme in his instruction — *“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”* <sup>32</sup>But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Jesus keeps talking about this.

**Mark 10:32b-34** *And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him,* <sup>33</sup>saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. <sup>34</sup>And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”

So we have Isaiah foretelling the death and resurrection of Jesus 700 years BEFORE Jesus.

Then we have Jesus telling His followers ahead of time — *“They are going to kill Me — but I’ll see ya again in three days!”* He was absolutely clear that He would not only die, but that He would be in the grave for three and then come back to life!

## **QUESTION #2 — WHAT IS RESURRECTION**

It is not resuscitation. It’s not life after death. It’s not somebody dying and “being in a better place.”

Here’s what Resurrection is.

1. You’re alive — Brain waves, heart beats.
2. Then you die. No more brain waves, no more heart beat — Dead. Not for a few minutes, and then you are resuscitated. You’re dead for awhile.
3. You are fully restored to physical life. Not the same condition of physical life — but a perfected physical life. Though He still bore

the marks of His death by crucifixion, He had a glorified resurrected body. Jesus was able to walk into rooms where the doors were locked.

### **QUESTION #3 — WHAT ARE THE FACTS SURROUNDING THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

#### **1.) The FACT that Jesus died on the cross.**

REMEMEBER who Jesus was scourged before He was crucified. Many men died from that horrific form of interrogation. We discussed it our last CREDO study. Then He was crucified by men whose job was to execute criminals — THAT was their profession! Their job was to kill people. That's all they did! An eyewitness to the crucifixion of Jesus tells us that in order to ensure that Jesus had died, a Roman soldier thrust a spear through his side, under his rib cage, into side — and there came forth from that huge wound an issue of water with blood. Medical science says that such an issue from the pericardial sac means that the heart has been ruptured. The point is — Jesus was most assuredly dead.

#### **2.) The FACTS surrounding His Burial**

**QUOTE: Wilbur Smith** — *“We know more about the burial of the Lord Jesus than we know of the burial of any single character in all of ancient history. We know infinitely more about his burial than we do the burial of any Old Testament character, of any king of Babylon, Pharaoh of Egypt, any philosopher of Greece, or triumphant Caesar. We know who took His body from the cross; we know something of the wrapping of the body in spices, and burial clothes; we know the very tomb in which this body was placed, the name of the man who owned it. . . . We know even where this tomb was located. We have four records of this burial of our Lord, all of them in amazing agreement, the record of Matthew, a disciple of Christ who was there when Jesus was crucified; the record of Mark, which some say was written within ten years of our Lord’s ascension; the record of Luke, a companion of the apostle Paul, and a great historian; and the record of John, who was the last to leave the cross, and with Peter, the first of the Twelve on Easter to behold the empty tomb.”*

#### **WHAT WE KNOW about the Tomb**

**Matthew 27:57-61** *When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus.<sup>58</sup> He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.<sup>59</sup> And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud<sup>60</sup> and laid it in his own new tomb....<sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.*

**Mark 15:46** *..... a tomb that had been cut out of the rock.*

**Luke 23:53** *Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid.*

**John 19:41** *Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.<sup>42</sup>..... they laid Jesus there.*

Joseph of Arimathea was a very well known political and religious leader. He knew exactly where his tomb was. The 2 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus knew where his tomb was.

## **WHAT WE KNOW about the burial of Jesus**

Jesus was then prepared for burial by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea

---

**John 19:40** *So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.*

**QUOTE: Merrill Tenney** (1904-1985) was an American professor of Old Testament and Greek. He was the general editor of the Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, and served on the original translation team for the New American Standard Bible — explains the graveclothes as follows:

*“In preparing a body for burial according to Jewish custom, it was usually washed and straightened, and then bandaged tightly from the armpits to the ankles in strips of linen about a foot wide. Aromatic spices, often of a gummy consistency, were placed between the wrappings or folds. They served partially as a preservative and partially as a cement to glue the cloth wrappings in to a solid covering...”*

That's upwards of 100 pounds of linens and spices. He's then laid without any medical attention in a cold tomb out of rock.

