

Jesus' Resurrection – A Historical Fact



Thank you for curiosity!

Sorry...I'll be reading (no extemporaneous!)

Questions... "Steve! Steve! Steve!"

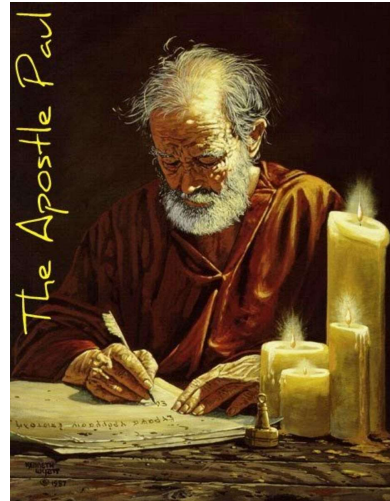
"Outward Facing"

Bribe to come to the second meeting...a copy of the presentation.

Why the Resurrection?

“...If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

1 Corinthians 15:17



Why the Resurrection?

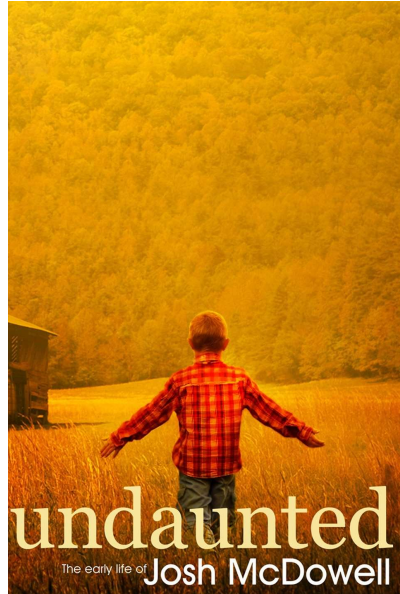
I'm sure you know the answer to this question...if the Resurrection didn't happen as a historical event, we need to all go home and do something else with our time.

The Resurrection is the Keystone of Christianity...take it out and the whole thing crumbles.

Paul said this in 1 Corinthians. “...If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

In our historical approach to the Resurrection, you'll see that Paul is extremely important.

Why the Resurrection?



The Keystone aspect of the Resurrection is made well in these two movies.

Josh McDowell was a cocky smart-guy in Junior College. He was definitely anti-Christian and made fun of them in a public setting. The Christians told him that, if he was able to show that the Resurrection didn't happen, he'd be able to take Christianity apart.

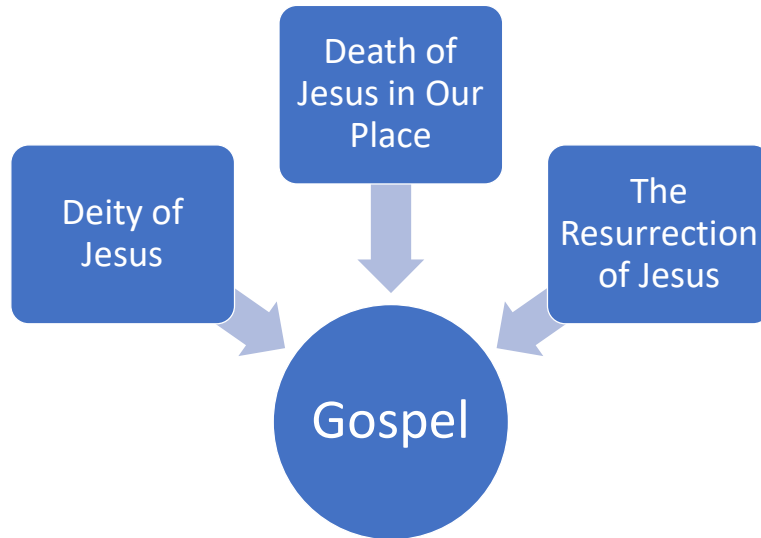
Lee Strobel was a cocky smart-guy at the Chicago Tribune. He was definitely anti-Christian. A Christian co-worker suggested that, if he wanted to prove that Christianity was a fairytale, he needed to go for the jugular of Christianity...the Resurrection.

Both guys went to work to disprove the Resurrection and ultimately came to the conclusion that the Resurrection did happen. It was an actual historical event.

And they both understood that, because the Resurrection happened, it had meaning...great meaning.

Has everyone seen these two movies? If not, I encourage you to watch both of them...a couple of times. If you've already seen them, go back and watch them again and pay special attention to the **profound** change that the realization that the Resurrection was an actual historical event makes on these men's lives.

Why the Resurrection?



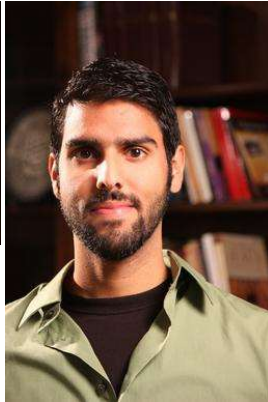
The Resurrection is one of the three essential facts that make up the Gospel.

If we scan through the book of Acts and Paul's letters, we'll see that, though the Gospel might include other facts, these three are foremost. (Read the three.)

“The only thing Christianity has over Islam is the Resurrection.” – Nabeel Qureshi



David Wood



Nabeel Qureshi



Mike Licona



Gary Habermas

This is part of a conversation between these four men following a debate over the historicity of the Resurrection between Shabir Ally, a Muslim scholar and Mike Licona. At this point, Nabeel is still a Muslim. (From *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* by Nabeel)

Mike Licona: “What did you think of [the case for the Resurrection]?”

Nabeel Qureshi: “I think you won in that department, Mike, I’d give you sixty-five and Shabir thirty-five.”

Gary Habermas says: “Hey, that’s great, Mike! That’s a two-to-one ratio in favor of the Resurrection, from the perspective of a thoughtful Muslim. So, Nabeel, you think the argument is pretty good, huh?”

Nabeel: “There’s still room for doubt, but objectively speaking, the Resurrection seems to be the best explanation.”

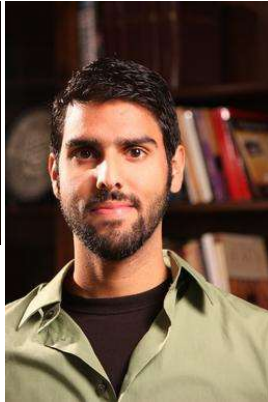
David Wood says; “So Nabeel, are you a Christian yet?”

Nabeel says; “In your dreams. We still haven’t looked at whether Jesus claimed to be God, which is a bigger issue to me. Plus, when it comes time to investigate Islam, you’ll see how strong the arguments can be. It’s untouchable. As far as arguments go, the only thing Christianity has over Islam is the Resurrection.” (statement captured above)

“The only thing we’ve got is the Resurrection?
Buddy, that’s all we need!” – Gary Habermas



David Wood



Nabeel Qureshi



Mike Licona



Gary Habermas

Gary looked at Mike as if he couldn’t believe what he had just heard.

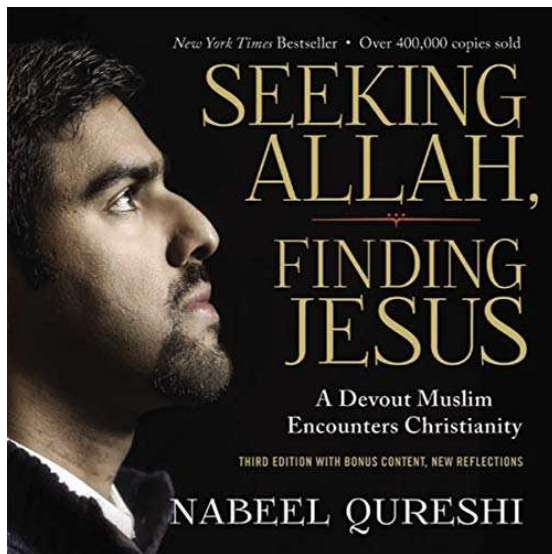
“The only thing we’ve got is the Resurrection? Buddy, that’s all we need!”

Just let that fact sink in for a minute.

If, in this adventure we’re about to jump into, we can show that there’s good evidence that the Resurrection was a historical event...if we can show that it happened...we can then look at the question of...what does the Resurrection mean?

That of course...the meaning of the Resurrection...is the main topic of what our pastors address every Sunday.

Time for a Shameless Plug



This slide has absolutely nothing to do with our lesson, but I can't mention Nabeel Qureshi without mentioning his main book, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*.

This is his testimony book...how he came to Christ.

Everyone's journey to Christ has to be called amazing, because it's a supernatural process. But, Nabeel's journey is extra amazing.

It reads like an action movie and yet, at the same time, includes deep, theological reflection.

You'll see on Amazon that it's a best seller.

Sadly, Nabeel passed away from pancreatic cancer at age 34 back in 2017.

I'm so glad that he documented his journey.

I encourage you to get it and read it.

Focus on Historical Facts – Meaning, Secondary

- “Christ...has been raised from the dead | the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” I Corinthians 15:20
- “Christ died | for our sins.” I Corinthians 15:3
- “Jesus was declared to be the Son of God | by His resurrection from the dead.” Romans 1:4

The name of our little, two session lesson is *Jesus’ Resurrection, a Historical Fact*.

So...our **focus** will be on doing **history**, not on doing **theology**.

That’s an easy distinction to make...we’re going to focus on the question of whether the Resurrection happened as an event in history, similar to the event in history of your birth or your coming to church today.

We’re not going to **focus** on the theological question of what Jesus’ Resurrection means.

These three verses can be split into their historical and theological parts.

(Go through them and show the distinctions. In the first two, the historical part is first. In the Romans verse, the historical part is second.)

Doing good historical work and doing good theological work are two separate disciplines. Our focus is on doing good historical work.

“How do you handle Jesus’ Resurrection?”



If we truly believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, we have a duty to lovingly challenge our ‘neighbor’ ... ‘neighbor’ as defined by Jesus...to consider Jesus.

We could ask them a question like this... “How do you handle Jesus’ Resurrection? What do you do with it?”

In this lesson, we’re going to be looking at the Resurrection as an event that happened at a time and a place...as historians.

We’re going to be learning a little bit about tools that historians...and...crime scene investigators use in order to best figure out what happened in the past...whether that ‘past’ was 2,000 years ago or last week.

We’ll be looking at two historical-studies tools...How Testimony is considered and the Argument to the Best Explanation.



Spoiler Alert: We have good reasons for believing that the Resurrection happened as presented in the Bible.

We're going to be looking at how some scholars have considered the bedrock historical facts regarding the Resurrection and have come to different conclusions.

We'll run their proposals through the Argument to the Best Explanation tool to see how they come out.

It's a fair question to ask why we need to be concerned with what some scholars think...I mean...we have the Scriptures.

The point is that these ivory tower ideas, these proposals, these theories have a way of filtering down to us...through movies, books, etc. For example, Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*.

Some of our 'neighbors' may have heard one of these theories and think to themselves, without giving it much critical thought... "O that's what the Christians refer to as the Resurrection. I don't need to be concerned with that."

Our job is to present the case that the Resurrection did occur as reported in Scripture and that it's an event in history that they do need to be concerned with.

Let's talk.



I understand and appreciate that it's not easy to get our 'neighbors' to engage in serious conversation like this.

But...it is what we're called to do.

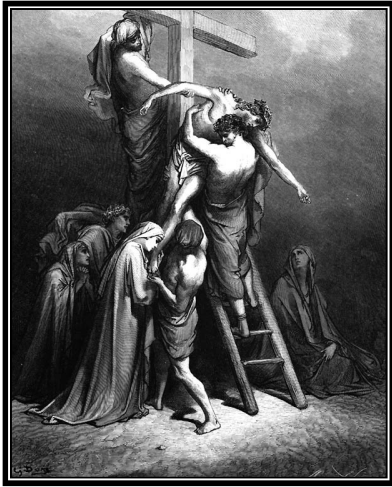
Even if the only thing that results from it is that we're able to put a pebble in their shoe. That is...present a well-argued challenge to their current thinking...we've accomplished a lot.

They're not going to forget it.

Pastor Frank often refers to the spiritual journey that all we're all on.

If our little conversation with them can be a part of pointing them in the right direction on that journey, we've done our job.

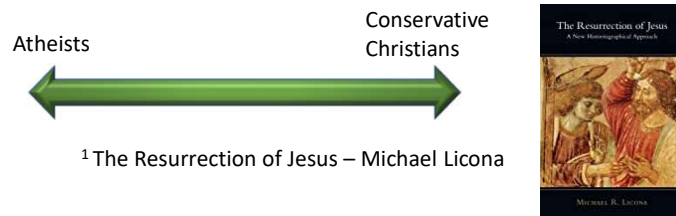
Jesus After the Cross - Draws Attention



What happened next?

“...the subject of more than 3,400 academic books and articles written during the past thirty-five years.”¹

That’s close to 100 per year!



