

## **THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE**

**Did Jesus Christ ever really exist?  
Was He really God?  
Did He rise from the Dead?**

Let me start with a short story.

I'd been good natured-ly putting up with a fellow engineer who had been teasing me about being a Christian. So seeing the opportunity to witness to him, I asked him if he knew why I was a Christian. He said, "because you believe it." This opened the door to a very interesting conversation that started at 7 PM on the stairs on our way home after work, gradually edged out towards the parking lot, and then drifted back into the building because it was cold and ended at 9:30 PM with us sitting next to the door waving at others exiting the building. Now in the course of the conversation he said this.

He said: "it makes no difference whether Jesus Christ or Krishna really existed or not, it makes no difference whether the events happened as they are depicted in anyone's holy books, it's the concepts and the teachings of Jesus Christ that count." He was saying that it's the ideas that come from Christianity that count, not the historical or physical events.

Now some of us might have **no** problem with this statement. And to tell the truth, I wouldn't have had any problem with this statement a few years ago.

But now I do. Because now I know that:

Christianity isn't a blind faith, it's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation.

That is so important that I'll say it again.

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Let me paraphrase something I read in the Christian Research Institute Journal. Douglas Groothuis says

"Christianity has always been a historical religion  
and any serious challenge to it's legitimacy must attend to that fact.  
Its central claims are rooted in EVENTS, not ideas;  
in PEOPLE, not principles;  
in revelation, not speculation;  
in incarnation, not abstraction,  
in FACTS and not concepts."

Let me ask you this: Is Christianity based **ONLY** on the teachings of Jesus?

If you said No!. You are absolutely correct.

Did Jesus come to only teach us the way? No?

If Jesus had not died would we be saved? No.

Christ's blood has to be shed to forgive us of our sins. Jesus had to die to save us:

You see Christianity is based not only on the teachings of Jesus, but on the **blood** of Jesus, if there was no blood, there is no redemption of sin, if there is no redemption of sin, there is no salvation, if there is no Salvation, there is no Christianity.

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Almost every other religion in the world would **still** survive if you take away the central figure. It **is not** important if Buddha really existed, his teachings are what counts. It **is not** important if Krishna really existed, it's his theology that counts. It **is not** important if Joseph Smith really existed, it's the fact that the Mormons have a burning in their bosom that counts.

But in Christianity,  
if you take away Christ, we have no religion.  
if you take away Christ, we have no faith  
if you take away Christ, we have no hope.  
if you take away Christ, we have no salvation,  
if you take away Christ we have nothing.

Let me ask you this: Did Jesus come only to show us the way?

No he absolutely didn't.

You see, Jesus didn't come to **SHOW** the way, He came to **BE** the way.

Now I've been claiming that Christianity shouldn't be a blind faith but a logical and rational faith, and you may ask me, Good Grief Neil how can you say that? Doesn't the Bible say, without faith it is impossible to please God. Isn't Christianity based on faith and faith alone?

Let me ask you this: If someone were to prove that Jesus never existed or never rose from the dead should you still be a Christian?

The answer is a resounding NO! You should not be a Christian if Christianity is false.

Now I can't say that authoritatively, but Paul **can** and he **did**, he says **it** in I Cor 15 vs 12 onward: He says:

If there is no resurrection of the dead and  
if Christ did not rise from the dead  
then our faith is in vain  
and we of all people are to be pitied.

But this causes us a huge dilemma. I mean if we're supposed to believe in Jesus because he really existed, then we'd better be able to prove he really existed, and what's more, we'd better be able to prove he really was God as he claimed.

Or does the Bible ask us to have Blind Faith?

**NO!** the Bible never asks us to have blind faith!

Jesus says in Matt 22:37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your blind faith!"

No wait that's not it.

He says "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your feelings!"

No wait that's not it either.

He says "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your sincerity!"

No!

He says "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind!"

ALL YOUR MIND! He expects us to use our minds. God never said, become a Christian and put your intelligence on the shelf! God never said, become a Christian and toss away all logic! He said use your mind! There is none of this Blind Faith business! The Bible says: Without faith it is impossible to please God! But it never said BLIND Unsubstantiated FAITH.

Jesus says: You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free!!! Key words here: Know the Truth: Knowledge of truth!!. Truth has to do with Facts. Your faith must be based on Truth.

Bernard Shaw a very active Atheist said: Christians would rather die than think, in fact many do.

Is that really you and me?

So today if an atheist were to ask you to defend your faith, would you be able to do it? If today the Pastor who led you to Christ, who was your role model was to be caught in an adulterous affair would you decide that your faith had no basis? If today you were to get real sick and everything in your life was to go wrong, would you decide that your faith was just wishful thinking? If your parents were to divorce would you decide that God doesn't exist because nothing is going right?

Or do you have something solid to run to?

And that's what we are here to talk about today.

But maybe you are here today and you are not a Christ Follower, maybe you are a seeker, or maybe you've always wondered if Christianity was just a bunch of legends and fairy tales? Perhaps you are here today and thing that Christianity is just like any other religion.

Are you an earnest seeker, not afraid to face the truth? If I could prove to you in the next few weeks, that there is actual historical and physical evidence that proves with a high degree of confidence that Christ is God and that he really rose from the dead, would you be willing to accept that fact, despite the consequences of that decision?

Let me ask that question again. If I could prove to you that there is a high degree of confidence that Jesus actually rose from the dead, would you be willing to accept his claims despite the consequences of that decision?

Remember: Never let the consequences of your logic force you to abandon the logic. If the logic and the facts are right you are forced to face them and deal with them.

Would you be willing to make that commitment to yourself today?

Because that's what we are here to talk about.

Was there ever really a man named Jesus? And if there was, why should I believe in him? Why should *anyone* believe in him? And most of all if there was a man named Jesus, was he God?

### **In this series we are going to cover**

1. Why is Jesus different from all the other good teachers. (already done)
2. Did Jesus really Exist?
3. Who did Jesus say He was?
4. Did he really rise from the dead?
5. Why Christ had to die, why Christ had to be God and other things (see the associated paper on this where we discuss the necessity of Christ having to be God to be able to save us)?

### **What the Critics Say!**

First, let's look at what the critics say!

1. Joseph Campbell, a famous dead author said: Jesus is just a metaphor.
2. Some say Jesus never really existed.
3. Others say He was a legend that arose from the combination of good qualities of various people.
4. The Mercury News had an article about an Atheist who said, Jesus, Santa Claus, and the tooth fairy are all fairy tales!
5. Others say: Jesus is a legend started by the Church to oppress the masses and keep them in subjection.
6. But overall most people say: He was just a good man. A wise teacher. A sage.

### **3. My Proposal**

I am going to propose something very shocking! I am going to propose that you do not need **any** faith **at all** to believe that Jesus existed. Let me repeat that: you do not need any faith at all to believe that Jesus existed.

Not a single bit! Shocking?

Not really. Because I am about to show you evidence that Jesus existed! And I'm not going to use the Bible at all! In fact I am going to show you that you can believe Jesus existed even if you'd never heard of the Bible.

First, how many people here believe that Julius Caesar existed? Everyone believes that he existed right. But you've never seen him, have you?

Now let me ask you a question...Do you need faith to believe that Julius Caesar existed? **No** of course not. But wait you've never seen the man? So how do you know he existed?

One- You see you believe he existed because he is in your history books.

Two - You believe he existed because people around his time wrote about him.

And three - You believe in him because he left his mark on the world.

Do you believe Napoleon Bonaparte existed? You've never seen him?

Why do you believe **he** existed?

One - You believe he existed because he is in your history books.

Two - You believe he existed because people around his time wrote about him.

And three - You believe in him because he left his mark on the world.

Cornelius Tacitus was a historian.

So the question we should ask is: Did anyone other than a Christian write about Jesus. Or is Jesus only talked about in the Bible?

So I went to the San Jose Public Library, the one down on Market Street and went into the History Section. And there in the Library, surrounded by centuries and centuries of historical and proven accounts, accounts that almost everybody agrees with. I picked up a book by Cornelius Tacitus and I flipped through the pages of it. And as I turned the page looking for the reference my eyes fell upon the paragraph, and in that instant, my skin crawled and I got chills down my spine. Because right there for the first time in my life I was seeing the physical evidence in something other than the Bible, that JESUS CHRIST REALLY LIVED AND WALKED ON THIS EARTH!

Cornelius Tacitus wrote: and this is an original quote from the book!

“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...”

The Annals and the Histories by P. Cornelius Tacitus 44.

Jesus Christ really lived, he really lived, do you understand that, he walked on this earth, he talked to real physical people, he had legs, he had hair, he had blood and flesh, he was like me and you in that way!! He really lived!

Josephus was a Jewish Historian who defected over to the Romans when he saw that Jerusalem was about to be trashed. He was born in AD 37. He writes about the High Priest Ananias who took advantage of the death of the Roman Governor Festus, also mentioned in the Bible, in order to have James the brother of Jesus killed. Josephus writes in his Historical work called Antiquities;

*He (meaning Ananias the High Priest) convened a meeting of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ, and*

*certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned.*

Josephus, Antiquities, 20.2100

There is a second passage from Josephus, though some critics claim that this was added later and not really written by Josephus. However in either case the James passage above is not disputed.

