

Any Questions?

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Undershepherd *Donald Ray Hargrove*

Theological/Doctrinal Foundations : Eschatology (27)

God's Immortality and Ours

1 Timothy 6:16 Who [God] alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

- Only God is *inherently* immortal.
- Contrary to Plato, man is not *inherently* immortal.
- Man's immortality is only possible through the active sustaining power of the immortal Almighty God.
- God could no more grant an *autonomous* immortality anymore than He could grant deity to any creature.
- There is no life of any kind apart from God's active sustaining power.
- Is this disconcerting? Why? Why would Plato's view be more attractive to some?

Spiritual Life Foundations

Issue of Fellowship and Divine Discipline

John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²
"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He ~~takes away~~ lifts up
(αἶρει) and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may
bear more fruit.



Spiritual Life Foundations

Issue of Fellowship and Divine Discipline

John 15:5-6 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

- When we are in fellowship with Christ we bear much fruit. It really is all about fellowship with Christ.
- There is zero spiritual production when we are not in fellowship with Jesus Christ.
- Extended carnality (OOF with Christ; stop living in Word, stop confessing) leads to a spiritually dried-up life.
- The fire and burning is in keeping with the vine analogy. The analogy refers to divine discipline, not Hell.

Spiritual Life Foundations

Issue of Fellowship and Divine Discipline

- Divine discipline is never punitive. It is always related to lack of fellowship with Christ.
- Divine discipline is a family issue, not a judicial issue.
- There are three stages of divine discipline: 1 Cor. 11:30 *For this reason many among you are weak* [warning discipline] *and sick* [intensive discipline], *and a number sleep* [sin unto death].
- The time frame for the sin unto death (1 John 5:16) varies according to God's purposes in the angelic conflict. For some it is decades of frustration, emptiness and FSH (cf. Exodus generation), for others it is very swift (Acts 5:5-10).
- We have all experienced divine discipline for the purpose of training precisely because we are His children, Heb 12:5-11.
- Discipline is always a family issue and always done in love and for our benefit.

Resurrection Special #26:

Matthew 28:16-20: Falsifying Naturalism (2)

1. Our immutable, omnipresent, supernatural Lord, Matt. 28:16-20.
2. Naturalism is the view that the natural world is the sum of reality. Those who embrace naturalism hold that there is no such thing as a supernatural realm: What is non-science is nonsense.
3. This view is prevalent in Western society and has permeated the scientific community, spilling over into other disciplines.

4. In our last Bible class have noted how the Intelligent Design scientists have falsified Darwinianism. Today we will continue the dismantling of naturalism through science and the Word of God.

5. A couple of items before we proceed.
 - ✓ Any takers on the challenge to provide a naturalistic theory on the resurrection of Jesus that can account for Jesus death by crucifixion and His appearance to apostles?

 - ✓ Illustration of differences in historical narrative. Not the same story told by 2 sources (from Houston Chronicle and Houston Post).

The Houston Press

When a cop pulls you over because your windshield is shattered, your front end is crumpled and -- as he points out to you -- you seem to have a dead person sitting next to you in the front seat, what are your options?

a) Ask "What seems to be the problem, officer?"

b) Start madly spinning a tale of escaping an Uzi ambush and trying to find a hospital to take your wounded friend to

c) Admit that yeah, you hit something on the highway a couple of minutes ago, but say you were unaware there was a dead body sitting next to you.

James John Onak, 49, took the third option this morning and now faces criminal charges. "Onak was believed to be under the influence," HPD says, stunningly.

He's facing a felony charge of failure to stop and render aid and a misdemeanor charge of tampering with evidence. A blood test was taken, and further charges may come from it, HPD says.

Police say Onak was driving his Mazda 626 on the Gulf Freeway about 12:30 a.m. when he hit a man who had stopped when his car broke down and was "running back and forth across the freeway." The name of the 32-year-old male victim has not been released. Onak continued driving until he was pulled over by a deputy constable at Beamer Road at Kirkvalley.

"According to the deputy, the Mazda had extensive front-end damage and he observed the deceased victim in the front passenger seat," HPD says. "The driver advised the deputy that he had hit something on the freeway but was not aware the victim was lying in the passenger seat."

Houston Chronicle

A driver who hit a pedestrian along Interstate 45 in southeast Houston early this morning didn't stop even though the victim smashed through his windshield and landed in the front passenger seat, officials said.

The driver, identified as 45-year-old James John Onak, was charged with felony accident involving injury in the 177th State District Court, according to a Houston Police Department news release.

The collision occurred in the 12200 block of the southbound Gulf Freeway near Fuqua about 12:30 a.m. Tuesday, according to the Houston Police Department.