The question of what happened to Jesus after He died on the cross draws a lot of attention.

This question has been the subject of more than 3,400 academic books and articles written during the past thirty-five years.

That’s close to 100 per year!

And...this writing comes from scholars on every point on the continuum from atheists to conservative Christians.

This is just writing at the academic level, never mind the popular level.

This is a subject that commands humanity’s attention...as well it should.

By the way, you see quote marks around that fact. In this presentation on the resurrection, I’m pulling heavily from Michael Licona’s book, *The Resurrection of Jesus* – which was published in 2010.

Thinking Like a Historian – Part 1 - Testimony

Historians (or detectives...or anyone concerned with determining the strength of a person's testimony) use common-sense principles to determine the strength of that testimony. Here are the five main ones...

- Multiple independent testimony usually stronger than single testimony
- Confirmation by a neutral or hostile source is strong
- Embarrassing parts of testimony increase trustworthiness
- Eyewitness testimony is stronger than second or third-hand testimony
- The closer in time the testimony is to the event, the better

[Note: The material on 'testimony' for the next few slides comes from chapter 2 of *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* by Gary Habermas and Mike Licona.]

(Read the top of the slide.)

Was anybody here for Pastor Mike's fantasy trip to Disneyland?

I'll read the five and then we'll quickly look at each one. I'll give a modern-day example of how it applies and then show how each of the five ways we consider human testimony is part of arriving at the historical fact of the Resurrection.

(Read the five.)

Multiple Independent Testimony Usually Stronger than Single – Modern Day



“When an event or saying is attested by more than one independent source, there is a strong indication of historicity.” H&L 37

Here’s our modern day example of multiple independent testimony...

When this accident happened, there were five people waiting for a bus at a bus stop off to the right, just out of this picture.

Before the police arrived, the bus arrived, and three of the original five witnesses to the accident got on the bus and left...leaving two of the original witnesses at the bus stop. Two new people walked up to the bus stop and one of the original witnesses told them about the accident.

When the police arrive, they interview the two drivers and the four people at the bus stop.

Four of these six people, the two drivers and the two original witnesses at the bus stop represent multiple independent eyewitness testimony. Let’s say that there’s some conflict in the testimony of these four. Even though this confuses the situation, the police detective knows that the accident happened and the conflict shows that there isn’t collusion between these four. (Read the caption.)

Multiple Independent Testimony Usually Stronger than Single – Resurrection

1. Jesus' Disciples Sincerely Believed He Rose from the Dead and Appeared to Them

a. They Claimed It

- i. Paul
- ii. Oral Tradition
 - 1. Creeds (I Corinthians 15:3-5) (Independent of Paul)
 - 2. Sermon Summaries (Luke & Acts) (Independent of Luke – Peter/Pentecost)
- iii. Written Tradition
 - 1. Gospels
 - 2. Apostolic Fathers (Clement & Polycarp – knew the apostles)

b. They Believed It

- i. Seven Independent Ancient Sources Attest to the Apostles' Willingness to Suffer and Die for their Claim

Now we apply this same historical principle to the study of the Resurrection.

Just picking one point from that study...the fact that Jesus' disciples sincerely believed He rose from the dead and had appeared to them...here's a list of the multiple independent testimonies to that fact from two perspectives...that they claimed it and that they believed it.

(Read through them.)

Again...just to focus on the name of this historical tool... 'Multiple Independent Testimony'.

...and the fact that, in Resurrection studies...we have this; a lot of it!

Confirmation by a Neutral or Hostile Source is Strong – Modern Day



“If testimony affirming an event or saying is given by a source who does not sympathize with the person, message, or cause that profits from the account, we have an indication of authenticity.” H&L pp37-38

So we go on to the second of our five principles about determining the strength of testimony.

(Read the title.)

Going back to our modern day example of the car accident, let's say that the two bus stop original eyewitnesses say that the car on the right ran the red light.

Now I'm going to throw a new person in here...a passenger in the car on the right...who's a friend of the driver of the car on the right.

In a sense, this passenger is an 'enemy' of the car on the left because his natural inclination is to protect his friend.

Let's say that in his testimony he says, “My friend ran the red light.”

Historians (and detectives) view this a strong confirmation of the reported events.

(Read the caption.)

Confirmation by a Neutral or Hostile Source is Strong – Resurrection



“When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’”
Matthew 28:12-13

So let’s apply this common-sense principle about testimony to our historical study of the Resurrection. (Read the title.)

Here, the empty tomb is the Resurrection event we’re talking about.

The quote is from a meeting of the chief priests and elders. Were they friends or enemies of Jesus and his movement?

(Read the quote.)

So we’ve got enemy attestation that the tomb was empty.

To the professional historian who’s trying to piece together what really happened here, this is historical gold.

Criterion of Embarrassment – Modern Day

"I ran a red light ten years ago and caused an accident."



"I've never disobeyed a traffic signal."

Next on our list of basic investigative skills when it comes to the determining the strength of someone's testimony is the Criterion of Embarrassment.

The police detective asks the drivers of the two cars if they've ever disobeyed a traffic signal. The driver of the car on the left responds this way (read the slide) while the driver of the car on the right responds this way (read the slide).

"The detective may tend to believe the entire testimony of the driver of the car on the left over the other driver because he willingly shared information although it would tend to embarrass or hurt him. He appears to be attempting to tell the truth."

This is the criterion of embarrassment.

Good piece on the Criterion of Embarrassment...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AW0gPI222Qs>

Criterion of Embarrassment – Resurrection

“Sooner let the words of the Law be burnt than delivered to women.” Talmud, Sotah 19a

“But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex...” Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.15

“Any evidence which a woman [gives] is not valid (to offer)...This is equivalent to saying that one who is Rabbinically accounted a robber is qualified to give the same evidence as a woman.” (Talmud, Rosh Hashannah 18)



Just in general New Testament studies, one of the most famous places to apply this is Peter’s three denials of Jesus.

Peter went on to be one of the main leaders in the church which was growing exponentially. We know from watching politics that those who desire positions of leadership tend to present whitewashed pictures of themselves.

Historians have come to the conclusion that Peter’s embarrassing three denials are included because they were actual historical events.

When it comes to Resurrection studies, the included accounts of the women being the first ones to discover the empty tomb and report on it were up against this kind of cultural push back. (Read the slide.)

The Gospel writers...when writing their accounts to inform new believers of the church’s history were well aware of this cultural view of women’s testimony. If you’re trying to persuade people to become Christians, you wouldn’t want to include any embarrassments. Again, it’s thought that it is included because that’s how the actual events unfolded. – Criterion of Embarrassment - Helps discern true testimony

Eyewitness Testimony is Stronger than Second or Third Hand Testimony
- Modern Day



The fourth of our five basic investigative skills regarding testimony is that eyewitness testimony is stronger than second or third hand testimony.

Going back to our car accident...

Remember that, at the bus stop, there were two original eyewitnesses. Two new people had walked up to the bus stop after the accident and one of the original witnesses told them about it.

What if all of the original eyewitnesses had left the scene before the police arrived...leaving just the two who had heard the account of the accident from one of the originals?

The police interview these two but understand that it's a secondhand account that they're getting.

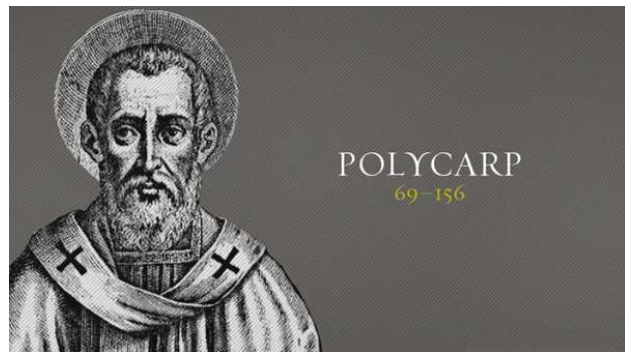
In a court of law, this second-hand account might be rejected as hearsay, but historians have to consider secondhand testimony as they try to piece together an event.

Eyewitness Testimony is Stronger than Second or Third Hand Testimony
- Resurrection

Clement – Bishop of Rome
– Died 99 AD



Polycarp – Bishop of Smyrna
– Died 156 AD



We've met Clement and Polycarp before.

They were mentioned six slides ago in the multiple independent testimony list.

Both of these men knew some of the apostles. Clement especially knew Peter and Polycarp especially knew John. Both Clement and Polycarp taught that the apostles had taught that the Resurrection really happened; that it was an actual historical event. So...Clement and Polycarp are secondhand testimony – certainly not as strong as eyewitness testimony...but...considered.

Clement and Polycarp help us in a different way as well. They show that the Resurrection account wasn't a legend that developed over time. That's a proposal that's been made in the past...that later Christians invented the Resurrection.

But Clement and Polycarp's writings show us that the apostles were talking about Jesus' resurrection right from the very beginning...no legendary development.

The Closer in Time the Testimony is to the Event, the Better – Modern Day



The last of our five common sense principles to determine the strength of testimony is this one...the closer in time the testimony is to the event, the better.

Let's say that 30 years have passed since the accident and all original eyewitnesses have passed away.

All of a sudden, a person comes forward and gives a totally different evaluation of the accident. He wasn't an eyewitness. But, he says that one of the original eyewitnesses who got on the bus before the police arrived, had told him that the accident appeared staged...

...that the driver in the car on the right had staged the accident in an attempt to kill the driver of the car on the left.

So here we have secondhand testimony...definitely weaker than eyewitness. It's late testimony...which can tend to reduce its weight.

And...it's conflicting testimony. This 'staged accident' idea was never mentioned by the two original eyewitnesses. The point is that early, eyewitness testimony carries more weight than late, secondhand, and conflicting testimony.

The Closer in Time the Testimony is to the Event, the Better – Resurrection

"[whom] we have heard, [whom] we have seen
with our eyes...and our hands have touched..."
1 John 1:1

"Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here;
see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into
my side..." John 20:27

"...They came to Him, clasped His feet and
worshiped Him." Matthew 28:9

"Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh
and bones, as you see I have. ...He took [the
broiled fish] and ate in in their presence."
Luke 24:39,43

60-100 AD - 30-70 years after Resurrection
(Teenage Apostles) (Eyewitness)

"...Then the Savior appeared, not in his
previous form but in invisible spirit. He
looked like a great angel of light, but I
must not describe his appearance.
Mortal flesh could not bear it..."

The Wisdom of Jesus Christ 200-400 AD
(Secondhand)

Let's apply this same principle about testimony to the Resurrection.

In the left column, we've got quotes from the NT which refer to the **physicality** of Jesus' resurrected body. (Read them) These are early and, with the exception of Luke, eyewitness reports. (But...Luke did interview eyewitnesses.)

It's thought that the apostles were probably in their late teens when they started to follow Jesus. So, if the Resurrection took place in about 33 AD and John was, let's say 18, when it happened, that makes him age 85 at the upper-limit of the writing of his gospel in AD 100. Definitely doable...and we know that John lived a long time.

So...we've got early and eyewitness reports in the NT.

We've all heard about these "lost gospels". Earlier, I mentioned the book and movie, *The Da Vinci Code*. That was based on three lines that Dan Brown pulled out of The Gospel of Phillip, which most scholars think was written in the third century.

Look at this quote from another one of "the lost gospels". (Read It.) Notice its emphasis on the **non-physicality** of the resurrected Jesus. Notice the date range of its writing. Very late, very secondhand, and conflicting. So...in our testimony scale, where does the weight go?

Thinking Like a Historian – Part 1

Historians (or detectives...or anyone concerned with determining the strength of a person's testimony) use common-sense principles to determine the strength of that testimony. Here are the five main ones...

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Here's the slide we looked at when we started this look into the five main ways that testimony is weighed.

They're common sense – we use them every day.

Just take a moment to mentally read through these.

Normal Rules of Testimony – Case for Resurrection Has ‘Historical Weight’

- Multiple independent testimony
- Confirmation by hostile source
- Embarrassing elements
- Eyewitness testimony
- Close in time



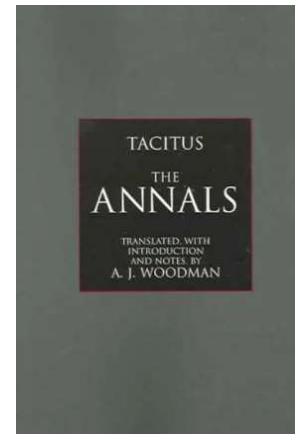
As we sum up this section on the common-sense principles of how testimony is considered both in doing historical studies and in our legal system, it's important to see that the testimony that we have about the Resurrection has historical weight.

When a historian is studying an event that's alleged to have happened in the past that wasn't videoed (as a lot of events are today), they start with a mental scale in their mind. The scale starts in the balanced position. As they study the material, the scale may stay in the balanced position because there just isn't enough material to move one side up or down. There isn't enough to show that the event didn't happen or that it did happen. So...the scale remains balanced.