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And here were non-Christians, unbiased historians telling us this!

But these aren't the only occurrences.

Suetoneous wrote about Jesus, Plinius Secundus wrote about Jesus, Thallus wrote about Jesus, and the Jewish Talmud wrote about Jesus.

You see Christianity isn't a blind faith! It's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation.

Now without once touching the Bible, we have proved that not only did Jesus exist but also that he was crucified by Pilate during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, and there were a group of crazy people running around claiming that he came back to life!<sup>1</sup>

And isn't that is exactly what the Bible has been saying for the last 2000 years!

And those are just the skeptics.

Somebody once asked me, how come there aren't lots more documents?

I said there are. But those were all written by people who believed his claim that He was God and most people immediately assume those who believed him are wacko. You see we haven't even touched the myriad of documents written by people who believed in Christ. The apostles, the elders, the early church fathers, the disciples of the apostles and so on.

You see the Church as we know it, did not suddenly pop into existence; we have writings of its growth, from the Biblical writings of the Apostles to the extra biblical writings of the disciples of the apostles. You see after Christ arose, the disciples started teaching others, their students became leaders of the church after the original disciples and all of these students wrote letters and kept documents that we have today. So the early church is documented. In fact even the New Testament is "re" documented. In otherwords, you can go through the sermons of the early church and recreate the entire New Testament from their quotes except for about 9 verses.

So there it is, there's the proof that Jesus was a real man, not a metaphor, not a legend, not a fairy tale. He was a real man, real flesh and blood, real as you and me.

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<sup>1</sup> At this point there are NO reputable scholars (atheists and agnostics and Christians and scholars of other religions) who dispute the existence of a man named Jesus. There are some fringe elements however that refuse to accept this despite the evidence to the contrary.

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Let me ask you this:

Why do you believe Jesus existed?

One - You believe he existed because he is in your history books.

Two - You believe he existed because people around his time wrote about him.

And three - You believe he existed because .....if you pull out a coin and look at it, it says 1990...something

You see this man not only left his mark on history but he single handedly changed the history of the world **so** completely that he has left his mark everywhere and on everything and makes his changes felt **every... single... day!!!**

Our dates are based on him,

our country was founded because of his persecuted followers.

Our weekends were affected by him,

Our names were influenced by him,

our laws were mandated by his Word.

Jesus Christ has left his mark on **every** aspect of our lives!

Can **anyone** have **any** doubt that Jesus really existed?

### **Rational faith...**

What kind of faith are we supposed to have? Why? What could happen if you have a blind faith? What are some of the problems with a blind faith?

What do you think happens if you have a faith that is based purely on feelings or emotions or gut wrenching belief with no foundation?

OK let me give you some answers here:

Faith is similar to the word trust. You trust someone. But should you trust someone blindly? Not good. Let me give you an example. Let's say you are walking down the street and suddenly a guy in a minivan shows up and you've never seen him before. He then says to you: Hey, your mom/husband/friend just told me to give you a ride home. Or he says: Hey, do you want to go for a ride?

Should you get into his minivan?

Why not?

Because you could end up DEAD or worse.

But aren't you supposed to have faith? Why is this a bad idea? Because this would be an example of stupidity or blind faith. So blind faith is what? Stupid.

Why should you not have faith in this guy? Exactly because he has done nothing to earn your trust. Nor has he done anything to earn your faith. So you should NOT have faith in him. You should scream very loudly and then run. Oh and memorize his license plate while you are at it, so you can tell the cops.

So as you can see blind faith is a very bad idea. Never have faith in something you can't trust. Never trust something you can't verify. You can't verify anything until you have facts and experience. So faith must be built on facts and experience.

But on the other hand let's say you are walking down the street and someone you've known for years and has babysat you when you were young, drives by in his truck and he says: Hey do you want a ride home? is it safe to jump in his truck? Of course it is. Why? Because he has earned your trust and your faith. So that is a rational faith. Faith that is based on experience and verification. You know from experience that this person would give up his own life to save your life. These are facts. So your faith and trust in this person is based on what? It's based on Facts. So any faith that is based on facts is a good faith, it's a rational and logical faith. Any faith based on no facts or any blind faith is what? Stupid.

Trust and faith are things that are to be earned. Giving someone blind trust is very stupid and very dangerous.

Now I asked what are some things that can happen if other people have blind faith. This is what could happen.

9-11-2001

You see every one of the men who were involved in 9-11 had blind faith. Blind faith that they were doing the will of some God they'd never questioned, never proved and what's worse never questioned what his will was. Yet they blindly believed that if they died in a suicide attack killing Americans, they would go to some heaven that they had no validation of and have 70 virgins to attend to their needs.

Did they have blind faith?  
Absolutely!

Let me ask you this. Is blind faith a good idea? Absolutely not!

You see when you have blind faith, you have no idea if you are following God or Satan, because you have decided precisely not to test it. You must test your faith, or like Paul said in the Bible, you may be one of the biggest fools around. If you have blind faith you may even be following a God who doesn't even exist.

Now let me ask you this, can you decide your faith based on feelings?  
No.

Why?

Exactly because your feelings aren't always based on facts and your feelings can fool you. For instance, how many times have you felt that you could trust a friend only to be betrayed?



How many times have you seen people fall in love with someone and feel they are the “one” only to find out that they were wrong? So can you always trust your feelings? Absolutely not.

So you should only worry about your feelings after you have checked the facts. You could feel that you are in love with someone only to find out that you fell in love with someone that you can't stand and can't live with. So don't pay attention to your feelings until AFTER you check the facts. Remember this whatever you do: You CAN fall in love with the wrong person. So guard your heart. I've known too many girls who fell in love with idiots who made their lives miserable.

### **But is He God?**

OK we talked about how Jesus really existed, how **you** can prove that he existed without ever using the Bible. We showed how there evidence that Jesus really existed from historians around his time who wrote about him who were NOT Christians. In fact people like the Roman Tacitus and Pliny reported about Jesus and they hated the Christians.

But now let's get into the meat of things. There are some of you here that will say, well just because he existed - it doesn't mean he was God.

Just because he existed - it doesn't mean he rose from the dead!

Just because he existed - it doesn't mean he was telling the truth!

Just because he existed - it doesn't mean he is the way to eternal life!

Just because he existed - it doesn't mean that he is God.

Maybe he was just a good man, a wise teacher.

And how right you are!

You see if Jesus was just a man,

if he isn't God and

if he didn't rise from the Dead

then our faith is in vain and we Christians are all fools!

So we have to study the claims that Jesus is God if we are going to do our "Historical Foundation" any justice.

Now if we had time, I would first go into the details of why we can trust the historical accuracy of the Bible. But for now if you need information on the accuracy of the Bible, I recommend you check out my web page.

So for now accepting that the Bible records are accurate we will now discuss the contents of those records and the historicity of the Resurrection and the claims of Jesus.

First we have realize that according to these Biblical records and let me remind you the other writings of the early church pastors and priests, Jesus claimed to be God. He claimed to be the Son of God, he claimed to be the eternal judge who would judge all mankind, he claimed to be the one who could forgive sins. He claimed to be a King.

We also at this point have to understand Jewish Culture a bit. According to the Jews, God created Man, so man is created and God is not. God cannot be created or he wouldn't be God. Now if the created Man begets a son. That son is also a created being, that son would be a man. But if the everlasting God were to beget a son.

That Son would NOT be a created being. That son would be God. A God being. He would be of the same substance as God.

Men beget men, God begets God. The offspring of God is of the same essence, being equal in ability and rights as God Himself. Now note that he would not be "begat" in the same sense that humans are born.

So when Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and claimed to be the same as the Father, people were incensed. And in fact as we'll see later, this is the very excuse the Jewish Leaders used to condemn him and have him executed.

But wait you say, let's see some proof of that.

First I'll show you some early church fathers who quoted this. These are the people who led the church right after the apostles were killed.

Polycarp (AD70-155). Bishop of Smyrna. Disciple of John the Apostle.

"O Lord God almighty...I bless you and glorify you through the eternal and heavenly high priest Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom be glory to you, with Him and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever"

(n. 14, ed. Funk; PG 5.1040).

Note how he includes Jesus and the Holy Spirit and the Father together.

Ignatius of Antioch (died ~AD98). Bishop of Antioch.

"We have also as a Physician the Lord our God Jesus the Christ the only-begotten Son and Word..."(Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., The ante-Nicene Fathers, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975 rpt., Vol. 1, p. 52, Ephesians 7.)

Now here is where Jesus himself claims to be God or equal to God.

**John 10:30-39** – [Jesus said] I and the Father are one." Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

"We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

**John 20:28-29** -- Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, ***Don't call me God, you idiot. No- in fact he said:***

"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

**Matthew 16:13-17** -- When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist;

others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ***What were other people calling Jesus? A wise man, a good teacher, a prophet.*** "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

This next verse is from a scene where Jesus has been taken to the Jewish High Priests and he is being tried.