Police said the 32-year-old victim, whose name has not been released, died at the scene.

No other injuries were reported.. .

Police said a man was driving his Ford Explorer on the freeway when it broke down. He pulled to the shoulder and got out and began trying to cross the freeway.

The man was hit by a black Mazda, driven by Onak, police said. Police said the collision forced the victim's body through the windshield, and he landed in the front passenger seat inside the car. Onak did not stop after the collision, police said. Police said he allegedly got off the freeway and drove a few blocks before a Precinct 8 Harris County Constable pulled him over at 11600 Kirkvalley near Beamer, and the deputy noticed the car's front was damaged. Then the deputy saw the victim in the car, police added. Police said Onak told the deputy he had hit something on the freeway and that he didn't know the victim was in the passenger seat beside him. Onak was believed to be under the influence and a mandatory blood draw was taken. Police are still investigating the case.

We live in an amazing time where science is increasingly confirming the existence of a timeless, spaceless, personal Being of unimaginable power and intelligence.



The Bible teaches that creation *clearly* reveals the eternal power and eternal nature of God to the point where man is without excuse in rejecting the existence of God.



SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, GOD'S INVISIBLE QUALITIES --
HIS ETERNAL POWER AND DIVINE NATURE --
HAVE BEEN CLEARLY SEEN, BEING UNDERSTOOD FROM WHAT
HAS BEEN MADE, SO THAT MEN ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE.

