

## **Assignment #3 Resurrection Survey**

### **DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT A DEAD MAN ROSE FROM THE DEAD?**

Dear beloved, one of the reasons the world does not believe Jesus is more than a historical figure is because we as followers of Jesus have done a poor job on several issues. One concern is about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We need to know the facts and present these facts in a way that non-believers will accept the truth that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave on the third day as he said he did.

There are some who question the validity of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ was not murdered and did not rise from the grave, then He is no different than any of the wise men or prophets of other religions. Jesus' resurrection is what gives Him the authority to say He is God and that there is no other means to experience eternal salvation except to acknowledge Him as your Lord and Savior.

***The resurrection of Jesus, his divinity and 6-day creation are the most disputed biblical issues.***



#### **1 Corinthians 15 Verses 12-19**

***This chapter is often called Paul's Gospel.***

**The Risen Christ, Our Hope**

**12** Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

**13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

**14** And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty.

**15** Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.

**16** For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

**17** And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins!

**18** Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

**19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

The key verse is **14** And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty.

First of all, I need to say I believe in the resurrection and know for a fact that Jesus was raised from the dead. I know there is wonder working resurrection power but I need to teach you one of the reasons I know the resurrection is real and happened.

First of all, we need to read Matthew's account of the resurrection.

## **Matthew 28**

### **He Is Risen**

**1** Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

**2** And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

**3** His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

**4** And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men*.

**5** But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

**6** He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

**7** And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

**8** So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

### **Skip to verse 11**

#### **The Soldiers Are Bribed**

**11** Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened.

**12** When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,

**13** saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'

**14** And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure."

**15** So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Here is both logic and reason accepting the evidence the resurrection of Jesus.

The roman guard unit contained between 8 and 100 guards to watch an empty tomb. The tomb had a roman seal on it and it was against the law and punishable by death if you were to break that seal. The Lord Jesus could not have broken that seal, even if he was able to fake his death. It is hard to fake your death when a professional executioner runs a spear in to your side.

It is also very difficult to walk over and push a stone that weighted up to 2 tons when your hands and feet are pierced. When every inch of skin has been peeled off your back. So you have to assume that Jesus was dead in the tomb and the tomb was very secure.

I will begin to present my case and if you draw the same conclusion as I have, you will have to determine if Jesus is Lord, liar or lunatic. Some of you feel that Jesus was a good teacher but not Lord. You will need to make your mind and determine today if you will accept the Lord Jesus or reject him as Lord.

Our first piece of evidence.

### **Acts Chapter 16:25-28**

Here we have Paul and Silas in a Roman jail.

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27

And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

Did you notice that the Jailer was going to kill himself? Why?

Roman soldiers and jailers had two laws that scared them to death, even to the point of suicide. One Roman law was that if lost a prisoner, you would be immediately executed. Second, if you ever left your post, you would be executed. These laws are confirmed in many of the contemporary writing of the time.

### **Evidence Number two.**

Beloved, all the old Testament prophecies regarding Jesus and his crucifixion.

One in particular is that Jesus told his followers when they asked for a sign of his divinity, Jesus replied, "No sign would be given but the sign of Jonah". The sign of Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth. So you need to see if Jesus is a good teacher or the Son of God. I say Son of God.

### **Isaiah 53** *Written 700 years before the crucifixion*

Isaiah is often disregarded by the Jews and they still believe that we sneaky underhanded Christians supplanted chapter 53 in their bible. The Dead Sea scrolls prove otherwise.

- <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.
- <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.
- <sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.
- <sup>8</sup> By oppression [\[a\]](#) and judgment he was taken away.  
And who can speak of his descendants?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
- <sup>9</sup> He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Jesus was laid to rest in a large rich man's tomb. It had a weeping chamber and an extra tomb for the rich man's wife.

### **Evidence Number Three.**

This is a difficult piece of evidence for we have forgotten all the Jewish festivals. We forget that Jesus was Jewish and a devout Jew, he followed the Jewish writings and the Bible is a Jewish book. But my point is that Jesus was our Passover Lamb that took away the sin of the world. He was crucified on Passover.

Rose on Festivals of First Fruits. He had to rise on First Fruits because he is the bread of life, He is the new wine, He is life. No one else would have been able to have themselves executed on a Jewish holy day and resurrect on a huge Jewish holiday resenting new birth.

### **Exodus 12:5**

<sup>5</sup> Your lamb shall be without blemish. <sup>6</sup> Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

Jesus died at twilight, do you remember when the Sun was darkened and then Jesus died.

Jesus was probably crucified before Wednesday evening, and approximately 72 hours later (Sunday morning), arose from the dead. Jesus was not killed or crucified on a Friday.

The Father raises the Son from the dead sometime early Sunday morning, possibly before dawn. In doing so, He fulfills the typology of the First fruits (I Cor. 15:23. Matt. 28:1-13). Through His death believers are justified, that is, the perfect righteousness of the Son is imputed to sinners, and through His resurrection we can be assured that the sacrifice of the Lamb of God was accepted by a Holy God, and therefore, our resurrection is certain.

### **Evidence Number 4**

Changed disciples. Before the resurrection, we have 11 sacred disciples and even one denying he knew Jesus to two little girls even disguising his voice. After the resurrection all these disciples and thousands more went to their deaths being tortured, persecuted and even crucified and would not re-count the message of the resurrection. All this information is recorded outside the bible by roman historians.

### **Evidence Number 5**

God's character, what credibility would God have if only the Disciples or his followers saw Jesus resurrect? God would have zero credibility. Therefore, He had to have non-believers see the resurrection first. The Roman Guards had to be witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

### **Matthew 28**

**4** And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men*.

These guards had a rough three days. First they ran into Jesus at in Gethsemane and were knocked down to the ground. If you ever had a tough day, think back to the Roman soldiers and their encounter with Jesus.

### **John Chapter 18 Verses 3-6**

<sup>3</sup>So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

<sup>5</sup>"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)

<sup>6</sup>When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

Jesus used his "I Am" name here. Jesus was using His divine name and at that name ever knee will bow and one day soon every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. You can choose to do that on your free will or wait forever and then be judged. Get in the habit now because I want to rush in to Heaven and join all the saints at the Great big buffet, the wedding feast of the bridegroom. I am ready and I know I will see many of you there but not all of you.

Back to our study, the highly trained Roman guards all fell to their knees before they arrested Jesus. Three days later they were laid out again at his resurrection. These highly trained killers ran from their post of guarding a dead man. They knew it was punishable by death to leave their posts and for losing their dead prisoner. What made them leave? What would make you leave your post knowing you would be tortured and executed?

### **Matthew 28**

#### **Let's Re-examine the Account**

#### **Let's Break it down...**

**11** Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened.

Some of the guards probably disappeared; some of the guards probably became followers of Jesus. Other guards had to deny Jesus just like people do today. Some people can be shown all the proof but they rather live in darkness. Other people prefer the law, for the flesh loves the law and wants to deny Jesus and his grace. Others feel they will lose out on some concern or be condemned. Others are afraid they will be found out. He knows everything about you, for that is the definition of being God. Repent now, for time is short.

**What about these Chief Priests?** Most of these Chief Priest were scaywags to begin with, these guys were appointed by the Romans and were not legitimate Priests. The last real high priest was John the Baptist's pop Zacharias.

