

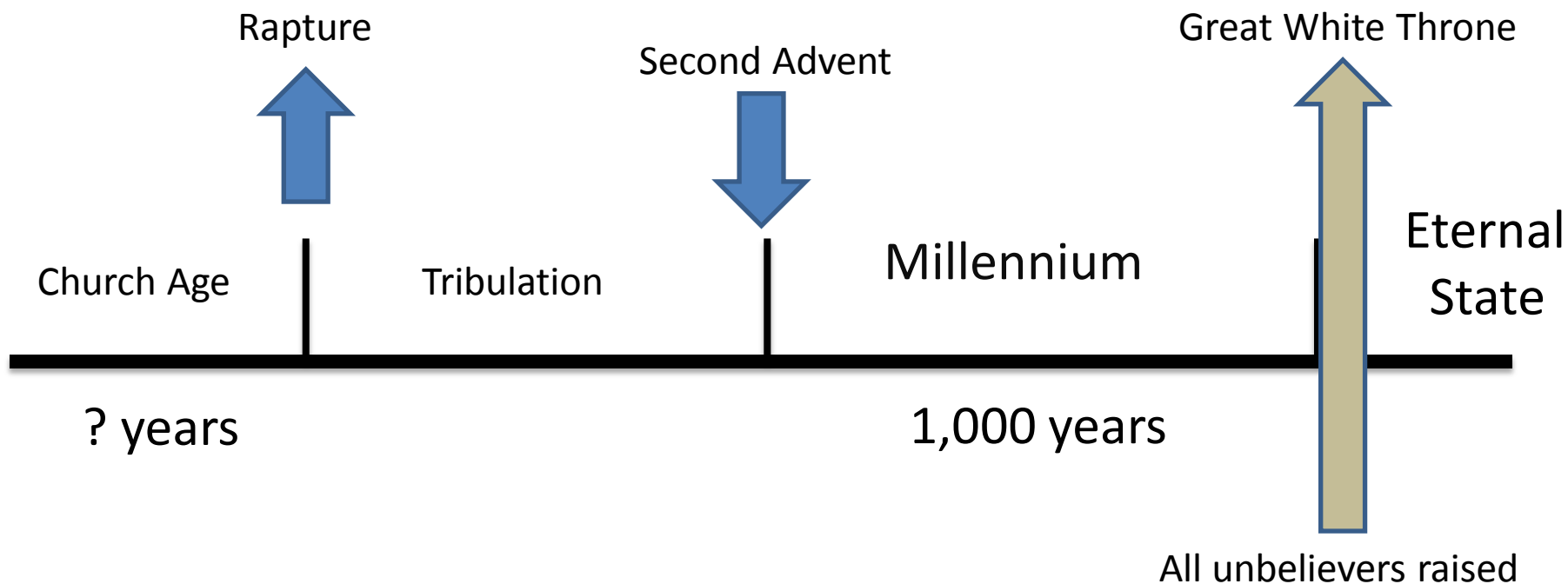
Any questions on historiography or resurrection studies?

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Doctrinal Foundations: Eschatology (10)

The Millennium is the Golden Age of restoration. The risen, glorified, Lord Jesus Christ will reign as king over the earth.

Isaiah 2:4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.



Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual life: #1- Salvation

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰ and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#2: Daily spiritual life.

Philippians 2:14 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 (διεστραμμένης) generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life . . .

Preparation for Bible Class

Foundations for the Spiritual Life

#3 - Spiritual maturity and the trials of life

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be ~~perfect~~ τέλειοι/mature and ~~complete~~ ὀλόκληροι/sound/whole lacking in nothing.

Resurrection Special #10:

Historiography: Debunking the Hollywood “Zeitgeist Heist” (“Christ-mythers”) & the Resurrection Narratives

1. Zeitgeist “documentary” was produced by Peter Joseph. Since its creation, it has been quite a popular phenomenon on the Internet, and March 15th, 2008, was celebrated as its worldwide promotional day (“Zeitgeist Awareness Day,” or “Z-Day”), with 718 public events and over 1100 private events over the globe.

