

Any questions on historiography or resurrection studies?

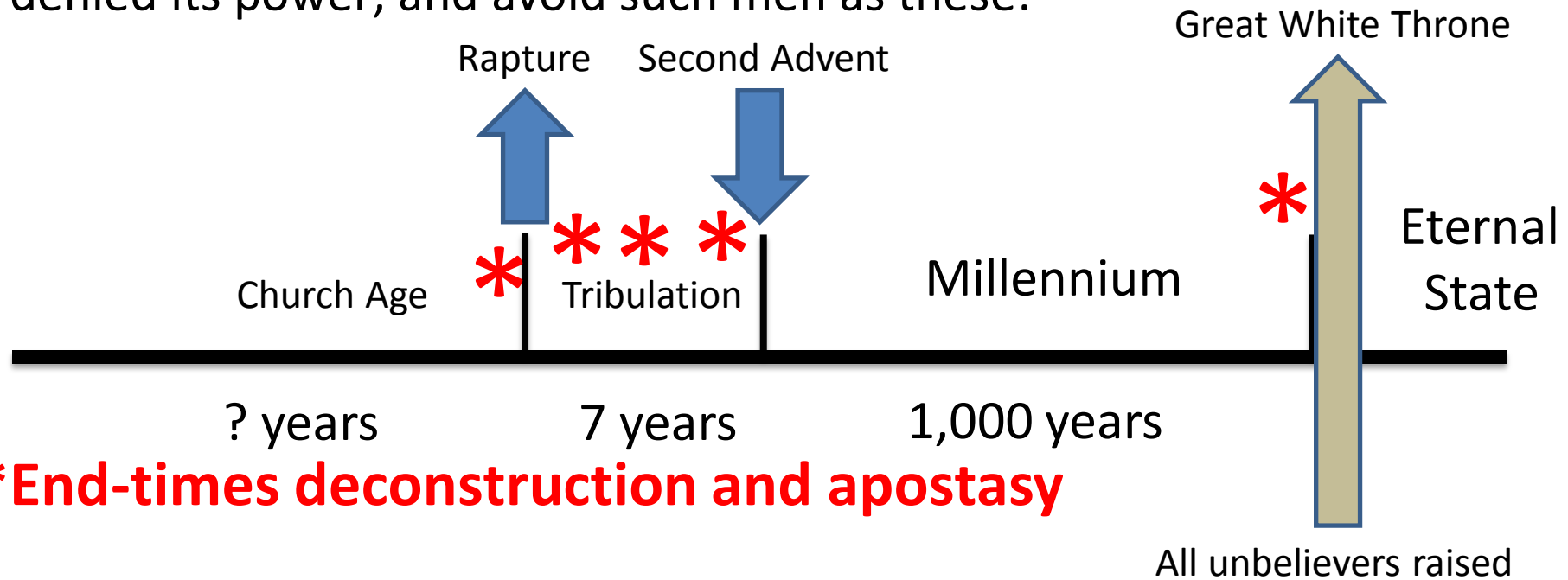
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A secret pagan in the midst of FBC?



Doctrinal Foundations: Eschatology (6), the End-Times

2 Timothy 3:1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.



***End-times deconstruction and apostasy**

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual life

#1- Salvation. Positional truth (PT): at the moment of belief in Christ, the new believer is united with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. PT is the believer's unconditional everlasting relationship with God. This position (standing) is an absolute. It is not progressive, emotional, or related to any human merit.

- **Romans 8:38** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. us in Christ Jesus.

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#2 Daily spiritual life – daily kosmic conformity or daily transformation? Rom 12:1-2

Romans 12:1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ² And stop being conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#3 - Spiritual maturity—advancing in true freedom through life in the Word—being a disciple of Christ.

John 8:31 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- ✓ Function of the mind – to seek the Truth.
- ✓ Function of the will – to seek the Good.
- ✓ Only in Christianity is there true freedom and rest for the mind and will.

Resurrection – 6 – Historiography – Peter in Acts 3; Non-Christian Sources on Christ

Historiography

1. **The earliest testimony (A.D. 35), cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 with Galatians 1:18.**
 - Galatians 1:18 Then three years later [A.D. 35] I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted [ἱστορησαι] with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.
 - ✓ These two passages trump all attacks on the historicity of Jesus Christ and the Gospels.
 - ✓ If you get this down you will always be able to defend the historicity of Christ, the gospel, and the resurrection against *anyone* regardless of IQ or training.

2. A doctrinal look at Peter under the power of the HS and living in the reality of the Resurrected Christ—the Prince of Life, Acts 3:11-26.