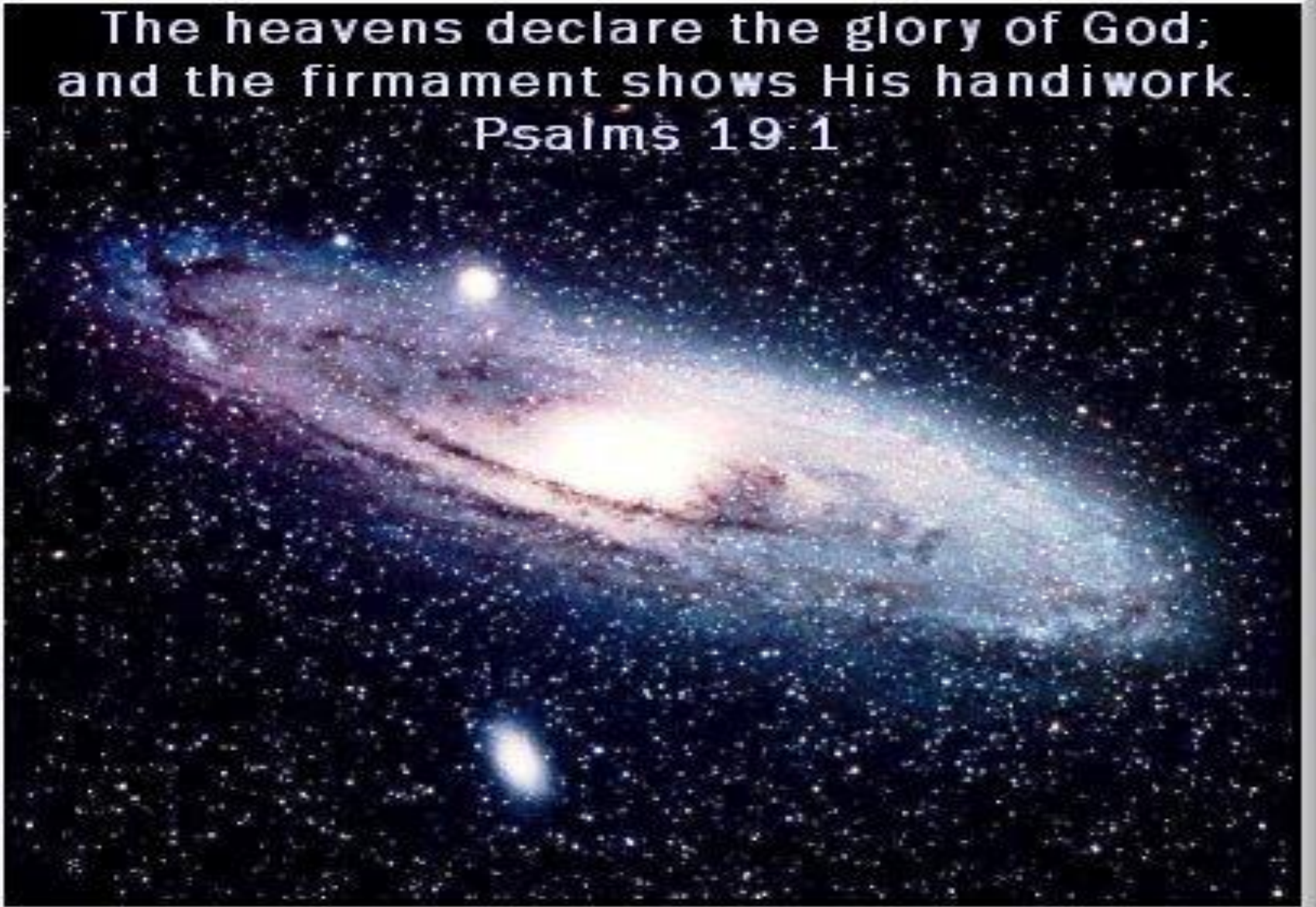
ROMANS 1:20

The Heavens Declare His Handiwork:

God's Revelation of Himself through the Things that Are Made



The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the firmament shows His handiwork.
Psalms 19:1



Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe

Colossians 1:16 For by Him [Pre-incarnate Christ] all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together (συνίστημι).

N.B. The Bible says more about the creation, divine contingency, and framework of the universe than all religious books combined by a factor of 10.

Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe

Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds (φέρων) all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

NATURALISM IS NO LONGER A SCIENTIFIC OPTION

- If a transcendent cause of the universe is true then naturalism is false.
- If intelligent design is true then naturalism is false.
- The consensus of the scientific community is that the universe has a transcendent cause. This is not debated!
- The consensus of the scientific community is that the universe has unbelievable precise design. There is no longer any debate about design (cf. Hawking's *Grand Design*). When you look throughout the scientific disciplines the impression of design is overwhelming.
- The only question that remains is the identity of this transcendent Creator and Designer: God or Math?
- If it is the God of the Bible, we would expect the evidence to continue to grow. Indeed, it is growing at astronomical rate monthly.

Four unique biblical truths about the universe:

#1 – Creation of the Universe ex nihilo

#1. The universe (heavens and the earth; the totality of space, time, and matter) was created ex nihilo, Gen. 1:1; Heb. 1:3.

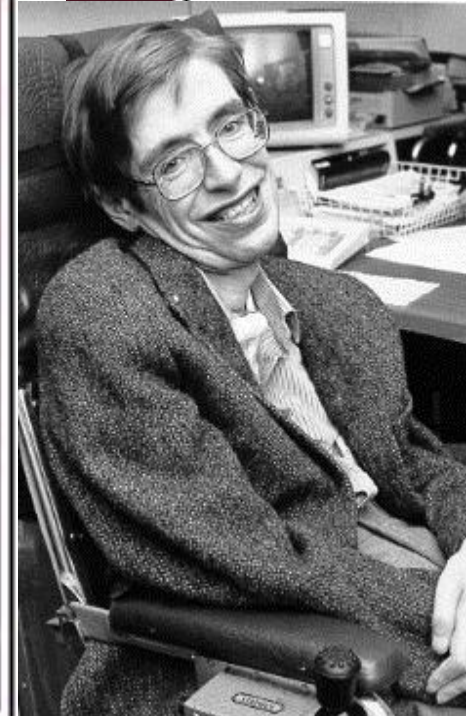
- The Bible teaches that the universe can be traceable to a singularity beginning. The Bible stands alone in saying that not only was matter and energy created by God but space and time too.
- What is special about the 21st century is that mathematicians and physicists have been able to prove what the Bible says about a singularity beginning through the space-time theorems of Hawking. Hawking will not call it God, but it is something beyond space and time that brings the universe and the laws of physics into existence. This would be a definition of God found in any dictionary: an Agent beyond space and time that creates.

The Big Bang

- Physicist Steven Hawking -

Almost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the Big Bang.

Steven W. Hawking and Roger Penrose, *The Nature of Space and Time* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996): 20 as cited in Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator: A Journalist Investigates Scientific Evidence that Points Toward God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004): 107.



- ✓ Subsequent space-time theorems that have tried to avoid the transcendent cause of the universe, but these efforts have only made the case stronger for a transcendent cause.
- ✓ All of these conclusion falsify methodoloical naturalism (which says that scientists can only look for natural causes).
- ✓ Scientists can no longer presume that all causes are natural because it has been proven beyond any shadow of doubt that a *miraculous* act took place for the beginning of the universe. This is the biggest miracle any scientist could ever hope to find: an agent beyond space and time who miraculously intervened in bringing about the universe.
- ✓ That the cause is beyond space and time is now admitted by the scientists and thus falsifies naturalism. Scientists now cannot deny a supernatural cause. If a supernatural cause brought the universe into existence, He certainly can intervene after creation.