2. Zeitgeist received an award for Best Feature Documentary at the 2007 Artivist Film Festival in Hollywood, CA.

3. When viewing Zeitgeist, one first sits through lengthy introduction sequence consisting of audio and a series of explosive visuals with musical accompaniment, a depiction of the evolutionary process from start to finish, and at last an audio clip from the noted “expert” on religion, comedian George Carlin.

4. There are three parts to the film. Tripartite conspiracy:
- ✓ #1, “Greatest Story Every Told” alleges that Christianity is founded on astrology and pagan mythology, not on historical events as Christians might contend.
 - ✓ #2, “All the World’s a Stage” claims that the United States government engineered Sept. 11th.
 - ✓ #3, “Don’t Mind the Men Behind the Curtain,” asserts that international bankers have conspired to dominate the world.

5. Part one of Zeitgeist, in brief, attempts to make the case that Jesus never existed, and that Christian teachings and the vast range of world mythology find a common root in astrology, as shown by strong similarities between the stories of Jesus and the various pagan gods.

6. Five pagan gods are especially singled out for treatment (Attis, Dionysus, Krishna, Mithras, and Horus); many others are also alleged, but only in passing.

7. Zeitgeist and the Story of Jesus. Movie's summary on the Jesus narrative: *Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary on Dec. 25th in Bethlehem, his birth was announced by a star in the east, which three kings or magi followed to locate and adore the new savior. He was a child teacher at 12, at the age of 30 he was baptized by John the Baptist, and thus began his ministry. Jesus has 12 disciples which he travelled about performing miracles such as healing the sick, walking on water, raising the dead, he was also known as the King of Kings, the Son of God, the Light of the World, the Alpha and Omega, the Lamb of God, and many others. After being betrayed by his disciple Judas and sold for 30 pieces of silver, he was crucified, placed in a tomb and after three days was resurrected and ascended into Heaven.*

8. **Zeitgeist on Attis:** *Attis, of Phrygia, born of the virgin Nana on December 25th, crucified, placed in a tomb and after three days, was resurrection.*

- ✓ Born of a virgin? Attis was born of a vanishing fruit from a tree that grew from the blood shed by a demon.
- ✓ Attis was not born Dec. 25
- ✓ Crucified? Attis died under a tree from self-mutilation (emasculatation).
- ✓ Attis placed in a tomb but was never resurrected; every year his grave is bewailed to commemorate his passing. Any hint of new life comes well after the time of Jesus.

9. Zeitgeist on Dionysus: *Dionysus of Greece, born of a virgin on Dec. 25th, was a traveling teacher who performed miracles such as turning water into wine, he was referred to as the “King of Kings,” “God’s Only Begotten Son,” “The Alpha and Omega,” and many other, and upon his death, he was resurrected.*

- ✓ Born as a result of Zeus’ rape of Semele.
- ✓ No record of Dec. 25th prior to Christ.
- ✓ Dionysus did spread his cult. If you did not accept him, he was very vindictive causing madness.
- ✓ Never said that he actually turned water to wine.
- ✓ Reincarnation, not resurrection.
- ✓ Death: he dove off a cliff.
- ✓ Above titles not found in any primary sources.

10. Zeitgeist on Krishna: *Krishna, of India, born of the virgin on Dec. 25, Devaki, performed miracles with his disciples, crucified, and upon his death was resurrected.*

- ✓ Virgin? Devaki's 8th son!
- ✓ No record of birth on Dec 25th
- ✓ Not crucified - shot by a hunter.
- ✓ No record on resurrection – only reincarnation.

