

Slow Religion

The Foundations of Christian Faith in the 21st Century

The Slow Religion: The Foundations of Christian Faith explores the core beliefs and experiences of the Christian faith and invites reflection in our 21st Century/Covid-19 pandemic context. The series is led by Joe Jennings, the Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun (St. Stephens Church), the Rev. Br. Richard Edward Helmer (Church of our Saviour), and Nancy Clark (St. Mary the Virgin) and is organized into two sets: first, the historical context and development of the faith; and, second topical examinations of belief and how to apply those today.

The topics include: God, Resurrection, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Incarnation, Forgiveness of Sins and Eternal Life. Each subject will include a brief presentation to give historical and textual content, readings in the Bible, creeds and prayers from multiple sources, and then questions for reflection and discussion.

CLASS #3:1-4



Resurrection Classes

1. Why talk about the Resurrection?
2. Historical/Inerrancy View
3. Parable/Metaphor View
4. Alternative Theories

SUBJECT

Jesus is Risen! Since all written material on Jesus Christ and the early Church (Epistles, Gospels, Creeds and Commentary) are written and collected after the Resurrection it is important to examine the Resurrection before exploring additional subjects and using those sources. (Please see Appendix One: Comparing the Gospels, and Appendix Two: Timeline)

OPENING PRAYER

Proper 28¹

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn,
and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever
hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have
given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with
you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

BRIEF OVERVIEWS

Resurrection Class #1: Why Talk about the Resurrection?

Resurrection²

- the rising of Jesus from the dead (by God³)
- the rising again to life of all the human dead before the final judgment
 - "I know", says Martha, "that He shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24)

Centrality of Resurrection to Christianity:

- "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." (St. Paul 1 Cor 15:13-14)
- "The question of the resurrection of Jesus Christ poses a key question,,, of the Christian faith. ... almost all other questions of faith and theology are decided by this question."⁴
- "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God."

Opposition to Resurrection

- 32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed..." (Acts 17:32)
- "'No doctrine of the Christian Faith", says St. Augustine, "is so vehemently and so obstinately opposed as the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh" (In Ps. Ixxxviii, sermo ii, n. 5)
- "Among the opponents of the Resurrection we naturally find first those who denied the immortality of the soul; secondly, all those who, like Plato, regarded the body as the prison of the soul and death as an escape from the bondage of matter; thirdly the sects of the Gnostics and Manichaeans who looked upon all matter as evil; fourthly, the followers of these latter sects the Priscillianists, the Cathari, and the Albigenses; fifthly, the Rationalists, Materialists, and Pantheists of later times."⁵

Catholic vs. Orthodox Church – who rose⁶?

- There is no direct description of the resurrection in the NT: there is the empty tomb and the meetings with Jesus Christ.
- Individual resurrection tradition – held by the Catholic west focusses on Jesus Christ alone rising from the dead. (Images begin to appear in 400 CE)

² Merriam-Webster definition; Middle English resurreccioun, from Anglo-French, from Late Latin resurrection-, resurrectio act of rising from the dead, from resurgere to rise from the dead, from Latin, to rise again, from re- + surgere to rise — more at SURGE

³ Added by JWJ. Issue is who raised Jesus changes as you move from Paul to Mark to John. He was Raised ie. by God, becomes He has Risen, ie either unclear or because of a higher Christology by Jesus/God.

⁴ Kessler, *Sucht den Lebendigen* (n.15), 19

⁵ <http://web.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/resurrection.htm>

⁶ John Dominic Crossan & Sarah Sexton Crossan, Resurrecting Easter, How the West Lost and the East Kept the Original Easter Vision

- Universal resurrection tradition – held by the Orthodox eastern church has Jesus Christ rise and bring all of humanity with him.

The Easter/Resurrection story elements (See Appendix One: Comparing the Gospels):

- Friday
 - Jesus is tried by Pilate and crucified by the Romans
 - Jesus died on the cross
 - Jesus was buried in a tomb
- Sunday morning
 - The tomb is found empty – the body is gone
 - The women are the first witnesses
- Sunday night/later
 - His followers and disciples report meeting him after the resurrection
- Jesus' followers are told/conclude
 - God has raised Jesus from the dead
 - Jesus is not a ghost or spirit but bodily resurrected

When were the materials written? (See Appendix Two: Timeline)

- 30-33 CE Jesus execution, death and resurrection
- 50-60s CE Paul's letters written
- 70-110 CE Gospels written
- 100-400s CE Creeds written

3 Views of Resurrection:

1. Historical Fact/Inerrancy – Notes from NT Wright and Alan Richardson
2. Parable/Metaphor – Notes from Borg and Crossan
3. Alternative Theories to Explain Resurrection

REFLECTIONS

Is resurrection a one-time event in history or an ongoing opportunity for people of faith?

What grave or darkness are you burying yourself in, and are you open to God raising you?