### **WHAT WE KNOW about the Stone**

**Dr. Frank Morison** (Harvard Law Professor) calls the stone at Jesus' tomb "*the one silent and infallible witness in the whole episode - and there are certain facts about this stone which call for very careful study and investigation. Let us begin by considering first its size and probable character... no doubt... the stone was large and consequently very heavy. This fact is asserted or implied by all the writers who refer to it.*

*Matthew 27:60* And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

*Mark 16:4* And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.

Structural Engineers from Cal tech calculated that in order to cover the entrance of the garden tomb, the stone would have had to weigh 1.5 - 2 tons (3,000-4,000 pounds)

### **3.) The FACT that steps were taken to PREVENT a resurrection.**

*Matthew 27:64-66* <sup>64</sup>Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." <sup>65</sup>Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." <sup>66</sup>So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

### **WHAT WE KNOW about the Seal**

A.T. Robertson says that the method of sealing the stone at Jesus' tomb was probably by a cord stretched across the stone and sealed at each end as in the case of Daniel in Babylon.

*Dan 6:17* And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

To break the seal of Rome was an offense punishable by death as it was considered an offense against Caesar.

### **WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT the guard**

These men were particularly motivated to carry out their duty. The penalty for falling asleep on guard duty was death. The ENTIRE unit would be punished.

#### **4.) The FACT of the eleven cowards.**

We know that *all the disciples left him and fled. Matthew 26:56*

We are told in **Matthew 26:69-75** that Peter denied Jesus THREE TIMES out of abject fear for his own personal safety. The third time he denied Jesus with a curse — he essentially said “*may God curse me if I know this Jesus.*”

#### **5.) The FACT of the empty tomb.**

To suggest that the tomb of Jesus was not in fact empty is utterly ridiculous!

### **The Tomb didn't become a shrine**

The FACT that the tomb of Jesus was empty is seen in the fact that it didn't become a shrine! Even in our culture when someone famous dies the grave site becomes a memorial. When a loved one is buried we leave flowers at the grave. After a few days, no one visited Jesus' tomb. There were no flowers. There were no cards. There were no memorials. There were no candles. Why? Because you could go have lunch with him. The tomb was not enshrined because the body was not there.

### **Christianity could never have survived its infancy if the tomb of Jesus was not empty**

It's a matter of history that Christianity was BIRTHED — people first came to faith on Christ - IN JERUSALEM — the very city that cried “*Crucify Him.*” Christianity began in **that** city a result of the apostles proclaiming the message that Jesus — who had notably been crucified by

Pontius Pilate — had risen from the grave. They did this within a short walk from His tomb. The enemies of Christ could have said — “Right! Follow me.” And then walked to the tomb and pointed at the rotting remains of the crucified Jesus. It is INCONCEIVABLE that the Christianity would have survived if the Body of the One they proclaimed to be risen was all the while rotting in the tomb.

**Even the enemies of Jesus acknowledged that the tomb of Jesus was empty.**

*Matt 28:11-15 While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. <sup>12</sup> And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers <sup>13</sup> and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.*

The FACT that the tomb was empty is a given.  
This leads us to our fourth question

#### **QUESTION #4 — IN LIGHT OF THE FACTS — WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE EMPTY TOMB**

##### **1.) The Swoon Theory**

A CLASSIC example of the lengths that people will go to deny the facts is *The Swoon Theory*. It goes something like this. Jesus did not actually die on the cross! To take that position you have to discount the EYEWITNESS account of John.

*John 19:34-35 NLT One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water flowed out. <sup>35</sup> This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account; it is presented so that you also can believe.*

Here’s what you HAVE to believe in order to explain the empty tomb by way of The Swoon Theory.

After suffering Hematadrosis, being beaten beyond recognition, enduring the Roman Scourge, His beard plucked out, crowned with thorns, nailed to a cross and a spear thrust through his side, Jesus did NOT actually die. Instead, He just passed out! Being medically ignorant, they wrapped the yet-alive Jesus in 100 pounds of burial spices and linen; placed Him in a cold tomb; and rolled a 2 ton stone in front of it and left him to rot.