**Matthew 26:63-66** The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered (see also Mark 14:61- 63; Luke 22:67-71). *And so they condemned him to death. Note that the only reason they would condemn him to death is because he claimed to be of the same substance as God, to be the same as God.*

Now remember how we said that Jesus never said the words: I am God. And that's true. But what did he say instead of that? He said something much more powerful.

OK now I want to tell you a story.

Anybody here see the animated movie "The Prince of Egypt"? Great movie by the way. Go rent if it you haven't seen it already.

Well there is a scene in it taken from the Old Testament. It's when Moses hears God in the Burning bush.

God tells Moses to do what? Exactly to go to Pharaoh and say: Let my people go.

But then Moses gets scared. He starts to whine:

**Exodus 3:13** And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

Moses what's to know when the Israelites ask me, who sent you? What do I tell them? Who do I say sent me? In otherwords, Moses asks God: What is your name?

What does God say?

**Exodus 3:14** And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.

Moses asks God: What is your name and God says: My name is I AM. The name of God is I AM.

Only God was I AM. Note that years later the Hindu's confused this and thought that the name was pronounced Om. (Just kidding, God said it in Hebrew not English, in Hebrew it sounds more like "Ani Asher" and in Greek it is "Ego emi").

Now I want you to fast forward about 2000 years to the time of Christ. Jesus is in a crowd of people and they are arguing with him.

Jesus says in **John 8:56** "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

**57** The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

**58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **--WHAT?--** I AM."

**59** Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

Note that he didn't say before Abraham was born **I was**. He said before Abraham existed **I AM**. Wait, what was the name of God? It was I AM. So yes Jesus never said I am God. He said something much more powerful. He named himself the name of God.

Let me explain why this is so powerful. Now some hate the current president and some love him, but regardless, a few months ago he flew into the middle of the war in Iraq and met personally with the troops. OK let's say that just before he got out there to talk to the troops he was standing around waiting to be introduced and someone walked up to him and asked: Excuse me who are you? Well he could of said: I am the President. But then he could have been an old President, right? He could have also been the President of another country right? Or he could have been the President of a company correct? So you could be confused. But if you'd asked him who he was and he said, I'm *President* George Walker Bush you'd know immediately that he was claiming to be the President of the USA himself. The only current president of the USA. There would be no doubt would there. Now you may doubt that he really was GW Bush, but you couldn't have any doubt about WHO he **claimed** to be.

So in the same way, when Jesus claimed to be God, he didn't just say I am god. Because then he could have been any old god. Or that he was part of God, or that he was godly, or that he had essence of god or whatever. But he instead using the **name** of the ONLY SUPREME GOD, made it very clear that he was the "I AM." He said in those few words, OK Folks remember Moses out there in the wilderness? Remember the Burning Bush? Remember that God? Remember the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob? Remember the God who brought you out of Egypt out of slavery? Remember the God who gave you this land and destroyed all your enemies. Remember the God who you think created the entire universe? Remember the God who says He's the ONLY God. Well guess what, THAT is the GOD I AM. That is the God I am claiming to be. No doubts, no questions, no confusion. I AM.

And what did the Jews do? Where they confused? Were they puzzled? Not at all, they understood immediately what he had claimed to be and they tried to what? Stone him. Why? For blasphemy.

Anyone know what Blasphemy is?  
Blasphemy is claiming to be God when you aren't.

**John 8:59** Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

So if anyone ever says: Well Jesus never said he was God, you can say, well actually he did one better, he not only claimed to be God but he explained exactly which God he was. To be sure there was no confusion he named the God that he was.

Many years ago by the grace of God, I was fortunate enough to have to fly to Israel to help some customers debug their Video Encoder boards. So as a result I got an all expense paid trip to the Holy Land. Do you guys know where Israel is? The company was based just outside of Tel Aviv, which by the way at the time I thought it was the most hideously ugliest cities in the world. Anyway after a few days of work, I was very eager to figure out how I was going to get to see Jerusalem. On the map it was all the way across the country. Well one night, the guy I was working with, said, let's go for dinner in Jerusalem. I said that sounds like a long drive. Oh no he said, it's only 30 miles away. Jerusalem was the most "beautifullest" cities I've ever seen. They have a law saying that you can only use stone to build any buildings there. So it is a gorgeous city and has in addition it has the best weather ever.

It's also a very very tiny city inside the walls, barely  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile across. Which means that you can walk across the entire old city of Jerusalem in less than 8 minutes.

When I finally got the opportunity to do some sight seeing, it was their festival of Yom Kippur. Yom means day, Kippur means Atonement. One of the places I visited was interesting. It was just near the city walls. They wouldn't let you enter there unless you had your head covered. Well I don't usually wear a hat, so they gave me a piece of cardboard cut out in the shape of a cap that I could wear. I went in, and there in front of me was a large mound decorated and revered. There were a lot of tourists there, but there were also a lot of Jews visiting from all over the world. I turned to our guide and I asked him. What is this place? "Why" he said "this is the tomb of King David."

In the last section we talked about how Jesus not only claimed to be God but he also claimed to be one specific God. He used the specific name of the God of Moses. The God of Abraham Issac and Jacob. By claiming that his name was the same name as the God of Moses, he was claiming to have created the entire world and the universe and if you remember he is basically claiming to be the God who was responsible for the singularity and the big bang at the beginning of the Universe and Time and Space.

So if anyone ever says: Well Jesus never said he was God, you can say, well actually he did one better, he not only claimed to be God but he explained exactly which God he was. Just in case there was any confusion.

Let me further explain why that is so important. You see some people claim that we are ALL small gods. So if you tell them that Jesus claimed to be God they will say: Well that's OK we are all gods too. You are also a god, just like Jesus. . He meant that we all have the nature of God.

Or they may say Jesus just meant that he was god in his soul or some thing like that.

But that is all nonsense because Jesus didn't say he was just another God. He didn't say he was God-like. He didn't say he was a servant of God. He didn't say he was God because we all had the nature of God. He called himself by the name of a God who said he was the ONLY God. Jesus claimed that he was the ONLY GOD, the same GOD who created everything.

Some people may say well Jesus just called himself the Son of God and sometimes he calls himself the Son of Man. They may say this means he's not really God. But that is also nonsense. Because as we showed, when he called himself the son of God he was implying he was a God Being and the Jews understood this and tried to kill him. And when he called himself the Son of Man did that mean he was only a man? Absolutely not. When he calls himself the Son of Man he is referring to a vision that Daniel a prophet about a 1000 years before Jesus had.

Daniel Chapter 7 verses 13-14.

Daniel 7

*13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.*

***(Note that the Jews knew that The Ancient of Days is God the Father).***

*14 He (the son of man) was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

So when Jesus called himself the Son of Man, what is he saying about himself?

He was saying that He was the who? The very **same** as the person in Daniel's Vision. And who was that person? The one who will get all authority, glory and sovereign power; and all peoples, nations and men of every language will worship Him. His dominion will be an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. And what's more, the Jews understood this!

You see Daniel had seen in that Vision that God was going to come to earth as a man. So Daniel says he saw God as a Son of Man. And so when Jesus calls himself the son of Man he's really saying he's the same person that Daniel saw 1000 years earlier.

These are some more of the verses where Jesus or people around him claimed that he was God had the powers of God.

**Matthew 9:6**

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**Matthew 12:8**

**Matthew 13:40-41**

**Matthew 16:13-17**

**Matthew 16:27**

**Matthew 18:20**

Matthew 19:28  
Matthew 24:30-31  
Matthew 25:31-34, 41  
Matthew 26:63-66  
Mark 3:11-12  
Mark 8:38  
John 1:1  
John 3:13-15  
John 5:26-29  
John 6:53-55  
John 9:35-38  
John 10:30-39

John 11:25-26  
John 20:26-29  
John 4:25-26  
John 6:33, 35  
John 6:51  
John 8:12  
John 8:23-24  
John 8:58-59  
John 10:9  
John 10:11  
John 14:1-10  
Matthew 9:11-13

Matthew 20:28  
Matthew 28:18-20  
Luke 4:16-21  
Luke 19:10  
Luke 11:31-32  
John 1:47-51  
John 3:16-18  
John 10:10  
John 12:27  
John 12:46  
John 12:47-48  
John 18:37

But even without these verses that show very clearly that Jesus claimed to be equal to God and in fact God, if we were to say that Jesus never claimed to be divine we'd have a technical problem.

You see: Why would anyone publicly execute a good teacher? Think about that. Secretly plot and then assassinate yes, like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, but publicly execute with the masses' approval. No, he had to have done something a lot more serious than teach good things. There were many crimes for which the Jews could kill a man, blasphemy was one, but teaching love and peace was not. There were many crimes for which the Romans would publicly execute men, sedition, revolt, political issues like Socrates, etc, but again teaching love and peace was not any of them. Jesus did far more than teach love and peace he taught a complete change of life. He challenged the entire paradigm of the Romans and the Jews.

Why would anyone crucify an innocuous innocent sage telling nice little parables, how did he end up on the cross especially at a Passover season when no Jew wants any Jew to be executed?