Here the alleged event is the Resurrection. Using the normal rules of testimony, we have all five elements. This puts a lot of weight into the 'IT HAPPENED' side of the scale.

Again...just mentally drink this in.

The Bible as a Historical Document



I want to make the point here that, when we're making this historical argument for the Resurrection, we're not taking a 'For the Bible Tells Me So' approach.

When we're referring to the writings of the authors of the New Testament, we're viewing them as historical documents...the same as we'd view the writings of Tacitus who wrote a history of Rome (at about the same time the New Testament was being written).

In this historical argument, we're not claiming that the Bible is inspired by God or that it's without error, we're referring to it simply as a historical document. This basic, minimal approach is accepted by scholars of all stripes.

Certainly, the Bible is inspired and without error.

But that understanding will come later in the journey of the current non-believer whom we're sharing this information with.

And certainly, I hope that your faith...as followers of Jesus...is increased as you see the strength of the historical argument for the Resurrection...always keeping in mind what the Resurrection means.

A Summary of the Summary: Thinking Like a Historian – Part 1 “Testimony”

- Five Common Sense Principles of Testimony: Got ‘em!
- New Testament Narratives: Treated like any other ancient document



I want to hang out here for one more slide before we move onto the next point.

This was the first part in our project of learning how historians do their work. And again, by ‘historian’ we mean a person who’s working in the traditional role of a historian; it can mean a detective who’s trying to figure out something that happened just a year ago in a particular crime; it can mean anybody who’s trying to figure out what happened in the past, be it recent past or ancient past, regarding human history.

Human Testimony: There are proven, common sense principles of testimony that we can apply to the NT narratives about the Resurrection. The weight is strong for that being reliable testimony.

The New Testament documents themselves: We’re treating them like any other ancient documents...with no special privileges or deficiencies.

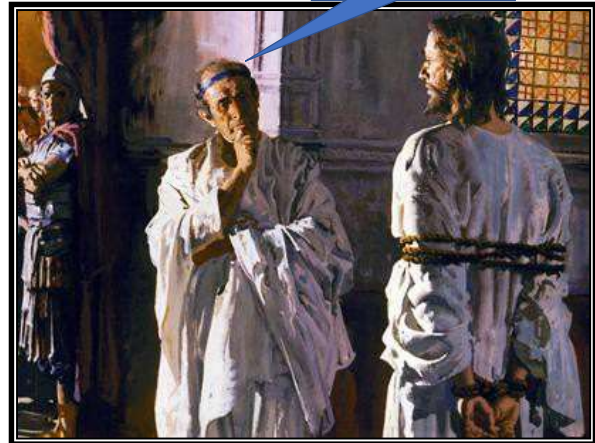
So this sums up; “Thinking Like a Historian: Part 1 – Testimony”

Questions? Comments?

Thinking like a Historian – Part 2

What is truth?

Truth is what matches reality...what the world is really like, or really was like in the case of 'doing history'.



We're going to put on our professional historian hat again and look at the events that followed Jesus' crucifixion to see if we can figure out what happened.

There are lots of theories about what happened following the crucifixion. As basic as this may sound, it still needs to be said, we're trying to discover the truth about what happened following the crucifixion.

Pilate may have been a little sarcastic when he asked Jesus, "What is truth?"

We can answer that question. I'm just reading from the slide here... Truth is what matches reality...what the world is really like, or really was like in the case of 'doing history'.

Tools for Discovering Reality



What are the tools we have for discovering what's real in the world around us?

Well...we've got our five senses...sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.

And...we have the ability to think...to reason through what our senses are telling us.

We've got our five senses **and** critical thinking.



Here are a couple quick examples to show how we combine our senses and critical thinking skills to determine what's real.

Imagine that you're a very young child riding in a car and you see this, with your sense of sight, for the first time.

What do you think you're looking at? Water on the road.

Of course, you announce this to your family.

Fortunate for you, your older, and **very kind** brother is sitting next to you. He says, "You dufus...that's not water on the road; it's a mirage. It's caused by the refraction of light rays due to the different temperatures of air above the road."

So...your sense of sight was working just fine; you just needed a little more maturity in your thinking.

Charlemagne/Carloman



And here's an area where our critical thinking helps us to know reality, the truth...specifically regarding history.

We've probably all heard of Charlemagne...the king of the Franks.

Did you know that Charlemagne had a younger brother named Carloman?

(He's the one on the right.)

For a while, these two brothers were co-regents of Francia.

And then...Carloman died suddenly on December 4th, 771 AD.

His death meant that Charlemagne now ruled Francia by himself.

There's always been a question as to how Carloman died. Was it a natural death? Did Charlemagne have him murdered?

We do know that Carloman wasn't killed by a drone strike. How do we know that?

When our five senses and critical thinking skills are working properly, we can have a good handle on reality.

Thinking Like a Historian - Continued



And again, 'history', includes what we talk about in the court room as well.

Where were you on the night of?...

OK...I'm really dating myself by showing this picture! (I loved this show!)

What's the name of this show?

Argument to the Best Explanation

- Explanatory Scope
- Explanatory Power
- Plausibility
- Less *ad hoc*
- Illumination

Arguments to the Best Explanation...This is an awesome tool we can use in doing history...including criminal investigations...and the Resurrection. When an event has happened in the past and we have certain data about that event, people will come up with theories about what happened.

This argument to the best explanation tool is a process we can go through to discover the theory that best fits the data we have.

This 'tool' has five parts...

Explanatory Scope
Explanatory Power
Plausibility
Less *ad hoc*
Illumination

Those might sound a bit weird; they did the first time I heard them.

I'll try to explain them....provide some 'illumination'.

Explanatory Scope:

- Does the explanation take into consideration all the key facts of the case?

A man is found dead in his home...

- Voice mail on his phone from his doctor discussing his heart condition
- Just been fired from his job
- Last text sent; evidence of affair with former boss' wife



Let's take a quick look at the five parts to this tool...

(Read the slide.)

A detective on the scene says; "It's clear that he was murdered by his former boss."

Does this explanation take all the key facts into consideration?

No...it leaves out the 'heart-condition-fact'.

That's what Explanatory Scope is all about...making sure all the key facts are considered.

Explanatory Power

- The proposed solution makes few assumptions
- The proposed solution gives us the ability to make predictions about how other things may have happened or might happen in the future.



(Read the slide.)

Here, we have an angry store clerk who's about to get fired for insulting a customer.

When she is fired, she blames her behavior on the customer...saying that the customer annoyed her.

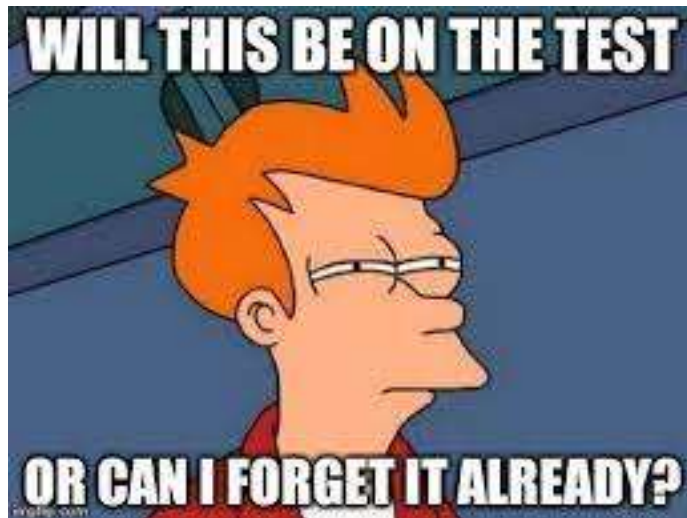
That answer doesn't explain much and it doesn't give us the ability to predict what might happen in the future.

How about this explanation?...

This employee had a history of showing low discipline and low self-control. They'd acted out against customers in the past.

That's a powerful explanation...it gets down to the root cause. And...it allows us to make predictions about what might happen in the future.

Explanatory Power



You don't need to memorize all this.

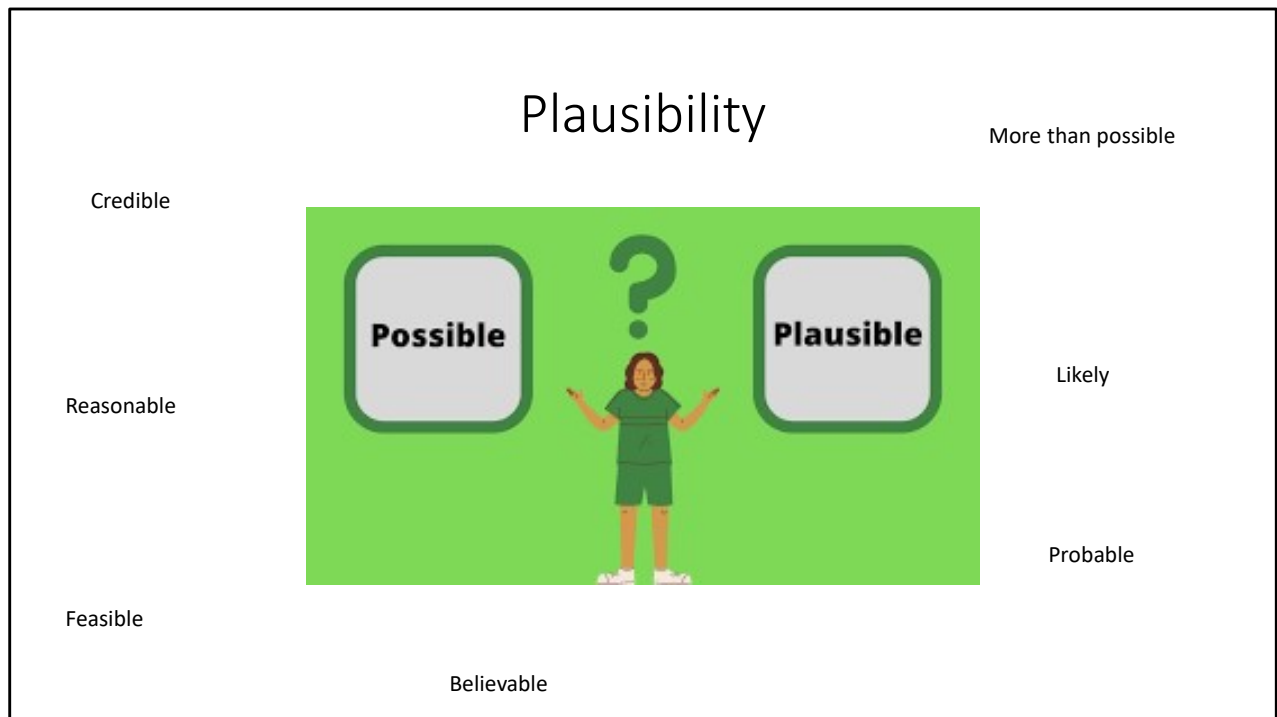
This is simply the foundation for where we're going in our quest to see if the Resurrection, as presented in the Scriptures, is a historical event.

Historians use this tool...Argument to the Best Explanation...in order to try to determine what happened in the past...so we're going to use it.

So...if you're in a conversation with someone and they say something like; "What kind of strange argument are using to say that someone rose from the dead?"

You can say; "This isn't a strange argument; we're using the normal historical method."

So...you can relax...this isn't going to be on the test.



Plausibility...this is our third (of five) criteria in the Argument to the Best Explanation grid.

Plausible...it may not be a word that we use a lot, but it's important.

It means something that is **more than possible**.

I included some synonyms for plausible here so that we can start to get a hook on what it means. (Read them.)

We have to admit that our culture is kind of a Disney culture where phrases like; "Anything is possible" are thrown around without a thought.

"If you can believe it, you can achieve it...anything is possible."

That's what the plausibility criterion is about. People can throw out all kinds of ideas.

The plausibility criterion says, "Let's take a look at this...is it reasonable that it would have happened this way?"

Plausible – Continued...



Here's one more quick slide on 'plausible'...

Imagine this conversation...

Pastor Frank says; "Who stole my last French Fry?!?!"

Pastor Vince says; "It might have been an alien."

Pastor Frank says; "That's crazy; it wasn't an alien...it was you!"

Pastor Vince says; "It's possible that it was an alien."

Pastor Frank says; "Maybe so, but is it plausible...that is believable, reasonable, feasible, likely that it was an alien?"

Pastor Vince says; "You're right...it's not plausible that it was an alien...it was Pastor Graham."

Do you sense the difference between possible and plausible here? What we're looking for is plausibility; a much higher criteria than possibility.

Less *ad hoc*



- Pastor Vince: “Pastor Frank, I don’t think I can justify the cost of your Lamborghini lease to the budget committee.”
- Pastor Frank: “That car helps me to get to church faster.”
- Pastor Vince: “In a normal church budget, the lease of the pastor’s car is between 1.5 to 2% of the overall budget. The Lamborghini lease is 7% of the budget.”
- Pastor Frank: “I have a back problem and the Lamborghini seats are the only car seats that let me drive without back pain.”