Resurrection Class #2: Historical Fact/Inerrancy View:

Christianity is a historical religion: Central facts of Christianity are the life, character, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ⁷

The central facts of Jesus remain:

1. He lived in a certain time, lived in a certain way, and taught certain things,
2. Was crucified under Pontius Pilate and died
3. He was widely believed to have risen from the dead
4. His followers founded a society that has played an enormous part in the subsequent history of the world

Attempts to have Christianity without Jesus, seen as a school of thought and morality/system of ideas has issues:

1. It is the character and life of Jesus which authenticate his teaching about God and man;
2. It is the actual circumstances of his life and death and resurrection that guarantee the truth of the system of ideas and turns it into a religion

The historical Christian religion has always been a faith in a person – a personal relation to the God revealed in Jesus, not a mere intellectual acceptance of certain teachings about God given by Jesus.

Historical Christianity (the development of Christian thought between 1st century CE and 21st century CE is consequently not a system of ideas, but an attitude towards a historical person; and for this reason it is not possible or desirable for us to attempt to separate the religion of Jesus from the religion about Jesus.

The content of the Gospels is Jesus himself, not a doctrine or creed about Jesus. The acceptance of Christianity as our personal religion is not a mere assent to an individual proposition, but the living response of our whole personality to the fact of Jesus

Christians⁸ on Resurrection

Heaven and hell – the early Christians did not talk about their own personal futures – they spoke about transforming the present – the kingdom of God was here, now – God was doing something new now.

Christian modifications to Jewish thought on Life After Death:

1. Jews had no consistent belief in life after death – Christians were completely consistent in believing in it – they believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a historical event
2. In Second Temple Judaism resurrection was just not that important – it was talked about but not central to the faith. Christians made resurrection central to the new faith in Jesus Christ.
3. Christians gave Resurrection a much more precise, and different meaning than the Jewish thought before them. Resurrection means the body has been transformed by death and resurrection. It has new properties. Most importantly it is incorruptible – won't decay and rot.
4. Christians split resurrection into two:
 - a. Jesus had already been bodily resurrected
 - b. Rest of people would resurrect later
5. Collaborative Eschatology (Wright and Crossan)
 - a. God had raised Jesus Christ
 - b. Now all Christians were called to participate in Jesus mission

⁷ Alan Richardson, "Creeds in the Making" Notes

⁸ NT Wright on Resurrection Lecture Notes

6. Redefinition of the Resurrection
 - a. Jews meant resurrection for Israel
 - b. Christians gave it new meaning
 - i. Baptism of the individual into the Holy Spirit and the Christian Community
 - ii. Ethical obedience to Jesus Christ and God through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives
7. Messiahship
 - a. Jewish
 - i. Jews expected a Messiah to be a military/political leader who would throw off the oppressor (the Romans) and reestablish the state of Israel. They did not expect the Messiah to die, much less be executed by the Romans.
 - ii. Past Jewish messianic movements all ended with the leader being killed, the followers scattering or picking a new leader. None claimed that their leader had been seen again, had been raised from the dead. Dead was dead.
 - b. Christians
 - i. Redefined Messiahship, God was acting in the world to create a new world order here on earth, through spiritual leadership not political or military leadership.
 - ii. Christians found in the OT texts that described the messiah dying and rising after death.
 - iii. Christians jumped from Jesus Christ (Messiah in Greek is Christ) to Lord – meaning overlord of all earthly political and military leaders –thus they expressed allegiance to a new and different King.
8. Point of Resurrection
 - a. Death was defeated – earthly powers that use death and the threat of death to maintain power were defeated

Why did the early Christians modify the Jewish concept of Resurrection? What can we say about the early resurrection stories in the Gospels?

4 Gospels do not fit neatly together – they reflect different oral traditions/stories about the same event. For such a remarkable event it is not expected that there would be more than one version of what happened and in what order.

4 Strange Features about the 4 Gospel's Resurrection Stories:

1. Resurrection stories have few OT references in them. The rest of the gospels are full of OT references. “according to the scriptures” is added later by Paul. All 4 gospels tell the story from their own author and communities perspectives based on their own oral tradition. But they do not support the resurrection by citing the OT.
2. All 4 gospels list women as the first witnesses to the resurrection.
 - a. In the first century CE women were not admissible witnesses in court or public opinion. And by the time Paul writes 1 Cor 15 he has airbrushed them out of the story.
 - b. Having the women in the Gospel rings true because no one would have put them into the stories if they were trying to improve believability.
3. Portrait of Jesus himself
 - a. He is not like Daniel “shining like a star”
 - b. Jesus Christ appears with a normal body, that is different from how he had been before the resurrection. His body has been transformed. Comes and goes from locked rooms. Often not recognized.
 - c. He is not perceived to be a ghost or spirit – he is a transformed body.
4. The gospel resurrection stories do not present a future hope (heaven) for the Christians
 - a. Instead they are given the Holy Spirit and through baptism they are accepted into the body of Christ
 - b. but their charter is to carry on Jesus work to the ends of the earth.

What can we conclude?

