

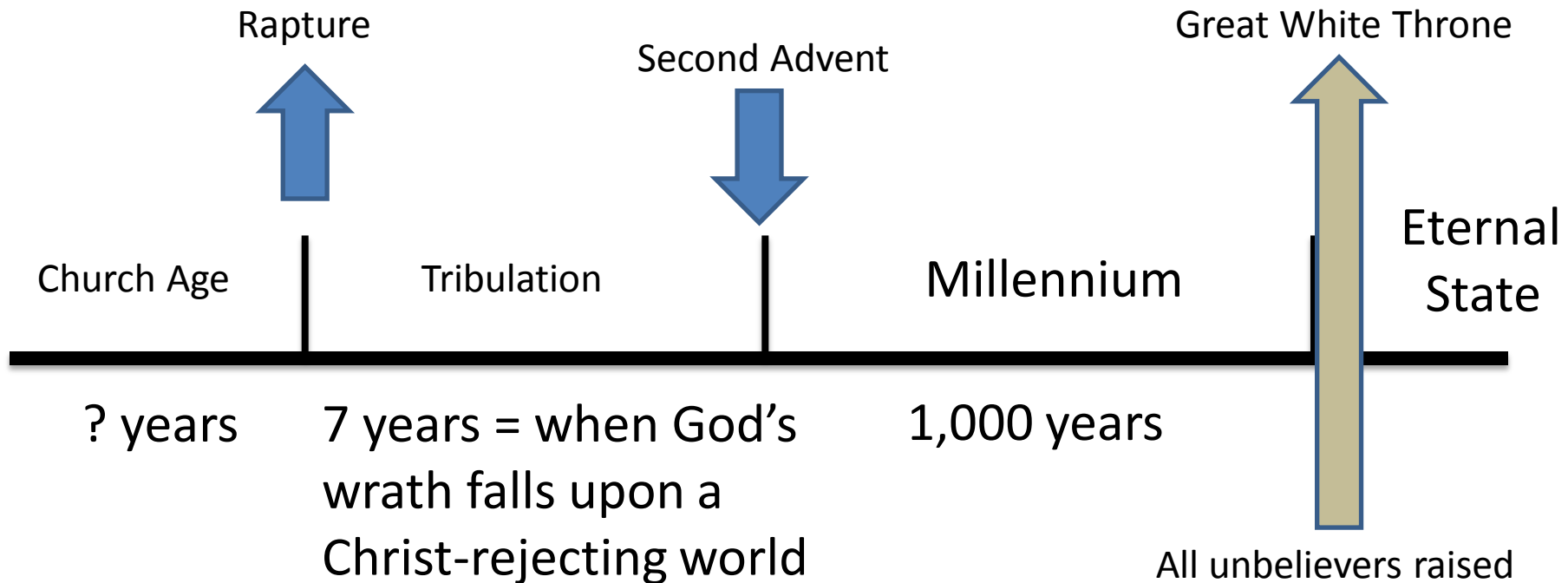
Any questions on historiography or resurrection studies?

**These slides are available at
www.fbcweb.org/sermons.html**

Doctrinal Foundations: Eschatology (8)

The next age is the Tribulation—the age of God’s enormous wrath on the earth. The church is excluded from this time of intense divine wrath.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come (ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης).



Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual life: #1- Salvation. Positional Truth

Colossians 3:1 If (Ei) then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. . . ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

- ✓ The power of God's perfect grace is far stronger than the weaknesses, wickedness, vacillation, sinfulness, and evil of man.
- ✓ In grace God found a way to provide perfect standing for man by granting to spiritually dead man absolute and perfect righteousness.
- ✓ Positional truth takes man from status of being totally separated from God, in a position of inability to do anything pleasing to Him, & make such a man as righteous as God Himself as far as standing. This is only possible in grace.
- ✓ This was only possible through the exchange of imputations.