Less *ad hoc*: This is our fourth of five criteria in the argument to the best explanation.

We’ve probably heard the phrase, an ‘*ad hoc* committee’. What does that mean?

A committee that was set up to meet a temporary need. *Ad hoc* means something that’s created to solve an immediate problem.

Ad hoc is fine when it comes to making up a temporary committee but *ad hoc* is **not** ok when it comes to making up explanations to bolster a failing argument.

Again, we’ll pick on our pastors to show how this works.


(*Read the dialog.*)


What’s going on here?


Pastor Vince is presenting an excellent argument with excellent data.

Pastor Frank **just wants the Lamborghini**. He’ll **make up** any argument...even though they don’t address what Pastor Vince is presenting. Pastor Frank’s arguments are *ad hoc*.


More on *ad Hoc*...




 Sergio




Lizette



James



"I just have to study art in Italy!"



Just for fun, we'll do one more slide on *ad hoc*; to make sure we have the concept.

Hallmark movies are very *ad hoc*.

At the beginning of the movie, we're introduced to Lizette. Lizette is dating James. And, just by the way the movie portrays their interaction, their relationship feels 'stale'.

But then...along comes Sergio! Sergio is fresh...and very attentive to Lizette. The movie makes sure that we like Sergio. We want Lizette to be dating Sergio. But there's a problem. What's that problem? James!

Now...this is a Hallmark movie; there are certain things we can't do to get James out of the picture...like what?

Suddenly, James announces that it's been his lifelong wish to study art in Italy. He just has to do it! So...he leaves Lizette for Florence. That's *ad hoc*. Something is just made up (James going to Italy) to make the story work the way want it to.

Real life doesn't work this way.

Illumination



Illumination: This is probably the least important of the five criteria...but...it's important.

Sometimes, someone comes up with a theory about how things work, that, if true, provides solutions in other areas – provides illumination in other areas.

Astronomers studying solar eclipses give a good example of this. During a total solar eclipse, because the relative sizes of the Sun and Moon in the sky are exactly the same, only the chromosphere of the Sun is visible. This allowed us to discover the spectrum of light.

Because the science of chemistry had already shown us that different gasses burned with different colors, when we saw the sun's chromosphere, we were able figure out the chemical make-up of the Sun. And this allowed us to figure out the chemical make-up of other stars.

So...the discipline of chemistry provided illumination to the discipline of astronomy.

One field providing illumination in another field.

Illumination #2

- Which proposal best handles the historical facts we have?

So...how would this criteria of illumination apply to the question of what happened to Jesus after He died? I've been giving examples to explain the other criteria in the Argument to the Best Explanation process; here I'm going to get down to the meat and potatoes.

You're going to be hearing naturalistic proposals as to what happened to Jesus after He died. It's these proposals that we'll probably come across with our family and friends. (I'll explain what 'naturalistic' means in just a minute.) The basic naturalistic proposal is that nothing happened to Jesus after He died. Rather, psychological things happened to the disciples and Paul. If one of these proposals comes out best, based on the historical facts we have, we will know more about the field of psychology – that's illumination!

On the other hand, if the proposal that Jesus rose from the dead comes out best based on the historical facts we have, we learn more about Jesus. We learn more about His claims to be God; we learn more about His teaching about the coming of the Kingdom of God; and we learn more about the miraculous deeds He did – that's illumination!

At the end of the day, the question you see up here is the question we're trying to answer...which proposal best handles the historical facts we have?

Horizon/Worldview

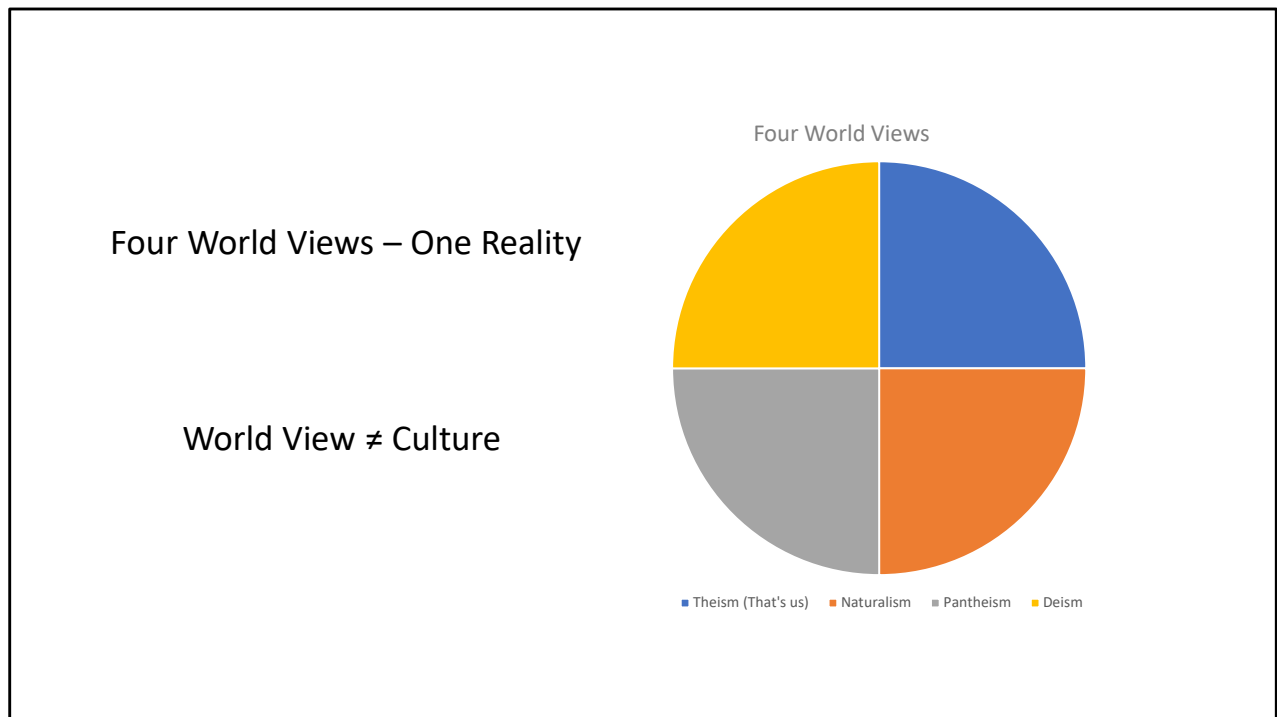


“Horizon may be defined as one’s pre-understanding.” - Licona

“Worldview is our understanding of reality. I have a Christian worldview.” - Steve

We’re going to be talking about what can be considered the historical bedrock that professional historians have arrived at regarding what happened after the crucifixion.

Professional historians are humans, and all humans have a worldview, or...as Mike Licona calls it...a horizon. (Read the two definitions from the slide.)



While this isn't a lesson on world views; it's a lesson on the historicity of the Resurrection...worldviews come up because we're going to be making the point that scholars from all four worldviews agree as to what the historical bedrock is regarding what happened after the cross.

This is important because it means that whoever we're talking to...no matter which worldview they hold...they have to deal with the historical bedrock.

So...here's a tiny little lesson on worldviews...there are only four of them...Theism (that's us), Naturalism (atheism would fall in here). Naturalism is the world view we'll encounter most often. Then there's Deism and Pantheism. I showed them each at 25% just to fill up the pie chart.

Two important notes here...while humans may hold any one of these four world views, there is only one reality. This means that three of the four world views are incorrect.

I also wanted to make the point that worldview and culture are not the same. We hear a lot about culture today. To clarify this, I'll pick on the Samoan culture. A person could be deeply steeped in the Samoan culture and hold any one of these four world views. Worldview and culture are not the same.

The Danger of Worldview When Doing History

- Bias can lead historians (attorneys, scientists, engineers, detectives, all humans) to a wrong conclusion.



Robert Clark: Served 24 years under a wrongful conviction. The (later revealed) details of the case show that both the detective and prosecuting attorney showed clear bias against Clark.

The concepts of 'Worldview' and 'Bias' are very close. (Read the first two parts of the slide.)

We've all heard of horrific examples in the legal system of someone being wrongfully convicted. (Read the caption next to the picture.)

Coming back to our study of history and Jesus' resurrection, let's say that we have a professional historian who holds a naturalistic worldview. In his worldview, God doesn't exist, there is no supernatural realm, there are no miracles.

This professional, naturalistic historian is studying the Bible; he's studying the accounts of Jesus' resurrection. As he puts together all the testimony he finds there, do you think he'll come to the conclusion that Jesus was physically resurrected?

Not if he lets his current worldview rule the day.

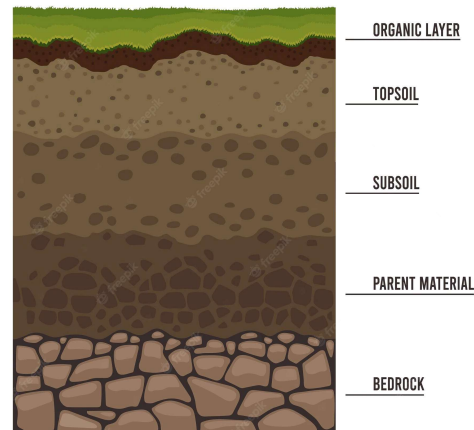
The Benefit of Worldview When Doing History

- 1) Facts that are so strongly evidenced that they are virtually indisputable
- 2) The consensus of contemporary scholars with any one of the four worldviews regard them as historical facts

We've hit bedrock!



STRUCTURE OF SOIL LAYERS



In the last slide, we talked about the danger of worldview when doing history. Here, we're going to talk about the benefit of worldview when doing history.

The New Testament is studied by professional historians who hold anyone of the four world views. When we sift through all their observations and conclusions and look specifically for two things...and find them...we know we've arrived at facts that can be called 'Historical Bedrock'.

And here are the two criteria that we look for (read them).

So Historical Bedrock is whatever facts remain after professional historians of all stripes have looked at the material and come to their conclusions.

(Read the two criteria again.)

‘Consensus’ – More than Counting Noses

Count noses



“I am always much less interested in counting noses than in reviewing arguments.”
– Dale Allison

“A single opinion of a sober historian easily outweighs a majority vote, in my opinion. Historical judgment must remain a matter of argument.” – Wolfhart Pannenberg

We need to be careful here.

We’re not just looking for ‘what the majority of scholars say’.

If you’ve voted in at least one election, you know that the ‘majority’ isn’t always correct.

So...we’re not just counting noses when we’re looking for a ‘consensus’.

We’re looking for conclusions that professional historians, of differing world views, arrive at that are based on the **strongest arguments**.

(Read the quotes.)

Consensus from Diverse Historians



“Annual SBL meetings are attended by members of many theological and philosophical persuasions: liberals, conservatives, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, agnostics and atheists, all from numerous countries and ethnic groups from all over the world.” – Mike Licona



One more thing before we look at the bedrock historical facts...

We’re setting a really high bar in determining what gets to be counted as a bedrock historical fact regarding the resurrection.

These facts need to have strong supportive arguments and they need to form a consensus from diverse historians.

Mike Licona points to the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) as an organization that enjoys the kind of diverse scholars that we’re looking for.

(Read Licona’s quote.)

When we arrive at historical events that have a nearly universal consensus from a diverse group like this, we know we’ve got something.

And Finally...



The Three Bedrock Historical Facts...

It's time to finally look at the three bedrock historical facts regarding the Resurrection.

Now, when we go to that slide, you may think... "Well, yeh...duh! Every Christian knows these things."

But keep in mind how high a bar we've set here for determining **historical bedrock**...the widest possible diversity of historians with strong supportive arguments.

The Three Bedrock Historical Facts

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion.
- 2) Very shortly after Jesus' death, the disciples had experiences that led them to believe and proclaim that Jesus had been resurrected and had appeared to them.
- 3) Within a few years after Jesus' death, Paul converted after experiencing what he determined as a post resurrection appearance of Jesus to him.

(Just read them.)

The Three Bedrock Historical Facts

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion.
- 2) Very shortly after Jesus' death, the disciples had experiences that led them to believe and proclaim that Jesus had been resurrected and had appeared to them. **(Includes Change)**
- 3) Within a few years after Jesus' death, Paul converted after experiencing what he determined as a post resurrection appearance of Jesus to him. **(Includes Change)**

Here are the Three Bedrock Historical Facts again...with one adjustment.

These three facts are written in such a way to include as few words as possible.

This is a good thing because, in a conversation, their shortness allows us to lay out these facts as quickly as possible.