1. The resurrection stories are every early oral traditions from the early Christian communities
2. They pre-exist Paul
3. They have very little polish to them – they are more or less reported as remembered
4. Same portrait, different artists

Resurrection boils down to two statements:

1. The Tomb was empty
2. Disciples encountered the risen Jesus Christ

REFLECTIONS

Is resurrection a historical fact or a matter of faith?

Does the mystery of faith mean we can never know for sure?

Resurrection Class #3: Parable or Metaphor⁹ View:

Without Easter we would not know about Jesus. The questions are:

- What was Easter?
- What does it mean?

To understand Easter/Resurrection we have to answer four foundational questions:

1. What kind of stories are the Easter stories?
2. What kind of language are they told in and how is that language being used?
3. Are they intended as historical reports?
4. Do they use the language of parable and metaphor to express truths that are much more than factual?

What is our pre-understanding of Easter?

1. Hard form – affirmed by Christians committed to biblical inerrancy see every detail as factually, literally and infallibly true.
2. Soft form – affirms the historical basics -- death, empty tomb, God transformed Jesus body, and Jesus really did appear to his disciples and followers after his death in a form that could be touched, held and seen. The soft form does not worry that the accounts do not line up exactly (number of angels, where he appeared Galilee or Jerusalem and when and how he ascended).

Many Christians believe that the historical integrity of the Easter/Resurrection story is essential to the integrity of the Christian faith.

1 Cor 15:13 “If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.”

We believe the historical inerrancy view gets in the way of understanding the meaning of Easter/Resurrection and are a stumbling block to people who have difficulty believing the stories as history. The issue is not “Did they happen or not?, the issue is “What do they mean?”.

History or Parable?

History – report publicly observable events that could have been witnessed by anyone who was there.

Parables of Jesus – stories that are truth filled but not necessarily factual.

Seeing the Easter/Resurrection stories as parables does not involve denial of their factuality. It leaves questions alone. What the parable view does is insist on the importance of these stories and their meanings. The parable view of the Easter stories is to emphasize their meaning.

Looking at the Gospels through the lens of Parable:

- Mark 8 verses; Matthew 20 verses; Luke 53 verses and John 56 verses
- Mark does not report the appearance of the risen Jesus and ends abruptly.¹⁰

Mark as Parable

- Jesus was sealed in a tomb, but the tomb could not hold him.
- Jesus is not to be found in the land of the dead, “He is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.” Luke then adds, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:5)

⁹ Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week, What the Gospel's Teach Us About Jesus' Final Days in Jerusalem*

¹⁰ It is conjectured that the Gospel of Mark is missing a beginning chapter and an ending chapter.

- Jesus, who was crucified by the Romans, has been raised by God. That means God has said "yes" to Jesus and "no" to the authorities. God has vindicated Jesus.
- His followers are promised "you will see him".
- Go back to Galilee means go back to the beginning of the story and the way and the kingdom messages.

Matthew, Luke and John as Parables

Mark's story of the empty tomb is expanded upon by the later Gospels to include appearance and ascension stories. Unlike the passion stories that are very similar between the Gospels, the resurrection stories differ:

Matthew: has two appearance stories, meeting Jesus at the grave side and the Great Commission in Galilee.

- To the risen Jesus God has given all authority in heaven and earth. Jesus is lord of heaven and earth overturning the structure that killed him.
- Jesus' followers are made to be disciples to all nations.
- They are to teach to obey everything Jesus has taught them – obedience not belief is required.
- "I am with you always." Echoes the birth theme in Matthew that Emmanuel means God is with us.

Luke: has two appearance stories set in Jerusalem (not Galilee) where Jesus' follower remain for Pentecost (book of Acts). The Emmaus story and the Easter Sunday evening appearance in the disciples room story. Both emphasize the physicality of the risen Jesus. In the second story they are urged to touch him. And in the second story they are commissioned, promised the Spirit, and then he blesses them and ascends.

John: has four appearance stories but his story is different:

- Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene at empty tomb, sees angels and meets and recognizes Jesus. She is told to be the apostle to the apostles and go and tell them he has risen. (John 20:1-18)
- Sunday evening – the apostles are hiding in a locked, upstairs room and Jesus appears among them. He breathes on them and gives them the Holy Spirit. (John 20:19-23)
- A week later, Jesus appears with Thomas there. (John 20:24-29)
- Much later in Galilee Jesus appears to Peter and six other disciples on the beach grilling fish and bread. Jesus pastorally cares for and restores Peter, and tells him to lead the church, and be aware that he will die by crucifixions as well. (John 21:1-23)

All four gospels' post easter/resurrection stories contain two themes:

1. Jesus lives – he continues to be experienced after his death, though in a radically different way.
2. God has vindicated Jesus, saying yes to Jesus and no to the Empire and the Jewish and Roman authorities.

These two themes are in the post-Easter affirmation about Jesus in the NT, that "Jesus is Lord" which means the lords of this world are not. Easter affirms that the domination systems of this world are not of God and do not have the final word.