There also had to be a reason why when he was crucified the sign above his head said, "This is the King of the Jews."

You see they thought he claimed to be King of the Jews. The sign put above his cross said it in 3 languages. "The King of the Jews," The Pharisees saw that and complained. "Take it down" they said to Pilate, Pilate said No. The Pharisees said: Then put He **claimed** to be King of the Jews. But Pilate said: "I have written what I have written."

The Pharisees said that Jesus **claimed** to be the King of the Jews. So either Jesus had made that verbal claim or someone clearly thought he did.

**Christianity isn't a blind faith, it's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation.**

So that brings us to the million-dollar question.

**Is Jesus God? Or was he just a very wise and good man.**

Many people I talk to say: Oh Jesus, he was a very wise and good teacher. He was a great man, like Martin Luther King, like Mother Teresa (who was by the way a woman).

But after looking at all those verses we have to realize is that we cannot tolerate any garbage about Jesus being only a Good Man.

As CS Lewis says:

"You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Think about it Jesus claimed that He was God-  
And this leaves us with only 3 alternatives.

1. He was coo-coo,---- mad as a hatter, he was a lunatic who actually thought he was God, like Charles Manson who by the way seems to think he is Jesus Christ, or
2. He was a con man, a liar, a cheat, a hustler, who fooled all these people or
3. Jesus was really God.

There is no in between, there is no happy medium.

As I said earlier I will later prove the accuracy of the testimony of the Bible to you, but for now taking what we know about Jesus from what we've read and heard, let us go through the options we are presented with.

## 1. LUNATIC

So maybe Jesus **was** just a bit off his rocker! Maybe he had illusions of Grandeur and just thought that he was God. I mean let's say that tomorrow you meet someone and he says to you: Hi, I am God. Would you think he was sane? Or would you think he was what? Insane. A little bit touched.

Well Jesus couldn't have been just a bit off his rocker, he had to be totally insane! Remember what Blasphemy is? It's when you claim to be God. Do you guys remember what the Jews would do to people if they claimed to be God? What would they do?

Exactly they'd kill him.

So claiming that you are God in a fiercely monotheistic culture like the Jews in 30 AD, would be as stupid as a chicken seeking refuge in a Kentucky Fried Chicken hen house. Both will get you killed without fail!

But if we study the Christ's life, you'd be hard pressed to find that madness.

Do you detect any madness in the calm authority of his sayings?

Do you detect any madness in his total knowledge and understanding of human nature?

Do you detect any madness in how he knew exactly what people of all walks of life needed?

Do you detect any madness in the way he acted?

He never went off on wild fantasies, he was never anything but sane, kind, humane, wise and self controlled, ...even in the clearing of the temple.



And remember, this is the man that has singularly affected the entire world for good more than any other man living or dead!

Even Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte said, "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ was not a man... I search in vain in history to find a man that can compare with Jesus Christ, and there is none!"

No, Jesus Christ was anything but Mad! I know of no one who has studied the man who even considers the possibility that he was mad. Psychologists will attest to the fact that he was anything but mad or deluded. Everybody says he was a wise teacher, or a prophet, or as the New Agers would put it "an enlightened master".

**2. LIAR** So that brings us to 2. Maybe He was a liar.

Well, if he was a liar then he was also a fool because if you look at the historical account you'll see that he was asked repeatedly by Pilate and the High Priest to say that he wasn't God. But he didn't. Do you think that Jesus having grown up in Israel would know what the penalty of Blasphemy was? Of course he knew, but he still claimed to be God. He didn't have to die, all he had to say was: Whoops, you guys are serious about killing me. Never mind, I was just joking about that God thing. Can I go now?

And if he was a liar then he was a con man, and what a useless con man he was, he died penniless & powerless. What's the use of being a thief or a liar if you never get to steal or gain anything?

He didn't get rich like many fake teacher.

He didn't amass an army around him like Hitler.

He didn't gain anything for himself and he didn't try! What sort of con man is that?

Finally, even critics of the man upon studying the evidence have to admit that this was a good man, a moral man -----

And so I ask you

how in the name of logic, common sense and experience could an imposter

- that is a deceitful, selfish, depraved liar -

have invented, and consistently maintained from the beginning to end of his life, the purest and noblest character known in history with the most ....perfect... air of truth and reality?

The man who even today changes lives of the most hardened criminals into the most kindest of people.

Almost everybody here would have to agree that the concept of Jesus being a big con man and a liar is just ridiculous.

No, it seems everybody agrees that he was a very good man.

So he was certainly not a liar, unless he was really convinced that he was God, which would mean that he was mad -wait a minute we already eliminated that option.

**3. LORD**

And so if he wasn't a Lunatic, and he wasn't a Liar that leaves only one option - He really was Lord God! Can you think of any other option given that the historical evidence is true?

Remember when we started this series we talked about what the Critics said? Well there was one item we did not cover, but now we've covered that. Jesus could NOT have been just a good and wise teacher.

And that is a decision you have to make! If you are here today and you are not a Christ follower you can't just ignore it, and pretend that he is a great moral teacher or a good and wise man! And if you are a Christian, in your discussions with non Christians, you HAVE to bring up this point. They have to be faced with this decision. This dilemma...because it is a real problem, because...

You see Christianity isn't a blind faith! It's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation.

You have to **decide was Jesus what he said or was he a liar or a madman?**

### **The Empty Grave!**

Now the facts we talked about earlier in themselves would have been pretty good evidence for the Uniqueness and perhaps the Deity of Jesus Christ. But that's all philosophical! I wanted to know more. I wanted something physical. Something logical, something historical. And there was something.

You see something happened 2000 years ago that changed the entire course of history. Some inexplicable occurrence took place and mankind has never been the same since! Something so unusual happened that it motivated a handful of scared fishermen to leave everything that was familiar to them and go out to the most dangerous corners of the world and change the entire world!

There ..was..... an..... empty grave! And after 2000 years mankind has still not been able to explain how the grave became empty! Christianity isn't a blind faith!

But first you may ask - how do you know the grave was empty?

Well let me turn that question around. If the grave wasn't empty, and if the body of Christ was still in the grave.

How long would the story of Jesus' resurrection have lasted?

Let me ask you this: What is the fundamental crux of Christianity?

The fundamental crux of Christianity was not the teachings of Jesus but the fact that he was God and that he rose from the dead. Remember this verse that we talked about?

### ***1 Corinthians 15:12***

*If there is no resurrection of the dead and  
if Christ did not rise from the dead  
then our faith is in vain  
and we of all people are to be pitied.*

In other words the Bible says:

If Jesus did not rise from the dead: Christians are idiots, dolts, fools, dunkophs, ignoramuses, pinheads....

So let me ask you this. Let's say that it was AD29, about 3 months after Jesus had been crucified and you want to stop this religion of Christianity. What's would be the easiest thing in the world for you to do to kill this whole stupid religion?

Exactly, go find the dead body of Jesus and show it to everybody.

In light of that the Jewish Pharisees who would have given their eye teeth to end the Christian movement if they could, would have just produced the dead body of Jesus paraded it down main street Jerusalem and put an end to the whole stupid thing.

And the apostles weren't preaching the story in Rome a few thousand miles away from Israel, Where were they preaching this story? They started preaching the story 8 mins away in downtown Jerusalem! Remember how big Jerusalem is? It's very small. You can walk across it in 8 mins.

But if we read in the Bible we find the Apostle Peter's first Evangelistic talk in Acts II. Here's what happens. It's the Passover feast and Jews from all over the world are visiting Jerusalem. Jerusalem is packed with Jewish tourists. Most of them don't speak Hebrew, they speak whatever language was spoken from where they live. Then suddenly the disciples are overcome by the Holy Spirit and they find they can suddenly speak in the languages that these foreign Jews speak. So Peter the disciple of Jesus preaches the worlds first evangelizing message. He preaches to these masses and masses of people who were in Jerusalem for the feast.

What does he say to them: He says:

**Acts II.** *God raised Jesus from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death. ...for God would not allow the Holy One to undergo decay... I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried and his tomb is here to this day*

(what tomb is he talking about? Exactly! The same tomb that I visited 2000 years later)

Then he goes on:

*But Christ was not abandoned to the Grave, nor did his body see Decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are witnesses of the fact....*

What did Peter just say: He said: Jesus died but rose again and is not in his Grave. David is, but Jesus is not. And do you see the importance of this. Those people that Peter was talking to, many of them were from out of town and had probably gone and visited David's tomb that very morning, just like I did 2000 years later. That's the same grave that Peter was talking about 2000 years ago. And when Peter said that, he was a 8 min walk away from where the equivalent Grave that Jesus was buried in. He was comparing a full grave to an empty grave. A physically full grave to a physically empty grave.

You see it was an empty grave that a 8 min walk from downtown Jerusalem could have proved or disproved!

It was an empty grave that a casual observer could have disproved.

It was an empty grave that a Roman official could have disproved.

It was an empty grave that a child could have disproved.

It was an empty grave that the entire town could have disproved.

