

**HISTORY OF
EARLY
CHRISTIANITY
PART ELEVEN**

THE RESURRECTION:

FACTS AND ISSUES

IN MEMORIUM

To the memory of my little brother:

DR. EUGENE CRUZ-URIBE

**Who, 40 years ago, gave me Vol. 1
of the Anchor Bible, Genesis, and
opened to me the world of scholastic
biblical research.**

LECTURE

ONE

1CORINTHIANS15:17

“And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is futile.”

THE RESURRECTION - 1



ADVISORY ON LECTURES - 1

The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is found in all four of the Canonical Gospels and comprises a rather insignificant portion of each Gospel. Considering that this event is often described as the most important feature of Christianity, it is an understatement to say that there is not much written about it.

ADVISORY ON LECTURES - 2

And for something so important and central to the message, theology, and very nature of Christianity, it's curious that the gospel authors (as well as Paul) would all have such radically different stories about what happened. The story that most people are taught is actually a conflation of six sources, the four Gospels, Acts, and 1 Corinthians.

ADVISORY ON LECTURES - 3

This course is going to explore in detail the Resurrection from Sunday morning through the Ascension of Jesus, highlighting the key points of the story. Each of these points will be discussed and explained within the context of the timeframe of the 1st century.

ADVISORY ON LECTURES - 4

This study will compare the six stories and the discrepancies as well as the contradictions among them, detailing what historical facts that can be determined. Points of disagreement among theologians, historians, and scholars will be noted, when appropriate.

RESURRECTION RESEARCH - 1

No other research on the Gospels has come across more controversy than those who claim that there was no such event and those that claim that the Gospels accounts are inerrant and exact. One group points to all

RESURRECTION RESEARCH - 2

the discrepancies, inconsistencies, and contradictions in the canonical accounts as proof that the historical fact has no basis while the opposite side claims that all such “minor details” can be easily explained. Neither side is totally correct.

QUOTE 1 BY A BIBLICAL SCHOLAR

“This is why, against both traditional conservatism and against the more sophisticated assertions of some scholars that the resurrection was a “historical” event, we must assert its meta-historical character. By this we do not mean to suggest that nothing transpired between God and Jesus...” **From R.H. Fuller**

THE COUNTER ARGUMENT- 1

The absence of a negative does not make a positive. Because an author (or Paul) did not write and bluntly state this is what happened (or not) does NOT mean that one can accept a different fact in order to reconcile different versions of the same event.

THE RESURRECTION:

CANONICAL FACTS

THE EPISTLE OF 1 CORINTHIANS

The Epistle of 1 Corinthians, written by Paul, has a total of 437 verses. The Resurrection information found there is only 5 verses of that total (1Cor15: 4 - 8). That is barely 1.1% of the total.

And it is important to remember that Paul's letter was written anywhere from 10 to 40 years before any of the Gospels were written.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

The Gospel of Mark has 678 verses.

The Resurrection is only 8 verses of that total (Mark 16: 1 -8). That is barely 1% of the total. For the record, I have excluded from this lecture the longer ending which has another 12 verses because it is fairly well understood that they were added onto the Gospel 300 years after it had been written.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The Gospel of Matthew has, in total, 1071 verses. The Resurrection is only 28 verses of that total (Matthew 28: 1 - 20). That is barely 1.9% of the total.

THE GOSPEL/ACTS OF LUKE

The Gospel of Luke has a total of 1151 verses. The Resurrection is only 53 verses of that total (Luke24: 1 - 53). That is 4.6% of the total.

The Acts of the Apostles has a total of 1006 verses. The Resurrection is only 11 verses of that total (Acts1: 1 – 11). That is 1% of that total.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Gospel of John has, in total, 879 verses. The Resurrection is 56 verses of that total (John20: 1 – 31 & John21: 1 - 25). That is 6.4% of the total, by far the largest of all canonical writings.

ALL CANONICAL SOURCES

For these six canonical sources, with 5222 verses, only 153 verses contain information on Jesus covering the time period from his Resurrection on Sunday morning until the Ascension. That is only a little over 2.9%, a rather diminutive amount of data for describing the climatic event of the Christian faith.

SUNDAY

MORNING

OF THE

RESURRECTION

NUMBER OF WOMEN AT THE TOMB

Each Gospel has a different number.

- 1. Matt: 2- Mary Magdalene & the other Mary**
- 2. Mark: 3- Mary Magdalene & the Mary (mother of James), Salome**
- 3. Luke: At least 5 or more**
- 4. John: 1- Mary Magdalene**

THE TIME THE WOMEN VISITED THE TOMB

Each Gospel has a similar time.