Paul and the Resurrection of Jesus

Jesus Lives and Jesus is Lord are equally central themes to Paul's experience, conviction and theology. But Paul adds a third theme:

1. Jesus lives: Paul experienced the risen Lord. Paul has a private experience of light and sound on the road to Damascus.
2. Jesus is Lord: Paul's experience of the risen Jesus changed his life.
3. God's transformation of this earth has started: the resurrection of Jesus will lead to the resurrection of everyone.

The Parable or Metaphor View of Easter/Resurrection

Easter completes the archetypical pattern at the center of Christian life:

- Death and Resurrection
- Crucifixion and Vindication

The two patterns must be equally emphasized and affirmed equally.

- Without emphasis on God's decisive reversal of the actions of the authorities the cross is simply pain, agony and horror. – it leads to the idea that we all need to suffer like this, but Jesus suffered in our place. God can spare us because Jesus accepted the punishment for us.
- Without God's reversal of the power elite's action on Easter, Good Friday leads to cynical politics – this is the way the world is, the powers are and will always be in control. Christianity is about the next world, not setting this world right.
- Easter without Good Friday risks sentimentality and vacuity. It becomes an affirmation that spring follows winter.

Good Friday and Easter are both personal and political. They address the human question, What ails us?, and answers egoism and injustice. We seek both personal and political transformation.

- Egoism – not a Christian term – but it is a central Christian theme – means being centered in the self and its anxieties and preoccupations.
- Good Friday and Easter, death and resurrection, are the path to dying to the old way of being and being reborn in the new. Saying Jesus is the way, the way to death and rebirth, is the path to personal transformation.
- Injustice – Jesus died as part of a confrontation with the Jewish and Roman authorities in Jerusalem. He was passionate about the kingdom of God, what life would be like on earth if God were kind. A world of distributive justice in which everyone has enough and systems are fair. God's dream for our world is one of justice and peace – and this got Jesus executed.
- Good Friday and Easter top off a strong anti-imperial theology in the gospels. Jesus is Lord. Revelation contrast the kingdom of God with that of Rome.
- Living in the United States, Good Friday-Easter and the Gospels overall should call us to question and change the US empire power and how it is wielded at home and abroad.

Good Friday-Easter/Resurrection demand we ask and answer two questions:

1. Do you accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?
2. Do you accept Jesus as your political Lord and Savior?

Additional 20th Century Views:

Rudolf Bultmann¹¹ (1884-1976)

"For Bultmann, belief in the Resurrection of Christ's physical body is completely unnecessary to Christian faith. In fact he cannot see how a man who accepts twenty-first century reality can accept it and still keep their integrity intact. What then is the meaning of resurrection to Bultmann? Christ triumphed over death, and that his death saves those who, on hearing the preaching, will accept crucifixion with him:

"Faith in the resurrection is really the same thing as faith in the saving efficacy of the Cross." (KM I, 46)

The purpose of the kerygma (gospel) is to announce God's judgement, but this judgment frees us from sin and death if we will be crucified with Christ, if we renounce worldly passions and lusts, overcome our natural dread of suffering, and live in detachment from the world.

The decision on our part to do this causes us to pass from a life of sin, a life in which he puts his trust in visible, tangible reality. By this decision he will experience God's pardon, and be enabled to live a life based on unseen, intangible realities—a "life in faith." When this happens, the saving act of God has

¹¹ Sources: Rudolf Bultmann, Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate (Joanne Cotler, 2003). Bultmann, Rudolf, Kerygma and Myth (Harper & Row, New York, New York, 1953).

taken place in us. Resurrection becomes an existential reality in us – and this is all that resurrection means.

Background: "It was during these years of discussion with Heidegger that Bultmann developed his own theological position—namely, that Christian faith is, and should be, comparatively uninterested in the historical Jesus and centered instead on the transcendent Christ. Christian faith, he asserted, is faith in the *kērygma* ("proclamation") of the church, into which Jesus may be said to be risen (Bultmann's understanding of the Resurrection), and not faith in the historical Jesus. This view found its earliest expression in two essays, "*Der Begriff der Offenbarung im Neuen Testament*" ("The Concept of Revelation in the New Testament"), written in 1929, and "*Die Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins und der Glaube*" ("The Historicity of Man and Faith"), written in 1930."¹²

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

"Was there an empty tomb? Yes, this is the presupposition of the Resurrected Jesus. Were the Empty Tomb accounts in the Passion narratives Historical events? No, they are not meant to be understood as straight forward literal history that could be reconstructed. Not only is it impossible to harmonize the Empty Tomb narratives as verifiable history, and those who have attempted to harmonize these accounts have resulted in even more absurd results than problems they wished to overcome. If the Empty Tomb is a Legend or Saga or Myth, may it then be omitted from the New Testament? No, they are a necessary presuppositional sign of the Resurrected Jesus. What then is the Empty Tomb? It is a presuppositional sign of the Resurrected Jesus."¹³

Paul Tillich¹⁴ (1886-1965)

"The word "resurrection" has for many people the connotation of dead bodies leaving their graves or other fanciful images. But resurrection means the victory of the New state of things, the New Being born out of the death of the Old.