I wish I was a fly on the wall and listened to them question the dead prophets that were resurrected at the same time of Jesus and then the tomb guards run in to tell them that Jesus rose also.

Do you know the Jews have records that two of their own chief priests were resurrected at that time? Matthew 27 verses 52-53

**12** When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,

The Soldiers were paid off. I would like to see how much money it takes to change your testimony. It is like gaining the whole world but yet losing your soul.

I would love to hear the conversation at the dinner table of these soldiers. Hey, how did you get that money? I couldn't keep silent on this matter and I would have ended up telling every one.

How about you? Is Jesus that important? Is it important to tell your loved ones or does it take a small payoff to keep you quiet?

**13** saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'

Can you believe that 11 weak and scared disciples would have broken into a Roman guard and cracked the tomb open and stole his body? Peter was scared of a little slave girl and Thomas was probably hiding under a bed.

Roman guards would have been executed for sleeping at their post and anyone that broke the roman seal was supposed to be executed.

How is it the Guards didn't hear the stone being moved or the roman seal being broken. The roman seal was a steel bar jammed in to a special hole with a wax seal to lock the tomb closed.

The only disciple that was brave enough would have been John and he would have needed a torch and a stretcher to steal the body and have no fear that the guards would not be awoken.

How did these guards sleep through the earthquake? The earthquake evidence is visibly present at the Garden tomb today.

**14** And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure."

I do not think that anything these men could have said would have appeased Pontus Pilate or Herod. These men had to deny everything connected to Jesus just as many unbelievers do today.

Most people that have heard the good news and have reject it have many different excuses, from pride and alcohol or drug addiction, or worse sin

addiction. The flesh loves sin and doesn't want to give it up even if it means your death from having an overdose.

Lord Jesus wants to free even the worse sinner from all addictions and give you rest. For His yoke is easy and light and Jesus is wonderfully gentle. Jesus is not here to condemn but to love, to love unconditionally. Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is the enemy that condemns, it is the enemy that deceives, it is the enemy that tells you lies. Well, we have victory over the flesh, sin and the enemy.

The war is over but the battle is still going. Allow me to explain, back in WWII, the war was won when the US attacked the Germans with the D day invasion. But it took another year for the battle to be completely over, but the war was won a year earlier.

It is the same with the enemy, he is a defeated foe and but until he is finally captured he is convincing as many people as possible that Jesus is not the son of God.

**15** So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Roman guards should have been executed but they weren't, I figure the reason being is that the Jews and Chief Priest realized that their story was true, they saw the resurrected Lord Jesus and this was too much for these religious leaders to deal with.

I am sure these Chief Priests were scared for their lives because they were as fake and phony as Jesus had earlier exposed them to be.

The Jews have many different explanations for the reasons that Jesus was not the Messiah. None of these explanations hold any water. For some reason God has made these religious people blind to the information we easily see.

For once I too was blind but now I see. I am so glad that God allowed me to see the light.

If Christ is not raised, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty.

Do you think like the rest of the world and think the resurrection never happened? That the bible is a fairy tale or written by corrupt people. Or the bible was changed over many centuries and many opinions and rules were placed to trick saps like me and you. No, the bible has one primary focus and that from the beginning to the end is to glorify the Lord Jesus from his complete genealogies to his miracles to the words he spoke. Jesus is in every book and some say every chapter.

Some of you may say that I am too emotional, too passionate, but I want you to understand my position. This world system has selected various forms of socialism to replace God. (We will define socialism and other forms of government in the rear).

The world has declared all out war against Jesus and his resurrection. Books, TV shows and so-called experts are attacking the Gospels.

They have attack and discredited the bible because socialism and the world system cannot compete with God. They want to replace God with a form of government. Government is supposed to be for our protection but not to provide for us.

Lord Jesus preached the following message about his government and yet was almost thrown of a cliff. King Jesus' government is a kingdom government.

**Isaiah 61:1**

Because the LORD has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;

This scripture is for us, beloved. You can find freedom in Jesus.

I would like to read a little something and would like you to think about this verse for I have a serious question that only your deepest soul can answer.

**Please turn to Matthew 16:13**

**13**When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

**14**They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

**15**"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

## **Historical Evidence**

The Jewish historian Josephus (AD 37-100 Approx.) talks briefly but matter-of-factly about Jesus. Josephus lived a few years after Christ, he was a Pharisee who went over to the Roman camp and wrote a history of his people. In his history he briefly mentions Jesus Christ.

"About this time appeared Jesus, a wise man (*if indeed it is right to call Him man; for He was a worker of astonishing deeds, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with joy*), and He drew to Himself many Jews (*many also of Greeks*).

*(This was the Christ.)* And when Pilate, at the denunciation of those that are foremost among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those who had first loved Him did not abandon Him (*for He appeared to them alive again on the third day, the holy prophets having foretold this and countless other marvels about Him.*) The tribe of Christians named after Him did not cease to this day." (Jewish Antiquities, 18.3.3 §63)

Most scholars agree that the statements in italics were added later by others, most likely Christians. I hate it when Christians use deception, lies, false claims, etc. to quote 'help the cause'. Spreading rumors, conjectures, internet hoaxes (even unknowingly, because they refuse to check validity first) etc. is foolishness and many times sin, and they will be judged.

## **Comments on Lack of Historical Evidence of Resurrection**

The irritation of the Pharisees, helps us to understand why the resurrection of Jesus is not discussed in the history books. There were many writers of history at that time, but only two records of the lives and times of the Jews of this period. One record is that of the scriptures, the other is the record of the contemporary historian Josephus. If there are limited historical records of the Jewish people does that mean there was no Jewish race during Jesus' time? Maybe one of the reasons there were not many documents regarding the resurrection is because at the time there was no need for other documentations because the writings of the scriptures were throughout the land.

The Pharisees certainly would not be promoting writings on the resurrection of Jesus. The Pharisees went to great lengths to prevent any possibility of fraud in the matter of Jesus' resurrection. They had a better knowledge of the promise of resurrection than the disciples themselves did, and they did not want any possibility of fraudulent attempts on the part of the disciples to gain credibility by stealing the body, then claiming it had been raised from the dead. (Mat 27:62-66 KJV)

They went to great pains after the resurrection of Jesus to try to hush it up. They knew that if the facts of the matter were broadcast, there would be no controlling the people as they turned towards Jesus, and away from them. As the disciples

went to the city to proclaim the joyful news of the resurrected Christ, the men appointed to watch the grave to prevent this very thing went to report to their masters. (Mat 28:11-15 KJV)

Again, after the resurrection and ascension into heaven, the Jewish rulers still tried to restrain the doctrine that Jesus had arisen from the dead. (Acts 4:1-3 KJV)

If the above is true, it makes logical sense that there would be a lack of evidence.

### **Lack of Evidence against the Resurrection and the Bible Accounts**

Here is something that most never consider. If the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus is not true, why during the early centuries is there no documentation disproving these events other than some writings that Jesus body was stolen.

Why did those who were against Christianity make sure the body wasn't stolen from the grave?

Why did the opponents against Christianity produce Jesus' body to prove the Christians were deceived?

Why were there not writings proving that those who claim to have seen Jesus in resurrected form were 'off the wall', mentally ill?

