

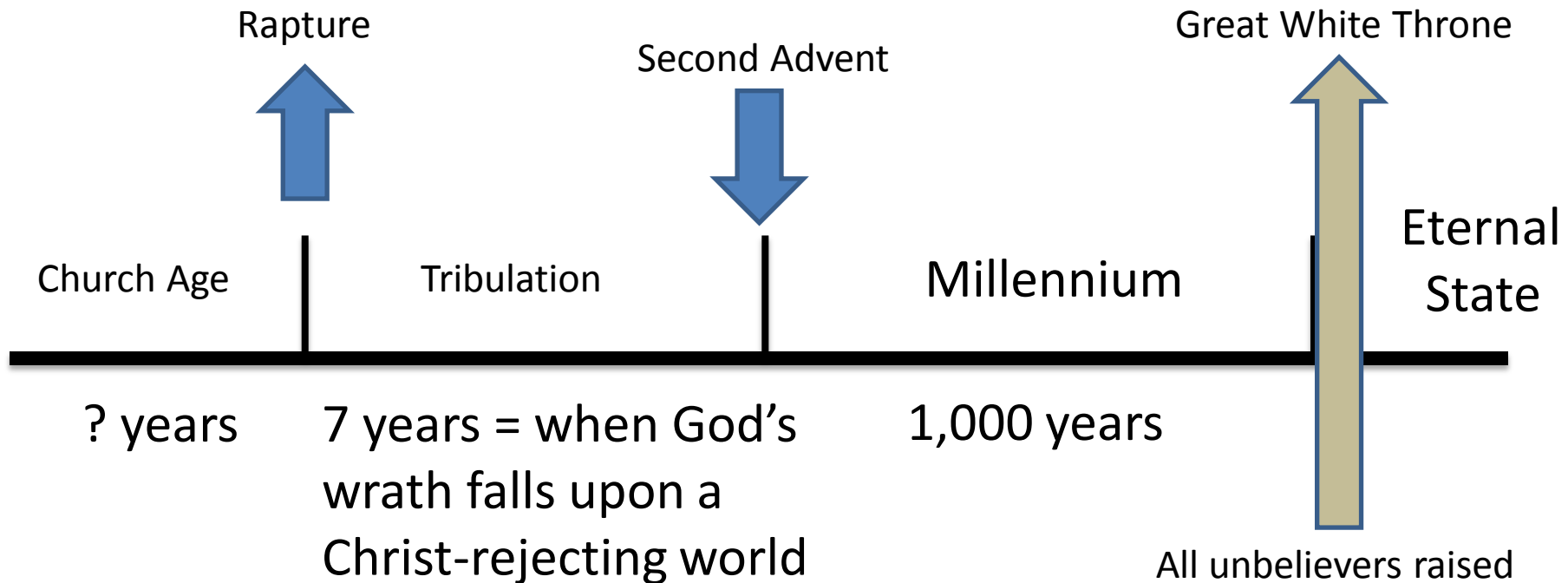
Any questions on historiography or resurrection studies?

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

Doctrinal Foundations: Eschatology (9)

The next age is the Tribulation—it is unique. This is the way the Lord described the coming tribulation period. Two things unique about it: worldwide (not localized) & people will be *acting* like the world is coming to an end (Rev. 6:15-17).

Matthew 24:21 for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.



Preparation for Bible Class

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

Romans 5:1 Therefore having been justified by faith (δικαιωθέντες), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#2: Daily spiritual life – as unto the Lord.

Romans 14:5 One man regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#3 - Spiritual maturity—advancing in the POG.

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Resurrection Special #9:

Historiography & Overview of the 4 Resurrection Records

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

+1

Understanding the Nature of Historical Proof:

- We have historical proof that Jesus lived, cast out demons, performed miracles, died on the cross, and that He was resurrected.
- We do not have historical proof that He walked on water or fed 5,000 +.

Understanding the Nature of Historical Proof:

- Historiography is a soft science like geology, astronomy, “evolution.”
- What would constitute “proof” of evolution? What about the forensic science of CSI? What about T-Rex? What about proven guilty and court? What is epistemological justification of faith in skepticism? Or faith in naturalism in a recognized divine context/background?

QUESTIONS?

- The spiritual journey of seeking truth is one first of uneasiness and then fascination and confidence. If you keep moving forward you will have far greater understanding of and faith in the reality of Christianity. Those who do not seek truth end up living with a make-believe and very vulnerable “faith,” and eventually experience some type shipwreck of the faith—because they really never understood what they believed. Why would a believer be afraid of seeking truth? Afraid that maybe what he believes is not true? Faith!?

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 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 note 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.
 - ✓ Did the Holocaust ever happen? Can you prove that you were born – a historical question? Is there any amount of historical written evidence about anything that would convince a skeptic. What kind? Volition?

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 with 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.

- ✓ **#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 this conclusion 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 (both naturalism and supernaturalism). 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. A 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 diagnoses 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.