The entire religion of Christianity would have stopped right then and there.

Now let me ask you this. If I told you that some famous person had die a few months ago and had come back to life and his grave was empty. Would you be curious to go check out the grave 8 mins away? Of course you would. How fascinating. So imagine how everybody then rushed to the grave. I'd drive 2 days to check it out because I'm such a skeptic.

All it would have taken was one historian, or one eyewitness, or even one local Jewish guy visiting from India to say: What I am telling you. These people are only scamming you and lying to you. I am going to the grave that my esteemed apostle is telling and I am not believing my nose, because this man is not only being very dead, he is also being very stinky.

No, nobody said that, because the grave was empty, believe me lots of people did go to the tomb just to check it out- wouldn't you. Hey Jesus rose, here's David's tomb, it's not empty. But Jesus' tomb is only 8 mins away. Well- we'll just see about that shan't we. And you walk over. The very first declaration of Christianity to everybody included the claim that the grave was empty. How stupid would it have been if they claimed that this grave next door was empty when it wasn't?

And further proof that the grave was empty was that the Jewish leaders who hated the Christians claimed that the disciples had stolen the body. Now why would they do a silly thing like that if the body of Jesus was still in the grave?

You see for the religion of Christianity to survive, the key fact was that Jesus had to have physically risen from the dead. The Jews weren't into buying any sort of metaphysical hogwash about symbolic resurrections.

Without that physical resurrection, Christianity would not have anything to stand on. Because Christianity **IS** based on facts and not concepts. Because Christianity isn't a blind faith, it's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation. A dead body would have ended the entire Christian movement in one swell foop.

Both the Christians, and their opponents claimed that the tomb was empty. Which anyone can see is pretty conclusive evidence that the tomb, really was empty. No one in history doubts that the grave was empty! They are all too busy trying to explain it was empty!

What are we saying? We are saying that:

**Christianity isn't a blind faith, it's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation.**

[How did the grave come to be empty?](#)

Now if the grave was empty it could have become empty by Natural Means or by Supernatural Means. And we as detectives are going to try and solve this 2000 year old mystery.

So now we are going to look at all the possible ways that Grave could have become empty?

### **DISCIPLES STOLE THE BODY**

The first and most obvious way the grave could have become empty is as some people have suggested, the disciples stole the body of Jesus and then claimed that he had risen.

Well this is the easiest claim to disprove. You see God knew all these things would come up so he prepared ahead of time.

1st of all, the tomb was guarded by the Roman Guards.

Now the Roman Guards were not exactly the sort you'd like to meet in a dark alley. Polybius, a Greek historian tells us that a Roman guard unit was 16 men. They were professional killers trained to protect whatever they had from an entire battalion and the penalty for their failure was quite simple. They were killed.

So whatever they were guarding they were guarding with their lives, because they were put to death one way or another if they lost their keep!

Now, the guards watched over their keep in 4 shifts, the 1st shift of 4 would guard the tomb over here while the rest of the 12 slept in a semi-circle in front of them with their heads pointing in.

Then every 4 hours another shift of four was awakened and the 4 who had been guarding went to sleep.

So to get to the tomb the disciples would have to pass over the sleeping row of 12 killers and then dispatch with the 4 guards who by now will have awakened the sleeping 12.

So now the 11 disciples who were mostly fishermen, instead of only having four Romans to deal with, would now be surrounded by 16 trained professional killers....who if you recall weren't exactly very fond of the Jews. Then they'd have to move away that great big stone, grab the body of Jesus and fight their way back out again.

I know....I have trouble with it too.

But the death knell for this whole theory is quite simple, every single one of the disciples of Jesus but one, died gruesome, agonizing deaths and they all died alone.

Peter was crucified upside down,  
Andrew was also crucified,  
Simon was crucified too,  
the first James was beheaded,  
the second James was sawed alive in pieces,  
Bartholomew was flayed alive with knives,  
Thomas was speared in India,  
Jude was killed by arrows,  
Matthew was killed in Ethiopia,  
**and Phillip.... was killed .....in Hieropolis.**

Now what sort of an imbecilic idiot would concoct a lie and then die gruesomely for it, all the while maintaining that it was true? In fact the fundamental basis for most all of their death sentences was **precisely because they claimed Jesus was God and rose from the dead to prove it**. Nobody was out to kill them because they claimed that Jesus said we should love everybody. They were killed by the Jews for claiming Jesus was God, they were killed by the Romans for claiming Caesar was not God, they were killed by other people for claiming that Jesus was the **only** way.

Not one of the disciples ever recanted their story and all of them could have lived if they had just been willing to say -

Noooo I was just kidding - he really didn't rise from the dead, we actually stole the body, I admit it I admit it. I won't talk about this whole religion thing anymore. Please don't kill me! Please please Don't kill me. I think I'll go fish now.

NO, every one of them died for their beliefs, believing that they had not only seen the empty tomb, but that they had actually seen Jesus Christ risen from the dead, and he was living, breathing and eating!!! They believed they'd touched Him, they believed they'd talked to Him, they believed they'd felt Him.

Now if you recall I said last week that I have no doubts about that the Bible's documentation of what Jesus said is accurate. I said that because it was written by these same men who went to their gruesome deaths claiming the same thing. In other words, John and Mathew and the rest of them wrote what they thought Jesus said. Then they wrote that they saw him alive, and this proved to them, that what they thought he said was what He said. Then they went to their deaths still claiming that what they wrote and what they said was the truth. Their witness stands the test of time and accuracy. They were willing to die because they personally believed that they'd seen the physically resurrected Christ.

## **WRONG TOMB**

So maybe they didn't steal the body, but maybe they just were mistaken and went to the wrong tomb. You know: they go to the wrong tomb and there's no dead body and they say: Oh he's alive let's tell everybody.

So not only did the women go to the wrong tomb, but later John and Peter went to the wrong tomb, and then the Pharisees also went to the wrong tomb, followed by the Romans who also went to the wrong tomb and of course Joseph of Arimethia who owned the tomb and actually helped put Jesus in the tomb, went to the wrong tomb, because he was confused and did not know his own and probably only tomb in his own backyard?

Of course too the Roman guard must have been guarding the wrong tomb. Unless they were guarding the right tomb and were wondering why all these people were running in and out of the wrong tomb next door.

And of-course nobody noticed the Roman guard guarding the right tomb? The whole concept gets even more ludicrous as we continue.

So much for the wrong tomb theory. Nobody could have mistaken the tomb, it was way too important!! Besides if the stupid Christians were running around pointing to the wrong tomb, don't you think the Pharisees and the Romans would have only been too happy to point out the RIGHT tomb with the very very very dead body of Jesus and that would have been the end of that and we wouldn't be wasting our time here today.

## **MOVED BY THE JEWS OR ROMANS**

Well, maybe the body was moved by the Jews or the Romans. But, as we've already said: if the Jews had the body of Jesus they'd have been the first ones to bring it out and put an end to the Christian movement with one swell foop!

But nobody did that! Why not? Because they couldn't, they didn't have the body of Jesus, nobody seemed to know what had happened to it! Everybody was running around blaming everybody else.

## **HALLUCINATION**

Now some people have suggested that everybody hallucinated. Peter hallucinated, John hallucinated, the rest of the 12 hallucinated, all the Mary's hallucinated. Makes you think they were back in the 60's. The problem is that more than 500 people saw Jesus after he had risen. And psychologists tell us that if even 2 people see the exact same thing, it isn't a hallucination, forget about 500 eyewitnesses. And this wasn't some strange bright light in the sky or mold on a water tower that resembled Jesus. Many of these folks claimed they'd seen Him, talked to Him and then touched Him then they went out and died for those claims.

You see Christianity isn't a blind faith! It's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation.

## **THE DAVE THEORY**

I just recently learned of a new theory. It's been mockingly called the "Dave Theory" by the great debater William Lane Craig after the movie Dave, you know where the President of the US is replaced by this ordinary guy named Dave who just happens to look exactly like him. It was proposed by a European theologian who is an expert in history but he's not a Christian. This theologian says that when Jesus was born, he was actually born to another couple and he was a twin. Somehow in the confusion of the manger scene, Jesus was swapped with the baby who was the real son of Mary and Joseph. So Jesus grew up not knowing that he had an identical twin brother out there.

Don't laugh, it gets more ludicrous. Well one day the twin brother decides to visit Jerusalem and he sees his identical twin dead on the cross. He immediately realizes that Jesus was his unknown twin and gets this great idea. He will steal his twin's body and then pretend to be Jesus risen from the dead. Since nobody even knows the twin exists, everybody including Mary and all the Disciples are fooled by this.

OK well that's a bit far fetched and requires so many things to work a specific way. For instance. Could no one have figured out that this twin was not Jesus. The twin would not have known the disciples very well, the twin would not have been able to walk through walls, the twin would not have been able to ascend into heaven. It's sort of silly plus there is no physical evidence for this theory at all. If you are interested, there's a Video of the debate available between Professor William Lane Craig and this theologian where Craig the good guy

demolishes the Dave argument completely. Any we won't waste anymore time on the Dave theory.