Why were there no documents by the opponents refuting the details that are documented in scripture?

It isn't until over a thousand years that the validity of the Bible is being questioned, when there is more archaeological proof every day proving the validity of the Bible.

If the disciples died horrific deaths for believing in the resurrection of Jesus when they actually hid his body, they were insane. If they were insane enough to die for a lie, there should be much documentation on how crazy the disciples were after Jesus death. There certainly is plenty of 'dirt' on other historical figures.

### **Good news, you can be saved and here is the information.**

**Romans 10:9,10** "...If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

*- If you know that God is knocking on your heart's door, ask Him to come into your heart.*

**Jesus said,**

Revelation 3:20a "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..."

- *Is Jesus knocking on your heart's door?*

Beloved, do you need any other proof, the guards were the first to see the resurrected Lord Jesus and it changed their lives.

Has Jesus' resurrection changed your life? I can tell you, because He lives, I can face tomorrow.

I have hope. I have grace. Grace is undeserved favor from the Father just for me having simple faith in the resurrection. I also know my name is written in the Lamb's book of Life. Is your name written there? If not, I will tell you how to ensure it is written.

**How do you know if you are saved?**

When you confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, you experience the new birth. Every abundant blessing, He has for us is freely available in salvation (Romans 10:9-10).

The word salvation comes from the Greek word *soteria*, which means *saved, healed, delivered, pardoned, rescued, protected, preserved, made whole, cured, set free, and restored.*

**WHAT SALVATION IS NOT**

Salvation is not any of the things most people think or have been taught such as confirmation, church membership, water baptism, taking the sacrament, observing religious duties, going to church, saying prayers, reading the 'Bible, memorizing creeds, nor doing good deeds. To be saved you must be born-again (John 3:14-18; Romans 10:9-10).

**Believe in Him.**

Ask Him to come in to your heart by faith, and ask Him to reveal Himself to you. Open the Bible to the Gospel of John and read what God says about Jesus, about you, and about being born again.

God will help you. He loves you.

**Answer these four questions:**

1. Do you want to be forgiven and saved (1 John 1:8)?
2. Do you believe Jesus Christ, God's son died for you (1 John 1:7)?
3. Are you willing to repent of sin and follow the Lord Jesus Christ for the rest of your life (Acts 2:21; 3:17-19; 16:31; 1 John 1:9)?

4. Do you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that God does forgive you of your sins and that He does cleanse you from all unrighteousness (Romans 10:9-10; 1 John 1:9)?

***If you answered yes, then your old life is now crucified with our Lord Jesus and your new life in Him through His blood and resurrection has just begun.***

***If still unsure, I encourage you to continue reading.***

***If you are re-dedicating your life back to Him, then you know it's time to follow Him and you're welcomed back.***

***Abba Father,***

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may you fill us with the spirit of wisdom and revelation of the knowledge of your Son. Thank you for Jesus.

May you open the eyes of our understanding so we can be enlightened.

We want to know what is the hope of your calling, we want to know the riches of the glory of your inheritance for the saints.

We ask for the exceeding greatness of Your power toward us who believe.

All of this according to the working of Your mighty power which you worked in Christ when you raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at Your right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

May Adonai bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.”

in Jesus' precious name Amen

May God Bless You.

## Key Verses for Greek Lessons 48

Matthew 7:21

1. οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι κύριε κύριε εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

Luke 9:23

2. ἔλεγεν δὲ πρὸς πάντας εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεσθαι ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι

Isaiah 61:1

3. πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ οὗ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν με εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς ἀπέσταλκέν με ἰάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν

## The History of Jesus

**What can we say about the history of Jesus?** Is it reasonable to conclude that Jesus never existed, based on the weight of all the historical evidence? **Or is it more reasonable** to conclude that Jesus was an unparalleled historical figure; that not only was he a great teacher and "doer of wonderful works", but that something extraordinary - perhaps even supernatural - happened in history to spark a movement that "turned the world upside down".

Christianity presents a founder who is **unmatched in history** - one who really lived, taught unlike any other, performed miracles that testified of His authority, really died, and really rose from the dead to be seen by literally hundreds before His ascension.



**Either He existed, and was who He claimed to be - Lord and Savior; or not.** If He did exist, fulfilled prophecy, performed miracles, died in our place, and rose again, then you, I -- we all -- have to deal with the ramifications of this.

**Consider the written historical evidence of Jesus from these varied sources ...**

1. **Non-Christian, non-Jewish sources (principally Roman, Greek).** These consist of the writings of a number of Greek or Roman historians, and refer to the history of Jesus because of the trouble the Christian movement was causing in the empire at the time. The records are normally antagonistic, since they have nothing to gain by admitting the historicity of the events.
2. **Jewish sources** - Josephus, the Talmud. Josephus, a Jewish aristocrat turned politician, was recruited by the Romans during the first Jewish revolt to act as a mediator and write a historical record of events at the time. He records that Jesus was a wise man that did many wonderful works, and that many people - both Jews and Gentiles - followed after him.

The Talmud, written by Jewish sources at the time, is (not surprisingly) unfriendly toward the founder of Christianity. The important point, however, is that Jewish sources do not deny that Jesus was a real historical figure -- they only promote a different interpretation of his conception.

3. **Christian sources** - the Gospels, early church fathers and historians. The four gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - are judged by most scholars to be reliable, historical testimony of eye-witnesses. These gospels, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of Paul and the other Apostles, are judged to have been written from 40 A.D. to 100 A.D. -- all within a few decades of the life of Jesus. The early church fathers were the leaders and teachers in the church who followed the apostles - many were also disciples of these same apostles.

### **Non-Christian, Non-Jewish Historians Comment on the History of Jesus Cornelius Tacitus (c. A.D. 55-120)**

A Roman historian who lived through the reign of over a half-dozen Roman emperors, Tacitus has been called "the greatest historian of ancient Rome. His most famous works are the *Annals* and the *Histories*. The *Annals* covers from 14 A.D. to approximately 68 A.D. (the death of Augustus up to the time of Nero), while *Histories* proceeds from 68 A.D. (Nero's death) to 96 A.D. (the time of Domitian).

Here is what Tacitus wrote concerning the history of Jesus, and the existence of Christians in Rome:

*"But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the price could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome.*

*Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. **Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also.**" (Annals XV, 44)<sup>1</sup>.*

#### **Some points to note about the narrative from Tacitus:**

- ▶ He mistakenly refers to Jesus as "Christus", however this was a common practice among the pagan writers at that time
- ▶ He supports the fact that Christ existed, and was put to death by Pontius Pilate - agreeing with the Christian scriptures
- ▶ He alludes to "the pernicious superstition" which broke out, was repressed, but then spread even more - even throughout the city of Rome itself. This may indeed be referring to the core belief which caused the early church to explode and "turn the world upside down" -- that Jesus had died indeed, but that He had also risen from the grave.