Examples of Mythers vs. Historians On The War on Christianity and “Easter”

1. Da Vinci Code. Dan Brown, “The further I progressed in my research, the more troublesome the information became to me. I also found much of the information very hard to accept quite simply because the history did not mesh with what I had been taught in school and church.”

2. Movies, best selling books, websites, and an enormous amount of internet activity assert that “Jesus never existed.”
 - ✓ Response by F.F. Bruce: “The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the “Christ-myth” theories.”

- 3. Allegations:** “The history of Jesus was harvested from pagan religions” (Freke, Gandy, and cited by Norman)
- Jesus/Baal was killed by Mot, and **returned to life.**
 - Jesus/Adonis was killed and rose on the **third day.**
 - Jesus/Attis was born of a virgin on Dec. 25th
 - Jesus/Isis was born Dec. 25th
 - Jesus/Mithras was incarnated from rock of cave on Dec 25th. He also performed miracles. He held a last supper.
 - Jesus/Dionysus: born Dec 25th in a cave, turned water into wine, transfigured, hung on a tree/crucified, rose on the 3rd day.

(cont.) “The history of Jesus was harvested from pagan religions”” (Freke, Gandy, and Asher Norman).

- Jesus/Krishna. Both pierced and crucified. Both resurrected and will return; both born of a virgin.
- Jesus/Buddha. As boys, when to their temples at the age of 12; had a disciple who walked on water, disciples were miracle workers.

4. The charge of “diabolical mimicry.” Popularized by Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy: the idea that early Christians, recognizing that Christianity had similarities to earlier pagan beliefs, desperately tried to explain these similarities away by declaring that the devil looked into the future and inspired pagans to copy Christianity. This charge is made against:

- ✓ Justin Martyr (100-165)
- ✓ Tertullian (160-220)
- ✓ Irenaeus (120-?).

5. **Zeitgeist “documentary” (Peter Joseph).** The Christ Myth Goes Hollywood.

- ✓ “Jesus never existed; not in the historical record.”
- ✓ “Parallels” = virgin birth, Dec. 25th, 12 signs of the Zodiac, resurrection in 3 days, 3 virgin mothers had names that started with the letter M—Mary, Myrrha, and Maya
- ✓ Life of Jesus was harvested from pagan gods. The 5 main gods include: Attis, Dionysus, Krishna, Mithras, Horus,
- ✓ Diabolical mimicry (copy-cat) by Church Fathers.

What should we make of all of this “evidence”?

What do the professional historians and scholars of religion say about all of this? Most laugh/ignore mythers.

About Jesus?

- ✓ Jewish historian Geza Vermes: “Let me state plainly that I accept that Jesus was a real historical person.
- ✓ F.F. Bruce: “The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the “Christ-myth” theories.

About the pagan gods?

- The scholars of comparative religions
- The Mithraic scholars. The Buddhist scholars.

How could a Christian respond without understanding history?

The bottom line is that there is not a shred of evidence to these “similarities.” They all lack explanatory power, explanatory scope, plausibility, illumination, and are all filled with ad hoc (non-evidenced based assumptions).

What about all of the stark differences between Christianity and these false religions?

HISTORICAL TRUTH = BASED ON PRIMARY SOURCES

- ✓ There is no tablet preserving the account of Baal's death and return to life.
- ✓ Adonis. Not a shred of evidence of virgin mother or resurrection, and earliest text – 2nd century.
- ✓ Experts recognized that Attis borrowed from Christianity.
- ✓ Mithraic scholars do not believe Christianity borrowed anything from Mithraism. No document before 1st A.D.

- ✓ Dec 25 and cave are irrelevant.
- ✓ Dionysius was called Young Man of the Tree
- ✓ Egyptian scholars do not believe Jesus and Osiris are alike.
- ✓ Osiris' return to life was more of a zombification.
- ✓ Krishna not resurrection – only reincarnated.
- ✓ Krishna “pierced or crucified” = shot by a hunter. Later Hindus did begin to borrow from missionaries.
- ✓ Not a shred of evidence Buddha went to temple at 12.
- ✓ Buddha's mother a virgin? She was impregnated when a white elephant entered her womb.
- ✓ Krishna born of a virgin? How? Krishna was 8th child.

Regarding Diabolical Mimicry

1. Irenaeus. No evidence and those who cite him never provide any citation by Irenaeus.
2. Tertullian. The truth is that Tertullian was claiming that the devil was imitating existing Jewish law with regard to sacrifices. He was saying that the devil copies existing documents and interpretations. Freke and Gandy ignoring the section before and after the quote they use.

3. Justin Martyr. Claimed similarities, but it was the other way around: Plato copied Moses and the devil inspired Greek myths.

4. A word of two about minor themes (water purification, communal meals, sacrifices, etc.) and C.S. Lewis' observations of similar themes in all religions over the world—that never had any contact!

Overview of the 4 Historical Accounts of the Resurrection

THE BIG PICTURE

1. On Saturday evening three of the women decided to go back to the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea where they had seen Christ's body laid away on Friday at sundown, Mark 16:1. They wanted to rewrap His corpse with additional spices, beyond those which Nicodemus and Joseph had used on Friday. By the time they got there it was dawning on Sunday, Mark 16:2.