Resurrection is not an event that might happen in some remote future, but it is the power of the New Being to create life out of death, here and now, today and tomorrow. Where there is a New Being, there is resurrection, namely, the creation into eternity out of every moment of time. The Old Being has the mark of disintegration and death. The New Being puts a new mark over the old one. Out of disintegration and death something is born of eternal significance. That which is immersed in dissolution emerges in a New Creation. Resurrection happens now, or it does not happen at all. It happens in us and around us, in soul and history, in nature and universe.

Reconciliation, reunion, resurrection — this is the New Creation, the New Being, the New state of things.

REFLECTIONS

Is Easter/Resurrection diminished if you cannot prove that it is a historical fact?

Does the mystery of faith mean we can never know for sure?

¹² <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rudolf-Bultmann>

¹³ Source: Karl Barth, *The Church Dogmatics* Vol. III.2

¹⁴ Source: Paul Tillich, *The New Being* (1955)

Resurrection Class #4: Alternative Theories to Explain Resurrection¹⁵

The Swoon Theory or Resuscitation Theory

Jesus did not really die, He only swooned, therefore the disciples saw only a revived or resuscitated Christ. Christ was nailed to a cross and suffered from shock, pain and loss of blood. But instead of actually dying, He only fainted (swooned) from exhaustion. When He was placed in the tomb, He was still alive and the disciples, mistaking Him for dead, buried Him alive. After several hours, He revived in the coolness of the tomb, arose, and departed.

Response: This theory completely ignores the evidences of His death and would require a greater miracle than the resurrection.

The Hallucination Theory

This theory says all of Christ's post-resurrection appearances were really only supposed appearances because actually the people only had hallucinations. In this way, all the post-resurrection appearances can be dismissed.

Response: How could so many people have hallucinations--especially 500 at one time? Furthermore, the appearances happened under different conditions and were spread out over different times. And, don't forget, the disciples were reluctant to believe in the resurrection in the first place! This involves a miracle of blindness to reason away the resurrection.

The Impersonation Theory

This is the view that the appearances were not really Christ at all, but someone impersonating Him. This, the opponents say, is evident because in some cases they did not recognize Him at first (or at all).

Response:

1. The disciples were reluctant to believe in the resurrection, were doubtful and would have been hard to convince unless it was really Him, as was the case with Thomas.
2. It would have been impossible to impersonate Christ's wounds. This was Christ's proof to Thomas that it was really Him (cf. John 20:24f).
3. At times their inability to recognize Him was a phenomenon of His glorified body brought about by His own purposes as in Luke 24:16, "But their eyes were restricted that they should not recognize Him."
4. These men had traveled with the Lord for three years and it is incredible that anyone could have gotten away with an impersonation particularly due to their reluctance to believe.
5. They were meeting in locked chambers in some instances, and He suddenly appeared in His glorified body. No one could impersonate such a miraculous act other than the resurrected Christ.

The Spiritual Resurrection Theory

This is the view that Christ's resurrection was not a real physical resurrection. Proponents of this theory assert that Christ's body remained in the grave and His real resurrection was spiritual in nature. It was only told this way to illustrate the truth of spiritual resurrection.

Response:

A physical body did disappear from the tomb. If it was only a spiritual resurrection, then what happened to the body? History shows there was a body there and it disappeared. The enemies of Christ were never able to produce the body nor disprove the resurrection.

The resurrection accounts are not presented in parabolic or symbolic language, but as hard fact. John 20 is full of what Greek grammarians call vivid historical present tenses to stress the historical reality of the Gospel message.

¹⁵ <https://bible.org/article/false-theories-against-resurrection-christ>

The Theft Theory

The disciples stole the body and claimed that He rose from the dead.

Response:

Matthew 28:11-15 Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. 12 And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' 14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." 15 And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

Again, such a theory ignores the evidence of the linen wrappings and the empty tomb. If someone had stolen the body, they would have either taken the body and left the wrappings scattered or piled in a heap, but only resurrection could account for the position of the linen wrappings with the body absent.

The Unknown Tomb Theory

One of the earliest theories present to explain everything away is that the disciples did not know where the tomb was located and could not have found the empty grave. This theory depends on the belief that those who were crucified were tossed into a common pit and were not allowed to be buried.

Response:

This theory also disregards totally the straightforward historical narrative about the events surrounding Christ's burial and the post-resurrection scene. The Gospel record indicates that Joseph of Arimathea took the body to his own private tomb--not a public mass burial ground. According to Scripture, the body of Christ was prepared for burial according to the burial customs of the Jews; the women sat opposite the tomb and watched. Not only did Joseph of Arimathea and the women know where the tomb was, so did the Romans--they placed a guard there. (McDowell, pp. 77-78).

No God Therefore No Resurrection

JWJ: In discussions I have often found that the people who argue with me about the resurrection do not believe in God. So of course there is no resurrection if there is no God to raise Jesus from the grave.