## Thallus

Thallus, a Samaritan-born historian who lived and worked in Rome about 52 A.D., "wrote a history of the Eastern Mediterranean world from the Trojan war to his own time." (Habermas, VECELJ, 93). Although the original writings of Thallus are lost to us, Julius Africanus, a Christian historian of the late second century (221 A. D.), was familiar with them and quotes from them. One very interesting passage from Thallus relates to the darkness that enveloped the land at the time of Christ's crucifixion. Julius Africanus writes as follows:

*"Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun - unreasonably, as it seems to me (unreasonably, of course, because a solar eclipse could not take place at the time of the full moon, and it was at the season of the Paschal full moon that Christ died." (Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18.1)*

Points to note:

- ▶ This quote testifies that the gospel accounts of darkness falling upon the land about the time of Christ's death were well known, and thus required a naturalistic explanation from non-Christians<sup>1</sup>.
- ▶ Thallus did not dispute that Jesus has been crucified -- he was more concerned with coming up with another explanation for the darkness that enveloped the land.

## Suetonius

Another Roman historian, Suetonius, a court official under the emperor Hadrian, stated in his *Life of Claudius* (written about 120 A.D.) that Christians were expelled from Rome because of Christ (whom he calls Chrestus):

*"As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of **Chrestus**, he [Claudius] expelled them from Rome". (Life of Claudius, 25:4)*

In another of his works, Suetonius records the punishment that Christians were receiving in Rome during the time of Nero (64 A.D.):

*"Punishment by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition." (Lives of the Caesars, 26.2)*

This "superstition" undoubtedly refers to the conviction by early Christians that Christ had been crucified and risen from the dead.

## Pliny the Younger

C. Plinius Secundus, called Pliny the Younger to distinguish him from his uncle, was governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor about A.D. 112. He wrote to the emperor Trajan to seek advice on how to deal with the problem of Christians in his province. He recounted to Trajan in his letters that he had been killing so many, he was considering whether he should continue killing anyone who professed to be a Christian, or only certain ones. He explains that he made them bow down to statues of Trajan, and **"curse Christ, which a genuine Christian cannot be induced to do."** In the same letter he says of the people who were being tried:

"They affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when **they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god**, and bound themselves to a solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft, adultery, never to falsify their word, not to deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up." (Epistles X, 96)

### Phiegon

Another secular authority, Phlegon, wrote a book entitled *Chronicles*, which was quoted by Julius Africanus. Like Thallus, Phiegon acknowledges that a darkness fell upon the land about the time of Christ's death, and like Thallus he attributes this to a solar eclipse:

"During the time of Tiberius Caesar an eclipse of the sun occurred during the full moon." (Africanus, Chronography, 18.1)

### Mara Bar-Serapion

In the British Museum we have the text of a letter written by a Mara Bar-Serapion to his son, encouraging him to pursue wisdom. This letter, written by this Syrian and probably Stoic philosopher, is dated about 70 A.D. He compares Socrates, Pythagoras and the King of the Jews (which by context points to Jesus):

"What advantage did the Jews gain from **executing their King**? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished."

### Jewish Historians Comment on the History of Jesus The Talmud

The *Talmud* is comprised of two separate books of Jewish writings. The first is the *Mishnah*, which is the Jewish code of Jurisprudence. It was compiled sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), and was completed in A.D. 200. This great body of case law became the object of Jewish study from which grew a body of commentaries called *Gemaras*. Together these two works comprise the *Talmud*.

References to the history of Jesus in the Talmud **do not question that Jesus Christ existed** - the issue they quarrel with is with the Christian belief in His virgin birth.

They record (not surprisingly) that He was born under shameful circumstances:

The Babylonian Talmud: "*R. Shimeon ben Azzai said [concerning Jesus]: 'I found a genealogical roll in Jerusalem wherein was recorded, Such-an-one is a bastard of an adulteress'". (b. Yebamoth 49a; m Yebam. 4:13)*



*In another passage we are told that Mary, "who was the descendant of princes and governors, played the harlot with carpenters" (b. Sanh. 106a)*

In another passage we find: *"His mother was Miriam, a women's hairdresser. As they say, ..."this one strayed from her husband" (b. Sabb. 104b).*

**Points to note:**

- ▶ These are evidences that Jesus' virgin birth was a claim of the early Church, and **that it required a rebuttal** by the Jewish authorities.
- ▶ The notion that Mary was descended from "princes" is consistent with the genealogy given in the gospel of Luke, which records her lineage dates all the way back to King David. The allusion to "carpenters" is an obvious reference to Joseph.
- ▶ Notice that **the response did not include a denial of Jesus' existence** - only that he was born under other circumstances.

The Talmuds were Rabbinic commentaries on the Jewish scriptures, that is, the Old Testament. The Babylonian Talmud was probably completed around the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The Talmuds are long and complicated, and it is difficult to make sense of some of what they say. Of course, the Jews were not overly sympathetic to the heretical new religion that Jesus founded. The Babylonian Talmud says:

On the eve of Passover, they hanged Yeshu\* [= Jesus]. And an announcer went out in front of him for forty days, saying: 'He is going to be stoned, because he practised sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray. Anyone who knows anything in his favor, let him come and plead in his behalf.' But not having found anything in his favor, they hanged him on the eve of Passover.

\* One version of this text actually says 'Yeshu the Nazarene.'

There are of course, some differences here from what the Gospels describe. (Note: When this kind of discrepancy arises, scholars have a remarkable tendency to believe that it is the other document that is right, and the Gospels that are wrong, rather than vice versa - even though the documentary evidence for the Gospel account may be much stronger.)

**Notice that:**

- 'Yeshu the Nazarene' is described as someone who engaged in sorcery. This is a typical way that Jewish writers accounted for the miracles of Jesus.
- He was put to death
- His death took place at the time of the Passover
- His death was by 'hanging' - which was often used by Jews to describe crucifixion - see Luke's Gospel chapter 23 verse 39 and Galatians chapter 3 verse 13.

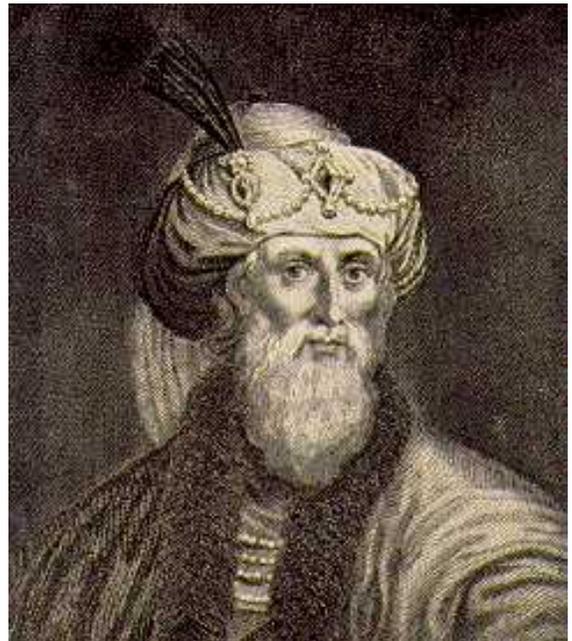
There are various other passages in the Talmuds that may also refer to Jesus. For details see pages 123-125 of: 'The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict', by Josh McDowell.

"Yeshu the Nazarene' is described as someone who engaged in sorcery. This is a typical way that Jewish writers accounted for the miracles of Jesus.'

