

Easter 2024 | **The Resurrection** | 03.31.24

Teaching Text: 1 Corinthians 15:12-26 LEB

12 Now if Christ is preached as raised up from the dead, how do some among you say that *there* is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if *there* is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised *either*. **14** But if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching *is* in vain, and your faith *is* in vain. **15** And also we are found to *be* false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if after all, then, the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised *either*. **17** But if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is* empty; you are still in your sins. **18** And as a further result, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If *we have put our hope* in Christ in this life only, we are of all people most pitiable.

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since through a man *came* death, also through a man *came* the resurrection of the dead. **22** For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. **23** But each in his own group: Christ the first fruits, then those *who are* Christ's at his coming, **24** then the end, when he hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when he has abolished all rule and all authority and power. **25** For it is necessary for him to reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be abolished *is* death.

Conversation Questions:

1. When you think of Easter, Jesus, and The Cross - what comes to mind?
2. What arguments for and against Jesus's death and resurrection have you heard before? Which ones are interesting to you?
3. What do you think of Pastor Chase's claim that without the resurrection of Jesus, Christianity falls apart?
4. How could the resurrection matter today?
5. How has Jesus changed your life?
6. How could the Good News of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection change the lives of your friends and family who don't know Him?

Additional Resources:

Reasons for Trusting in Jesus, His Death, and His Resurrection:

There are at least ten first century historians and writers that mention Jesus of Nazareth by name, some of them Jewish, some Roman, most not friends of the Christian faith at all - indeed almost all of them were anti-Christian. Here's some examples:

1. **Tacitus**, a famous Roman historian and politician:
 - a. "Nero fastened the guilt...on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate." Tacitus, Annals 15.44
2. From the **Babylonian Talmud**:
 - a. "On the eve of Passover Yeshu (Jesus) was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald...cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy." - The Babylonian Talmud, vol. 3, Sanhedrin 43a, 281. This one is especially interesting - it's saying that Jesus did miracles and told Israel to believe in him as God.
3. From **Josephus**, a famous historian from the first century as well:
 - a. "About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he...wrought surprising feats,,,He was the Christ. When Pilate...condemned him to be crucified, those who had come to love him did not give up their affections for him. On the third day he appeared...restored to life...and the tribe of Christian...has not disappeared." - Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 18.63-64.

And there's more where that came from!

If we only had these three historical documents we would know this about the historical person who lived in the first century known as Jesus:

- Jesus was a Jewish teacher who lived in the first century
- people believed he performed exorcisms and miracles
- he and his followers believed he was the Messiah/Christ,
- he was tried and crucified under Pontius Pilate as a criminal during the reign of Tiberius
- and despite his death, his followers believed he had come back from the dead, and they worshiped him as the God of Israel.

It is quite clear that, even without the Bible, Jesus was a real person who died on the cross under Roman Regime in the first century. There's no way around that. In fact, when you put Jesus up against other religious figures in history, we have better historical documentation for Jesus's existence than any other by a longshot.

The question is not whether Jesus existed, whether he led a renewal movement in 1st century Israel, whether he was crucified, or even if his followers believed that he was alive again and that he was God. **The question is why did they believe it, and why did they believe in it enough to die for it?**

Another Reason for Trusting the New Testament Accounts:

Following Jesus's death, a wealthy, well known man named Joseph of Arimathea gifted his tomb to Jesus to be buried there. In that day, tombs were not little plots of land you could buy that most people didn't know about. They were huge and often handed down in families through generations, and in these small communities they were a big deal and everyone knew about them. So this wasn't some small out of the way place. For a wealthy man to give his tomb to Jesus, a rebel killed for blasphemy and treason would've been a huge deal. Therefore, when

people started claiming the tomb was empty, how easy would it have been for people to go check Joseph's tomb? Everyone would've been able to call them on their lie - but they couldn't because the tomb was empty.

To preach that Jesus had come back in the same city that he was killed and buried in would've been a shock and people would've easily been able to check on the tomb. One historian said, "This myth could not have been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for even a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all." It wouldn't have held up. What's interesting is that at this time there were over 50 shrines of the bodies and tombs of holy men in Jerusalem that you could go visit. But Jesus's tomb was never made into a shrine because you couldn't see his body - it wasn't there! His body was never recovered or found. And of course the disciples claimed it was because he was alive!