- ✓ **Acts 3:14** "But you disowned (ἠρνήσασθε) the Holy (τὸν ἅγιον) and Righteous One (δίκαιον), and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,¹⁵ but put to death the Prince of life (ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς), *the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses* (μάρτυρές ἐσμεν).
 - Assertion of His perfection and sinlessness.
 - Prince of Life asserts Jesus to be the Lord and Source of Life.

- “Denied” (2x)– Peter no doubt thought about his own denial in the shameful hour in his own experience. He is in essence saying that he can preach forgiveness to you sinners, because he has received it for himself.
- Note the choice of man. Barabbas is set against Christ; the Prince of Life against a murderer. ‘You killed the Prince of Life, but God raised Him.’

- The Just Christ. What a strong testimony to the impression which the character of Christ made on his contemporaries, e.g.
 - ✓ ‘Who can convict Me of sin? If I have done evil, bear witness of the evil. I find no fault in Him. Pilate’s wife remarked, “that righteous person.”’

- Yet, man chooses the murderer and rebel instead of Christ. Why? Would they have rejected Him if He took up arms against Rome? No! They rejected Him because He did not fit into their notions of what the Messiah should be and do! That is the root problem – always has been and always will be! Very few willing to take up the cross/plan of God and invest in the things of God. Most would rather play games with God on their own human good terms—and use God to baleout their reversionism bottoms.

- They all saw Christ's goodness and holiness. It did not attract them. They all wanted a Messiah who would do what they wanted and so they cried out "not this man but Barabbas."
- This is not just confined to the Jewish leaders, it happens all the time. People always looking for stuff— it is more outwardly and tangible.
- The beauty of JC and Bible doctrine is set before the world, but men's desires are on other things: not Jesus, not discipleship, not Bible doctrine, but wealth, fleeting bodily delights, and gratified ambition.

- Christ is the Prince of Life (ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς). Prince means originator, and hence leader and hence lord. It was the resurrection of JC that strengthened their faith (cf. the disciples on the road to Emmaus).
- What daring paradox: You killed the Prince of Life. He showed Himself the Lord of life and the Master of Death. He made his soul an offering for sin.
- As the Prince of life, he put to death the death of Death in His victory over spiritual death and sin. While the physical act remains, the sting is gone. At physical death we will be more alive than ever.
- Man's deepest sin and evil work out God's highest act of Love and Atonement.

A LOOK AT SOME OF THE NON-CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR JESUS

N.B. Professional historians prefer the evidence of 1 Cor 15 & Galatians, whereas the village atheists prefer non-Christian historical evidence.

1. Josephus (b. 37).

- ✓ He fought against the Romans, was defeated by them and then joined them as the court historian for Emperor Vespasian.
- ✓ He was geographically and chronologically in a position where he would have heard about the church from its inception.

- ✓ He was born in Jerusalem when the church was growing. He was raised in Jerusalem at a time when the church is growing. He was in the very spot to know what the disciples were preaching.
- ✓ He was a priest so he would be interested.
- ✓ Remember, the church was still meeting in the synagogues and the Temple before A.D. 70.
- ✓ He is going to be hearing what these apostles were preaching so he will be a primary witness as to what these apostles were saying.
- ✓ There are two texts where he makes reference to Jesus.

The first text is of much dispute because it contains a Christian interpolation (**in red**), *Ant.* 18.3.3:

- ✓ “And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, ***if indeed we should call him a man***; for he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. ***This man was the Christ/Messiah.*** And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross on his impeachment by the chief men among us, those who had loved him at first did not cease: ***for he appeared to them on the third day alive again, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him***: and even now the tribe of Christians, so named after him, has not yet died out.”

Problems with Josephus 1st Reference

1. The text leads one to believe that Josephus must have converted to Christianity. Yet, Origen in 235 says that Josephus was not a believer.
2. Josephus scholars agree that the trimmed version is authentic because of context, style, and mss evidence. The world's leading Josephus scholar today, Feldman, a Jew, agrees that the trimmed version is authentic. The Jewish scholar Vermes also accepts it. Village atheists are simply wrong to throw out the whole thing out.

3. Other mss have been discovered that included the resurrection account but as “for they reported that he appeared to them alive.” Many scholars believe the resurrection account should not be trimmed out. It is very possible that Josephus was reporting on what he was hearing as he lived in that area.

The second text is accepted as authentic by most scholars

Antiquities of the Jews

Book XX, Chapter IX, Section 1

On the martyrdom of James:

"Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law he delivered them to be stoned."

- “brother of Jesus” instead of brother of the Lord rings of authenticity
- “the so-called Christ” suggests that Josephus had already made some reference to Jesus.

Non-Christian source: Tacitus (56-120)

Tacitus is considered one of the greatest Roman historians. He is writing of the burning of Rome.