Response:

If you assume no God and no resurrection how do you explain the transformation of the disciples and the willingness of generations of Christians to be martyred for their beliefs? You are ignoring what the contemporary writers recorded from the event and what followed. The person you are arguing with may not believe in God and the resurrection, but clearly the early church did.

REFLECTIONS

What is resurrection to you?

Does resurrection make you uncomfortable?

Does the mystery of faith mean we can never know for sure?

READINGS

Paul the Apostle preached the resurrection of the dead as one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, at Athens, for instance (Acts, xvii, 18, 31, 32), at Jerusalem (xxiii, 6), before Felix (xxiv, 15), before Agrippa (xxvi, 8). He insists on the same doctrine in his Epistles (Rom., viii, 11; I Cor., vi, 14; xv, 12 sqq.; II Cor., iv, 14; v, 1 sqq.; Phil., iii, 21; I Thess., iv, 12-16).¹⁶

Acts 17:18 Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.)

Acts 23:6 When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection[b] of the dead."

Acts 24:14-15 But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. 15 I have a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both[e] the righteous and the unrighteous.

Acts 26: 8 "Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?"

1 Corinthians 6:14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

1 Corinthians 15:1-13 15 Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters,[a] of the good news[b] that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, 2 through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

3 For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters[c] at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.[d] 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me...

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.

2 Corinthians 4:13-14 But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence.

¹⁶ <http://web.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/resurrection.htm>

Philippians 3:10-11: I want to know Christ[f] and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters,[g] about those who have died,[h] so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.[i] 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died.[j] 16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Romans 8:11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ[j] from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through[k] his Spirit that dwells in you.

Mark 16 (NRSV)

16 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." 8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.[a]

The Shorter Ending of Mark

[[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.[b]]]

The Longer Ending of Mark

9 [[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10 She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

12 After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13 And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

14 Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.[c] 15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news[d] to the whole creation. 16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out

demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands,[e] and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Matthew 28 (NRSV)

28 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he[a] lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead,[b] and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." 8 So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
[d]

Luke 24 (NRSV)

24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in, they did not find the body.
[a] 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5 The women
[b] were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men
[c] said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.
[d] 6 Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." 8 Then they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.
[e]

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles
[f] from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.
[g] 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" 19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth,
[h] who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.
[i] Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,

23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." 25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah[j] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us[k] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."*[l]* 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.*[m]* 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence.

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah[n] is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses[o] of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.*[p]* 52 And they worshiped him, and*[q]* returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53 and they were continually in the temple blessing God.*[r]*

John 20 (NRSV)

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look[a] into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew,[b] "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord", and she told them that he had said these things to her.

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin[c]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe[d] that Jesus is the Messiah,[e] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

PRAYERS

Prayers of Jesus as recorded in the 4 Gospels

- Prayer of gratitude and jubilation: Matt 11:25 Parallel: Luke 10:21

Matt 11:25 At that time Jesus said, “I thank[i] you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.[j] 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

- Prayer in Gethsemane: Mark 14:35-36 Parallels: Luke 22:42, Matt 26:39, John 12:27-28

Mark 14:35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, “Abba,[a] Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

- John 17-High Priestly Prayer

John 17 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all people,[a] to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. 5 So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

6 “I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that[b] you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost,[c] so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.[d] 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.[e] 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth;

your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

20 “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,[f] so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 “Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

The Exclamatory Prayers in the Crucifixion narrative

- Mark 15:34; parallel: Matt 27:46
Mark 15:34 At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, Ilema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"[i]
- Luke 23:34: Luke 23:46 (prayer of surrender)
Luke 23:34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."¹⁷
Luke 23: 46 Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.

In addition there are a number of general references to the praying of Jesus, especially to his prayers in solitude, are to be found:

- Mark 1:35, 6:46
- Matt: 14:23
- Luke 3:21 and 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 28 (Transfiguration)
- Luke 22:31, 32 (a saying of Jesus about his prayer for Peter)

The instruction on prayer from Jesus to his disciples including the Lord's Prayer:

- Matt 6:5-13 and Luke 11:1

Matt 6:5-13 “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6 But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.[b]

¹⁷ Luke 23:34 Other ancient authorities lack the sentence *Then Jesus . . . what they are doing*

7 "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 "Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.[c]

12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And do not bring us to the time of trial,[d]
but rescue us from the evil one.[e]

Luke 11:1-4 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father,[a] hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.[b]

3 Give us each day our daily bread.[c]

4 And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."[d]

SUMMARY

27-30 CE Greek/Roman-Jewish Context Summary

	Jewish/OT	Greek/Roman	Christian
God	Monotheism	Polytheism	Monotheism
	<p>Yahweh, Covenant with Israel</p>	<p>Incorporated all religions within the empire</p> <p>Stoicism: God, as <i>pneuma</i>, is immanent in all of Nature and humankind.</p> <p>Epicureanism: everything is made of atoms. Gods exist, but take no notice of humans. No afterlife.</p>	<p>God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Holy Spirit</p>
	<p>One transcendent God who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses, and the Hebrew prophets and by a religious life in accordance with Scriptures and rabbinic traditions.</p> <p>God who created and rules the entire world and who at the end of history will redeem all Israel and the whole world.</p>	<p>Plato and Aristotle conceived of systems based on reason that had little impact on ordinary mortals.</p> <p>Plato: utterly static image of divinity would have a large influence on Jews, Christians and Muslims even though it had little in common with the God of revelation.</p> <p>Aristotle: Man is in a privileged position: his human soul has the divine gift of intellect, which makes him kin to God and a partaker in the divine nature. This godly capacity of reason puts him above all of creation.</p>	