Why 'typical'? Where else do you have evidence that 'Jewish writers' make any reference to Jesus at all? For the most part, there is very, very little about 'Yeshu' in any Jewish source at all. Even the references we know about in the Talmud were, by and large, censored by Christian authorities over the ages and it is unclear exactly to whom the Talmud is referring, despite the similarity in name. The great scholar Nachmanides indicates that this individual referred to in the Talmud actually lived about 100 BCE!

### Josephus

Josephus ben Mattathias (c. 37/38 A.D.-sometime after 100 A.D.) has been described as a Jewish aristocrat, a priestly politician, a reluctant commander of rebel troops in Galilee during the first Jewish revolt against Rome (66 - 73 A.D.), a Jewish historian in the pay of the Roman emperors, and a supposed Pharisee. After capture by Vespasian in 67 A.D., Josephus served the Romans as mediator and interpreter during the rest of the revolt. He is famous for two great historical works: *The Jewish War* (written in the early 70's), and *Jewish Antiquities*, finished about 93-94.



There are two passages in his *Jewish Antiquities* that are of particular interest. The first records testimony about Jesus, his life and impact during the rule of Pilate. Parts of this passage have been disputed by some, based on the contention that Josephus, being a Jew, would not have said some things in the passage.

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, *if it be lawful to call him a man*, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. *He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things*

*concerning him.* And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." (Antiquities, XVIII, 3, 3).

**Points to note from the sections that are undisputed:**

Josephus records not only that a Jesus lived, but that he was wise and a doer of "wonderful works" (which can easily be interpreted to mean **his miracles**).

He credits Jesus with such **wise teaching** that he drew many to him, including both Jews and Gentiles. This was in fact what worried the religious leadership at the time - that Jesus was drawing so many that their power base might be in jeopardy

He **corroborates what is taught in the gospels** - that Jesus was accused the religious leadership, condemned by Pilate, and crucified on a cross.

The second writing from Josephus (not in any dispute) concerns the condemnation of James, the brother of Jesus:

"... Ananus was of such a disposition, he thought he had now a good opportunity, as Festus was now dead, and Albinus was still on the road; so he assembled a council of judges, and brought before it the brother of **Jesus the so-called Christ**, whose name was James, together with some others, and having accused them as law-breakers, he delivered them over to be stoned." (Antiquities XX, 0.1).

**Key points to note:**

The reference to "Jesus the so-called Christ" does not make sense unless Josephus had referred to Jesus earlier in his writings (which he did -- in XVIII, 33)

This passage from a third party historian corroborates the historical passage in the Acts of the New Testament, which also states that James the brother of the Lord was accused unjustly and stoned.

The James Ossuary is a recent archeological find which further testifies of the existence of James as the brother of Jesus. This is referring to the bone burial box of Jesus's brother James.



## More Evidence of the Resurrection

**If Jesus did not actually rise from the dead, why then did the disciples go from frightened, timid followers of Jesus before his death, to bold evangelists willing to die preaching his resurrection if they just really made the whole thing up and he was still dead?** Remember, before Jesus was crucified, the disciples were, for the most part, cowards. Peter denied even knowing Jesus 3 times before the crucifixion. What event changed them from cowards to courageous? Answer: They must have actually seen the risen Jesus.

**Why were the disciples willing to be tortured and killed for a known lie?** You don't need a degree in human psychology to know that people do not die for a cause they *know* to be false. People do certainly die for false beliefs all the time, but they *think* they are dying for the truth. If the disciples faked the resurrection, they would know Christianity is a lie. History records they were tortured and killed for their faith, and not one of them said, under torture "okay, okay, we made the whole thing up?" Why is that? Answer: They must have actually seen the risen Jesus.

**Why would they make up the resurrection story if Jesus turned out to be a fraud?** Remember, Jesus told them he would rise after 3 days. If he was still dead on day four, that means he wasn't who he claimed he was, he wasn't the Messiah and certainly wasn't God after all, so why would the disciples worship a dead guy who lied to them and was exposed as a fraud? Answer: They must have actually seen the risen Jesus.

**What was their motive?** Lies or deceptions are typically done for some selfish motive. Preaching the resurrection of Jesus would not bring them wealth, fame, status or popularity. It would only cause them to be hated, scorned, persecuted, excommunicated, imprisoned, exiled, beheaded, tortured and crucified, as history records. So again, what could possibly be their motive? Just to save face? That's certainly not logical. No one is going to go through what the disciples went through just because they're too embarrassed to say "I guess we were wrong," so what was their motive? Answer: It was the TRUTH. They must have actually seen the risen Jesus.

**How do the disciples, 12 ordinary people pull off such a hoax?** Remember, this "hoax" would trigger thousands of skeptics per day to convert to following their scam as well as redirect the entire world to even eventually change their calendars and establish their hoax character, Jesus as the best known religious figure in all of humanity. How could they pull something like this off without ever getting exposed, offering a death bed confession or even admitting it was a hoax under torture? Answer: It must not be a hoax. They must have actually seen the risen Jesus.

**Why would thousands of people immediately convert if Jesus didn't actually rise from the dead?** Think about it. History records that thousands upon thousands were instantly and immediately mass converting to be followers of Jesus, as many as 3000 in a day. It is recorded that after the crucifixion, Jesus appeared alive over a span of 40 days and to "500 brethren". (Back then, only men were counted in crowd totals, so factoring in women and children, Jesus most likely appeared to safely 1500 to 2000 people over 40 days). If that many people saw Jesus alive, it would explain how so many were converting because even the most hardened skeptics would have crowds and crowds of former skeptics saying "yes, it's true, we all have seen him too". But if no one saw him alive and the crowds had only the words of the disciples to go by, why would thousands convert? Remember, the disciples were preaching to many who didn't want to believe Jesus was the Messiah. What words could they speak to hostile crowds to convince them Jesus really did rise from the dead? "Trust us"? That might convince some of the disciple's closest friends, but not thousands upon thousands of skeptics. So why did thousands convert? Answer: Crowds must have actually seen the risen Jesus.

**Why did the disciples make themselves look bad in the Gospels?** Think about it, if you were going to make up a story, wouldn't you present yourself in somewhat of a positive light? The disciples painted themselves as sniveling cowards lacking in faith. Answer: They must have been telling the truth.

**How did Saul of Tarsus, the chief persecutor of Christians convert to become the Apostle Paul, the chief follower of Jesus if he didn't really have an encounter with a risen Jesus?** Logically, if Jesus didn't really rise from the dead, Saul would just gloat in his victory, exposing Jesus as a fraud who couldn't conquer death after all. What event could have caused him to convert? Answer: He must have actually encountered the risen Jesus as recorded.

**How could the disciples even steal the body in the first place?** The body was encased in a tomb with a 24-hour watch by Roman guards trained to kill. The punishment for breaking a Roman grave seal, or attempting to steal a body or overpowering a Roman soldier was death. How did timid, cowardly disciples muster up the courage to try this? And as stated before, for what motive? That's a big risk for absolutely no payoff. Some will say "maybe the guard was asleep". First, dereliction of duty brought death to a Roman soldier, so I doubt they would "fall asleep." Secondly, the stone covering the tomb weighed 2 tons and was rolled into a stone groove which would have been flush against the stone opening of the grave.

Think about how loud a 2-ton stone scraping against stone would be as several disciples tried to move it. I don't think Rip Van Winkle could sleep through that commotion. How could the disciples have stolen the body? Answer, they didn't. Jesus actually rose from the dead.