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#2: Daily spiritual life – The presence and power of God working in us.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#3 - Spiritual maturity—advancing in the POG.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance (δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν) the race (ἀγῶνα) that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Resurrection Special #8: **Historiography & The Risen Lord's First Resonating Word**

- 1. Goals of this study (by August 2011)**
 - ✓ **Greater biblical understanding of the significance resurrection in the gospels and epistles.**
 - ✓ **Deeper understanding how the resurrection of JC played such a dominant role in the lives of the apostles and early Christians.**
 - ✓ **Deeper doctrinal understanding of the issues related to resurrection and the SL, cf. Philip 3:8.**

- ✓ **Enable the believer to defend Christianity and defeat all modern attacks on the resurrection. What a great feeling! Consider the alternative.**
- ✓ **Prove the resurrection of JC using only the science of historicity.**
- ✓ **Spiritual growth through gaining a much broader and deeper understanding of the resurrection, Philip 3:8.**

2. Historiography. Never forget that God is always in control of history and directing the affairs of mankind, cf. Gen. 50:20; Dan. 4:13; Prov 29:13; Matt. 10:30; Rom 13:1; Heb 1:3. All of the historical theories of man, though they may have some elements of truth, are all fatally and finally flawed (cf. geographical determinism, economic determinism, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, labor theory, Marxist history, American communism, positivism, Spengler, Toynbee, progress theory). Jesus Christ is the one who continues to control history.

- 3. God has blessed with overwhelming historical proof that Jesus Christ was indeed raised from the dead (cf. Acts 1:3).**

- 4. However, confidence in this proof does not resonate with many today for two primary reasons:**
 - ✓ The postmodern intellectual climate of our age**
 - ✓ The anti-intellectualism of contemporary Christianity (which is due in no small part to postmodernism). However, it was Jesus who told us to love God with all of our minds.**

5. Review of the nature of historical proof *alone*:

- We can prove historically that Jesus cast out demons, that He died on the cross, and that He was resurrected.
- We cannot prove historically that He walked on water or fed 5,000 +.

Any Questions on this?

6. What is the quintet of historical proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? The four bedrock certainties + the one overwhelming fact?

+1

Fact #3: The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.

- ✓ Paul changed from being skeptic who believed it was God's will to persecute the church to becoming one of its most influential messengers.
- ✓ Paul's notorious pre-Christian activities and conversion are multiply attested (Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-19; 22:1-19; 26:4-5; 9-23; 26:10; 26:9-23; .1 Cor. 15:9-10; Gal 1:12-16, 22-23; Philip. 3:6-7; Church Fathers).

- ✓ He went from being a “Judaistic” enemy of Christianity to embracing it after seeing the risen Lord. He was not of a bent to leave “Judaism,” given his view in Gal 1:13.
- ✓ His willingness to suffer continuously for the sake of the gospel, even to the point of martyrdom is well documented with first hand early multiple testimony (Paul, Luke, Clement, Polycarp, Tertullian, Dionysius of Corinth, Origen).
- ✓ Paul’s conversion was based on primary evidence: the risen Jesus appeared personally to him.

4th Fact: the skeptic James, the half brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.

- ✓ Jesus has at least four brothers: James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon, plus unnamed sisters.
- ✓ Josephus mentions James as the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ.
- ✓ James was a pious Jewish believer who after conversion became the leader of the first church council at Jerusalem.

- ✓ The Gospels report that Jesus' brothers including James, were unbelievers during his ministry (Mark 3:21, 31; 6:3-4; John 7:5).
- ✓ Appearance of JC to James, 1 Cor 15:3-7.
- ✓ Subsequent to the alleged event of Jesus resurrection, James is identified as a leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13-21; Gal 1:19).
Remember, we are not appealing to divine inspiration here. Strictly history alone. What caused the change?

- ✓ Not only did James convert to Christianity, his beliefs in Jesus and his resurrection were so strong that he died as a martyr because of them.
- ✓ James' martyrdom is attested by Josephus, Hegesippus, and Clement of Alexandria. Hence, his martyrdom is attested by both Christian and non-Christian sources.