2. While on their way to the tomb, we have the earthquake, the angel rolling away the stone, and the guards becoming like dead men, Mat 28:2-4. The earthquake was not extensive since the women were unaware of it.

3. The three women were delightfully surprised to find their problem of access to the tomb solved; the stone had been rolled away, Mark 16:3-4.

4. They sidestepped the unconscious guards and went into the tomb where a leading angel told them not to be afraid (Mk 16:5-6). Matthew and Luke record that the angels reminded them of the Lord's predictions, Mt 24:7-8; Lk 24:6-7.

5. After the angel had said this, the women remembered Christ's prediction, and were encouraged. Then the angel told them to go tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead. They ran and told the disciples which caused the disciples to run to the tomb (Jn 20:2-10).

6. Upon seeing the empty tomb, John believed, John 20:8. He noticed that the body had simply left the tomb and left the grave clothes on its own power, passing through all those layers of cloth without unwrapping them at all. Jesus has not been removed by other hands; He had raised Himself from the dead. That could only mean that He was alive again.

7. Mary is unaware of what the disciples deduced. She may have not even gotten back before they left. She looks back in the tomb and beholds two angels and asks where the Lord was. They gave no answer—no need to Jesus was there, John 20:14.
8. She recognizes Jesus when He calls her name, Jn 20:16. He then tells her to stop clinging to Him & tell others.
9. Mary leaves and then the other two women come to the tomb where they see Jesus and He tells them to go tell others as well, Mt 28:8-10. It is significant that Jesus decided to reveal Himself to the three women instead of the Twelve or even the chief apostle Peter.

10. Jesus reveals Himself to Peter privately, Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5.
11. Jesus reveals Himself to two undistinguished disciples (they were not of the Eleven), Lk 24:13-35. One's name is Cleopas. These two were convinced that Jesus was dead and gone. They were the first to walk with Jesus in living fellowship and hear Him speak from every part of the Hebrew Scriptures, Luke 24:32. It was not until He had opened the Scriptures and then ate with them that He revealed Himself to them and then vanished. This meal would drive home to them the physicality of the resurrection.

12. The Emmaus disciples returned to Jerusalem as soon as Jesus left. They sped back to Jerusalem as fast as their legs could carry them. To share the electrifying news of their lengthy encounter with the risen Lord, Luke 24:34-35.

13. While the Emmaus disciples were finishing their report to the assembled disciples, the Lord Himself entered through the locked doors and appeared in their midst (Luke 24:36), much to the amazement of all those who had not previously seen Him risen from the dead. He greeted them and then showed them the physical evidence of His pierced hands for them to see and removed His sandals to show the nail holes through His feet, Luke 24:38-39. He even uncovered the scar of the gash that the Roman spear had made in His side when He hung on the Cross. Note the stress on the physicality in verse 39. He then proceeded to eat with them, 42-43.

14. Instead of feeling disappointed by the shame of the Cross, they were to see in it the greatest victory of all time. They were to announce this good news to all. This led to the early pronouncement of the Great Commission. In advance of the general bestowment of the HS on them, He gave them the HS for this awesome responsibility (Jn 20:22) and promised divine acceptance of their work – the keys of heaven (John 20:23, Matt. 16:19).

15. Christ appears one week later—this time Thomas was there, John 20:26-31. God worked all this out providentially. Thomas was a skeptic whose horizons were purely naturalistic—even in the Biblical background, the miracles, and before the Son of God. He had faith in skepticism in spite of the evidence. He was not a neutral observer of facts. Thomas persisted in his stubborn skepticism until Jesus provided proof that could admit of no other explanation: the same body that was crucified on the cross now stood alive before him. All he could do was fall to his knees in confession, adoration, and worship John 20:28.

16. 3rd Interview between Christ and His apostles subsequent to the Resurrection, John 21. This occurred in Galilee. Peter's threefold reinstatement as undershepherd for Christ's sheep.
17. On some mountain in Galilee (Mt 28:16) we have a large gathering of disciples to whom Jesus gave a stirring appeal for spreading the gospel.

18. Over the forty day period between Resurrection Sunday and ascension of our Lord to heaven (Acts 1:9), Luke indicates that Jesus was repeatedly seen by His disciples and He taught them “concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

19. Last resurrection appearance is recorded in Acts 1. This appearance was on the Mt. of Olives. The same place where He will return at the Second Advent. This is probably where the 500 believers saw Him.

20. They asked Him when He would come back and set up the millennial kingdom, and He told them that was not their concern, they are to simply to be His witnesses, Acts 1:7-8.
21. As they watched Him ascend, two angels appeared beside them (probably the same ones who were with Him at the tomb) and assured disciples He would come back in the same way as He left—in bodily form.

22. Following this, they made their way down the Mt. of Olives and spend 10 days together in prayer and fellowship until the Holy Spirit came on them at Pentecost—and thus we have the beginning of church age.