- 1. Matt: Just after sunrise**
- 2. Mark: At dawn**
- 3. Luke: Very early in the morning**
- 4. John: While it was still dark**

THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

The Gospels have two different reasons

- 1. Matt: To look at the tomb.**
- 2. Mark: Brought spices to anoint the body (already seen tomb).**
- 3. Luke: Brought spices to anoint the body (already seen tomb).**
- 4. John: To look at the tomb (body already anointed).**

THE ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB

The Gospels have two scenarios.

- 1. Matt: There was a violent earthquake and an angel came down and removed the stone while the women watched.**
- 2. Mark: Tomb was already open when the women arrived.**
- 3. Luke: Tomb was open.**
- 4. John: Tomb was open.**

WHO WAS AT THE TOMB

The Gospels have four different answers.

- 1. Matt: A shining angel came down from heaven and two guards who were passed out (or asleep).**
- 2. Mark: A young man in a white robe.**
- 3. Luke: Two men in gleaming clothes.**
- 4. John: Two angels in white.**

WHERE WERE THE MESSENGERS

The Gospels have four different answers.

- 1. Matt:** The angel sat on the stone *outside* the tomb.
- 2. Mark:** The young man was sitting *inside* the tomb on the right.
- 3. Luke:** After entering the tomb, two men suddenly stood beside them.
- 4. John:** Two angels seated *inside*.

WHAT DID THE MESSENGERS SAY

The Gospels have two scenarios.

- 1. Matt: “Don't be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”**
- 2. Mark: Almost the same as above.**
- 3. Luke: Almost the same as above.**
- 4. John: “Why are you crying?”**

HOW DID THE WOMEN REACT

The Gospels have four scenarios.

- 1. Matt: The women hurried away and told the eleven.**
- 2. Mark: The women hurried away and told no one.**
- 3. Luke: The women hurried away and told the eleven and various others.**
- 4. John: Mary turned away and saw Jesus, then later told the disciples.**

WHO SAW JESUS FIRST

The writings have five different answers.

- 1. Matt: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.**
- 2. Mark: No one sees Jesus.**
- 3. Luke: Two disciples on the road to Emmaus.**
- 4. John: Mary Magdalene.**
- 5. Paul: Peter.**

THE MORNING IN COMMON - 1

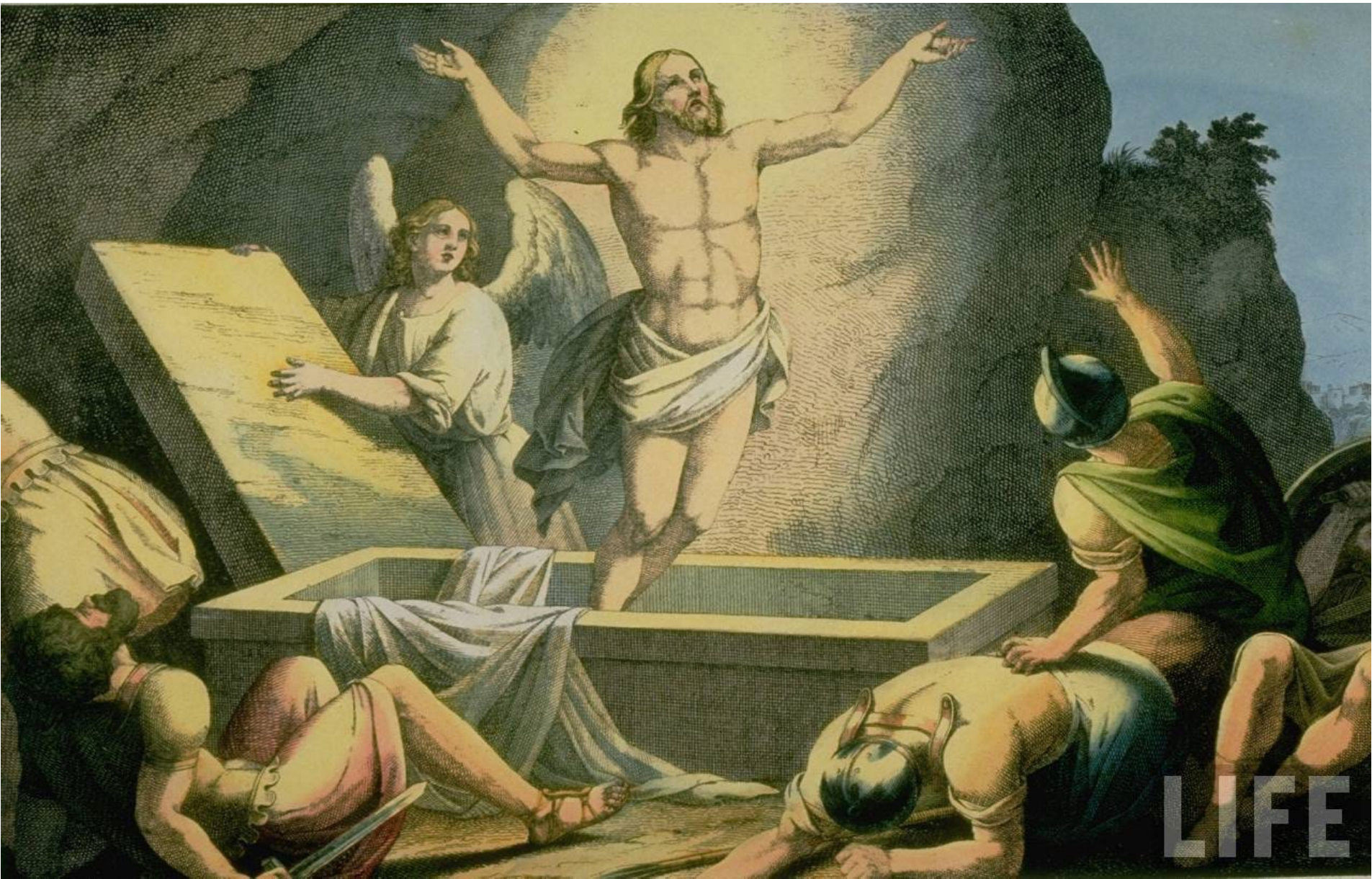
The four Gospels have much in common while being very different in specifics.