Fact #5 – The Empty Tomb

- ✓ 75% of critical scholars accept this – so technically this does not qualify as minimal facts bedrock.
- ✓ The tomb was empty. The **JET**:
 - **The Jerusalem factor.** Jesus was publically crucified in Jerusalem, and Christianity would not have gotten off the ground if the body had still been in the tomb. All the Jews or Romans would have to do is exhume the body—all enemies had every reason to produce the corpse. None of the critics of Christianity cite a corpse (cf. Celsus)

- **Enemy attestation.** The empty tomb is attested not only by Christian sources. Jesus' enemies admitted it as well. Early critics accused Jesus' disciples of stealing the body (Matt. 28:12-13). No need if the body was in the tomb. The earliest Jewish claim is an indirect admission that the body was unavailable for public display. The only opposing theory we know was offered by Jesus' enemies.

- **The testimony of women.** If someone concocted a story in an attempt to deceive others, we presume that they would not knowingly invent data that could hurt the credibility of their story. When we come to the account of the empty tomb, women are listed as the primary witnesses. They are not only the first witnesses mentioned; they are also mentioned in all 4 gospels. This would be an odd invention since in both Jewish and Roman cultures women were lowly esteemed and their testimony was regarded as questionable—certainly not as credible as men’s.

- Even disciples were influenced by this culture (Luke 24:10-11). If concocted then the writers would have chosen men. Yet the women are the primary first witnesses of the resurrection. This is why a vast majority of historians accept this as historically credible.

Luke 24:10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the *mother* of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And these words appeared to them as nonsense (λῆρος), and they would not believe them (ἠπίστουν αὐταῖς).

The First Resurrection Appearance

The very first resonating word from the risen Jesus

John 20:1-18

- ❖ **Note the dawning of gradual faith based on seeing the resurrected Christ. Contrast this to our situation:**
 - ✓ **John 20:29** Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed."

❖ **John 20:1-2:** Note how she misinterprets the glorious news. We likewise often interpret things as bad, when in reality they are most wonderful—above all we could ask or imagine. What a wonderful proof of the historical truth of the resurrection. This is no soil in which hallucinations would spring, and such people would not have believed Him risen unless they had seen Him living.

- ❖ **John 20:3-7.** Note the folded grave-clothes. Christ took the time to fold them. There had been no hurried removal. Not a trace of hurry or struggle. Calmly and deliberate, He rose from physical death by the majesty of His lordship.
- ❖ **John 20:8.** The apostle John believed in the resurrection of Christ upon seeing the folded garments. However, Peter remains in the dark.

❖ **20:9.** They had heard Christ teach this, but this was such an incredible unexampled thing. How many times have we heard doctrines, and yet when they come true in our lives we sometimes stand in astonishment?

- ❖ **20:10-14.** John believed, Peter did not, and Mary did not. She needs more than an empty grave, folded clothes and angels in white. She is in such stress that the angels mean nothing.
- ❖ **20:15-18.** The only alternative to this as history is that some unknown genius composed it all. “Miryam”! That was all it took—a one word revelation. This speaks volumes of His knowledge of her and each one of us— a knowledge that never ends. “Touch Me not! For I am not yet ascended, implies “When I am, you may—and in a deeper way.” This will be possible through the Holy Spirit and Bible doctrine.

- ❖ The resurrection begins a new relationship. One might expect Him to say just the opposite. But what we have here is the establishment of a new relationship. A new fellowship with Jesus Christ. Not absence but continual presence of the Lord with His people.
- ✓ **Matthew 28:20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.“
- ✓ **John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

- ❖ Seeking Christ above, Col 3:1-3. Poor Mary is clinging to the old ways, the earthly form. Having the indwelling of JC is far more powerful than walking with Him on earth. He is now nearer to us than ourselves. We can touch Him through faith, through Bible doctrine—by faith and love in ways that the disciples could not have dreamed of. He can now come into our lives—into our souls. The disciples did not have the blessings of an indwelling Christ for blessedness, power, and direction.