But neither human resources, nor imperial munificence, nor appeasement of the gods, eliminated sinister suspicions that the fire had been instigated. To suppress this rumour, Nero fabricated scapegoats – and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus.¹ But in spite of this temporary setback the deadly superstition had broken out afresh, not only in Judaea (where the mischief had started) but even in Rome. All degraded and shameful practices collect and flourish in the capital.

Note the antagonism and insulting remarks of Tacitus toward Christians

- ✓ He was not only unsympathetic, he was hostile:
 - Hated for their abominable crimes.
 - Deadly superstition.
 - Judea, the land which originated this evil
- ✓ Note what he does acknowledge
 - Christ was executed by Pilate during the rein of Tiberius. This is what the Gospels say.

- “Deadly superstition broke out again in Judea – then spread through Rome.” What did the gospels say about it spreading? “Suppressed” by the killing of JC? What does the NT report?
- Obviously, Christianity is not a small group if he is having to torture them to squelch the rumor. Must be having a significant impact.
- The majority of scholars accept this testimony from Tacitus. That He is a credible source.

Non-Christian Source: Mara bar Serapion (A.D. 73)

- ✓ He was a Syrian Stoic who wrote to his son from a Roman prison, Mara suspects he may be executed.
- ✓ Speaks of the death of Christ
- ✓ “Or the Jews [by killing] their wise king, because their kingdom was taken away at that very time.”

Non-Christian Source: Thallus (A.D. 55)

- ✓ He wrote a history of the eastern Mediterranean world from Trojan War until ca. A.D. 50.
- ✓ Julius Africanus says: *“On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun.”*
- ✓ It appears that a historian name Thallus made note of the darkness that occurred at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion—also the rocks opened as per Matt.

Non-Christian Source: Lucian (A.D. 115-200)

- ✓ “The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account.”

Non-Christian Source: Celsus (A.D. 177-180)

- ✓ Pagan writer who criticizes Christianity.
- ✓ He mentions the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- ✓ Origen writes a rebuttal to his work (A.D. 248). Quotes him verbatim and then answers him.

Babylonian Talmud (3rd century)

- ✓ “It was taught: On the day before the Passover they hanged Jesus . . . he practiced magic.

Even if we did not have the New Testament or any Christian writings, scholars tell us that we can conclude from *non-Christian* writings that 1) Jesus was a Jewish teacher; 2) many believed that he performed healings and exorcisms; 3) he was rejected by the Jewish leaders; 4) he was crucified under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius; 5) despite his shameful death, his followers believed that he was still alive, spread beyond Palestine so that there were multitudes of them in Rome by A.D. 64; 6) all kinds of people from cities and countryside—men and women, slave and free—worshipped him as God by the beginning of the second century.

Consider ancient historiography & Julius Caesar

- ✓ Many have cited Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon River as he returned from Gaul to Italy in 49 B.C. as a model of incontrovertible historical fact from the ancient world that also had *historic* significance: with that deed Caesar committed himself to civil war, and the course of the Roman empire was forever altered.
- ✓ However, we only have 4 sources for the date or location of the Rubicon (Paterculus, Plutarch, Suetonius, and Appian). The earliest is mid-first century and they all vary more than the Gospels.
- ✓ Of course, none of them were eyewitness. They all relied on only one eyewitness source, Asinius Pollio.

We can Establish the Biblical Jesus with Only 5 Minimal Facts – virtually unanimously accepted by scholars

- #1 – Jesus' Death by Crucifixion (“That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can be,” John Dominic Crossan).
- #2 – Disciples' Beliefs that Jesus Appeared
- #3 – Conversion of Church Persecutor Paul
- #4 – Conversion of the Skeptic James
- #5 – Empty Tomb.

Ready for Quiz?

The Bible teaches that man will continue to get better and better, especially in the end-times of the church age, tribulation, and millennium.

A- True

B - False

Positional Truth teaches that the believer can improve his standing with God if he stays in fellowship, grows in Bible doctrine, and is serious about Jesus Christ.

A- True

B - False

A believer who is not transformed by the renewing of his mind will be fashioned according to age in which he lives and lose capacity to understand the perfect will of God.

A- True

B- False

God created our wills to seek the _____ and our minds to seek the _____, and we remain unsatisfied and restless until we find them.

Material in 1 Corinthians 15 and Galatians 1 is accepted by all recognized scholars (mostly unbelievers) and this brings us to a date earlier than the writing of the Gospels. This multiple attestation includes _____ and _____ and takes us back to A.D. _____.

What two things explains Peter's boldness in preaching in Acts 3:11-16.

A – He was forgiven and restored to fellowship.

B – He recommitted his life to the Lord.

C – Fraud theory #1.

D – He was under the filling of the HS and witnessed the Resurrected Christ.

Why would people choose to free Barabbas (a murderer and revolutionary) rather than Jesus Christ?