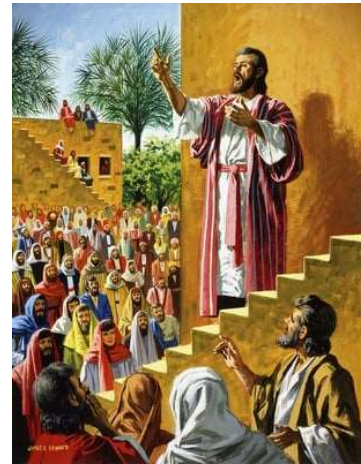
But we need to remember what's included in facts 2 and 3. You'll notice that I added the phrase 'includes change' after them. This is referring to the enormous change in the disciples and Paul's behavior after their experiences.

This is a fact that's not lost on historians and needs to be explained.

Just drink this in for a minute.



Paul Preaching – Areopagus/ Athens



Peter Preaching – Pentecost
Jerusalem

The disciples' amazing turn-about...from abandoning Jesus at his arrest and running scared from the authorities to publicly proclaiming Jesus, in about the most public settings possible and their willingness to now suffer on behalf of their message.

Paul's amazing turn-about...from being the arch-enemy of those who proclaimed Jesus to being arguably the loudest proclaimer of Jesus. And...included here too...is Paul's willingness to suffer on behalf of the message.

This behavior change needs to be explained.

What happened?

What About...?

- The empty tomb
- Jesus' appearance to James (resulting in James' conversion)
- Jesus' appearance to the 500
- The incredibly fast growth of the church...starting at Jerusalem...with the Resurrection being the central message
- Orthodox Jews who believed in Jesus changed their primary day of worship to Sunday (because that was the day that Jesus resurrected)

Now...we may see these three historical facts...Jesus' death by crucifixion, the disciples' experiences, and Paul's experience and want to jump up and down and ask...what about all the other historical facts surrounding this event that also argue for Jesus' resurrection.?...

Facts like... (Read the list.) (Need Habermas' list of 12? See *The Historical Jesus*.)

I think that all these things happen...just as presented in Scripture.

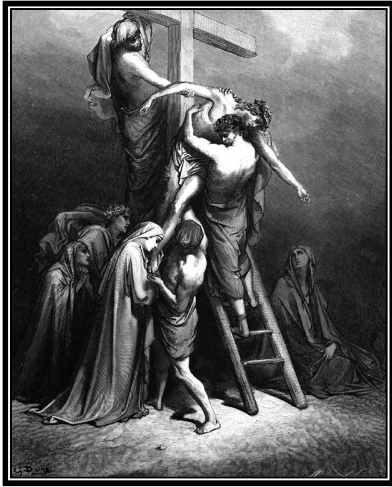
But...they're outside of the **extremely high bar** we set for ourselves by only including 'Historical Bedrock'. That is...facts that are so strongly evidenced that they are virtually indisputable and the consensus of contemporary scholars with diverse worldviews regard them as historical facts.

By the way...the empty tomb is just outside the historical bedrock criteria. It has a consensus of about 75%. It may be that, in the future, it will be included.

So...we've got this list of just three items as historical bedrock. As you'll see...they're all we need.

And...we can have confidence to present these three items as historical facts because of the support they have from professional historians of all stripes.

Jesus After the Cross - Draws Attention



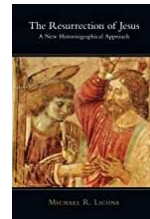
What happened next?

“...the subject of more than 3,400 academic books and articles written during the past thirty-five years.”¹

That's close to 100 per year!



¹ The Resurrection of Jesus – Michael Licona



We'll start with a tiny review of the first session.

We're trying to figure out what happened after Jesus' crucifixion.

Again, this is a subject that draws a lot of attention.

Normal Rules of Testimony – Case for Resurrection Has ‘Historical Weight’

- Multiple independent testimony
- Confirmation by hostile source
- Embarrassing elements
- Eyewitness testimony
- Close in time



We learned that the professional historian (or detective) has a ‘Testimony Tool Chest’ which helps them to figure out the strength or weakness of human testimony.

Here’s the Testimony Tool Chest! (Read them.)

If you’ve got all these things...you’ve got strong testimony.

And...in Resurrection studies, we’ve got it all.

This puts much historical weight on the ‘It Happened’ side of the Resurrection question.

Regarding embarrassing elements...does anyone remember what fact we find in Resurrection studies that’s embarrassing? Why was it embarrassing?

Argument to the Best Explanation

- Explanatory Scope

- Explanatory Power

- Plausibility

- Less *ad hoc*

- Illumination

Historical Bedrock

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion.
- 2) Very shortly after Jesus' death, the disciples had experiences that led them to believe and proclaim that Jesus had been resurrected and had appeared to them.
- 3) Within a few years after Jesus' death, Paul converted after experiencing what he determined as a post resurrection appearance of Jesus to him.

We also learned about another tool that historians use...the Argument to the Best Explanation.

It has five parts. (Read them.)

We walked through what each of the five parts mean.

In this week's lesson, we'll be applying them, so we'll be reminded of what they are and how they work.

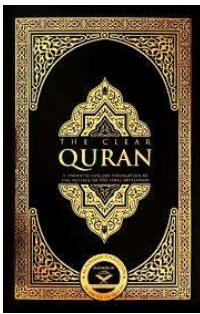
We also arrived at what's considered the 'Historical Bedrock' in Resurrection studies.

These are three historical facts that are affirmed by the widest possible diversity of historians with strong supportive arguments.

(Read them.)

Any Proposition as to What Happened to Jesus After the Cross Must Include the Historical Bedrock.

“And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so...” Qur’an - Surah 4:157



Historical Bedrock

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion.
- 2) Very shortly after Jesus’ death, the disciples had experiences that led them to believe and proclaim that Jesus had been resurrected and had appeared to them.
- 3) Within a few years after Jesus’ death, Paul converted after experiencing what he determined as a post resurrection appearance of Jesus to him.

So...we come to this conclusion: (Read the title on the slide – twice.)

Let’s look at what the Qur’an says about Jesus’ death on the cross. (Read the quote.)

So...does the Qur’an’s position include the three criteria of the historical bedrock?

It doesn’t. It denies the first criteria. Keep in mind the very high bar we set on what’s included in the historical bedrock.

So...the Qur’an’s position is to be rejected as not true.

We learned that one of the key things professional historians look for when reading documents that report on an event is how close in time that document is to when the event happened. The closer in time, the better. The Qur’an was written over 600 years after Jesus’ ministry. That’s a very late document.

There are a lot of people who believe the Qur’an’s position on this. The Qur’an doesn’t offer any good arguments in support of this statement.

So....intellectually, Islam’s view on this is in the same position as the Flat Earth Society’s view on the shape of the earth.

Weighing Naturalistic Proposals

Naturalism: A worldview in which nothing exists except nature...the natural world...the physical universe.

Historical Bedrock

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion.
- 2) Very shortly after Jesus' death, the disciples had experiences that led them to believe and proclaim that Jesus had been resurrected and had appeared to them.
- 3) Within a few years after Jesus' death, Paul converted after experiencing what he determined as a post resurrection appearance of Jesus to him.

Argument to the Best Explanation:

Explanatory Scope

Explanatory Power

Plausibility

Less ad Hoc

Illumination

The most common kind of objection to the Resurrection as its presented in Scripture...that is, that it was a supernatural event is that it can be explained naturalistically..

Let's define what naturalism is. Here we go. (Read the definition of naturalism.) [Note: Excellent, longer definition in H&L on page132.]

So...to someone who currently holds a naturalistic worldview, does God exist and can there be supernatural events? (No!)

The Bible is 'Big Stuff' in the academic world. There are those who try to ignore it, but it just won't go away.

So...how do scholars who currently hold a naturalistic worldview deal with these events as recorded in Scripture...this historical bedrock?

Weighing Naturalistic Proposals

Naturalism: A worldview in which nothing exists except nature...the natural world...the physical universe.

Historical Bedrock

- 1) Jesus died by crucifixion.
- 2) Very shortly after Jesus' death, the disciples had experiences that led them to believe and proclaim that Jesus had been resurrected and had appeared to them.
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Argument to the Best Explanation:

Explanatory Scope

Explanatory Power

Plausibility

Less ad Hoc

Illumination

Well...some change their worldview! (We are free to do that!) They come to the conclusion that the naturalistic worldview is incorrect...God exists...Supernatural events (miracles) are possible...Jesus was physically resurrected.

But...those who choose not to move away from naturalism...how do they deal with this historical bedrock?

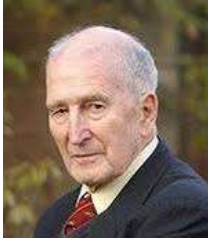
We're going to be looking at **THE FIVE LEADING** naturalistic proposals regarding the Resurrection events.

Of course, these proposals are going to deny that the physical Resurrection took place.

How do they deny it...naturalistically?

How do they handle the three items in the historical bedrock and how do they handle the five criteria of the Argument to the Best Explanation?

Worldview Flippers



Antony Flew – Design in Biology



Lee Strobel – The Resurrection



Pastor Frank - Fulfilled Prophecy



Craig Keener - Realized that life is meaningless...unless it's eternal



C.S. Lewis – Universal Law



Josh McDowell – The Resurrection

We are free to change our worldview; to flip it. Here are pictures of six worldview flippers. Some you might know, some not

These are six people who had an atheistic/naturalistic worldview who flipped over to the theistic worldview.

Under their pictures is shown the main intellectual reason why they made the flip.

We've already mentioned Lee Strobel and Josh McDowell for whom, it was this process that we're going through right now, studying the proposed resurrection by using the normal historical-studies tools.

Pastor Frank, in a message he gave just a couple months ago, gave his intellectual worldview flipping reason.

I want to hang on Craig Keener for a second. This is an amazing man...as they all are!

Tell Keener's story – book on Miracles (have it?) Teaches at a tiny Christian university in Kentucky – Asbury University

Weighing Naturalistic Proposals

- The disciples stole the body
- The Swoon Theory: Jesus didn't die on the cross
- The Wrong Tomb Theory
- The Twin Theory: Jesus had a secret twin brother (who...after Jesus' death, came forward 'as Jesus')
- Gardener reburied the corpse because visitors were trampling his lettuce seeds
- Egyptian trickery (faked death)
- An invented myth - just like all the other dying and rising gods

We'll be looking at current naturalistic proposals to the Resurrection. These are the mainline responses from well-known scholars.

That is, we won't be looking at fringe proposals. I take that back. This is a group that likes to laugh so we'll look at one slide dedicated to a fringe view.

In the years since the Resurrection, there have been many naturalistic proposals to the Resurrection.

The first is right in the Scriptures...that the disciples stole the body.

Of course, this proposal ignores items two and three in the historical bedrock: The disciples experiences and Paul's experience.

There was the Swoon Theory; that Jesus didn't really die on the cross. This ignores the first historical bedrock – Jesus died on the cross.

There was the Wrong Tomb theory. Over the centuries, there have been many naturalistic proposals.

Weighing Naturalistic Proposals

- The disciples stole the body
- The Swoon Theory: Jesus didn't die on the cross
- The Wrong Tomb Theory
- The Twin Theory: Jesus had a secret twin brother (who...after Jesus' death, came forward 'as Jesus')
- Gardener reburied the corpse because visitors were trampling his lettuce seeds
- Egyptian trickery (faked death)
- An invented myth - just like all the other dying and rising gods

A whole bunch of these theories cropped up in the 1800's.

And here are the other main ones (Read them, starting with Twin).

Interestingly, over the years, these naturalistic proposals have been debunked by **other naturalists**.

Weighing Anti-Supernaturalistic Proposals



David Strauss: 1808 - 1874

Addressing Swoon Theory – that Jesus didn't die on the cross:

"Suppose that a man was removed from his cross, half dead, buried in a tomb and somehow re-energized after a few days. Having awakened from his stupor and wanting out of the dark tomb, he places his nail-pierced hands on the heavy stone blocking his entrance and pushes it out of the way. He then walks blocks on pierced and wounded feet in search of his disciples. Finally, he arrives at the place they are staying. He knocks on the door, which Peter opens only to see a severely wounded and dehydrated Jesus who is hunched over. He looks up at Peter and, through his extreme pain grimaces and says, "I am the first-fruits of the general resurrection!" (313)

Would Peter and the disciples believe that he was the risen prince of life?

Here's a great example of a naturalist disproving a naturalistic proposal – David Strauss, a German scholar

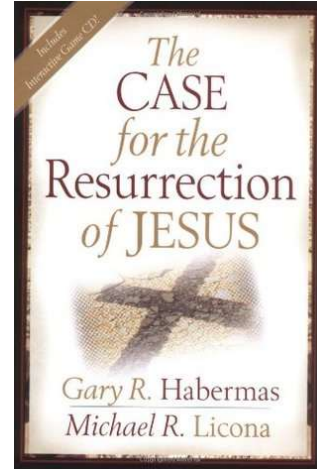
(Read the slide.)

This process has happened with all the naturalistic theories listed on the prior slide.

