

# He Has Risen Part I

## Scripture Reading:

**1 Corinthians 15:3–8, 14-15, 17-19 (NASB95)** — **3** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **5** and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. **6** After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; **7** then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; **8** and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. . . **14** and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. **15** Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. . . **17** and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

## Paul Lays Out What Is at Stake

1. Paul says that what is of first importance is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (vs.3-4)
2. Paul says that there were eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ which include the disciples, more than 500 brethren at one time, His brother James and last but not least Paul himself. (vs. 5-9)
3. Paul says that if Christ is not raised then our preaching is vain, our faith is vain and we are false witnesses of God.
4. Paul says that if Christ is not raised, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins and we have no hope of eternal life. (vs.17-19)

## Some of the Issues to Be Explored in this Seminar

1. Was there a historical person named Jesus?
2. What do we know about Jesus objectively?
3. What did His followers believe about Him in terms of His divinity?
4. Is the Bible a reliable document for learning about Jesus?
5. Are there objective reasons for believing that Jesus rose from the dead?

## Resources Used in Preparing this Seminar

*The Case for the Real Jesus* by Lee Strobel

*The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel

*Reinventing Jesus (How Contemporary Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture)* by J. Ed Komoszewski, M. James Sawyer and Daniel B. Wallace

*The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

## Historical Certainty or Historical Probability?

We are not looking for historical certainty but rather historical probability meaning that we are looking for the best explanation of the facts that we have determined to be credible. In other words, using historical criterion what is the best fit for the facts at hand.

But first we must distinguish between methodological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism.

Methodological naturalism versus metaphysical naturalism . . .

It is one thing to utilize methodological naturalism, where we only consider facts that can be established without reference to the supernatural. It is another thing to say that the supernatural cannot or does not exist and is excluded from our consideration at the outset. Many of those who deny the resurrection start with metaphysical naturalism.

In other words what is the criteria for evaluating history as to whether or not something took place or is just fable or legend?

Once we agree on the facts, then the question is one of what is the best explanation of the facts .

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But first things first, how do we determine which facts are credible . . .

## The Three R's of Good History

Relevant Sources

Responsible Method

Restrained Results

### *Relevant Sources*

If we are going to examine the resurrection of Jesus we should compile all of the relevant sources such as the *New Testament writings*; a few secular sources who mention Jesus such as *Josephus, Tacitus, and Pliny the Younger; the apologists*, who were early defenders of Christianity; and even the *Gnostic writings*. We also want to examine *the apostolic fathers* who were the next generation after the apostles.

### *Responsible Methodology*

The next step would be responsible method which means to assign the greatest weight to reports that are *early, eyewitness, enemy attestations, the principle of embarrassment, and corroborated by others*.

The next step would be responsible method which means to assign the greatest weight to reports that are *early, eyewitness, enemy attestations, embarrassing evidence, and corroborated by others*.

### *Restrained Results*

The last step would be restrained results which means *that historians should not claim more than the evidence warrants*. Another way of looking at restrained results, is to *look at the minimal facts* that are attested to by *most scholars*, even *those who are antagonistic* to your position.

## Minimal Facts for Jesus' Resurrection

*Fact #1: Jesus was killed by crucifixion . . .*

Not only do the four gospels claim that Jesus was killed by crucifixion, but there are a number of non-Christian sources that corroborate the crucifixion. The historian *Tacitus* said “*Jesus suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius.*”

The Jewish historian *Josephus* reports that *Pilate condemned Jesus to be crucified*. Even the *Jewish Talmud* reports that “*Yeshua*” was hanged.

*Fact #2: Jesus' disciples believed that He rose and appeared to them . . .*

While one may argue whether or not the disciples actually saw the resurrected Christ, the evidence from history is overwhelming; *that is what they believed. Many of them were martyred for what they believed.*

*Fact #3: The conversion of the church persecutor Paul . . .*

Paul's conversion is noteworthy because it is not based on secondary sources. We have Paul's own testimony. Paul claims to have seen the resurrected Christ and was later martyred for his faith. Again, most martyrs will not die for what they know to be false.

*Fact #4: The conversion of the skeptic James, Jesus' half-brother . . .*

**Mark 3:21 (NASB95) — 21** *When His own people heard of this*, they went out to take custody of Him; for *they were saying, “He has lost His senses.”*

**John 7:5 (NASB95) — 5** For *not even His brothers were believing in Him.*

Here we have the principle of embarrassment. “People will not invent a story that ‘s going to be embarrassing.” And Jesus' family not believing in Him would definitely be embarrassing. At the crucifixion, Jesus entrusts his mother to John and not to any of his brothers because they at that time did not believe in Him. What would convince you that your half-brother was God?

**Acts 1:14 (NASB95) — 14** These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and *with His brothers.*

**Galatians 1:18–19 (NASB95) — 18** Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with *Cephas*, **19** But I did not *see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.*

**James 1:1 (NASB95) — 1** *James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .*

*Fact #5: Jesus' tomb was empty . . .*

There are three strands of evidence: the Jerusalem factor, enemy attestation and the testimony of women . . .

The Jerusalem factor has to do with the fact that the disciples were proclaiming that Jesus got up and if there was anyone who could have produced the body of Jesus they would have and that would have killed the movement.

Enemy attestation comes from the report that the soldiers were told to tell the lie that the disciples stole the body of Jesus. (See Matthew 28:11-15)

If you were starting a movement the last people you would use as witnesses would be women in that society. They were not considered to be credible witnesses. (See Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:1-2 and 11-18)

**1 Corinthians 15:17 (NASB95) — 17 and *if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.***