Books:

- *The Problem of God and The Problem of Jesus* by Mark Clark
- *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller
- *The Case for Easter and The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel
- *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis
- *Simply Jesus, The Day the Revolution Began, Simply Good News, and How God Became King* by N.T. Wright

YouTube Channels, Podcasts + Content:

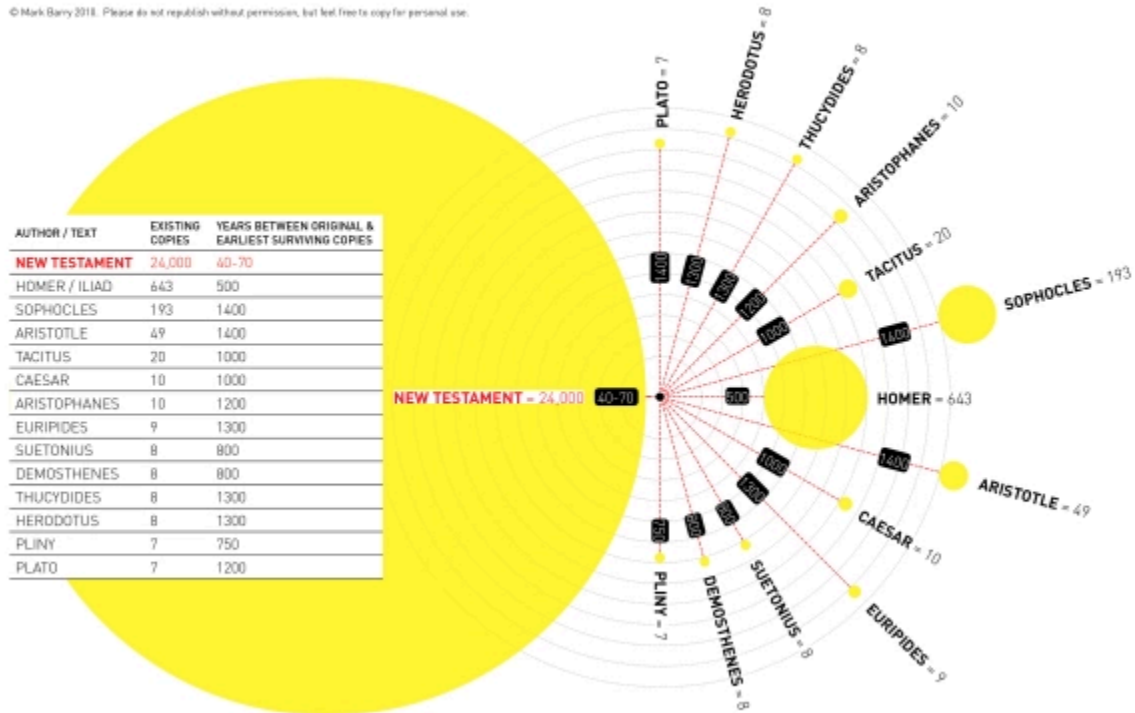
- Justin Brierly's books, content, social media platforms, and the podcast "Unbelievable"
- "Inspiring Philosophy" YouTube Channel
- "Ask N.T. Wright Anything" Podcast and YouTube Channel, and N.T. Wright's other interviews and talks on Jesus, his death, and resurrection.
- William Lane Craig books, interviews, and his organization Reasonable Faith
- Sean McDowell's books, podcasts, social media platforms, and YouTube Channel

Each of these offer a myriad of conversations around faith and the trustworthiness of Christianity that are extremely helpful, informative, and well-researched, but have especially great content on Jesus, if he was real, his death and resurrection, and more!

Graphs:

THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPARED TO OTHER ANCIENT TEXTS

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There are thousands more New Testament Greek manuscripts than any other ancient writing.

The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is about 99.5% textually pure.

In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages. The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 24,000.

To say that the New Testament has been changed and no one really knows what it really said at the beginning is simply an infeasible and indefensible position to hold.