BUT — Those 3 days in the cool air of the tomb were therapeutic! Jesus was resuscitated! Wrapped in the 100 pounds of burial materials He hopped over to the stone — rolled the 2 ton stone away from the opening — beat up the Roman guard unit — and proclaimed Himself as the Risen Lord!

## 2.) The Disciples Stole the Body

The Gospel accounts have already informed us about the cowardice of these followers of Jesus Christ. It is hard to picture them fearlessly sneaking up on a Roman guard (the fiercest fighting men in the world - who wouldn't think falling asleep) who fell asleep.... Tip toed over them — broke the Seal on the tomb at the risk of the death penalty carried the decaying body of Jesus away and announced to the world that Jesus was living.

**By the way** — There are also holes in the story from the side of the enemies of Christ.

*Mat 28:12-15 NLT A meeting of all the religious leaders was called, and they decided to bribe the soldiers. <sup>13</sup> They told the soldiers, "You must say, 'Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.' <sup>14</sup> If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you and everything will be all right." <sup>15</sup> So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.*

The STORY that the Roman guards were told to tell does NOT make sense.

FIRST — How can **sleeping** guards be able to identify the necronappers?

SECOND — Could 11 COWARDS have tip-toed over sleeping guards and without making a sound roll away a 2 ton stone?

HERE IS THE BIG ONE — Let's assume that the apostles did steal the body — and then LIED about Jesus having conquered death.

Would you die for a lie? All but one did!

### 3.) The Jews Stole the Body

To this next possibility we must ask the question — WHY would THEY do that?

Even if they were dumb enough to do it, they could have produced the body at any time to disprove the claims that Peter made when he preached the first sermon of the Church on the day of Pentecost —

*Acts 2:23-24* this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.  
<sup>24</sup>God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

### 4.) Everyone Hallucinated

Before we can conclude that the story of the resurrection was born out of a hallucination we must ask the question - *What is an hallucination?*

**QUOTE: Wilbur Smith** *“An apparent act of vision takes place for which there is no corresponding external object. The optic nerve has NOT been stimulated by any outward waves of light.... At the same time one fully believes that the object of his vision is actually before him.”*

Hallucinations are noted for VARIABILITY and INCONSISTENCY. They are INDIVIDUALISTIC and extremely SUBJECTIVE. It is highly unlikely that any two persons would have the same hallucination.

Hallucinations also involve expectancy! However, The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus were NOT accompanied by the EXPECTATION of seeing Jesus alive.

**EXAMPLE #1** - The disciples on the road to Emmaus — *“We had hoped....”*

**EXAMPLE #2** - Mary came to the tomb on the morning of the first day of the week with spices in her hand. WHY? To anoint the DEAD body of Jesus.

**EXAMPLE #3** - When the disciples first saw Jesus they were FRIGHTENED.

**QUOTE: John Stott** — *The disciples were NOT gullible, but rather CAUTIOUS and SKEPTICAL and SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE. They were NOT susceptible to hallucinations.*

**QUOTE: R.J. Thornburn** — *Hallucinations have NEVER stimulated people to undertake a work of enormous magnitude and while carrying it out, to lead to lives of the most rigid and consistent self-denial and even suffering. We are constrained to agree with Dr. Sanday, who says, 'No apparition, no mere hallucination of the senses, ever yet moved the world'*

## 5.) Everyone Went To The Wrong Tomb

To buy into this as a possibility would mean that you must concede that even Joseph could NOT find his own tomb; and that the two Mary's that watched them place Jesus in the tomb forgot where it was.

That brings us to the LAST and ONLY possibility in light of the evidence!

## 6.) JESUS IS RISEN!

If Jesus is NOT risen, then we have to answer some hard questions.

**Why did the family of Jesus — all of whom were devout Jews — worship Jesus as God**

Jesus had two brothers — James and Jude. We just saw James mentioned in 1 Corinthians, 15. Think of this — I have two brothers as Jesus did — and neither of them has ever worshipped me as God — and I don't think they ever will. Neither of them would ever dream saying — *Hey our brother Richard died and rose and we worship him as Yahweh.* They would never say that because I constantly worked them over. They know, I'm not the sinless Lord, God, Savior and Christ.

