

## God in the Dock

Week 2 - Michael Curl

Witness

**Icebreaker:** What is the heaviest thing you've ever tried to pick up or move by yourself?

### Topics for Discussion:

- There are 4 key areas where people like to question Jesus's divinity (and the very existence of God). The first two are whether Jesus even **EXISTED** at all (which would put the kibosh on the importance of prophecy) and if he was **EXECUTED**. Yet overwhelmingly, scholars from many walks of life (atheist, Islamic, Christian, etc.) agree that Jesus was a real historical figure who lived and was executed around 30AD. This is so certain, that many universities will not bestow professorship upon a historian if he or she expresses a belief that Jesus's existence is up for debate. Yet, this question comes up often amongst those who are less informed.
  - Has anyone ever questioned Jesus's existence or asserted him as a myth to you? What was your response, or did you have one? If asked now, how would you approach the answer?
- Another area where Jesus's divinity comes under fire is the **EMPTY TOMB**. Arguments in this realm rarely deal with whether the tomb was empty or not, but instead on how it became empty. All of them have a fatal flaw: the Roman soldier. The Roman soldier at this time period would have been a fatal flaw in anyone's plans to steal the body of Jesus. They did not answer to the Jewish leaders, and some 19-23 year old fishermen (Jesus's disciples) would not have had the ability to overpower this elite fighting unit (without killing any of them), and roll the stone away which likely weighed a ton. The Roman soldiers, who surely hated Jesus as much as the Jewish leaders did, had a death sentence hanging over their heads if they failed to protect Jesus's body or slacked off in their duty.
  - Read John 20:1-10
  - What is your favorite part of the "Empty Tomb" account recorded in this passage?
- And finally, the **EYE WITNESS** accounts of a resurrected Jesus Christ. According to Paul, whose existence is in even less debate than Jesus himself, there were over 500 people who saw Jesus--alive--after his very public execution. These witnesses, during Paul's lifetime, were still alive and formed an important part of Paul's testimony to a resurrected Christ. Not only that, he experienced a resurrected Christ himself!
  - Read Acts 9:1-19 (Saul is Paul).

### Things to Consider:

- It can feel like our faith is made up like a house of cards; in a moment, a strong gust will blow it over, defeat it, wreak havoc on beliefs held so dearly. When your faith is founded on a cultural idea, what your parents said, or even on a book it can be very easy to feel shaken when those sources are shown (or purportedly shown) to be flawed or even wrong! But when your faith is based on an event, historically verified, it changes the game. Questions no longer become a threat but an area to walk into with confidence. We don't need to know the answer to every "doubt" (and can't anyway), instead we can point to the reality that a real event happened.
  - To help us remember this we use a creed. A creed is a simple, often musical, way of teaching and remembering data. The ABC's are loosely a type of creed. For us, our faith in a real event can be summed up in the following creed:

**Christ is God, this cannot be denied  
For our sins, nailed to a cross he died  
And as witnesses saw, so this they say,  
"He rose again on the third day."**

### Going Deeper:

- This whole series is about strengthening faith, but it can't make you believe. How do you answer when asked the question, "Did Jesus get up again?"

**Prayer:** Pray for each other! When you start to live and declare the Truth in your life, the Deceiver will come against you. Pray for strength, help, love, and if you dare--patience to weather the storm that a very real, very angry Satan will throw your way.