That is...people who are skeptical about the Bible...and who might want one of these naturalistic theories to be true...have argued against them.

This is an important point...

“If most skeptics are willing to reject a natural theory, even though that theory supports their opposition to Jesus’ resurrection, it must be that the [natural] theory cannot be supported by the evidence.” (p46)



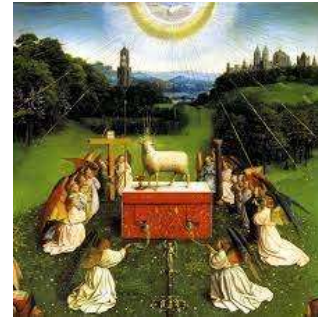
And here is that point... (Read the slide.)

I encourage you to have this book in your tool chest. It will be on the list of books at the end.



“...Daniel had a dream,
and visions passed
through his mind...
Daniel said: “In my
vision...” Daniel 7:1,2

“Peter...fell into a trance.”
Acts 10:10



“I saw in my vision...”
Rev. 9:17

The purpose of this slide is to give you some preparation for what’s coming up.

You’re going to be hearing what are the current main naturalistic scholarly attempts to answer the question; “What happened after the cross?”

Quite frequently, you’re going to be hearing it proposed that the disciples and Paul were having a vision, in a trance, in an altered state of consciousness when they ‘thought’ they saw a resurrected Jesus.

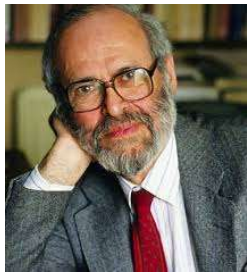
This is the main naturalistic idea. It comes with different seasonings.

This slide is to show that, indeed, there are lots of examples of visions in the Bible and two trances.

The point is that the Bible always **tells us** when a person is seeing a vision or in a trance. In the narratives that describe the disciples’ or Paul’s encounters with the risen Jesus, none of the vision or trance language is there. Also, when a vision or trance is happening in Scripture, it’s always to one person. There is never a group vision or a group trance.

Geza Vermes (1924 – 2013)

1. Empty Tomb (Women – Criterion of Embarrassment)
2. Jesus' appearances are "apparitions"
3. Rational people don't think of a bodily resurrection
4. There is no supernatural
5. Jesus' followers had a "powerful mystical experience"
6. Doesn't mention Paul
7. We can't know what really happened



Bedrock

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

Geza Vermes was a British scholar. "He's best known for his complete translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls into English" (Wikipedia)

This is a summary of his views on the Resurrection from his book entitled *The Resurrection* which was published in 2008.

(Read through them with some comment.)

I put the Historical Bedrock down in the corner just to remind us that it is the Historical Bedrock so any attempt to explain what happened needs to include all three pieces.

Let's look at Vermes' position...

1. Grants the empty tomb (just outside of bedrock)
2. "Apparitions": Luke 24:36...but then...24:39
3. Rational People – No physical resurrection
4. There's no supernatural
5. Jesus' followers had a powerful mystical experience – NT: physical, not mystical
6. Doesn't mention Paul
7. We can't know what really happened (Does his worldview prevent it?)

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

Let's take a look at Vermes' position... (Read #1)

#2: Scholars agree that, after the cross, Jesus is described as being able to show up and then just disappear. What's going on here? In Luke 24:36, Jesus is described as just showing up where the disciples are at. Because of this, Vermes concludes that Jesus is just an apparition. But then, two verses later, Jesus says, "Touch me" (Vermes ignores this.)

#3 and #4: Vermes makes these statements without any argument for them. So, what we really have here is just a statement of his worldview. We all need to be aware that we have a worldview and be able to argue for it. If I can't argue for my worldview, maybe it's time to get a new one.

#5: NT describes Jesus' resurrected body as being physical.

#6: Vermes doesn't mention Paul. This means that his argument doesn't include the full scope of the historical bedrock; it fails the Explanatory Scope test!

#7: This appears to be another statement of Vermes' worldview.

Vermes' argument fails...non-argued worldview and no mention of Paul. Paul is crucial because he was an enemy of Jesus' followers...until his experience.

Michael Goulder (1927 – 2010)

- 1) Peter: Had a hallucination caused by grief/guilt
- 2) Disciples: After Peter shared his hallucination, they had a group hallucination
- 3) Paul: Had secret doubts about Judaism and Christianity – Gentile friend – hallucination
- 4) Disciples taught a ‘spiritual’ (immaterial) resurrection; Paul taught a physical resurrection
- 5) Over time, speculations crept into the Jesus story. The empty tomb was added and Paul’s physical resurrection story won the day



Vermes: We can’t know what really happened.

Goulder: We can know what happened; it was psycho-history.

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples’ experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul’s experience, claim, and belief

Michael Goulder was another British scholar.

Here’s a quick summation of Goulder’s position. The first two points are pretty self-explanatory (read them).

Point #3 is interesting. Goulder thinks that Paul’s intense religious upbringing was causing emotional distress and that this was raising doubts in his mind about whether his thoughts about both Judaism and Christianity were correct. When he eventually had a hallucination of Jesus, the fact that he’d had a Gentile friend in his youth caused him to bring his message to the Gentiles.

In his fourth point (read it), Goulder is proposing that there was a ‘split’ between what the disciples were teaching about the resurrection and what Paul was teaching about it.

Point 5 is self-explanatory. (Read it.)

Notice the difference between Vermes’ and Goulder’s positions. (Read them.)

Let's look at Goulder's position...

Psycho-History: "This type of hypothesis has been the most popular naturalistic hypothesis [to explain the resurrection] of the last one hundred years." – Licona p479



"Psychoanalysis is notoriously difficult even when the patient is seated in front of you, but it is virtually impossible with historical figures." – William Lane Craig

Let's look at Goulder's position.

Let's start by looking at that phrase, 'psycho-history' – which may be new to us.

Notice that Goulder is proposing a hallucination by Peter, a **group** hallucination by the other disciples, and Paul having secret doubts. Goulder is doing psycho-history.

Licona gives us a good summation of what psycho-history is. (Read it.)

The picture on the right here is of William Lane Craig, a Christian apologist. I think that what Craig has to say about doing psycho-history is spot-on. (Read it.)

On a side note, I look at this picture of William Lane Craig and I think back to what Vermes said about 'rational people' and that rational people don't think of a physical resurrection.

I'm sorry, but William Lane Craig is probably one of the most rational people on the planet...and he thinks of a physical resurrection, as I'm sure you do and as do I. Are you guys irrational?

Let's look at Goulder's position...

"I have surveyed the professional literature (peer-reviewed journal articles and books) written by psychologists, psychiatrists, and other relevant healthcare professionals during the past two decades and have yet to find a single documented case of a group hallucination..." Gary Sibsby, Ph.D

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

Notice that Goulder's argument covers all the historical bedrock...he assumes Jesus' death and he addresses the disciples and Paul. So...he satisfies the explanatory scope.

Where I think the argument fails is at #4 – less *ad hoc*.

Remember our Hallmark movie definition of *ad hoc* – something that's made up so the story works the way we want it to?

There is no evidence in the narrative of Peter's experience of the resurrected Jesus as a hallucination. Worse yet for this proposal, there isn't any evidence that a group hallucination is even possible (read quote).

Same thing with Paul's secret doubts and a Gentile friend from his youth. There isn't any evidence of these things.

In fact, in the third chapter of Philippians, Paul spells out his Hebrew pedigree. There doesn't seem to be any 'secret doubts' there. Goulder's proposal fails the *ad hoc* test.

Gerd Ludemann (1946-2021)

“Anybody who says that he rose from the dead is faced with another problem – namely, if you say that Jesus rose from the dead biologically, you would have to presuppose that a decaying corpse - which is already cold and without blood in its brain – could be made alive again. I think that is nonsense.” – Gerd Ludemann



“Any historical element behind [Jesus’ Ascension] must be ruled out because there is no such heaven to which Jesus may have been carried.” – Gerd Ludemann

Gerd Ludemann: Like Vermes and Goulder, we’ll look briefly into his position.

We’re going to approach Ludemann backwards. Instead of stating his argument first, let’s start by seeing if there are any clues as to what his worldview is. Here are a couple of quotes from Ludemann; one from a book, one from a debate. Let’s read them.

These quotes are excellent signs that Ludemann had a naturalistic world view; that there is no supernatural. He was an atheist. He doesn’t argue for atheism, he just assumes it. Looking for signs of a person’s worldview is important. Often, people don’t even know that they have a worldview and we can help them by showing that they do have one and that it’s not the only worldview out there.

An important note about the top quote. (Have them look at it.) If the naturalistic world view is true, then this is correct. Christianity is a supernaturalistic worldview. God exists and He transcends nature. He created nature!

Christianity doesn’t teach that Jesus rose from the dead ‘naturally’; it teaches that He was raised from the dead supernaturally – God raised Him!

Ludemann's Position...

- 1) Peter had a hallucination caused by grief/guilt (same as Goulder)
- 2) Disciples: After Peter shared his hallucination, they had a group hallucination (same as Goulder) (Disciples were from lower part of intellectual culture; gullible.)
- 3) Paul: Had secret doubts about Judaism and Christianity. He had a hallucination (same as Goulder; adds Paul's desire to always be #1)

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

Disciples



Paul



(Read the slide.)

The first thing you'll notice about Ludemann's position is that it's very similar to Goulder's. He's doing psycho-history. He includes all the historical bedrock...assumes Jesus' death, addresses the disciples, addresses Paul.

And, again, hallucinations are the answer – both individual and group. Again, there is no evidence in the narrative of a hallucination and no evidence in history that a group hallucination is even possible.

Note what Ludemann adds to his explanation of the disciples; that they were from the lower part of intellectual culture. Therefore, they were gullible to reports of a miracle. I just had to include a picture of an unintelligent disciple here. This proposal...that only unintelligent people acknowledge miracles has a long pedigree and is worth a session of its own. Suffice it to say that it just isn't true. Lots of very intelligent people have a supernatural worldview.

Notice this: After saying that the disciples believed in the resurrection because of their low intelligence, he has to turn around and explain Paul...who's universally understood to be one of the towering intellects of the first century. He does this by diagnosing Paul as a narcissist with a compulsion to always be number one.

Let's take a look at Ludemann's position...

Francine Rivers



Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination



Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

These may seem to be some strange images to show at this point. I'll explain them in a minute.

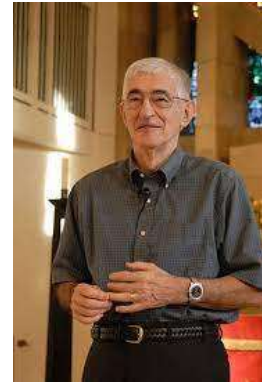
I've talked a lot about worldview. Worldview is so important and lots of people don't even know they have one. And the beautiful thing is that we have the freedom to change our worldview. In his writing, Ludemann drops lots of clues that he holds a naturalistic/atheistic world view.

This means that however Ludemann explains the bedrock, it **has to** have a naturalistic explanation. A supernatural explanation just doesn't fit a naturalistic worldview. He has to resort to doing psycho-history. He **has to** pull out a group hallucination (again, of which, there is no evidence in history), and he has to psycho-analyze Paul with a personality disorder in order to address all the historical bedrock.

We have a name for this kind of historical writing...historical fiction...where you have the hard facts of history and you write a story around those facts. We **love** historical fiction...but we understand that it's historical **fiction**; not real history. Francine Rivers is probably one of the best known Christian historical fiction writers. *Redeeming Love* is one of hers. (His name is Hosea.) Where does Ludemann's proposal struggle in the *Argument to the Best Explanation*? (It's *ad hoc*. It includes made-up elements.)

John Dominic Crossan (1934 -

1. A literal physical resurrection can't be true because it would mean that God exists
2. A literal physical resurrection would be a stumbling block for atheists who want to become Christians (and remain atheists)
3. A literal physical resurrection can't be true because it would mean that Christianity is the only true religion
4. A literal interpretation of the Resurrection narratives neglects the "real meaning" behind the Resurrection



John Dominic Crossan is probably the most 'famous' of the scholars that we'll look at. He was a prominent member of the Jesus Seminar...a group of scholars who held a naturalistic view of Jesus. This group was pretty busy in the 80's and 90's.

You can see that I'm trying to have no more than two or three slides on each of the main non-Christian scholarly views of the Resurrection. This is tough because, for instance, Crossan takes up 39 pages in Licona's book.

But here's a short, four-point, high-level summary of Crossan's position. (Read them.)

From these, can you figure out what Crossan's worldview is?

Crossan's Position...

1. Disciples: Had different experiences of the risen Jesus...trance, a new understanding of the Hebrew Bible, etc.
2. Paul: Trance (critical change in brain chemistry)

Crossan isn't so much interested in history as he is in 'story'.

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

One of the greatest wonders of all human history is... "How did Christianity grow so fast...against all odds?"