What would it take for your siblings to worship you as God — particularly if they are devout — monotheistic Jews. For a devout Jew to take that step is radical because they know that if they were wrong, they would spend forever in hell. It would take something as amazing as the resurrection to win their hearts and faith.

During His own life, the brothers of Jesus didn't worship him as God — they thought that he had lost his mind. They were going to bring him home (**Mark 3:31**).

How many of you would ever be able to get your mom to worship you as God and savior? I mean — if anyone knows that you're a sinner, your mother knows.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, worshipped her son as God. She knew that she would be breaking one of the 10 Commandments, damning her soul to eternity if Jesus was not the God of Israel become man. But she worshipped her own son as God, because of the resurrection.

### **How did the arch-nemesis of Christ, Christians and the Christian faith come to worship Jesus?**

**1 Corinthians 15** — the great theological passage of Scripture on the subject of the resurrection was written by a man named Paul. Paul was the **last man** you would think would ever worship Jesus as God! Relative to the first Christians — he was like Hitler. He wanted to exterminate ALL followers of Jesus. He's totally opposed to Jesus — Christians — and the Christian faith. In the Book of Acts we are told that he "wreaked havoc" upon the first believers. The original language was used of wild beasts tearing their prey to pieces. Paul described himself before meeting the risen Jesus in these terms

*1 Timothy 1:13* though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.

*Acts 26:9-11* "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>10</sup> And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them.<sup>11</sup> And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them

*blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.*

He was overseeing the murder of the Stephen — the first martyr in the history of Christianity

He is absolutely not predisposed in any way to believe Jesus is God. Then (**Acts 9**) he meets the risen Jesus. He becomes a worshipper of Jesus, a pastor, and author of the major part of the New Testament. In the end he is beheaded for his faith in Jesus as the risen Lord.

**How do you explain countless millions of men and women who have worshipped Jesus over the past 2,000 years? How do you explain their transformed lives? How do you explain that 6 million of them would die for their faith in the first 300 years of Christianity alone?**

Critics have denounced the resurrection as a hoax and fabrication, but they have never explained how such a hoax could produce men and women who gave up everything, including their freedom and even their lives to love and to follow a dead Lord!

**QUOTE: H. D. A. Major** — former principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford — *Had the crucifixion of Jesus ended his disciples' experience of Him, it is hard to see how the Christian Church could have come into existence. That Church was founded on faith in the Messiahship of Jesus. A crucified Messiah was no Messiah at all. He was one rejected by Judaism and accursed of God. It was the Resurrection of Jesus, as St. Paul declares in Rom. 1:4, which proclaimed Him to be the Son of God with power (The Mission and Message of Jesus [New York: Dutton, 1946], p.213).*

**QUOTE: Kenneth Scott Latourette (Church historian)** in *History of the Expansion of Christianity* — *It was the conviction of the resurrection of Jesus which lifted his followers out of the despair into which his death had cast them and which led to the perpetuation of the movement begun by him. But for their profound belief that the crucified Lord had risen from the dead and they had seen him and talked with him, the death of Jesus and even Jesus himself would probably have been all but forgotten (vol. 1 [New York: Harper & Row 1970], p.59).*

By contrast, a follower of Buddha writes of that religious leader —

*“When Buddha died it was with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains.”* Mohammed died at Medina on June 8, 632, at the age of 61, and his tomb there is visited yearly by tens of thousands of Muslims. But they come to mourn his death, not to celebrate his resurrection. Christians celebrate the victory of Jesus Christ over the grave, not just on Easter Sunday; but at every water baptism.

If Jesus didn't rise from the grave — then how do you explain all of this? What other possible answer could there be?

**QUOTE: Thomas Arnold - Professor of Modern History at Oxford.**

*The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be and often has been shown to be satisfactory. It is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone through it piece by piece as carefully as every judge summing up on an important case. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is better proved by fuller evidence than the great sign that God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.*

**We absolutely believe this at Metro Calvary.**

The fact of the Resurrection of Jesus is the basis of our hope. That is why our preaching is not in vain. That is why our faith is not in vain. That is why you can know that your sins are forgiven. That is why you can have hope.