- ❖ It was the resurrection that made early Christianity possible. Note the difference between the grave of the dead John and the grave of the Living Jesus, Mat 14:12 with 28:8. Those who followed John dispersed for there was nothing to hold them together any longer. They ceased to be as they lay John in the new grave. Those who laid JC in the tomb likewise had but little hope. Both groups scattered. But the grave of Jesus was the beginning of the church only because “the Lord is risen” indeed.

- ❖ The whole history of the Christian church, and even its very existence is unintelligible except on the supposition of the resurrection. But for that the fate of John's disciples would have been the fate of Christ's – it would have died out as well in less than a generation.
- ❖ The resurrection of Christ united the disciples. The natural thing would have been to disband as per the followers of John the Baptist.

- ❖ Not only did the resurrection of Christ keep them united, their conceptions of Jesus underwent a remarkable development. His death brought about the opposite effect of what would be expected. It should have ended their hope that He was the Messiah. As they said, “We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel.” However, the death of the Messiah confirmed it instead—because of the resurrection.

- ❖ The resurrection turned the disciples from being cowards into being bold, strong, and calm before the threatening Sanhedrin. They were now unmoved and victorious. They were transformed from being petulant, self-willed, jealous, cowards into bold proclaimers of Christ. What accounts for this new grandeur and heroism? Can any reasonable account be given of these paradoxes? Surely it is not too much to ask the skeptics to explain it on naturalistic grounds. Why did they not go the way of John's disciples? Why not do as John's disciples and simply disappear?

❖ Only the resurrection of Jesus Christ furnishes the only reasonable explanation of the facts. The inception of the church stands as evidence for its historicity. Apart from the resurrection there is no church. It would have been shattered from the beginning. What accounts for the fact that they declared Him risen and the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead ones? We have very early undisputed evidence (1 Cor 15 with Gal 1) that the existence of the church depended upon the belief that the Lord had risen. We see it in the apostles, in the epistles and in the gospels.

- ❖ The resurrection as a fact. Such a belief could not have originated or maintained itself unless it had been true. All of the theories over the last 2,000 years continue to fail.
- The hypothesis that the disciples lied dies and reappears in every generation. Paul and Peter and John were conspirators in a trick or were they sincere enough to die for their beliefs.
- The mythical theory. Myths are not made in three days or three years. What was the church to feed on while the myth was growing?

- Hallucination. Do hallucinations lay hold of 500 people at one? Do they last for a long country walk and give rise to protracted conversation and a meal? How does one explain the story of Christ eating and drinking before the disciples. What about all of the details in all of the different accounts?

❖ Consider the Joy of the Resurrection. How little did the women know that they would be the bearers of the great joy that should be for all of the people. It was the resurrection that caused them to recognize Him as the Messiah – not the crucifixion. The resurrection guaranteed that God accepted His Sacrifice as our Redeemer. The world had always doubted such a life beyond the grave. The one proof of a life beyond the grave is the resurrection of JC. Therefore let us be glad that God has taken us from the darkness of doubt and uncertainty and planted us on the solid rock of certainty. That is what this joy is all about. The proof of the resurrection of the LJC is indeed the greatest news! 😊

More on Historiography: The Importance of Methodology

- 1. Methodology.** It is imperative that every historian have an objective method if he ever hopes to remove his bias and transcend his horizon. This is key in being able to do history.
- 2. Admissions by prominent historians of lack of methodology:**
 - ✓ **Jose' Barrera:** *“Although those who would talk about history have an object in common—historiographical texts—they do not have a single clear method to approach them.”*
 - ✓ **David Fischer,** *“Specific canons of historical proof are neither widely observed nor generally agreed upon.”*
 - ✓ **Michael Grant,** *“it is true that every critic is inclined to make his own rules.”*

3. A strong majority of historians are realists (not postmodernists) who maintain that the past can be recovered. Furthermore, most agree that arguments to the best explanation provide the path to get us there.
4. Of late, more historians are more attentive to theory, method—philosophy of history— and this is a positive step in the right direction.