		<p>Man's duty is to become immortal and divine by purifying his intellect. Wisdom (Sophia) was the highest of all human virtues, it was expressed in contemplation (theoria) of philosophical truth -- achieved by logic alone, but was disciplined intuition resulting in ecstatic self-transcendence.</p>	
Jesus Christ	<p>NA</p> <p>The universal goal of the Jewish people has frequently expressed itself in messianism—the idea of a universal, political realm of justice and peace</p>	<p>Augustus is known in some inscriptions as Son of God</p> <p>Caligula was the first emperor to demand to be worshiped, he demanded that citizens everywhere bow to his statue.</p> <p>Nero claimed to be divine, although in neither case was there a requirement to worship the emperor.</p> <p>As Augustus had been Zeus incarnate, so Nero was Apollo incarnate. Even Seneca called him as the long-awaited Savior of the world.</p> <p>Domitian took the title “Lord and God”</p>	<p>Jesus of Nazareth, the pre-resurrection figure.</p> <p>Jesus Christ (Messiah) the post resurrection figure.</p>
The Holy Spirit	Ruach, God's spirit in OT	NA	God and Jesus Christ's Spirit.
Incarnation	NA	NA	

Death	Final	Final	Overthrown by God in raising Jesus from the dead.
Resurrection	Small element for one faction of the Jewish community. Not a central point or seen as very important by any of the factions.	NA	God has raised Jesus from the dead to a new life, new body.
	Pharisees believed it would occur for the righteous at the end time. Great turnaround of Israel		
	Sadducees disagreed and did not believe in resurrection		
Forgiveness of Sins	Sin is the result of our negative human tendencies or inclinations, ² known in Hebrew as the yetzer hara (the inclination toward evil) ³ , which must be channeled in ways that affirm life by the influence of the yetzer hatov (the inclination to goodness). The word in Hebrew for sin (het) literally means something that goes astray, like an arrow that misses the mark. ¹⁸	NA	
Eternal Life	NA	NA	
Communion	Readings, Prayer and Interpretation are basic structure of Jewish synagogue service	NA	

¹⁸ <https://www.reconstructingjudaism.org/article/sin-and-forgiveness>

Prayer	Transactional and Relationship	Transactional	Relationship between father and son or child.
Covenant	This arrangement is designated a covenant and is structured by an elaborate and intricate law.	NA	
Chosen people	Jewish people... the people chosen by God to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). Designated a covenant and is structured by an elaborate and intricate law. Jewish people are both entitled to special privileges and burdened with special responsibilities from God.	NA	

REFLECTIONS

1. Do I believe in the resurrection?
2. How do I believe in resurrection? Inerrancy, metaphor, other?
3. What has been my experience of resurrection?

Slow Religion

The Foundations of Christian Faith in the 21st Century

APPENDIX ONE: COMPARING THE GOSPELS¹⁹

(Yellow highlight for pericopes that appear in all four Gospels or in two Synoptic Gospels and John.)

The Passion Narrative

Pericope ²⁰	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus' Death is Premeditated	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2	
The Anointing in Bethany	26:6-13	14:3-9	7:36-50	12:1-8
The Betrayal by Judas	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6	
Preparation for the Passover	26:17-20	14:12-17	22:7-14	
Washing the Disciples' Feet	10:24 10:40		6:40	13:1-20
Jesus Foretells His Betrayal	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30
The Last Supper	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20	
Precedence among the Disciples and the Reward of Discipleship	20:24-28 19:28	10:41-45	22:24-30	
The New Commandment of Love				13:31-35

¹⁹ <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

²⁰ an extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

Peter's Denial Predicted	26:30-35	14:26-31	22:31-34	13:36-38
The Two Swords			22:35-38	
"Let Not Your Hearts be Troubled"				14:1-14
The Promise of the Paraclete				14:15-26
The Gift of Peace				14:27-31
Jesus the True Vine				15:1-8
"Abide in My Love"				15:9-17
The World's Hatred				15:18-25
The Witness of the Paraclete				15:26-27
On Persecutions				16:1-4
The Work of the Paraclete				16:5-15
Sorrow Turned to Joy				16:16-22
Prayer in the Name of Jesus				16:23-28
Prediction of the Disciples' Flight				16:29-33
The Intercessory Prayer				17:1-26
Jesus in Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:39-46	18:1
				12:27