### **Is 53 written some 400 years before Christ**

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*Is 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the sin of us all.*

*7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, ...9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin.*

*Ps 22 written about 1200 years before Christ.*

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*Ps 22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my cry?..7. All those who see me laugh at me and scorn me.., they shake their head, saying, 8 He trusted on the LORD to deliver him: let Him deliver him, ...*

*14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

*16 For dogs have encircled me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed around me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots for my robe.*

### **SWOONED**

Now some people have another theory. They say, "maybe Jesus was not dead, maybe he just fainted or someone gave him a drug so everybody thought he was dead. Like in Romeo and Juliet. I mean, the Romans didn't really know enough about medicine, may be Jesus was in a coma." Some guy even wrote a book claiming this was what happened, he calls it "The Passover Plot".

I call this the Monty Python Plot or the "I'm not dead yet - I'm getting bettah',----I want to go for a walk -- I feel happpeeeee", or "it's just a flesh wound".

The amazing thing as I said earlier is that we must realize is that God knew that all these theories were going to be proposed so He set the stage so that no doubts could come



through. He knew the Monty Python theory even before they met and created the movie. The sad thing is that most people never bother to learn the details about what could have happened and what couldn't have happened.

First, we really need to understand what crucifixion was all about.

### Crucifixion: the details

It all starts on the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemene. If you recall Jesus went there to pray the night before he was crucified. He was in great anguish anticipating the events and the pain that was to come. The gospels say:

#### [Luke 22:44](#)

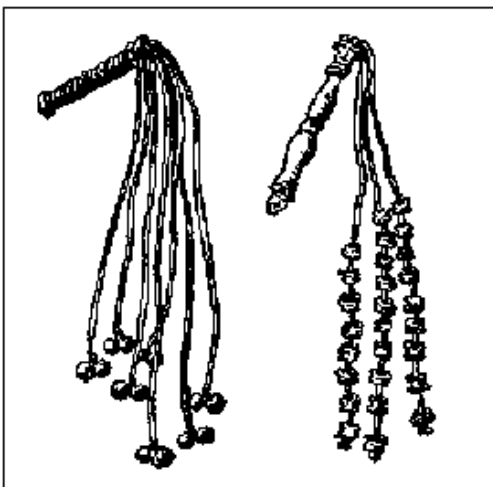
*And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his **sweat** was like drops of **blood** falling to the ground.*

Now right away some of us might be predisposed to assume that's just creative language. But not if you are a doctor and know about hema-tie-drosis. Can you say that: Hematidrosis. I am not a doctor which is why I have no idea how it is pronounced.

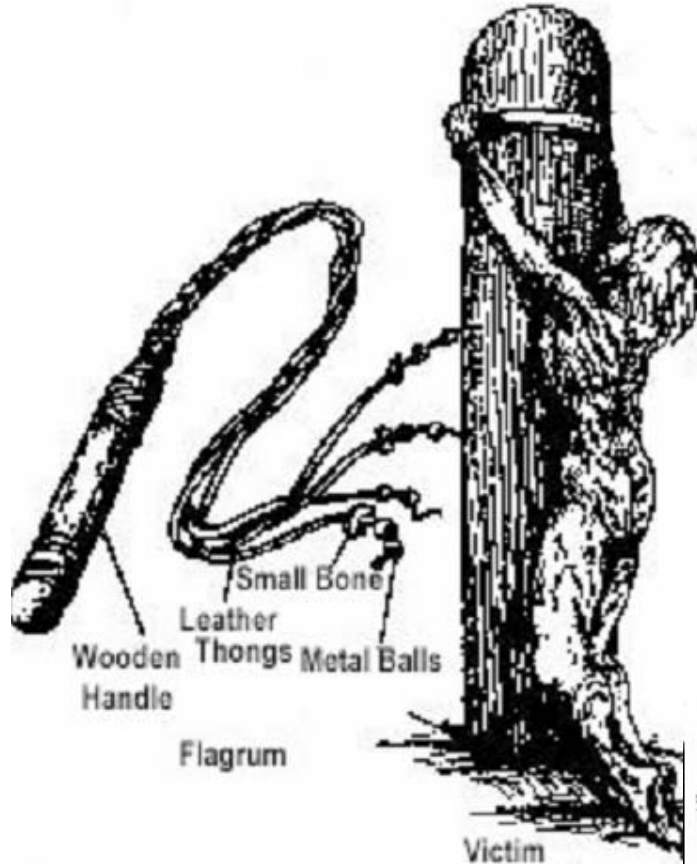
Very good, I can't pronounce it, but I do know what it is. It's an affliction associated with high psychological stress. You see what happens is that severe anxiety causes the release of internal chemicals that break down the capillaries in the sweat glands, and as a result they bleed into the glands, and when you sweat, the sweat comes out tinged with blood. It's not like you would be dripping with blood all over, but you would indeed literally sweat blood. It also has the unfortunate side effect of making the skin extremely fragile so that the skin becomes very sensitive and tender, at times even painful to the touch.

Jesus was in great mental anguish and at that moment he suffered from Hema-tie-drosis.

This is even more heartbreaking in that the next day Jesus was to experience 39 lashes with his skin already in this tender ready to bleed state.



History tells us that the Roman 39 lashes were from a whip of braided leather thongs, with metal balls and bone woven into them. When the whip would strike the flesh, these balls would cause deep bruises and the bone would cut the flesh severely.



If the soldier doing the whipping was in an extra foul mood, the cuts and intensity of the whipping could shred the back so much that the spine of the victim was sometimes exposed. The whipping would have gone all the way down the shoulders to the back, the butt and the back of the legs. It was just terrible.

One physician who has studied Roman beatings said: As the flogging continued the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce

quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Eusebius, a 3rd century historian says: The sufferer's veins were laid bare and the very muscles sinews and bowels of the victim were open to exposure.

*Is 53:5 He was beaten for our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed.*

The result of all these means that Jesus would go into Hypovolemic shock.

Hypovolemic shock is what happens when you lose large amounts of blood. This does 4 things.

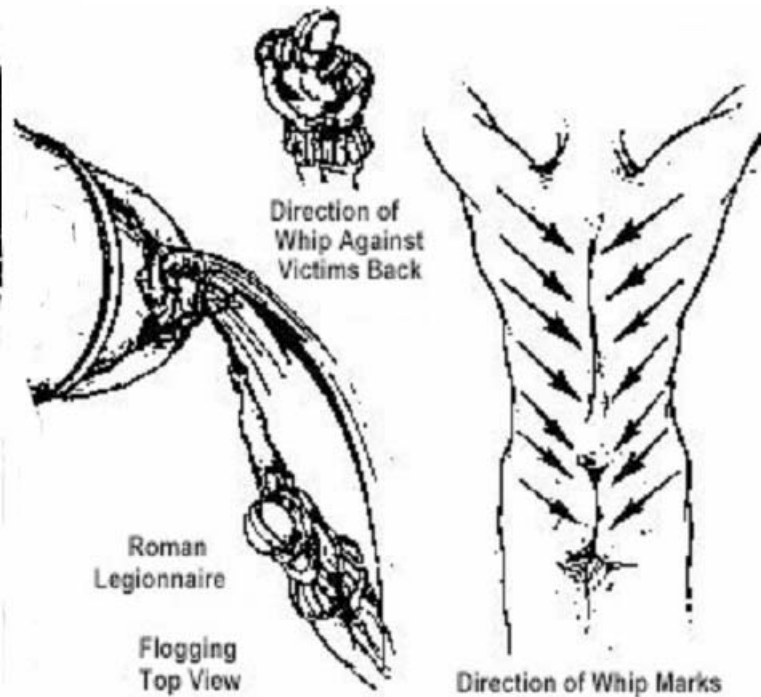
First the heart races to try to pump blood that isn't there,

second, the blood pressure drops causing fainting or collapsing,

third the kidney stops producing urine to try and maintain what liquid is left in the body and

fourth the person becomes extremely thirsty as the body craves fluids to replace the lost blood volume.

*Ps 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;*



Do recall what happened on the way to the crucifixion? Jesus stumbles with his cross and faints and Simon the Cyrene is forced to carry the cross. Then later as he is hanging on the cross Jesus says: I thirst. [John 19:28 After this Jesus...said, I thirst.] He was in Hypovolemic shock. He was in pain and he was in serious critical condition. For you and me.

When Jesus got to Golgotha the place where he was to be crucified, then soldiers tied his arms and legs to the cross and then nailed them. But they weren't nailed in the palms as so many paintings show. Jesus was nailed to the cross right here, in his wrists, right through the median nerve between the two bones. I want you to push right there with your index finger. In Greek like my mother tongue, the word for Hand and Wrist are the same. This would allow the nail to hold up the body otherwise if the nails had been through the palms, the nails with the force of the body would rip right through the palms.

Nailing through the wrist did one other thing. Remember your funny bone? How does it feel when you hit it? Well the median nerve right here in your wrist is an even more sensitive nerve.

The Romans knew how to create great pain.