5. Historiography is recognized as a “soft science”—much like geology, astronomy, archaeology, paleontology, forensic science, et al. Past events cannot be put in a test tube. However, it is worthy to not that in physics an electron is no more immediately accessible to perception than the Spanish Inquisition. It is a matter of inference from actual evidence.

6. The key issue in determining the best hypothesis of determining what is historical is found in what is known as argument for the **best explanation**.
7. There are **five criteria** that should be used when examining historical data to determine the best explanation.
 - ✓ **#1: Explanatory scope.** This criterion looks at the quantity of facts accounted for by a hypothesis. The hypothesis that includes the most relevant data has the greatest explanatory scope.

- ✓ **#2: Explanatory power.** This criterion looks at the quality of the explanation of facts. The hypothesis that explains the data with the least amount of effort, vagueness, and ambiguity has greater explanatory power. The historian does not want to push the facts to make them fit his theory. Liberals often use exegesis as a torture chamber where Greek words are stretched until they tell what the historians what he wants to hear.

- ✓ **#3: Plausibility.** The hypothesis must be implied to a greater degree and by a greater variety of accepted truths (or background knowledge).
- ✓ **#4: Less ad hoc.** A hypothesis possess an ad hoc component when it enlists nonevidenced assumptions, that is, when it goes beyond what is already known. Ad hoc is used as a salvage operation.

- ✓ **#5: Illumination.** Will the conclusions shed light on other areas that are in question now? If Jesus rose from the dead, does it help us in other areas? This is like icing on the cake. It illuminates other claims and background data.

8. Each hypothesis needs to be checked against these five criteria (cf. hallucination, stolen body, myth, lies, swoon). This is how we do all history. It is the only way one can bracket unbiased assumptions. If someone disagrees let them offer a better method (cf. Muslims who only use Koran). Unfortunately, most are totally controlled by their horizons.

Illustration of Methodology with *House*

1. Robust 15 year old is ill. His symptoms are fever, vomiting, and pain the lower-right side of his abdomen.
2. Three medical students.
 - 1st student opines that the fever suggests that the boy has the flu, since that is the most common symptom of the ailment. However, House notes that the flu is not usually accompanied by vomiting and abdominal pain on the right side. So the flu diagnosis lacks explanatory scope.

- 2nd student offers that, although vomiting and abdominal pain are rare symptoms in a case of the flu, it is still possible though rare that they resulted from having the flu.
3. House agrees but adds that if another diagnosis more easily accommodates the symptoms, then the flu diagnosis would lack explanatory power. He continues that in all of his years practicing medicine, he had never read of a case of the flu in the professional literature that included all three symptoms the boy is exhibiting. Thus, the attempt of the 2nd student to salvage the flu diagnosis also lacks plausibility.

- 3rd student decides to use imagination and suggests that the boy indeed has the flu as indicated by the fever and that, since it is the middle of the flu season, the plausibility factor is increased. There must be other reasons. Perhaps the boy is a martial artist who decided to work out the prior evening despite fever, and that he had been kicked in the lower-right side of his abdomen during a sparring session. After practice, he ate in a restaurant where the meal contained food poisoning. There is no forcing or ambiguity, however it requires two nonevidenced assumptions. Thus, this scenario suffers from ad hoc.

4. House then announces that the 3 symptoms are found in a classical case of appendicitis. An inflamed appendix explains all three symptoms without any strain or ambiguity. In fact, it is textbook.
 - ✓ Appendicitis—requires no nonevidenced assumptions, avoids any hint of being ad hoc, and provides best explanation.

- ✓ It is worth noting that none of the other diagnosis can be ruled out initially as impossible. They are all possible. However, the physician is going to treat the symptoms according to the most likely diagnosis, a determination made by which diagnosis best fulfills the important criteria. Same with historical investigation.
- ✓ It is all about explanatory scope and not making the data fit a theory – like T-Rex. These five criteria is very useful in determining what hypothesis provides the best explanation. It helps one bracket one's horizons.