- 1. The women are the first to go to the tomb.**
- 2. In every case, they meet a special messenger(s).**
- 3. The messenger(s) is clothed in white and/or radiate brightly.**

THE MORNING IN COMMON - 2

- 4. The tomb is open to them.**
- 5. Jesus is not in the tomb.**
- 6. At some point, the women tell the disciples, although this is only implied in Mark.**
- 7. Mary Magdalene is specifically mentioned in each Gospel.**

THE RESURRECTION - 2



THE MORNING IN COMMON - 3

8. No Canonical source anywhere in the bible actually describes the Resurrection as it physically happened. There is no eyewitness testimony. All risen accounts take place after the event!!!!

THE MORNING IN COMMON - 4

These eight points are critical to the Resurrection story because they are in agreement across the four Gospels. They also represent the basis of the belief system for Christianity. The specific details of each story so far create immense problems if anyone must insist that there are no inconsistencies, discrepancies and/or contradictions.

THE ROMAN GUARD



GOSPEL OF PETER –

CHAPTER 10: 34 - 41

- **34.** And early in the morning as the Sabbath dawned, there came a multitude from Jerusalem and the region roundabout to see the sepulchre that had been sealed.
- 35.** Now in the night whereon the Lord's day dawned, as the soldiers were keeping guard two by two in every watch, **36** there came a great sound in the heaven, and they saw the heavens opened and two men

GOSPEL OF PETER –

CHAPTER 10: 34 - 41

- **descend thence, shining with a great light, and drawing near unto the sepulcher 37**
And that stone which had been set on the door rolled away of itself and went back to the side, and the sepulcher was 38 opened and both of the young men entered in.
When therefore those soldiers saw that, they waked up the centurion and the elders (for they also were there keeping 39 watch); and while

GOSPEL OF PETER –

CHAPTER 10: 34 - 41

- **they were yet telling them the things which they had seen, they saw again three men come out of the sepulcher, and two of them sustaining the other 40 one, and a cross following, after them. And of the two they saw that their heads reached unto heaven, but of him that 41 was led by them that it overpassed the heavens...**

THE GOSPEL OF PETER - 1

This non-canonical Gospel was condemned and banned by the early church councils of the 4th century A.D. Yet in doing research it comes up in traditional Christian websites as support for the Resurrection as a historical event. In GOP the actual Resurrection is described in great detail with Jesus coming out of the tomb flanked by angels.

THE GOSPEL OF PETER - 2

More importantly the physical Resurrection is witnessed by a large number of Jewish priests and guards as well as a cohort of Roman soldiers. In fact, only non-believers and enemies of Jesus are there to witness the event. This was done to “prove” the event was real and not fabricated by Jesus followers.

THE GOSPEL OF PETER - 3

In recent years some traditional and Evangelical commenters have used the narrative of the GOP as a written proof that the Resurrection actually occurred. However, many of these same groups just years before condemned the same Gospel for being heretical.

LECTURE

TWO

LATER

SUNDAY

AND

AFTER

QUOTE 2 BY R. H. FULLER

“The Gospel (Resurrection) narratives can no longer be read as direct accounts of what happened, but rather as vehicles for proclamation. Such was their original intent.”