11. Zeitgeist on Mithras: *Mithra, of Persia, born of a virgin on Dec 25th, had 12 disciples and performed miracles, and upon his death was buried for 3 days and thus resurrected, he was also referred to as “The Truth” “the Light” and many others. Interestingly, the sacred day of worship of Mithra was Sunday.*

- ✓ Born of a rock as an adult.
- ✓ Virgin birth? Created by Ahura Mazda.
- ✓ The 12 refer to the Zodiac.
- ✓ No evidence of his death (therefore not buried or resurrected).
- ✓ No evidence of these titles in primary sources.
- ✓ Worship on Sunday postdates NT era.

12. Zeitgeist on Horus: *Sun God of Egypt, 3,000 B.C., born Dec. 25 of virgin Isis-Meri and accompanied by a star in the east, which in turn three kings followed to locate and adore the newborn savior. At age 12 was a prodigal child teacher, at 30 he was baptized, had 12 disciples, performed miracles, walked on water, known as The Truth, the Light, God's anointed Son, the Good Shepherd, the Lamb of God, and many others. Horus was crucified, buried for 3 days, and thus resurrected.*

- ✓ Mother Isis not a virgin.
- ✓ No evidence of teaching at 12, baptism, 12 disciples, crucifixion, burial, or resurrection in ancient sources for Horus.

13. In conclusion we have 0 of the 5 gods claimed as sources for Christian copycatting.

14. Zeitgeist on the Existence of Jesus: *You would think that a guy who rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven for all to see and performed the wealth of miracles acclaimed to him would have made it into the historical record. It didn't because once the evidence is weighed, there are very high odds that the figure known as Jesus, did not even exist.*

- ✓ This is patently false!
- ✓ We have a wealth of sources from within the New Testament itself, and we have several references from beyond it.

15. Zeitgeist

- ✓ Distorts all religions with false comparisons.
- ✓ Oversimplifies ancient myths and relies on non-scholarly sources.
- ✓ Material is fabricated in hopes that no one would discover and expose the fraud.
- ✓ Astrological ideas are heavily anachronistic.
- ✓ Claims that Jesus never existed, but provides no solid evidence for its claim and fails to interact honestly with the evidence from the opposing side.
- ✓ Virtually any field it touches, it treats poorly.

16. Regarding Diabolical Mimicry

- ✓ Irenaeus. No evidence and those who cite him never provide any citation by Irenaeus.
- ✓ 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 ignore the section before and after the quote they use.

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

Historicity of Jesus Christ

1. There is more evidence that Jesus lived than for all famous figures of the ancient past. This evidence is of two kinds: internal and external, or, if you will, sacred and secular. In both cases the total evidence is so overpowering, so absolute that only the shallowest intellect would dare to deny Jesus' existence. Yet, this pathetic denial is still parroted by the village atheist, bloggers on the internet, or such organizations as the Freedom from Religion Foundation.

Historicity of Jesus Christ

2. Internal Evidence (cf. explanatory power, scope, plausibility). Aside from the many Messianic predictions in the OT, not one of the four Gospels or the 23 other documents in the NT would make an ounce of sense without the historical Jesus. Did the whole cavalcade of well-known historical personalities in the first century AD interact with Jesus in a vacuum? Did the Jewish High Priest Annas and Caiaphas interview a spirit? Did the Roman governor Pontius Pilate sentence a phantom to the Cross? Or did Paul, Peter, James, and many others give their lives for a myth? No one doubts the names, and the archaeological evidence is overwhelming. Jesus' existence is categorical.

Historicity of Jesus Christ

3. External Evidence (Christian). The writings of the church fathers, some of whom had close contact with NT personalities. Polycarp and Irenaeus were students of the apostle John. The centerpiece in all of their writings was Jesus the Messiah.
4. External Evidence: Jewish Talmud and Josephus. There is a wealth of information from these sources. World greatest Josephus' scholar acknowledges the trimmed down text first text in Josephus.