## Historical Evidence Outside of the Bible

Often people are uncertain about the existence of Christ, but few scholars would disagree that a man named Jesus lived roughly between 2 BC and about 33 AD. History documents that this man was not a myth but a real person and the historical evidence for this is excellent. For instance, the Roman historian Tacitus, writing in about 115 A.D., records the events surrounding Emperor Nero in July of A.D. 64. After the fire that destroyed much of Rome, Nero was blamed for being responsible:

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus [Christ], from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a most mischievous superstition [Christ's resurrection] thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular. (Bettenson, p. 2)

In about 112 A.D. the Roman governor of what is now northern Turkey wrote to Emperor Trajan regarding the Christians in his district:

"I was never present at any trial of Christians; therefore I do not know what are the customary penalties or investigations, and what limits are observed. . . whether those who recant should be pardoned. . . whether the name itself, even if innocent of crime, should be punished, or only the crimes attaching to that name. . . . Meanwhile, this is the course that I have adopted in the case of those brought before me as Christians. I ask them if they are Christians. If they admit it I repeat the question a second and a third time, threatening capital punishment; if they persist I sentence them to death. For I do not doubt that, whatever kind of crime it may be to which they have confessed, their pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy should certainly be punished. . . the very fact of my dealing with the question led to a wider spread of the charge, and a great variety of cases were brought before me.

An anonymous pamphlet was issued, containing many names. All who denied that they were or had been Christians I considered should be discharged, because they called upon the gods at my dictation and did reverence. . .and especially because they cursed Christ, a thing which it is said, genuine Christians cannot be induced to do." (Bettenson, p. 3)

These passages indicate that Christianity was wide spread in the Roman empire within 80 years of Christ's death. Again, these are eyewitness accounts, not historians looking back years later.

The popular historian Will Durant, himself not a Christian, wrote concerning Christ's historical validity, "The denial of that existence seems never to have occurred even to the bitterest gentile or Jewish opponents of nascent Christianity" (Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 3, p. 555). And again, "That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood, would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the Gospels" (*Ibid.*, p. 557).

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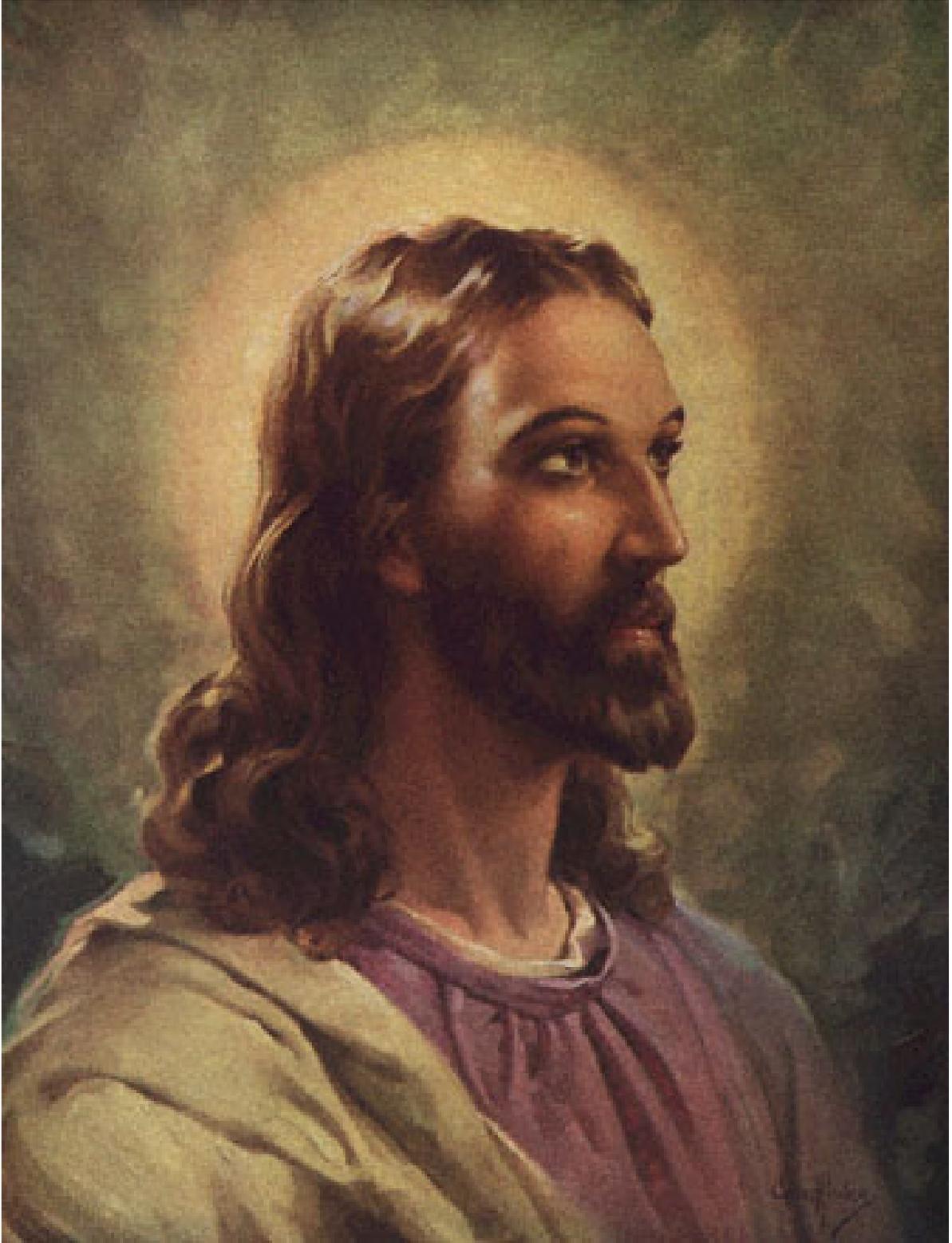
# Month of the Aviv

KEY  
Torah Yeshua

1st Day Sunday	2nd Day Monday	3rd Day Tuesday	4th Day Wednesday	5th Day Thursday	6th Day/Friday Preparation Day	7th Day Shabbat
All days begin the evening before and go to sunset on the day shown						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem	Yeshua in Temple during the day Mt. of Olives at night		Barley is Aviv Rosh Chodesh (New Moon)	Rosh Hashanah Head of the Year	Erev Shabbat dinner tonight in Bethany. Yeshua anointed with spikeword	Pesach Lamb is set aside and observed.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Waving of First Fruits Approved before the Father!		Last Supper Gethsemane	Talk Pesach/Passover Yeshua on cross, dies at 3 PM	First Day of UNLEAVENED Bread (High Day Sabbath)	Women bought & prepared burial spices	Weekly Shabbat Resurrection after Shabbat! Hallelujah!
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Omer Count: 1st day of 1st week	Omer Count: 2nd day of 1st week	Omer Count: 3rd day of 1st week	Last Day of UNLEAVENED Bread (Sabbath) Omer Count: 4th day of 1st week	Omer Count: 5th day of 1st week	Omer Count: 6th day of 1st week	Omer Count: 7th day of 1st week

♦ Erev Shabbat dinner is on Friday night, which was the beginning of the 10th day of the month of the Aviv.