Four unique biblical truths about the universe: #2 – The Continuous Expanding Nature of the Universe

- ✓ As much as the Bible says about the beginning of the universe, it has much more to say about the expansion of the universe—the stretching out of the universe, Psa. 104:2; Isa. 44:24. No other book, scientific or religious, taught this.
- ✓ This was recognized 1,000 years ago by Jewish theologians going through these texts—long before Hubble.
- ✓ Only a continuing expanding universe at the right rate (between gravity and dark energy) would make it possible to have molecules, neutrons, protons, or stars and planets and life. Very precise.

Four unique biblical truths about the universe:

#2 – The Continuous Expanding Nature of the Universe

- ✓ The precise fine tuning of the dark energy and universe is on the level of $1-10^{122}$. The best we can do with fine tuned instruments $1-10^{24}$. This means that this causal Agent that is beyond space and time was a Fine Tuner and thus personal! He is $1-10^{97}$ more intelligent and knowledgeable than our physicists at Caltech, and more precise than the most precise telescopes in Italy (of course He is better funded too). Like walking into room filled with trillions and trillions of dials each of which must be precisely set from biological life, the moon, to the whole universe.
- ✓ Scientists are startled at these discoveries because of the “disturbing implications” of this design. “An external Transcendent agent intervened in history for reasons of His own.”

Four unique biblical truths about the universe: #3- Constant fixed laws of physics

- ✓ **Jeremiah 33:25** “I have established . . . The fixed laws of heaven and earth.”
- ✓ Once God creates the universe, the constant laws are fix.

Four unique biblical truths about the universe:

#4- Pervasive Law of Decay

- ✓ Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
- ✓ 2nd Law, Murphy's law.

Naturalism/physicalism/scientism

The 6 major arguments against naturalism.

#1 - Cosmological argument falsifies naturalism:

- ✓ The universe is not eternal (b/c of philosophical and scientific reasons)
- ✓ Why do things exist? We know from mathematical reasons and scientific reasons that the universe is not eternal. Why is it here?
- ✓ We know that the universe, time, and space came out of nothing by nothing (i.e. nothing of matter, space, and time). Out of nothing nothing comes. Only the Bible, among religious books, teaches this.

#1 - Cosmological argument falsifies naturalism

- ✓ We know that the Cause of the universe, time, and space was an uncaused, timeless, spaceless, and immaterial Being/Entity with unfathomable power and a personal will (abstract numbers or mind – number cannot create anything).
- ✓ This Cause must be personal. He must be beyond space and time. The Cause must be an abstract thing like numbers or a Mind. The mind must be a transcendent intelligent mind.
- ✓ It is not longer scientifically credible not to believe in some type of transcendent miracle at creation.

#2 – Teleological Argument falsifies Naturalism

- ✓ In recent decades scientists are stunned by the precise conditions for life. Scientists no longer question design. The question is: Is the Designer physics and mathematics or God.
- Three 3 choices with regard to the fantastic incredible precision from atomic force to the moon and sun.
 - Chance? Odds are absolutely inconceivable by random material to this precision.
 - Physical necessity?
 - Designer? A word or two about Stephen Hawking (our modern Einstein) and two of his books, *Brief History of Time* (1988, over 30 million copies sold) and *Grand Design*. He is not an atheist

#3 – Moral reality falsifies Naturalism

- ✓ Who posits that there are no objective morals?
- ✓ Who lives as if there are no objective morals?
- ✓ Who can justify morals on the basis of naturalism?
- ✓ Who lives as though there are no morals, no virtues, no vices, nothing good or evil? No justice?
- ✓ Are morals real or illusory? Objective or subjective?

#4 – Rationality falsifies Naturalism

- ✓ Naturalism rejects the mind as a real entity.
- ✓ Naturalism posits that thinking is only the results of *physical* brain states.
- ✓ Through reductionism naturalism essentially equates a physical biochemical, bioelectrical event with thoughts, concepts, feelings, love, i.e. qualia.
- ✓ If all thoughts are nothing but the results of *natural* physical causes in the brain, then the very basis of rationality is destroyed.
- ✓ Naturalism can not even pass its own test.

#5 - Resurrection of Jesus Christ falsifies naturalism

- ✓ Jesus came on the scene as God in accordance with prophecy, performed miracles, and was raised from the dead.
- ✓ There is no natural explanation of the combined historical data which points to the reality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- ✓ All of the naturalistic theories of the resurrection of Jesus Christ have been abandoned by the most intelligent unbelievers for hundreds of years.

#6 - Existential knowledge of God falsifies naturalism

- ✓ **Romans 1:18-20** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
- ✓ **John 16:8** "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me;

Quiz

Which of the following provides a correct description of *naturalism*?