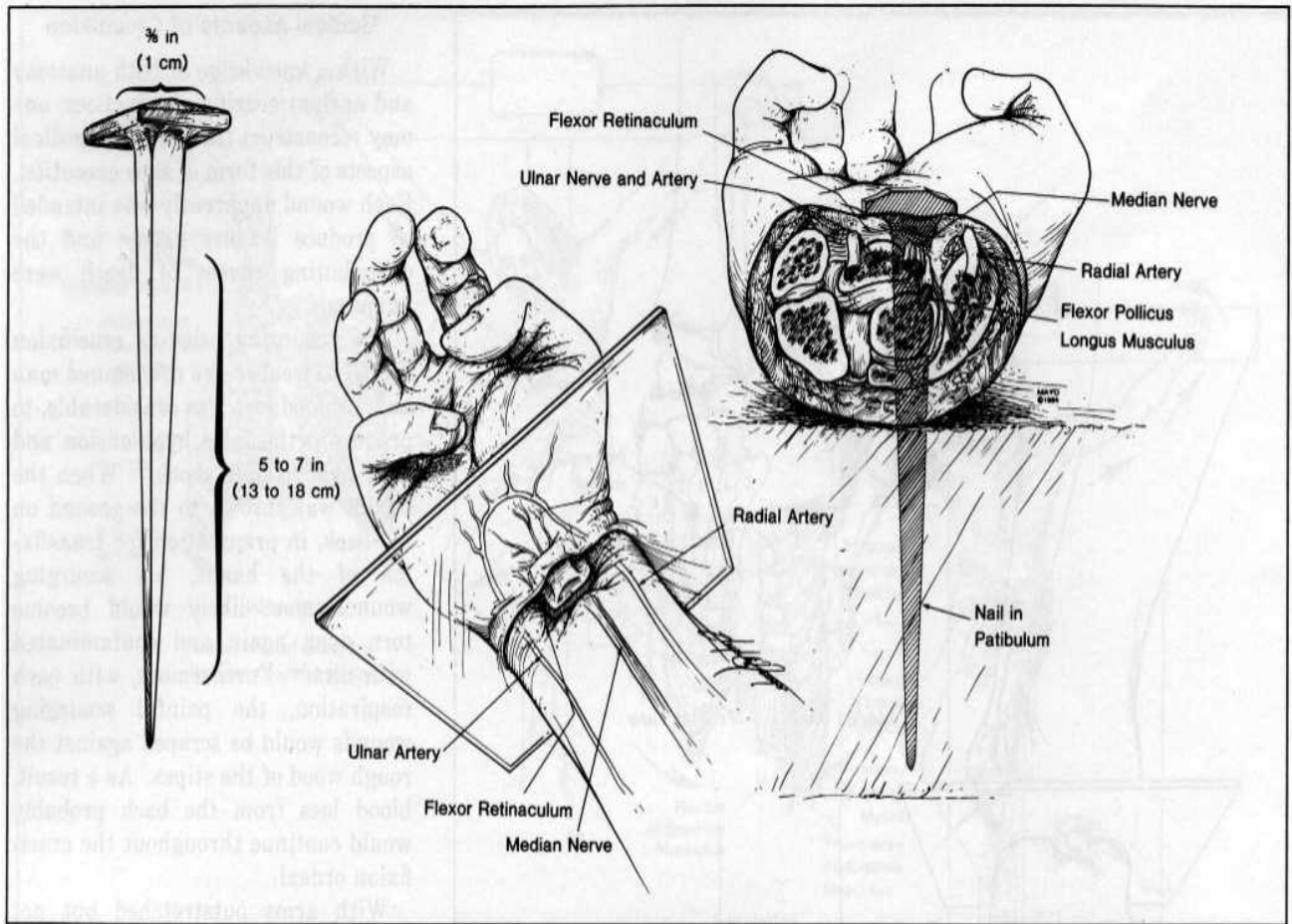


Fig 4.—Nailing of wrists. Left, Size of iron nail. Center, Location of nail in wrist, between carpals and radius. Right, Cross section of wrist, at level of plane indicated at left, showing path of nail, with probable transection of median nerve and impalement of flexor pollicis longus, but without injury to major arterial trunks and without fractures of bones.

So they'd use the median nerve, and nail right through it, which would be equivalent to taking a pair of pliers and squeezing your ulna nerve which is the nerve that causes the pain when you hit your funny bone. And this pain would last until the nerve was torn to shreds.

The pain was so unbearable that they created a brand new word for this pain. The word is excruciating. It means "out of the Cross."

He suffered for our transgressions.

And then they do the same with the other hand and then his feet.

*Ps 22:16 They have pierced my hands and my feet.*

Did you know that Crucifixion had not yet been invented when that



Psalm was written almost 1500 years earlier.

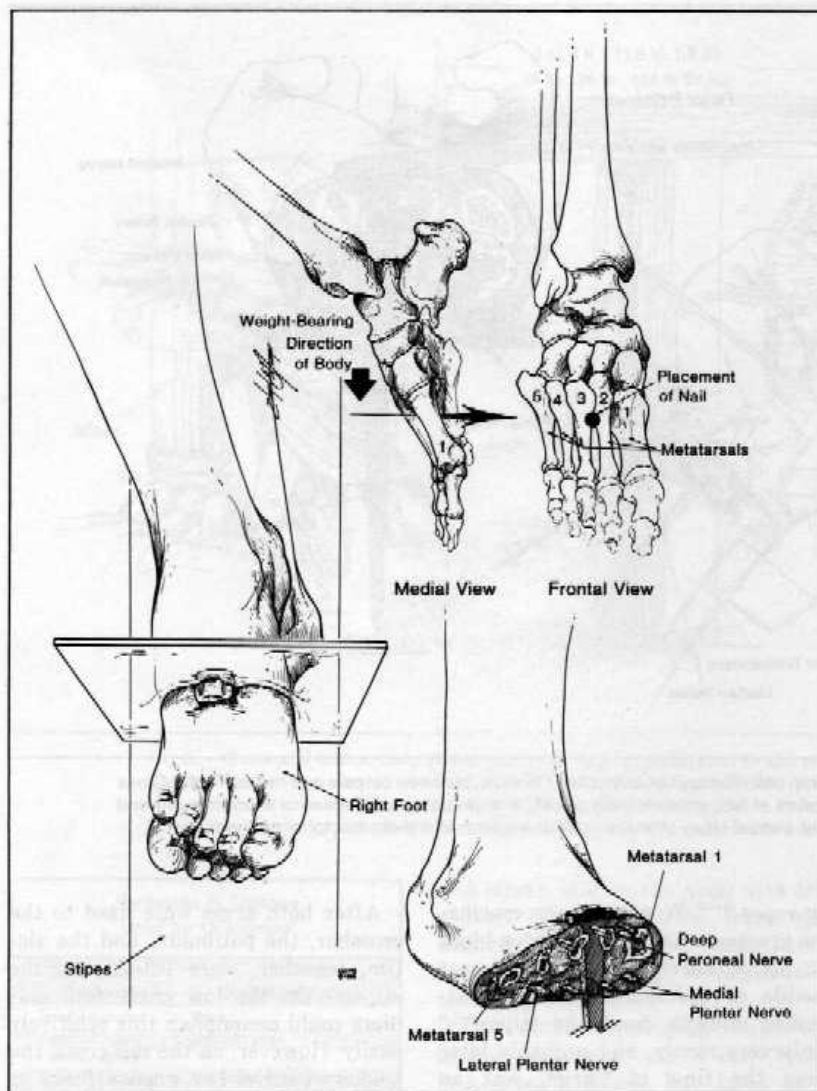


Fig 5.—Nailing of feet. Left, Position of feet atop one another and against stipes. Upper right, Location of nail in second intermetatarsal space. Lower right, Cross section of foot, at plane indicated at left, showing path of nail.

People didn't die easily from crucifixion, they weren't meant to. They were meant to suffer terribly first then die. They were meant to be an example to others. So that no one else would ever dare to oppose the Romans.

When Jesus' wrists were nailed, as we know from archeological finds of crucifixion victims, his arms would have been pulled back so that the shoulders become dislocated.

*Ps 22:14 My bones are out of joint.*

Then they'd raise the cross and it would have been dropped into its stand. Once Jesus was hanging vertically the weight of his body and the position of the arms put great stress on the diaphragm and would put his chest in an inhaled position. So in order to exhale, Jesus would have had to push up on his feet and take a breath. But each time he did this he'd be pushing on the nail in his feet tearing the muscle until it locked against the tarsal bones in his feet.

Finally with the pressure on his chest eased he'd be able to exhale. But then the strain and pain of holding himself up would tire him out and he'd have to relax down again. And so would begin the torturous task of exhaling again. This would go on until Jesus would literally be beyond the point of exhaustion and would not have enough strength to breathe.

In fact if you recall, the soldiers came by and broke the legs of the two thieves next to Jesus. Why do you think they did that? Because then the victims wouldn't be able to push themselves up to breathe, and would suffocate to death. They did this because the Jewish people had asked that no one would be hanging there over the Shabbat, the Sabbath. But when they came to Jesus, he was already dead. So they didn't break his legs. They didn't need to.