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## Types of Governments and Definitions

### Socialism

1. any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods
2. *2a* : a system of society or group living in which there is no private property *b* : a system or condition of society in which the means of production are owned and controlled by the state
3. *3* : a stage of society in Marxist theory transitional between capitalism and communism and distinguished by unequal distribution of goods and pay according to work done

### Democracy

1. *1a* : government by the people; *especially* : rule of the majority *b* : a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections
2. *2* : a political unit that has a democratic government

### Communism

1. *a* : a theory advocating elimination of private property *b* : a system in which goods are owned in common and are available to all as needed
2. *2 capitalized a* : a doctrine based on revolutionary Marxian socialism and Marxism-Leninism that was the official ideology of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics *b* : a totalitarian system of government in which a single authoritarian party controls state-owned means of production *c* : a final stage of society in Marxist theory in which the state has withered away and economic goods are distributed equitably *d* : communist systems collectively

### Dictatorship

1. *1* : the office of dictator
2. *2* : autocratic rule, control, or leadership
3. *3a* : a form of government in which absolute power is concentrated in a dictator or a small clique *b* : a government organization or group in which absolute power is so concentrated *c* : a despotic state

### Monarchy

1. *1* : undivided rule or absolute sovereignty by a single person
2. *2* : a nation or state having a monarchical government
3. *3* : a government having a hereditary chief of state with life tenure and powers varying from nominal to absolute



## Passover seder



Table set for the Passover Seder

Christians often call our Lord's last Passover the "Last Supper" and rarely understand the importance of our Lord being our Passover Lamb and *Afikoman*. The Jews do not understand the reasons for burial of the Afikoman or know the reasons the matzo bread is striped and pierced, but we who follow the Lord know it is an example of the torture and piercing of our Lord for the payment of our sin.

It is traditional for Jewish families to gather on the first night of Passover (first two nights in communities outside the land of Israel) for a special dinner called a seder (סדר— derived from the Hebrew word for "order", referring to the very specific order of the ritual). The table is set with the finest china and silverware to reflect the importance of the meal. During this meal, the story of the Exodus from Egypt is retold using a special text called the Haggadah. Four cups of wine are consumed at various stages in the narrative. The Haggadah divides the night's procedure into 15 parts:

1. *Kadeish* קדש – recital of Kiddush blessing and drinking of the first cup of wine
2. *Urchatz* ורחץ – the washing of the hands – without blessing
3. *Karpas* כרפס – dipping of the *karpas* in salt water
4. *Yachatz* יחץ – breaking the middle matzo; the larger piece becomes the *afikoman* which is eaten later during the ritual of *Tzafun*
5. *Maggid* מגיד – retelling the Passover story, including the recital of "the four questions" and drinking of the second cup of wine
6. *Rachtzah* רחצה – second washing of the hands – with blessing
7. *Motzi* מוציא – traditional blessing before eating bread products
8. *Matzo* מצה – blessing before eating matzo
9. *Maror* מרור – eating of the maror
10. *Koreich* כורך – eating of a sandwich made of matzo and maror
11. *Shulchan oreich* שולחן עורך – lit. "set table"—the serving of the holiday meal
12. *Tzafun* צפון – eating of the *afikoman*

13. *Bareich* בִּרְךְ – blessing after the meal and drinking of the third cup of wine
14. *Hallel* הַלֵּל – recital of the Hallel, traditionally recited on festivals; drinking of the fourth cup of wine
15. *Nirtzah* נִירְצָה – conclusion

These 15 parts parallel the 15 steps in the Temple in Jerusalem on which the Levites stood during Temple services, and which were memorialized in the 15 Psalms (#120-134) known as *Shir HaMa'alot* (Hebrew: שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת, "Songs of Ascent").

The seder is replete with questions, answers, and unusual practices (e.g. the recital of Kiddush which is not immediately followed by the blessing over bread, which is the traditional procedure for all other holiday meals) to arouse the interest and curiosity of the children at the table. The children are also rewarded with nuts and candies when they ask questions and participate in the discussion of the Exodus and its aftermath. Likewise, they are encouraged to search for the *afikoman*, the piece of matzo which is the last thing eaten at the seder. Audience participation and interaction is the rule, and many families' seders last long into the night with animated discussions and much singing. The seder concludes with additional songs of praise and faith printed in the Haggadah, including *Chad Gadya* ("One Little Kid" or "One Little Goat").

### Maror



Types of maror: grated horseradish, romaine lettuce, whole horseradish root.

Maror symbolizes the bitterness of slavery in Egypt. The following verse from the Torah underscores that symbolism: "And they embittered (*ve-yimareru* וַיִּמְרְרוּ) their lives with hard labor, with mortar and with bricks and with all manner of labor in the field; any labor that they made them do was with hard labor" (Exodus 1:14).



Silver seder plate

### **Four cups of wine**

There is a Rabbinic requirement that four cups of wine are to be drunk during the seder meal. This applies to both men and women. The Mishnah says (Pes. 10:1) that even the poorest man in Israel has an obligation to drink. Each cup is connected to a different part of the seder: the first cup is for Kiddush, the second cup is connected with the recounting of the Exodus, the drinking of the third cup concludes Birkat Hamazon and the fourth cup is associated with Hallel.

### **The four questions and participation of children**

Children have a very important role in the Passover seder. Traditionally the youngest child is prompted to ask questions about the Passover seder, beginning with the words, *Mah Nishtana HaLeila HaZeh* (Why is this night different from all other nights?). The questions encourage the gathering to discuss the significance of the symbols in the meal. The questions asked by the child are:

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Why on all other nights, we eat either unleavened or leavened bread, but tonight we eat only unleavened bread?

Why on all other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables, but tonight, we eat only bitter herbs?

Why on all other nights, we do not dip [our food] even once, but tonight we dip twice?

Why on all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining, but tonight we only recline?

Often the leader of the seder and the other adults at the meal will use prompted responses from the Haggadah, which states, "The more one talks about the Exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy he is." Many readings, prayers, and stories are used to recount the story of the Exodus. Many households add their own commentary and interpretation and often the story of the Jews is related to the theme of liberation and its implications worldwide.

### **Afikoman**



14th century Haggadah

The *afikoman* — an integral part of the Seder itself — is used to engage the interest and excitement of the children at the table. During the fourth part of the Seder, called *Yachatz*, the leader breaks the middle piece of matzo into two.

He sets aside the larger portion as the *afikoman*. Many families use the *afikoman* as a device for keeping the children awake and alert throughout the Seder proceedings by hiding the *afikoman* and offering a prize for its return. Alternatively, the children are allowed to "steal" the *afikoman* and demand a reward for its return. In either case, the *afikoman* must be consumed during the twelfth part of the Seder, *Tzafun*.

### **Concluding songs**

After the Hallel, the fourth glass of wine is drunk, and participants recite a prayer that ends in "Next year in Jerusalem!". This is followed by several lyric prayers that expound upon God's mercy and kindness, and give thanks for the survival of the Jewish people through a history of exile and hardship. "Echad Mi Yodea" ("Who Knows One?") is a playful song, testing the general knowledge of the children (and the adults). Some of these songs, such as "Chad Gadiyah" are allegorical.