Crossan isn't so much looking into the question of the historicity of the Resurrection...whether it really happened or not. Of course, he's already let us know by his worldview that he assumes that it didn't happen. But now he needs to explain that, given the fact that it didn't happen (according to his assumption), how did Christianity grow so fast?

Well...he covers the historical bedrock. He assumes Jesus' death. (#1): He addresses the disciples. They had different experiences of the risen Jesus...some went into a trance, others suddenly had a new understanding of key points in the Old Testament.

(#2): Crossan proposes that Paul also went into a trance. Crossan gets into this and explains that trances are caused by a critical change in brain chemistry.

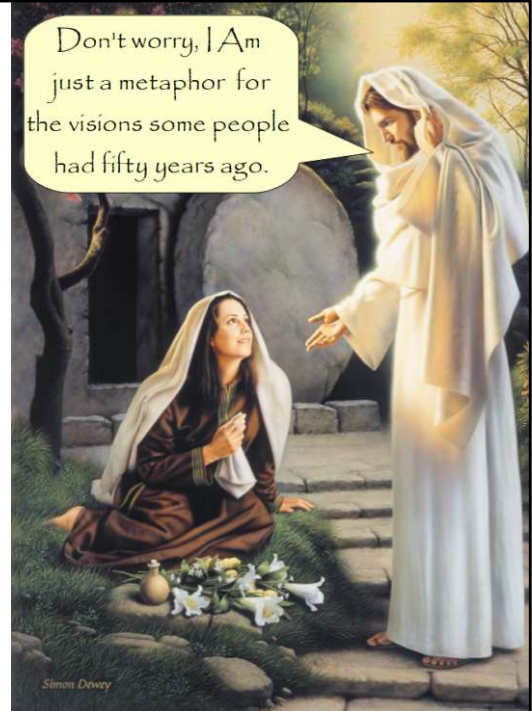
The most fascinating part of Crossan's proposal is his 'story' part. His portrayal of how Christianity grew so fast.

What *is* Crossan's Story?

- 1.) 'Jesus Groups' means separate gospels
- 2.) With Christianity, God's "Great Clean-Up" of the world had begun
- 3.) Each person's choice: Rome or Jesus
- 4.) "Resurrection" is a metaphor

Metaphor: A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable

"The snow is a white blanket."



Well...what is Crossan's story?

First, we start with his proposition that there were different, and competing 'Jesus Groups'. This is very common in naturalistic proposals for the growth of Christianity. The separate gospels were written by competing Jesus groups, with each gospel attempting to promote its own leaders. The gospels are fictional propaganda.

Secondly, Christianity was political. The main opposing parties were the bullies of Rome and the second was the humble program of Jesus which seeks justice in order to gain peace. The Christian political party's job is to clean up the world...from its evil and injustice to peace, holiness, and justice.

Thirdly, each person needs to pick which 'political party' they're in...Rome or Jesus?

Fourthly, In Crossan's story, Paul wasn't writing about a literal, physical resurrection. Paul was using the word 'resurrection' in a poetic way. For Crossan, that poetic way was as a metaphor. I always have to remind myself of what these words mean. So I included the definition of 'metaphor' here. (Read it.) Jesus' [metaphorical, that is, not literal] resurrection was simply a way for Paul to say that Jesus represented God's program.

Let's look at Crossan's position...

1. A literal physical resurrection can't be true because it would mean that God exists (**Many people have thought and do think that God does exist and that there is plenty of evidence of His existence...including the Resurrection.**)
2. A literal physical resurrection would be a stumbling block for atheists who want to become Christians (and remain atheists) (**Huh?**)
3. A literal physical resurrection can't be true because it would mean that Christianity is the only true religion (**That's the whole point.**)
4. A literal interpretation of the Resurrection narratives neglects the "real meaning" behind the Resurrection (**The "real meaning" ("metaphor") is just Crossan's story which ignores the first Christian's own account of quick growth – Jesus' literal Resurrection.**)

Let's re-visit Crossan's four main points and comment about them.

His four main points are here again...in black with some comments in red.

Point 1: (Just read it as it is.)

Point 2: (Read it.) If you do a quick internet search for Crossan, you'll see that his listed occupation is 'historian'. Note that in point #2, Crossan isn't attempting to **do** any history. He's making a statement that's not logically related to the question of whether the Resurrection was an actual historical event. This comment makes it clear that he's confused about what the word 'Christian' means.

Point 3: (Read it.) Again, like point #2, Crossan is avoiding the historical question of whether the Resurrection really happened. He's not acting as a historian here. He's saying; "Can't we all just get along?"

Point 4: (Just read it.) Think back to our study of 'testimony' and the timing of testimony. Earliest/Eyewitness is best while late and contradictory is questionable.

Where is Crossan on the Argument to the Best Explanation?

Alive and very active getting his message out

Super likeable guy

Fun to read

Easy to listen to

Message very popular with those who want a 'naturalistic Jesus'.



Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

Of all the scholars, I've spent the most time on Crossan...and here's why...

(Read my notes.)

Crossan covers the historical bedrock. He assumes Jesus' death. He addresses the disciples (they had a trance). He addresses Paul (he had a trance). So...he included the full scope of the historical bedrock.

Goulder and Ludemann used the word, hallucination. Crossan uses the word, trance. What's the difference? Well, at least one thesaurus says that they mean the same thing. Again...there's no evidence in the narratives of hallucination/trance.

I think we all picked up on the *ad hoc* nature of Crossan's story. The story about the in-fighting between the early Christian groups; Christianity being a political movement...a political movement that grew fast! And...it grew without regard for geo-political boundaries.

So...though I think Crossan passes at #1, I think he fails at #4...his story is *ad hoc*. I also think he fails at #3. His reasons for the rapid growth of Christianity aren't plausible.

Everyone wants Jesus...



...on their own terms.

I just had to drop this slide in at this point...

If you're like me, all these 'stories' about Jesus sound very strange the first time you hear them.

The fact of the matter is...everybody wants Jesus. Here, we've got the Big Christmas Sale Jesus, the New Age Jesus, the Black Liberation Jesus, the Social Justice Jesus, the Islamic Jesus, the Alien Jesus, the Ethical Teacher Jesus and the Mormon Jesus (and there are many more).

(Now...read the slide)... "Everyone wants Jesus...on their own terms."

What we hear in these stories, is not so much historical work as it is the creation of a Jesus the author wants.

The problem with this is...we don't invent God; we discover God.

We don't invent Jesus; we discover Jesus.

Pieter Craffert – D.O.B. ?

1.) The disciples' experiences of the risen Jesus were in the context of an 'individual'...yet... 'group' altered state of consciousness (Jesus walking on the water as an example)

2.) Jesus didn't physically rise from the dead. So...the question that needs to be answered is, How did the narratives that describe Jesus as physically resurrected come to be?

Answer: The disciples had a group vision of a physically resurrected Jesus and made the mistake of thinking they were experiencing reality.



Pieter Craffert is the last scholar we'll be looking at. Craffert is a professor in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa. (I couldn't find his date of birth.)

Of the main scholarly positions in the market right now, Craffert's is probably the most radical. (Read it.)

Pieter Craffert

Craffert: It was nighttime. The disciples were exhausted, sleep deprived, and afraid in the storm. Habakkuk 3:15 collectively came to their minds...

“You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters.” - NIV

“...[T]he disciples experienced a vision they believed was Jesus walking on the sea.” - Craffert



Seeing that Craffert focuses on the account of Jesus walking on the water as a case study of what those same disciples said about the Resurrection, let's look at what Craffert has to say about this event.

Craffert reminds us that the disciples had a Jewish, OT worldview. This is true. But...Craffert's next move is a little interesting. (Read the first paragraph incl. verse.)

So...somehow, the same verse, Habakkuk 3:15 spontaneously comes to the minds of all of them...at the same time.

So...the same OT verse in all their minds combined with their sleep deprivation and fear produced an altered state of consciousness in which they thought they saw Jesus walking on the water. (Read bottom section – focusing on plurals.) What do we know about visions and hallucinations? (Individual...not group)

Still explaining Craffert's proposition here... Of course, it wasn't really Jesus walking on the water. The problem is that the disciples compounded their error by writing this event down as if it were a real!

Study this illustration of the event. What is it that grounds this event in reality and not some altered state of consciousness? (Peter!)

Pieter Craffert

Jesus didn't physically rise from the dead. So...the question that needs to be answered is, How did the narratives that describe Jesus as physically resurrected come to be?

Answer: The disciples had a group vision of a physically resurrected Jesus and made the mistake of thinking they were experiencing reality.



We need to address Craffert's second proposition. Here it is again. (Read whole slide.)

You may have noticed in the last slide that I used the phrase 'altered state of consciousness' as what Craffert says the disciples were experiencing when they **thought** they saw Jesus walking on the water. This is Craffert's preferred phrase for describing the mental state in which the disciples were; seeing things that weren't real. Craffert refers to an author who's written on the subject of how to enter an altered state of consciousness. It's a lot of work to purposely do this and it requires very specific elements and settings.

A quick run through Matthew 28, Luke 24, John 20 and 21, Acts 9, and 1 Corinthians 15 have Jesus appearing at different times, different locations, inside, outside, to individuals, to friends and foes, and to different **sets** of groups. None of the requirements for being in an altered state of consciousness were present in these varied settings.

Due to lack of room on the slide, I included only four of these Resurrection encounters with Jesus.

Where is Craffert on the Argument to the Best Explanation?



Explanatory Scope: Paul not mentioned

Plausibility: Does the proposition include accepted truths? (**Group** Altered States of Consciousness)

Less *ad hoc*? A story which assumes that his psycho-history diagnosis and his naturalistic worldview are true

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

So, we always come back to this. How does this proposition work when it's put to the argument to the best explanation test?

Craffert proposes that the disciples were in a frame of mind regarding Jesus that made them prone to an altered state of consciousness. They had great goals in mind for Jesus; they had tremendous regret and grief regarding His crucifixion. **But...Craffert leaves Paul out.** Whatever frame of mind the disciples were in, Paul wasn't in it. Paul was **hunting** the disciples. As Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus is part of the historic bedrock, this is a big failure for Craffert's argument. "If a proposition can't account for the...historical bedrock, it's dead in its tracks." - Licona

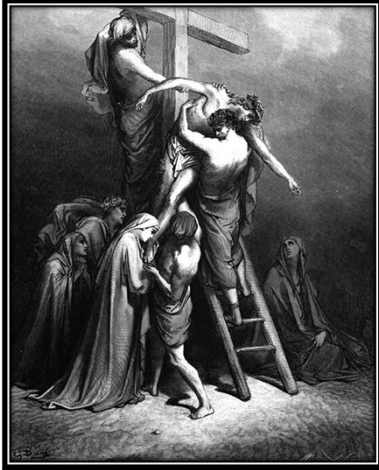
The plausibility test: Craffert proposes a **group** altered stated of consciousness. Like a proposed **group** hallucination...it isn't an accepted truth that a **group** altered state of consciousness...in which everybody is having **the same experience** is possible. So Craffert struggles in the plausibility area as well.

How about less *ad hoc*? Well...like a couple of the others, Craffert is practicing pscho-history. It's all conjecture. He's **assuming** that his naturalistic worldview is true. As such, the Resurrection narratives in the Bible **must be** just a story about human behavior. Craffert's **group** ASC proposition is *ad hoc* - a story created to fill a need.

Final Proposition: Jesus Rose from the Dead

What happened next?

Note: I will only accept certain kinds of answers.



Worldview Check

Is it possible to 'bracket' our worldview?



Finally, we're going to consider the proposition that Jesus rose from the dead.

Here's a reminder of our historical quest...trying to discover what happened after the cross.

We've looked at the five current major proposals from non-Christian scholars. In these proposals, we've seen a commitment to the worldview of naturalism...God doesn't exist. Nothing exists except nature...the natural world.

Because of their commitment to this worldview, these scholars, after asking the question; "What happened after the cross?" are inserting this little comment that I added in here... "Note: I will only accept certain kinds of answers." ...naturalistic ones.

Here's the tough question... Is it possible, when trying to answer this question, for someone to be super-duper honest with themselves and say, "I know that I have a naturalistic worldview. But, as much as possible, when doing this study, I'm going to try to bracket my worldview...to set it aside...and let the evidence speak for itself?" This is not easy, but it is possible.



Lee Strobel



Josh McDowell

Let the historical evidence speak for itself.



{Naturalistic Worldview}

In fact, we've already considered two individuals who did this, specifically regarding Resurrection studies – Lee Strobel and Josh McDowell.

There are many more for whom Resurrection studies was the deal-breaker; it's just that these two came to mind.

They were, in essence, brave enough, to be honest with themselves and decided to bracket their worldview, at least temporarily...knowing that they could grab it back anytime they wanted to...