A – They felt sorry for Barabbas.

B – They were ignorant and did not know better.

C – They were more interested in someone to take care of their temporal life issues rather than take care of the core issues.

Josephus

A – Provides very good evidence, but not as good as the evidence in 1 Cor 15.

B – Became a believer in Jesus Christ as indicated in his first reference to Jesus.

C – Probably did not know about Christianity on a personal level.

How are the village atheists different from atheistic professional historians with regard to the evidence for the life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Tacitus is considered one of the greatest Roman historians. When he writes about Nero's burning of Rome and the scapegoating of Christians, he reveals a great empathy, respect and admiration for Christians.

A – True

B – False

The minimal facts approach would include the writings of Pliny, Suetonius, Mara bar Serapion, Thallus, Lucian, Celsus, and the Babylonian Talmud.

A- True

B - False

Minimal facts: The majority of scholars agree that there were two skeptics who opposed Jesus' teachings until they believed the risen Jesus appeared to them. Name them.

What is the main difference between Paul and a modern skeptic who converts to Islam?

A – People follow a particular religion today because they trust secondary evidence. The disciples, Paul, and James believed based on primary evidence.

B- Christians don't believe they should spread their faith with a sword.

C- Although they both view Jesus as a man sent from God, Muslims do not believe He is God.

D- None of the above.

True or False: Jesus has a brother named James who did not believe in Him before the Resurrection.

A – True

B- False

Why are the testimonies of the skeptics Paul and James so profound?

A- They are reported in the infallible Bible.

B- Neither knew Jesus prior to his crucifixion.

C- They had previously rejected Jesus' message.

D- Like Christians today, they believed even though they did not witness Jesus' earthly ministry.

Which non-Christian author of the First Century reports the martyrdom of James?

Where is the appearance to James reported?

A – Matthew 28

B- 1 Corinthians 15

C – *Ant.* 20-200

D – James 1

In historiography what is the principle of embarrassment?

List two incidents in the New Testament that qualify as embarrassing facts and thus point to authenticity

Without the New Testament we would not know hardly anything about Jesus' early life or ministry?

A – True

B – False

What are the 5 minimal facts which virtually all scholars accept?

The Cross—Spiritual Applications From First Peter

1. 1 Pet 1:10-12. The Cross, the Angelic Conflict, and Testing. 3, the resurrection—regeneration and the new life.

- ✓ Christ and His Cross are the center of human history, 1:10-12.
- ✓ Note the positive volition of the OT prophets.
- ✓ Note the interest of the angels in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unpacking all of this opens up the purpose of human history

- ✓ Divine historiography and the angelic conflict.
 - ❖ Original creation of the heavens, angels, and earth.
 - ❖ Fall of Satan and judgment on the earth.
 - ❖ Restoration of the earth.
 - ❖ Creation of man.
 - ❖ Fall of man into the kingdom of darkness.
 - ❖ Promise of Redeemer. This becomes the thread of all history.

- ✓ Human history is about God reversing the curse of the Fall of man. These are things angels long to see.
 - ❖ Reverse spiritual death by making man spiritually alive again by providing eternal spiritual life with capacity to live and serve God.
 - ❖ Reversing physical death with resurrected bodies. Abolish decay, disease, deformity, & death.
 - ❖ Reversing the curse of creation by restoration of all things.

- ❖ Transfer man from kingdom of Satan to kingdom of God.
- ❖ Dethrone Satan as the king of this earth.
- ❖ Reversal of all consequences of sin by God's program of redemption.
- ❖ Take man from being at enmity with God to being at peace with God.
- ❖ Destruction of the old heavens and earth.
- ❖ Creation of new heavens and earth.

- ✓ The longing/desire (παρακύψαι) of angels, 1 Pet. 12:12.
- ✓ They learn of God's grace, but they will never feel the joy of our salvation.
- ✓ They are spectators not participants.
- ✓ They are fascinated with our salvation.

- ✓ They are fascinated with God's love and grace. They are fascinated with God's wisdom displayed in the theatre of human history.
- ✓ The wonder of God's grace coming to sinful men and transforming them. They cannot say "he died for our sins" but they can sing praise and glory to Him for redeeming man in matchless grace, cf. Rev. 5:8-14.
- ✓ They are always learning of God's grace in human history, but never like in the church age, Eph. 3:8-10

2. 1 Peter 1:17-25. Our priceless redemption and the Cross. Note the reference to the resurrection, 21.

3. 1 Peter 2:18-25. Christ, our Example. In unjust suffering we are to take up our crosses and glorify God.

- ✓ **Matthew 16:24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

4. 1 Peter 4:1-2. Breaking the OSN and living in the will of God rather than the lusts of the flesh.