This is not something that you can remain neutral on. This is something that we hold in the closed hand — non negotiable — won't ever give it up.

**You must decide** — Do I believe Jesus is alive? Or, do I believe that Jesus is dead? This is the distinguishing feature of what it means to be Christian

**FINAL QUESTION — WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION?**

**FIRST and MOST IMPORTANTLY** — The resurrection of Jesus from the grave **GUARANTEES** that His death on the cross actually satisfied the justice of God and can save me from the **POWER** and **PENALTY** of my sin!

*Romans 4:24b-25 Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup>who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

*1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*

**SECOND** — Only Jesus has gone to death and come back to tell us what awaits us on the other side of death.

No other major world religion has as its founder or leader anyone who is resurrected from death. There is no religion that could tell you what happens to after you die, but Christianity. Jesus alone has died and come back to tell us what awaits us on the other side of death.

There is a real heaven and a real hell. Jesus speaks of hell more than anyone in the bible.

Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose from the grave will live forever in God's eternal kingdom in a glorified body that will never die, wear out or get sick.

Non-Christians will have likewise live forever — only for them it will be an eternity of just punishment for the sins they committed — Eternal conscious physical torments of hell with a body that will never die. I'm not supposed to tell you this because it's not popular. But, it's true. This is what Jesus says. You may say – but other religions disagree. Those who disagree are with the dead founders and proponents of those religions who are being tormented right now.

Be very careful who your God is. Be very careful what your religion is. Be very careful what your eternity is. **DO NOT** be short sighted in your thinking. **LISTEN** — Forever is a long time. You will spend it with Jesus in blessing, or apart from Jesus in torment. You **will** live forever as a friend of Jesus or a foe of Jesus.

I want you to contend with this — Do you belong to Jesus or not? Have you given him your sin, or not? Will you rise to be with him or not? Have you trusted in him, or not?

**THIRD** — The Resurrection of Jesus radically transforms the way I perceive death. Paul says in [1 Corinthians 15](#), that apart from Jesus, death is an enemy. I'm not afraid to die. I've got a beautiful wife, 4 kids, I love this church, and I love what God has me doing. But I don't worry about dying. I have asked God, let me out live my wife so I can look after her all the days of her life and so I can preach her funeral. But, if I should die first — I know exactly what's going to happen. I'll stand before Jesus. I know that he died for my sins and I belong to him. And, I know that I will spend forever with Him in perfection. And, I know that I'll see my wife. My kids love Jesus. I know I'll see my kids.

Death is not the big deal that it once was because of Jesus. The Resurrection of Jesus means that you can actually live your life with freedom and joy and passion — knowing that because of the Resurrection Jesus death is the entrance to life in the presence of God where there will be no sickness, no pain, no disease, no cancer, no injustice, no evil, no tyranny, no war. Jesus ruling and reigning over a new creation with no curse, with none of the effects of sin, a perfect creation. Not polluted or contaminated in any way. People living together in harmony and love, across racial lines, across generational lines, across socio-economic lines, across gender lines, across political lines, across national lines, across linguistic lines, across cultural lines. The Resurrection of Jesus guarantees that the world that everyone wants is ahead of us — and it's with Jesus.

But, if all of your hope is here, you will be disappointed. The world will still have the effects of sin and the curse. And, you will be angry, bitter, disappointed and frustrated — and **THEN YO DIE** — with **NO HOPE!** Unless you know Jesus. Then, you will die in hope. You will die in faith. You will die to a resurrection life. You will experience the world as God intended it forever, with Him and His people.

Our hope is that you would trust in Jesus and that we would see you there. Our hope is that you would trust in Jesus and that beginning today, you would start to live as a citizen of that place.