Jesus Arrested	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12
Jesus before the Sanhedrin	26:57-68	14:53-65	22:54-71	18:13-24
Peter's Denial	26:69-75	14:66-72	22:56-62	18:25-27
Jesus Delivered to Pilate	27:1-2	15:1	23:1	18:28
The Death of Judas	27:3-10			
The Trial before Pilate	27:11-14	15:2-5	23:2-5	18:29-38
Jesus before Herod			23:6-12	
Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent			23:13-16	
Jesus or Barabbas?	27:15-23	15:6-14	23:17-23	18:39-40
"Behold the Man!"	27:28-31a	15:17-20a		19:1-15
Pilate Delivers Jesus to be Crucified	27:24-26	15:15	23:24-25	19:16
Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers	27:27-31a	15:16-20a		19:2-3
The Road to Golgotha	27:31b-32	15:20b-21	23:26-32	19:17
The Crucifixion	27:33-37	15:22-26	23:33-34	19:17b-27
Jesus Derided on the Cross	27:38-43	15:27-32a	23:35-38	
The Two Thieves	27:44	15:32b	23:39-43	
The Death of Jesus	27:45-54	15:33-39	23:44-48	19:28-30

Witnesses of the Crucifixion	27:55-56	15:40-41	23:49	19:25-27
Jesus' Side Pierced				19:31-37
The Burial of Jesus	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:38-42
The Guard at the Tomb	27:62-66			

The Resurrection

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Women at the Tomb	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-12	20:1-13
Jesus Appears to the Women	28:9-10	16:9-11	24:10-11	20:14-18
The Report of the Guard	28:11-15			
Jesus Appears to Two on the Way to Emmaus		16:12-13	24:13-35	
Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Thomas being Absent)			24:36-43	20:19-23
Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Thomas being Present)				20:24-29
Jesus Appears to the Eleven While They Sit at Table		16:14-18		
Jesus Appears to the Eleven on a Mountain in Galilee	28:16-20			
Jesus Appears to His Disciples by the Sea of Tiberias				21:1-14

The Endings of the Gospels

Pericope	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Short Ending of Mark		See Note		
The Long Ending of Mark		16:9-20		
The Ending of Matthew. The Great Commission	28:16-20			
The Ending of Luke. Jesus' Last Words and Ascension		16:15, 19	24:44-53	
The Ending of John				20:30-31
The Appendix to John. Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias				21:1-25

APPENDIX TWO: COMMON ERA (CE) TIMELINE

Dates	Judaism/OT History	Greek-Roman	Christianity
0-40 CE	Philo of Alexander (30 BCE-45CE)	Augustus (30 BCE-14 CE) Tiberius (14CE-37CE) Gaius Caligula (37-41 CE)	Jesus is born (0-6 CE) John the Baptist executed (28 CE) Jesus is crucified (30 CE) Stephen executed (36 CE) Conversion of Saul/Paul (circa 36 CE)
40–66 CE		Claudius (41-54) Nero (54-68)	Paul's missionary journeys (circa 46–64 CE) Proto-Pauline letters: 1 Thessalonians written (50-51 CE) Galatians written (54-55 CE) Philippians written (56-63 CE) Philomen written (55 CE) 1, 2 Corinthians written (56-57 CE) Romans written (57-58 CE) Paul and Peter executed in Rome (64 CE)
67-70 CE	Jewish Revolt Romans destroy Essenes at Qumran (source of Dead Sea Scrolls) Destruction of the Jewish Temple by the Romans	Gaba, Otho, Vitellius (68-69 CE)	Gospel of Mark written (68-73 CE) Hebrews written (60-80 CE) 1 Peter written (60-63 or more likely 70-90 CE)
70-90 CE		Vespasian (69-79 CE) Titus (79-81 CE) Domitian (81-96 CE)	Gospel of Matthew written (80-90 CE) Gospel of Luke and Book of Acts written (85 +/- 5 CE) James written (70-110 CE) Jude written (90-110 CE)
			Deutero-Pauline letters: 2 Thessalonians written (if Paul 51-52 CE or late 1 st century CE) Colossians written (if Paul 61-63 CE or 80s CE) Ephesians written (if Paul 60-63 CE or 90s CE (90% likely)) Titus written (if Paul 65 CE or late 1 st century CE early second century CE(90% certainty))

			1, 2 Timothy written (if Paul 65 CE or late 1 st century CE early second century CE(90% certainty))
90-100 CE	Talmud started: Pharisee Rabbi Yohannan to form a community and compile the Mishnah	Nerva (96-98 CE)	Gospel of John written (80-110 CE) Book of Revelation written (92-96CE) 1 John, 2 John, 3 John written (100 CE) Ebionites (1st and 2nd Century CE) Docetism (1st and 2nd Century CE)
100-199 CE		Trajan (98-117 CE) Hadrian (117-138)	2 Peter written (130 +/- 10 CE) Ebionites (1st and 2nd Century CE) Docetism (1st and 2nd Century CE) Gnostics: Marion (140CE), Basilides (140 CE) and Valentinus (150 CE) Anti-Gnostics: Irenaeus (180CE) , Clement (190 CE), Tertullian (190 CE)