From Josephus alone we have documentation of 1) the time frame of the Gospels, 2) Jesus' reputation for teaching wisdom, 3) that Jesus was believed to perform miracles, 4) he had a brother named James, 5) some Jewish leaders were involved with Jesus' execution, 6) Pilate was Prefect and had Jesus executed, 7) Jesus was executed by crucifixion, 8) Jesus was known as a messianic figure, 9) Jesus was the founder of Christianity, 10) the existence of early persecution of Christians in Jerusalem, and 11) that early Christians reported that Jesus was raised from the dead as foretold by the Jewish prophets

Overview of Historicity of Jesus Christ

- 5. External Evidence (Secular).** Cornelius Tacitus, one of the most reliable source historians of first-century Rome, wrote in his Annals a year-by-year account of events in the Roman Empire under the early Caesars. He reports of the great fire of Rome in AD 64. People blamed the emperor Nero since it happened on his watch, but in order to save himself, Nero switched the blame to the Christians. Tacitus also goes on to report the horrors that were inflicted on the Christians in what became their first Roman persecution. Tacitus despised Christianity calling it a disease. We also have Suetonius who called Christianity a wretched cult. Pliny said they worshipped Jesus as a god (there goes the Nicene theory).

Historian Edwin Yamauchi notes six facts we can glean from non-Christian sources: (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 this shameful death, his followers, who 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 the cities and countryside—men, and women, slave and free—worshipped him as God very early. As he put it, “We have better historical documentation for Jesus than for the founder of any religion.

Historians Habbermas and Lacona:

“Evidence for Jesus far outstrips written evidence for Julius Caesar or Tiberius Caesar:

Only five sources report of Julius Caesar’s military conquests . . . Yet in those 150 years after his death, more non-Christian authors alone comment on Jesus than all of the sources who mentioned Julius Caesar’s great military conquests within 150 years of his death.

Tiberius is mentioned by ten sources within 150 years of his death . . . Compare that to Jesus’ forty-two total sources in the same length of time. That’s more than four times the number of total sources who mentioned the Roman emperor during roughly the same period

Virtually 100% of all professional historians accept the historicity of Jesus Christ.

As F.F. Bruce aptly noted, “The historicity of Jesus is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the ‘Christ-myth’ theories.”

Jewish Attack on historicity of Jesus via Remsberg's list

- ✓ The easiest way to destroy this attack is by noting the famous and celebrated Jewish successor of Hillel, Yohanan ben Zakkai (A.D. 30-90). There is not a word spoken about him in any external sources—neither Jewish nor Roman. The primary Jewish historian of the day, Flavius Josephus, himself a Pharisee, does not mention Rabbi Yohanan, despite providing the most detailed account of the Jewish war and the fall of Jerusalem. . . . Should we therefore claim that Yohanan be Zakkai did not exist? How absurd!
- ✓ Others not mentioned: Shammai (50 B.C. – A.D. 30), Hillel (30 B.C.-10 A.D) & Gamiliel (cf. Acts 5; 22:3).

Overview of Historicity of Jesus Christ

6. The evidence is so overpowering that Jesus of Nazareth was no myth that virtually all historians accept his historicity. Hyper-skeptics should focus instead on whether or not Jesus was *more* than a man. That, at least, could evoke a reasonable debate among reasonable inquirers rather than a pointless discussion with sensationalists who struggle to reject the obvious.

Brief Overview of Historicity of Jesus Christ

7. To be sure, by far the most powerful testimony to the historicity of Jesus Christ is the Gospels themselves--even if one does not accept that they are divinely inspired. Historians do not have to believe in the supernatural to find history in documents of antiquity. The gospels are recognized by experts as biography. They are not tragedies, poetry, or just a collocation of sayings.