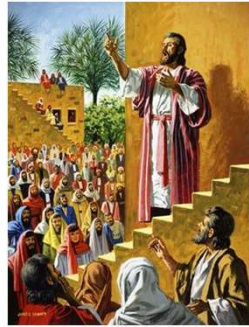
...and let the historical evidence speak for itself. – To see where it might lead.

Final Proposition: Jesus Rose from the Dead

Paul's Claims



Peter's Claims



Paul's Belief



Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

Peter's Belief



Here's a busy little slide.

Again, we remind ourselves of the historical bedrock that's strongly supported by a nearly universal and very diverse consensus of scholars. (Read it.)

The pictures at the top are to indicate Paul and Peter making their claims regarding their experiences of the risen Jesus...which is something we know they did many times.

Built into points 2 and 3 of the historical bedrock is that Paul and Peter **really believed** what they claimed.

How do we know this? (Someone answer?)

We know this because of their behavior. They were willing to suffer, even to the point of death, for their claim. Liars make poor martyrs. That's why I labeled the depictions of their executions as evidence of their belief that they had encountered the risen Jesus.

Confession: I've been leaving something out.



(On this slide, insert a political cartoon regarding a current event. This one is with regard to the classified documents found in President Biden's Oval Office.)

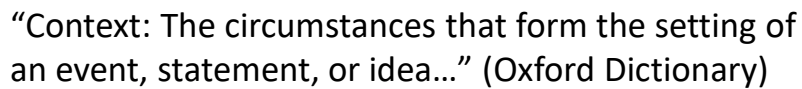
At this point, I need to confess that I've been leaving something out of this presentation. I'll introduce it this way.

This is a very simple picture of a lady asking a man who's digging holes a straightforward question.

And yet...it's funny.

Why is it funny?

(Go to next slide.)



Here's a definition of 'context'. (Read it)

This cartoon doesn't stand alone as some isolated thing...it has a back-story.

What would you think about it?

You might even wonder if you'd missed something in the political news.

88

The Context of the Resurrection

- Jesus' claims of divinity
- Jesus' statements that He was doing the Father's will
- Jesus' deeds appeared to be miraculous
- Jesus predicted His resurrection
- He lived an exemplary life (No one could convict Him of sin.)
- Jesus' placement of Himself within God's narrative...(John the Baptist preparing the way for Him)
- Arguments for God's existence

While not evidence for the Resurrection, the context of the Resurrection adds another perspective. It increases the likelihood that it happened.

The report of Jesus' resurrection is right at home in the context of His life.

Here are a few of the highlights of the context of Jesus' life. (Read the list.)

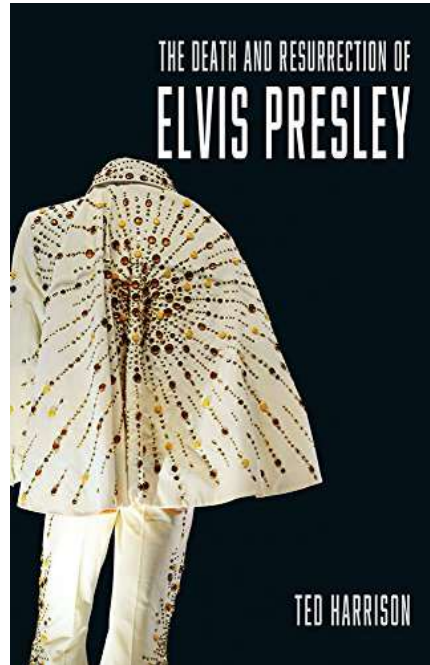
Jesus' life was full of theological significance

All these things are interconnected and give meaning to the Resurrection.

I separated the 'arguments for God's existence' bullet point just to make this point...

There are plenty of good arguments for God's existence and...if God does exist, there's no reason why He couldn't resurrect someone, and Jesus was just the sort of person we might expect God to resurrect.

Was there a context?



To help nail down the importance of context, let's look at Elvis.

We all know that there were many claims that Elvis was seen alive after his death.

Was there a context for Elvis' resurrection?

Elvis never claimed to be divine; he never performed any miracles; he never predicted that he would be resurrected, he didn't live a life that was free from sin, his life wasn't full of theological significance.

There was no context for a resurrection of Elvis Presley.

So, while a resurrection is fully at home in the context of Jesus' life, it's totally out of context in Elvis' life.

So again, while not **evidence** for the Resurrection, the fact that a resurrection fits the context of Jesus' life, adds another perspective. It increases the likelihood that it happened

Final Proposition: Jesus Rose from the Dead; was Resurrected

Plausibility: “Is the proposal, in this case, Jesus’ resurrection, implied by a greater number of accepted truths?”

What the accepted truths are depends on your [current] worldview. Are you able to bracket your worldview?

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples’ experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul’s experience, claim, and belief

Now...like the other arguments, we need to use the five parts of the Argument to the Best Explanation grid to see how the proposition that Jesus rose from the dead comes out.

Part #1: Explanatory Scope: Jesus’ resurrection covers all the historical bedrock. With the exception of Vermes and Craffert, the other proposals covered the bedrock as well. (Remember, if an argument doesn’t cover the bedrock, it’s dead in its tracks.)

Part #2: Explanatory Power: The hypotheses that Jesus was resurrected easily explains the historical bedrock. It explains the disciples’ and Paul’s experiences, their claim, and their belief.

Part #3: Plausibility: This is the tough one. Plausibility asks the question, (from the slide): “Is the proposal, in this case, Jesus’ resurrection, implied by a greater number of accepted truths?”

Well...(from the slide): what the accepted truths are depends on which worldview you’re bringing to the question. If you have a naturalistic worldview, which you haven’t purposefully set aside for a minute, you’re going to answer this question: “No! A Resurrection isn’t plausible!”

Plausibility: “Is the proposal, in this case, Jesus’ resurrection, implied by a greater number of accepted truths?”



Theism: There is one eternal self-existent God who brought the entire universe into existence and remains continually active in His creation

As mentioned earlier, there are only four worldviews – Theism, Naturalism, Pantheism, and Deism.

Here’s the shocker...there is no universally agreed upon worldview!

The government doesn’t tell us which worldview is correct. I take that back, Communism tries to dictate a naturalistic worldview.

Also, as mentioned before, there can be only one correct worldview...because there’s only one reality. I think that Theism is the one correct worldview. (Read the definition.)

I think that theism is true for all peoples and all times. There are good reasons for this conclusion.

Naturalism is the worldview we’re going to encounter most often. One of the beautiful things about human freedom is that we have the ability to change our worldview. I’ll bet that there are a lot of worldview flippers in here.



Lee Strobel



Josh McDowell

Let the historical evidence speak for itself.

Plausibility? Not a problem!

Going back to these two worldview flippers...because it was resurrection studies in particular which brought them to the conclusion that, based on the historical evidence for the Resurrection, that is, the historic bedrock we've been discussing, that their current naturalistic worldview was incorrect and the theistic worldview is correct.

Once they were able to say to themselves; "It may be that God exists and that He's active...He does stuff!"

(from the slide): Then they could look at the plausibility question and say, "Not a problem!"

So, if the person we're talking to says to us, "It's just not plausible that a dead person can come back to life!"

We can say to them; "I think you'll agree that the bedrock historic evidence we have is very strong and points to a resurrected Jesus. Are you able to set aside the naturalistic worldview for just a minute – because it is not the only worldview...and just consider the historic evidence? (from the slide): Follow the evidence."

Final Proposition: Jesus Rose from the Dead; was Resurrected

Is this proposition less *ad hoc*?

That is, does the proposition that Jesus was resurrected
'make up stuff' (like God) just so the story works?

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

(Read the top three lines.)

For the entire history of humanity, God's existence has been and continues to be an accepted truth for a large percentage of people. And there are strong arguments for God's existence so it can hardly be charged with being a 'made up' aspect.

And humorously, but truly, as far as historic weight is concerned, all we have to do is to beat the other arguments which had very *ad hoc* aspects to them.

Final Proposition: Jesus Rose from the Dead; was Resurrected

#5: Illumination

Why did the first
Christians worship
Jesus as if he was God?

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination



Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

Illumination is the fifth and last component of the argument to the best explanation. It's probably the least important component, but...it's in there.

A proposed answer to a problem, in this case, "That the Resurrection is what happened after the cross." ...meets the **illumination** criteria if it provides a possible solution to **other** problems.

A problem that some historians have had is this one here... (from the slide): "Why did the first Christians worship Jesus as if he was God?"

Of course, Christian historians don't have a problem with answering the question, but non-Christian historians have had a problem with it.

If the Resurrection hypothesis is true, it provides **illumination** to this question.

Thinking back to what we studied regarding the context of Jesus' life...His self-identification as God, the signs He gave, His predictions of His death and resurrection. The first Christians understood that His resurrection **proved** that He is God and they worshiped Him as such. There's the answer to the pesky question...**illumination**.

“Facts [*the historical bedrock regarding the Resurrection*] are stubborn things and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictums of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.” – John Adams

Arguments to the Best Explanation:

- 1) Explanatory Scope
- 2) Explanatory Power
- 3) Plausibility
- 4) Less *ad hoc*
- 5) Illumination

Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples' experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul's experience, claim, and belief

This is a famous quote from John Adams, our second president. (Read it w/o bracket.)

The context of the quote is important.

The year is 1770, the place is Boston. Hatred of anything British is at an all-time high. Several British soldiers had been charged with murder and John Adams was asked if he'd be their defense attorney.

No attorney wanted to defend these soldiers because the public **just didn't want them to be innocent**. Attorneys knew that, if they took the case, it would mean that public opinion would be against them, they'd lose clients, their law practice would suffer. Once John Adams heard the details of the event, he agreed to take the case. And....he lost half his clients and public opinion turned against him. This is a quote from John Adams as he presented the facts of the case.

Same here...some people just don't want the Resurrection to be true. But facts [the historical bedrock regarding the Resurrection] are stubborn things.

Final Proposition: Jesus Rose from the Dead; was Resurrected

“I am contending that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is the best historical explanation of the relevant historical bedrock. Since [the Resurrection] fulfills all five of the criteria for the best explanation and outdistances competing hypotheses by a significant margin in their ability to fulfill the same criteria, the historian is warranted in regarding Jesus’ resurrection as an event that occurred in the past.” – Mike Licona



Bedrock:

- 1) Jesus Died
- 2) Disciples’ experiences, claims, and belief
- 3) Paul’s experience, claim, and belief

On page 610 of his extremely detailed study of the historical facts regarding the resurrection and current non-Christian scholarly proposals as to happened after the cross, Mike Licona gives his verdict.

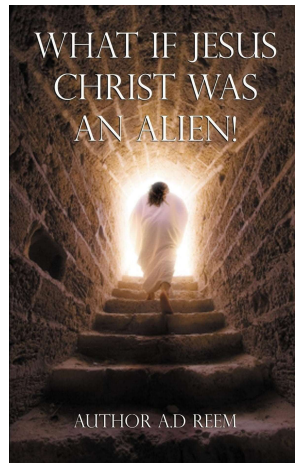
(Just read it.)

We’ve got a couple more slides but, before I go on...thoughts...questions?

And now...just a little humor...

Jesus was an Alien

It may be best to spend our time looking at academic criticisms of the Resurrection first. Then, if we have some extra time, we can look at the fun ones.



I had said earlier that we'd look at one fringe proposal to the Resurrection.

Every now and then, you might here this one. (Jesus was an alien.)

There are very good responses to this but, before you go down that bunny trail, you might want to take this approach...

(Read text on slide.)

“How do you handle Jesus’ Resurrection?”



So...we come back to where we started...

If we truly believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, we have a duty to lovingly challenge our ‘neighbor’ ...‘neighbor’ as defined by Jesus...to consider Jesus.

We could ask them a question like this... “How do you handle Jesus’ Resurrection? What do you do with it?”

Let’s see where they go as they try to answer this question.

And then, with gentleness and respect, make a case for the historical validity of the Resurrection.

Thus, we can say...as a fact of history... “He is risen!” (He is risen indeed!)

Thank you for attending this session on the historicity of the Resurrection, for being curious about it. May we all work to advance Christ’s Kingdom because of our knowledge here.

Pray! Show next slide!

The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach – Michael R. Licona

The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus – Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona

The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ – Gary R. Habermas

The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus: William Lane Craig

The Resurrection of the Son of God – N.T. Wright

Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts – Craig S. Keener

The Case for Christ (four chapters dedicated to Resurrection) – Lee Strobel

Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus – Nabeel Qureshi

Undaunted: The Early Life of Josh McDowell – Movie

The Case for Christ – Lee Strobel – Movie

Steve Claflin – steve@claflininsurance.com 949-533-8493

Here are some resources.

I'm a resource too. (I just stand on shoulders of believers who have stood on shoulders.)

Your pastors as well.

If you get stumped...and you will get stumped (we can't know everything), ask the person, "That's a good question; would you mind if I researched it and got back to you?"

Avoid making something up.

No 'apologetics by the seat of the pants'.