But then how did he die? Or did he just swoon and they thought he was dead? Well for one, if you were not dead, you couldn't breath without lifting yourself up to breath. They could see

that. But more over, as his breathing slowed down, our Lord would have gone into respiratory acidosis, which means that the carbon dioxide that he couldn't exhale would have dissolved back into his blood causing the acidity of his blood to increase. This would lead to an irregular heartbeat. Jesus would have felt his heart become erratic and would have known the moment of his death was near - at which point he said: Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit.

And then he died of cardiac arrest.

For God so loved the World that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life.

*Is 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the sin of us all.*

Roman historians tell us that no less than 4 executioners had to confirm the death of a crucified criminal. And as we have just seen, the Romans were very intimate with every form of death, they were experts in torturing and prolonging death and they were experts in killing. Furthermore, if a crucified person were to show up alive a few days later, the Roman executioner would be executed himself. I don't think they were in the habit of making mistakes.

Second, John tells us that the Roman centurion pierced Jesus' side with a spear, and blood and water gushed out. Not knowing anything else but this fact, a doctor can tell you immediately that not only was the victim dead, but he can tell you what the victim died of.

"Heart failure, due to shock and constriction of the heart detected by the presence of fluid in the pericardium." Some years ago I went to a class reunion, one of my old class mates, who I don't think is a Christian had completed medical school and was in his final year of internship. I was witnessing to about 4 of them and when I got to this point, I turned to him and asked "what does it mean if blood and water flowed out of the cut?" without a moment's hesitation he blurted out "he died of Heart failure"

and then continued to explain it to us, much to the amazement of the rest of my classmates. Just knowing that fact, 2000 years later a medical student can tell you that Jesus was dead!

The technical reason? The heart has stopped which results in the collection of fluid in the membrane around the heart, called pericardial effusion; as well as the collection of fluid around the lungs, which is called pleural effusion. This can't happen if the heart is still beating. So if you see the pericardial effusion you know the person is dead.

My heart is like wax.....

And remember John the Apostle couldn't have easily known this fact. He was a fisherman not a doctor, all he knew is that when the Roman soldier pierced Jesus' heart, blood and something clear like water flowed out.

But even given all that, the death blow to this theory that Jesus didn't die but swooned was delivered strangely enough by an **opponent** of Christianity:

**Dr David Strauss says:**

" It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment; who required bandaging strengthening and indulgence,

and who at last had died  
could have given to the disciples the impression that he was a Conqueror over death and the grave,  
how could this weak and dying person convince them that he had triumphantly risen and was the Prince of Life,  
an impression which lay at the *bottom* of their future ministry."

If the disciples had seen Jesus in that condition, they'd have known he didn't die and the last thing they'd think is "He is God". No they'd probably have said " oh poor man - he's not dead yet!"

Christianity isn't a blind faith! It's a rational faith built on a solid historical and logical foundation.

### **SUPERNATURAL**

Well that leaves us with only one option doesn't it? We have studied the case, we have investigated the options and now have come to the conclusion that the likely is impossible.

Therefore the unlikely is the only possibility.

There are no more normal natural explanations left.

The historical documentation of this case leads us to one conclusion. There are far stranger things happening here than we can understand. The supernatural!

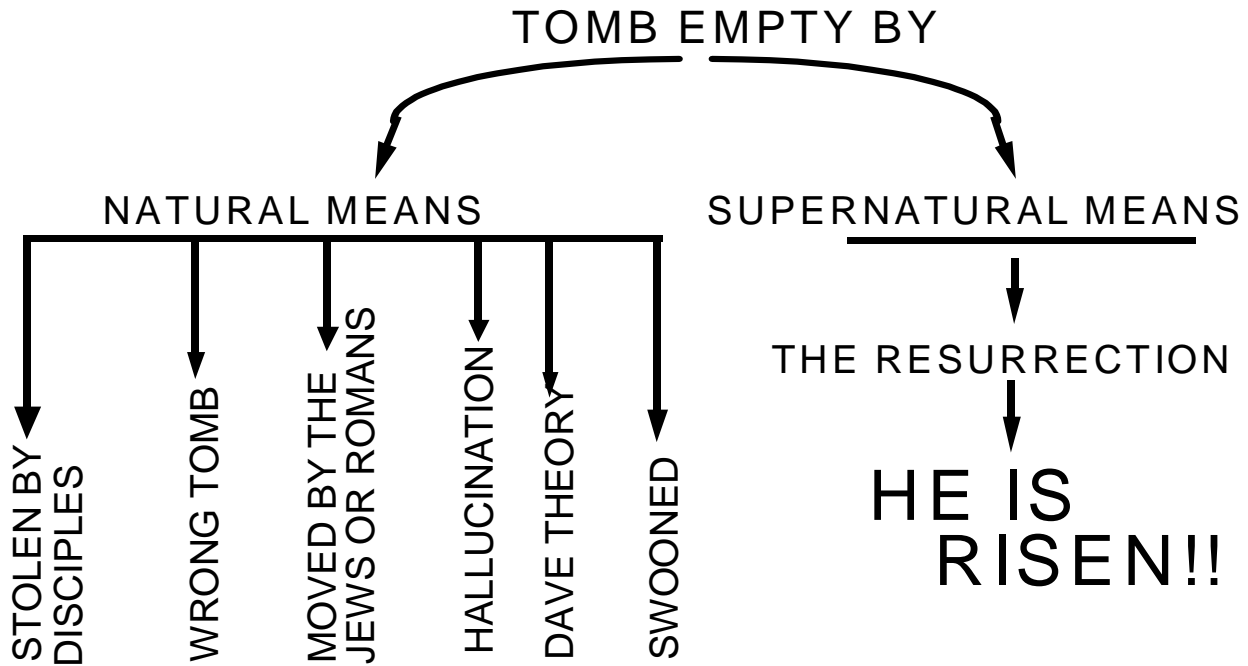
It would take us more faith to believe in some weird combination of plots and coincidences than it does to believe in the fact that Jesus actually rose from the dead.

The fact remains, after all the study of all the possibilities, the only probability is the Supernatural. Oh sure I can't prove it 100%. But I believe that I've shown you enough evidence to make it a very rational and probably event at the least. And what's more important, it is the most cohesive answer available today.

If you go listen to some of the debates by the scholars in this area. Scholars who believe Jesus didn't rise from the dead and scholars who do. You will see that first of all, none of them dispute the fact that the grave was empty. Secondly none of them dispute that the disciples thought Jesus had risen. What they debate is about how the disciples may have been mistaken.

See <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/menus/debates.html> and lookup debates by William Lane Craig.

The Grave was empty because Jesus Christ really rose from the dead. He is RISEN!!!!  
And not only did the **disciples** claim that He had risen, but over 500 people saw him. Including a Pharisee who at first was trying to kill all the Christians, his name was Paul. That would be like Hitler meeting God and then becoming the sanest and most humanitarian Jew for the rest of his life. You see something happened that day in 30 AD, that has changed the world and anyone who has studied the evidence .....forever.



### Conclusion

Now when I started this, I told you that you don't need any faith to believe that Jesus existed. And I've shown you that. Then using the Bible I showed you how you need some faith to believe that Jesus is God. In fact I am convinced it would actually take more faith in the improbable and the absurd to believe that Jesus WAS NOT God than it takes to believe that He is God.

If you are not a Christian, as I said, you need no faith to believe Jesus existed and you need some faith to believe He is God. But let me tell you where you are going to need **lots** of faith. You are going to need lots of faith to take that step, to accept Christ as your personal Savior if you haven't.

To believe that He will take care of you on a day to day basis.

To believe that when you become a Christian, you don't get bored or lose out on all the fun. In fact life becomes better.

To believe that when you become a Christian, life starts to have meaning and a purpose.

To believe that Jesus really **does** love you.

If you haven't believed in Jesus until now, are there reasons left?

Is there any reason why you shouldn't accept him now?

If you are still not convinced, study the issues again for yourself! There are lots more facts than I can give you in 45 minutes. There is an excellent book that every skeptic and every Christian should buy on this. It's called the CASE FOR CHRIST. It will go through all this in much more detail than we can do justice here.



If you **are** a Christian, you need to get involved with studying this more, so that you can defend your faith in front of others. So that you can have the confidence in times of doubt about your purpose and reason for existence. So that your faith is not built on some vague feeling that you had one day, but on facts. Make a commitment with me today, that you **WILL** make apologetics one of the focuses of your studies. That you **WILL** study the Bible as a tool to witness to other.

**An important point to remember:**

**Many people may say that Jesus did not rise *physically* he only rose spiritually. Or they may say: Jesus rose as a symbolic concept and not in reality. Or that He is alive in our minds and not physically.**

We immediately see that this is all nonsense. The grave was physically empty. The disciples were comparing David's physically full tomb with Jesus' physically empty tomb right from their very first Sermon. So they thought the resurrection was physical and not spiritual. Jesus did not rise only in the spirit. He rose in the flesh. This was an important part of the creed of the early Church.