Overview of the Resurrection History

- 1. Mark 16:1-3.** On Saturday evening (after 6:00 p.m.) three of the women purchased aromatics for the anointing (not embalming) of the body of Jesus. They left from Bethany (2 miles away) early Sunday morning while it was still dark. When they “came” to the tomb the sun had just risen. “Were saying” is imperfect tense—the chief topic of conversation. Absolutely no anticipation of the resurrection. There is a subtlety in the Greek in the way the word “roll” is used by women and in verse 4. Consider their attitudes as their downcast eyes (with bowed heads) looked up (ἀναβλέπω) to see the stone completely removed.

2. Matthew 28:2-4. Matthew explains the removal of the stone and what happened to the guards prior to the ladies arriving at the tomb. The angel had taken the heavy stone out of its groove and turned it over on its side. The result was that the stone slab was lying flat on the ground and the angel was sitting upon it, to symbolize Christ's triumph. The women did not see this happen. They saw the result. Only under inspiration is this account revealed. The radiance of the angels speaks of holiness and that he descended straight from heaven. Guards were knocked unconscious. Same root word used in both "quakes." The stone, seal, and the guards were nothing before the Triune God involved in Christ's resurrection.

3. Mark 16:5-6. The variations give us powerful historical early multiple independent testimony. They sidestepped the unconscious guards and went into the tomb where a leading angel told them not to be afraid. The robe (στολήν) on the angel refers to a long stately robe, reaching to the feet, or trainlike, sweeping the ground. Garment speaks of special solemnity, richness, and beauty. No such robe was worn by young men on earth. This was to point out that the individual was not a human being. Matthew and Luke record that the angels reminded them of the Lord's predictions of his death and resurrection, Mt 24:7-8; Lk 24:6-7. To show you at what lengths the mystics will go, note that some say Christ did not predict His death.

4. John 20:2-10. 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. Upon seeing the empty tomb, John believed. 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.

5. **John 20:11-18.** Jesus appears to Mary. When she first gets there she 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 because Jesus was there. She recognizes Jesus when He calls her by name. He then tells her to stop clinging to Him & go tell others.

6. Jesus appears to the other ladies, Matt. 28:8-10.

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.

7. **Luke 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5.** Jesus appears privately to Peter on Sunday afternoon, Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5.

8. **Lk 24:13-35.** Jesus appears to Cleopas and an unnamed disciple late Sunday afternoon. 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.

9. Luke 24:34-35. 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.

10. Resurrection Sunday evening: Jesus appeared to the 10 disciples without Thomas, Luke 24:36-42; John 20:19-25. 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, 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. He removed His sandals to show the nail holes through His feet. He even uncovered the scar of the gash from the Roman spear. Note the stress on the physicality.

11. John 20:22-23. Jesus gave early pronouncement of the Great Commission and gave them the HS for power. 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).

12. John 20:26-31. Christ appears eight days later on Monday—this time Thomas was there. God worked all this out providentially. Thomas was a skeptic whose horizons were purely naturalistic—even in the Biblical background of the miracles and 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.

13. Over the forty day period between Resurrection Sunday and the 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).

14. John 21:1-25. Jesus appears to 7 disciples by the Lake of Galilee—probably a few weeks later. This is the 3rd interview between Christ and His apostles subsequent to the Resurrection. This occurred in Galilee. Note Peter's threefold reinstatement as undershepherd for Christ's sheep.

15. Jesus appears to the 11 disciples on some mountain in Galilee—near the end of the 40 days. Jesus gave a stirring appeal for spreading the gospel.
16. 1 Cor 15:6. He appeared to the 500 people at once—near the end of the 40 days.
17. 1 Cor 15:7a. Appearance to James—near the end of the 40 days.

18. Acts 1:6-11—the ascension—40 days later, Jesus appears to the 11 disciples on the Mt. of Olives. The same place where He will return. 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 be His witnesses. As they watched Him ascend, two angels appeared beside them and assured disciples He would come back in the same way as He left—in bodily form. 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.

19. Jesus appears to Paul on the road to Damascus—
about 2 years later, Acts 9:3-5; 22:7-8; 26:14-16; 1
Cor. 15:8.