A- Most opposing theories offered to date adequately account for Jesus' resurrection.

B- The natural world is all there is.

C- Although Jesus rose from the dead, it was by natural causes.

D – Eating all natural foods without preservatives is the best diet one can have.

Quiz

Some critics claim that science has shown that resurrections are impossible. Why is this position false?

A- Scientists are always biased by their atheism and their conclusions should always be rejected.

B- Although scientific studies may reveal that resurrections are impossible, we must accept Jesus' resurrection on faith alone.

C- Science has only shown that resurrections are impossible by *natural causes*.

D- All of the above.

Quiz

If a skeptic told you that he could never believe that Jesus rose from the dead because his experience tells him that when people die they stay dead, how might you respond?

A- My experience from the Bible tells me differently. So our experiences cancel each other out.

B- His experience shows that the dead do not return to life by natural causes. However, this does not eliminate the possibility of God raising someone from the dead under special circumstances.

C- His experience shows him that 5,000 cannot be fed by five loaves of bread and two fish. However, it happened. Therefore, his reasoning is problematic.

D- All of the above.

Quiz

Skeptics will sometimes claim that even if God exists He cannot violate the laws of nature. What could you say in response?

A- Nature is all there is. God exists and is, therefore, included in the definition of nature. Thus, His actions within nature do not violate nature's law.

B- The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

C- God does not desire to violate nature's laws and Jesus' resurrection fits in well with those laws.

D- If God created the universe and its natural laws, there is no reason why He could not suspend or override those laws if He wanted to.

Quiz

If a skeptic suggested that science can explain everything and, thus, we do not have to appeal to a god, what might you say in response?

A- Science is unable to answer the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. This attests to the extraordinary evidence for it.

B- Since appealing to a god can explain everything, we do not have to appeal to science for answers.

C- What we know from medicine, history, and psychology disprove natural explanations for Jesus' resurrection.

D- A & C.

Quiz

If a skeptic said that only what science proves is true, you might respond with which of the following?

A- Since science cannot prove this position it cannot pass its own test.

B- I am only referring to religious matters, not science. So your objections fails.

C- Near death experiences (NDE's) are proof from science that resurrections are possible.

D- All of the above

Quiz

If a skeptic said, “I’ll grant we can know that something happened. But we cannot say that Jesus rose,” how should you respond?

A- We can make this conclusion because the inspired Word of God reports it.

B- Since all the evidence points to a resurrection and no plausible opposing theories exist, Jesus’s resurrection is the only plausible solution to account for the known facts

C- That’s a good point. I can see why you’re not a Christian.

Quiz

Skeptics frequently appeal to problem passages in the resurrection accounts in the Gospels. What is a good way to respond to this tactic?

A- This objection is irrelevant, because we know that the Bible is inspired and have no need to answer critics who claim that the Bible contains errors.

B- Jesus' resurrection would be disproved if the Bible contains errors, since it is our best source regarding the resurrection accounts.

C- A minimal facts approach keeps us focused on facts, which both sides admit. Problem passages, even in the resurrection accounts, don't at all undermine these minimal facts.

D- This objection is irrelevant, because the majority of scholars believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

Quiz

What are the six arguments that falsify naturalism?

Quiz

What are the six canons of historiography?

The “Hypothesis” of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (from purely an historical perspective)

1. Great explanatory scope. The resurrection of Christ explains why the tomb was empty, why the disciples had post-mortem experiences of seeing Jesus, why the Christian faith came into being.
2. Great explanatory power. The resurrection of Christ explains why the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, and why people repeatedly saw Him alive. It explains their willingness to be tortured and murdered for this faith.

3. It is not ad hoc. It is not contrived; it only requires one hypothesis: God exists. Even that need not be an additional hypothesis if you already believe in God.

4. Plausibility. It is in accord with accepted beliefs. Christians readily accept that *naturally* dead men do not rise. Given His unparalleled life, wisdom, claims, and prophecy, the resurrection serves as divine confirmation. Christ was either God or a blasphemer.

5. Illumination Thus, it is in accord with accepted beliefs and provides illumination to *all* facts.
6. It far outstrips all rival theories in meeting the canons of 1-5 above. This is why alternate theories continue to be abandoned for the last 200 years. This is precisely why all other theories have not attracted wide scholarship and most “pop” theories have been almost universally rejected.

All alternate theories fail miserably to meet the canons of history as to the best explanation.

- 1) Explanatory scope.
- 2) Explanatory power.
- 3) Plausibility.
- 4) Less ad hoc.
- 5) Illumination.
- 6) Outstrips all rival theories.