### **What is Propitiation?"**

**Answer:** The word *propitiation* carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him. God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world in human flesh to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and make atonement or "propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17).

The word *propitiation* is used in several verses to explain what Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross. For example, in Romans 3:24-25 believers in Christ have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed." These verses are a key point in Paul's argument in the book of Romans and are really at the heart of the gospel message.

In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul makes the argument that everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is under the condemnation of God and deserving of His wrath (Romans 1:18). Everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All of us deserve His wrath and punishment. God in His infinite grace and mercy has provided a way that His wrath can be appeased and we can be reconciled to Him. That way is through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ, as the payment for sins. It is through faith in Jesus Christ as God's perfect sacrifice that we can be reconciled to God. It is only because of Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection on the third day that a lost sinner deserving of hell can be reconciled to a holy God. The wonderful truth of the gospel is that Christians are saved from God's wrath and reconciled to God not because "we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The only way for God's wrath against sinful man to be appeased and for us to be reconciled to God is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. This truth is also communicated in 1 John 2:2, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." An important part of Christ's saving work is deliverance from God's wrath; Jesus' propitiation on the cross is the only thing that can turn away God's divine condemnation of sin. Those who reject Christ as their Savior and refuse to believe in Him have no hope of salvation.

## Assignment #3 Resurrection Survey

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Jesus Is Risen Study *Matthew Chapter 28 Verses 11- 15*

#### 1. Verse 11

Some of the guards probably disappeared; some of the guards probably became \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus. Other guards had to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus just like people do today. Some people can be shown all the proof but they rather live in darkness. Some people prefer the law and want to deny Jesus. Some feel they will lose out or be condemned.

#### 2. Verse 12

The Soldiers were paid off. I would like to see how much money it takes to change your testimony. It is like gaining the whole world but yet

\_\_\_\_\_.

#### 3. Verse 13

Can you believe that 11 weak and scared disciples would have broken through a well-trained Roman guard detail, cracked the tomb open and stole his body?  
Explain

#### **4. Verse 14**

Nothing would have appeased \_\_\_\_\_. These men had to deny everything connected to Jesus just as many unbelievers do today. Most people that have heard the good news and reject it have many different excuses, from pride and alcohol or drug addiction, or worse sin addiction. Jesus wants to free even the worse sinner from all addictions and give you rest. His yoke is easy and he is gentle.

**5. Verse 15** For once I too was \_\_\_\_\_ but now I see. I am so glad that God allowed me to see the light. Are you glad that you know Jesus is the way, the truth and the life?

*Many Christians, Deacons, Elders and Pastors do not believe that Jesus physically resurrected. His resurrection is essential to our salvation and key to our identity. So, I would like to throw a few statements at you. All of these statements I do not agree with, but you need to defend the resurrection to naysayers. Do not take these questions personally, but be ready to provide an answer to any man with salt and love. Many of our cults and false religions believe these false comments.*

***Defend the truth from each of these commonly found lies.***

**6.** Jesus was replaced on the cross by Judas or Michael the Arch Angel. One of these died on the cross and Jesus was not killed. A common lie from JW's and/or Skeptics.

**7.** The Disciples saw a ghost. They only saw Jesus' spirit. Everyone has seen a ghost. (My personal favorite) The Jews also believe this lie.

**8.** There were several Jesus's at the time of this crucifixion. One of them drank medicated gall and was placed in a temporary coma. Most skeptics believe this lie.

**9.** Jesus merely fainted and then rolled the stone away with holes in his feet and a spear in his side, wrapped like a mummy. AKA Swoon theory.

**10.** Jesus' body was thrown in the garbage heap and burned. A common and sad skeptic lie.

## **Hard Areas of the Resurrection**

**11.** Did Jesus' blood cover our sins? Or is there a stronger word? Starts with the letter P.

**Explain**

**12.** Was Jesus our Passover Lamb? Explain  
Exodus 12, Lev. 22:20 1 Cor. 5:7, John 1:29

**13.** What day was Jesus crucified on? Hint, it was probably not a Friday. I know this upsets the apple cart for many. He had to be dead for three days and three nights.

**14.** Explain Passover and Jesus' Crucifixion.

**15.** Is Passover an important holiday for Jews and Gentiles?

Explain

**16.** Why are so many Christians ignorant of Passover?

Explain

### **Isaiah 53 The Message**

1 Who believes what we've heard and seen? Who would have thought God's saving power would look like this?

2-6 The servant grew up before God—a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field.

There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look.

He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand.

One look at him and people turned away.

We looked down on him, thought he was scum.

But the fact is, it was our pains he carried—our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us.

We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures.

But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him—our sins!

He took the punishment, and that made us whole.

Through his bruises we get healed.

We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost.

We've all done our own thing, gone our own way.

And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.

7-9 He was beaten, he was tortured, but he didn't say a word.

***King Jesus was beaten and pierced for our transgression. Lord Jesus is our Passover bread and the Jews take a piece of the Passover bread and hide it to represent the death and burial of our Lord Jesus. Elijah is a forerunner or announcer for the Lord Jesus and John the Baptist fulfilled that prophecy.***

**17. What does the strips and holes on the Passover bread represent?**

**18.** Why is the Passover bread broken and a piece hidden? *Afikoman*

**19.** Figure out the importance of Noah's Ark and Jesus' resurrection.

Which day did the Ark rest and the day Jesus rise from the dead? When did Jesus ascend to Heaven and what happened seven days later. Find this info in Genesis and see that it is the same date as our Lord's resurrection.

**20.** What did it mean when Jesus says on the cross “It is Finished”?

**21.** Is the man named Jesus real or a myth as most people say? Is he just a historical figure?

**22.** Is the resurrection real or a fantasy? Did it really happen? Are you absolutely sure? If so, then provide evidence that you are His follower.

**23.** Kingdom Lesson: Out of the following governments, which is the best for people to belong to and why? Explain the pros and cons of each of these government styles.

**Socialism**

**Democracy**

**Communism**

## Dictatorship

### Monarchy *Lord Jesus is a Monarch*

Have you committed your life to Jesus Christ and trusted Him as your personal Lord and Savior?

Yes When \_\_\_\_\_ Where \_\_\_\_\_

Not sure    No

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptized by immersion (submerged under water) SINCE committing your life to Christ? I hope you will one day, but it is not necessary for salvation.

Yes When \_\_\_\_\_

Where \_\_\_\_\_

No    Not sure    Do not want to be baptized

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

## **Turning Point**

Many students are able to confess that Jesus is Lord but other students believe in Jesus but have made other gods Lord. Either you are saved or not. Some trust in Buddha or Mohammed or others. If you are not a follower of Lord Jesus, I want you to tell me who is your Lord and why. If you are not saved, or do not want Jesus as Lord, you'll be able to complete the certification program but will not continue on the advanced ministry studies.

**We serve a living and awesome king. A monarchy is the best and worse form of government. Man's government is nothing like King Jesus's. Are you ready to serve a king that loves you and has a plan for your life?**

***He indeed rose from the dead!***

**Remember, this program is not accredited by any official agency but we are a ministry and hopefully we will obtain accreditation in the future.**

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**I prefer that you e-mail us. Sometimes it takes a week or so for me to return your grades to you.**

**You can proceed to lesson 4.**