## **EXTRA STUDY MATERIALS**

## NON BIBLICAL EVIDENCE of the resurrection of Jesus

*“Testimonium Flavianum”* says: □ *Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.* (Flavius Josephus, “Jewish Antiquities” in [The New Complete Works of Josephus](#), trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1999), 18.63–64) □

Suetonius (AD 70–160) □ □ *Suetonius was a Roman historian and annalist of the Imperial House. In his biography of Nero (Nero ruled AD 54–68), Suetonius mentions the persecution of Christians by indirectly referring to the resurrection: “Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition [the resurrection].”* (Suetonius *Vita Nero* 16.11–13)

Pliny the Younger (AD 61 or 62–113) □ □ *Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to the emperor Trajan around 111 describing early Christian worship gatherings that met early on Sunday mornings in memory of Jesus’ resurrection day: □ I have never been present at an examination of Christians. Consequently, I do not know the nature of the extent of the punishments usually meted out to them, nor the grounds for starting an investigation and how far it should be pressed. . . . They also declared that the sum total of their guilt or error amounted to no more than this: they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day [Sunday in remembrance of Jesus’ resurrection] to chant verses alternately amongst themselves in honor of Christ as if to a god. . . .* (Pliny the Younger *Letters* 10.96.1–7) □

The Jewish explanation *The earliest attempt to provide an alternative explanation for the resurrection of Jesus did not deny that the tomb was empty. (Matt. 28:13–15) Instead, Jewish opponents claimed that the body had been stolen, thus admitting the fact of the empty tomb. But this explanation is untenable for the following reasons. One, the tomb was closed with an enormous rock and sealed by the government, and there is no explanation for how the rock was moved while being guarded by armed Roman soldiers. Two, if the body were stolen, a large ransom could have been offered to the thieves and they could have been coerced to produce the body. Or, if it had been taken by the disciples, then the*

*torture and death they suffered should have been sufficient to return the body. Third, even if the body was stolen, how are we to account for the fact that Jesus appeared to multiple crowds of people, proving that he was alive? In conclusion, the theft of the body is unlikely and still fails to account for it returning back to life.*

### **For further study on the resurrection:**

A brief but good article from Dr. Normal Geisler can be found at:

[http://www.equip.org/site/c.mu11LaMNJrE/b.2548567/k.FFA4/I\\_Believe\\_In\\_The\\_Resurrection\\_of\\_the\\_Flesh.htm](http://www.equip.org/site/c.mu11LaMNJrE/b.2548567/k.FFA4/I_Believe_In_The_Resurrection_of_the_Flesh.htm)

A very helpful and lengthy article from N.T. Wright can be found at:

[http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright\\_Jesus\\_Resurrection.htm](http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Jesus_Resurrection.htm)

A thorough book by a solid evangelical apologist is *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* by Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona

And, ambitious book readers will enjoy, N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* by N.T. Wright

### **QUESTION: Didn't Christians "steal" the idea of resurrection from other pagan religions?**

#### **QUOTE: N.T. Wright** — From "The Resurrection of the Son of God."

*In so far as the ancient, non-Jewish world had a bible, it's Old Testament was Homer. And, in so far as, Homer had anything to say about resurrection, he is quite blunt. It doesn't happen. The idea of resurrection is denied in ancient Paganism from Homer all the way to the Athenian dramatist Aeschylus, who wrote "once a man has died and the dust has soaked up his blood, there is no resurrection".*

According to Wright, neither in Plato, nor Aristotle, do we find any suggestion that resurrection, the return to bodily life of the dead person was either desirable or possible.

In Greek thought, man was comprised of the physical and the spiritual. The spiritual is good; the physical is bad. The whole goal is to leave the physical and go into the spiritual. The last thing they longed for or was a

resurrected, physical body. They considered that (wrongly considered ) to be the problem; not the solution.

Wright goes on to say –

*Christianity was born into a world where its central claim was known to be false. Many believe that the dead were non-existent. Outside of Judaism, nobody believed resurrection.*

Wright concludes

*Nobody in the Pagan world of Jesus day and thereafter actually claimed that somebody had been truly dead and then come to be truly and bodily alive once more. In summary, death in ancient Paganism is a one way street.*

SO — This concept that we stole the idea is erroneous on two fronts.

- 1.) Christianity had a unique claim to the resurrection of Jesus that Paganism never held.
- 2.) Secondly, we did not take the idea from Paganism, but even if we did, that still doesn't deal with the evidence regarding the resurrection of Jesus. Did he die? Did he rise? It still doesn't address the main issue of the resurrection of Jesus.