AFTER THE MORNING

After the early morning Gospel accounts, the stories diverge with very different details about the appearances of the Risen Jesus to the women and his disciples over the next days and weeks. Most of these specific details contradict each other in place, time, and location. This fact makes it difficult and hard to reconcile all the stories.

WHO

SAW

THE RISEN

JESUS?

1CORINTHIANS15:4 -7

Paul wrote this Epistle around 50 to 55 A.D., at least 10 to 40 years before any of the Gospels/Acts were written. He specifically made a list of those individuals to whom the Risen Jesus of Nazareth appeared.

- 1. Peter.**
- 2. The 12 Apostles (not named).**

1CORINTHIANS15:4 -7

- 3. 500 “Brothers” at one time. Paul did NOT provide any details of whom these people were.**
- 4. His brother James the Just.**

That is a total of 513 people (or close to that number).

THE GOSPELS of MARK and LUKE

Mark -- In the original ending, Jesus appears to no one.

Luke -- Cleopas and another on the road to Emmaus. The 11 Apostles and the “others” with them just before the Ascension.

Acts -- Number never specified. Just his Apostles.

THE GOSPELS of MATTHEW and JOHN

Matthew -- Mary Magdalene and another Mary. In Galilee, the 11 Apostles while standing on a mountain side.

John -- Mary Magdalene alone. Then some disciples (number never specified), followed by Thomas. Lastly, Peter, Thomas, Nathaneal, the sons of Zebedee, the beloved disciple and two others.

THE WHO SAW JESUS ISSUES - 1

1 Corinthians was written 10 to 40 years prior to the Gospels. Paul stated quite plainly that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people. Yet even if one conflates all the Gospels together, the total barely reaches 20. Why such differences?

COULD JESUS

BE TOUCHED

AFTER THE

RESURRECTION?

THE GOSPELS

- **Mark -- No mention is made.**
- **Matthew -- Yes. “They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.” (MT28:9)**
- **Luke -- Yes. “It is I myself. Touch me and see.” (LK24:39)**
- **John -- No. “Jesus said, ‘Do not hold on to me.’” (JN20:17)**

WHERE

DID THE PEOPLE

SEE THE RISEN

JESUS?

THE GOSPEL of MARK

Mark -- In the original ending, no one sees Jesus anywhere. It is implied that his disciples and others will see him in Galilee.

THE GOSPEL/ACTS OF LUKE

Luke -- Cleopas and another on the road to Emmaus. The 11 Apostles and the others see Jesus in Jerusalem just before the Ascension.

Acts -- Only in Jerusalem.

NOTE: Luke & Acts had the same author.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

- a) Mary Magdalene and another Mary near the burial site by Jerusalem.**
- b) At a second appearance in Galilee, the 11 Apostles while standing on a mountain side.**

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- a) Mary Magdalene alone near the tomb by Jerusalem.**
- b) Then some disciples (number never specified) in Jerusalem which is followed by the Thomas encounter.**
- c) The last appearance is with Peter and other disciples in Galilee by the Tiberias Sea.**

1CORINTHIANS

Paul -- Even though Paul lists out the largest number of people to see the Risen Jesus, he does not mention where anyone had actually seen him. It is implied that some were in or near Jerusalem.

HOW

LONG WAS

THE RISEN JESUS

AROUND?

THE GOSPELS of MARK and MATTHEW

Mark -- Unknown. No explicit resurrection/appearance stories in the original version.

Matthew -- Unclear. It had to be at least two days, Resurrection Sunday and another day for the single appearance in Galilee.

THE GOSPEL/ACTS OF LUKE

Luke -- One day, Resurrection Sunday.

Acts -- Appeared to the Disciples for 40 days.

Please note that these accounts are written by the same person.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN & EPISTLE OF PAUL

**John -- At least more than one week.
Resurrection Sunday and then eight
days later in Jerusalem. And then
later on the Sea of Tiberias. So Jesus
was here for probably two weeks.**

**Paul -- No timeframe given. At least
a couple of days.**

WHERE

DID

THE RISEN JESUS

ASCEND?

MARK, MATTHEW, JOHN & PAUL

Mark -- Unknown. No explicit Ascension stories in the original version.

Matthew -- Book ends with the great commission on a mountain side in Galilee.

John -- There is no Ascension event.

Paul -- No references in any of the his Epistles to the Ascension.

THE GOSPEL/ACTS OF LUKE

Luke -- Near Bethany, very close to Jerusalem, after supper on Resurrection Sunday.

Acts -- Appeared to the Disciples for 40 days and ascended to heaven outside Jerusalem.

THE GOSPEL OF PETER - 4

“For he has risen and is gone to the place that he had come from.” (Bernhard translation)

In the GOP, the angel tells the women that Jesus of Nazareth has ascended immediately after the Resurrection. This is another “issue” that traditionalists have with this Gospel. Yet some still use it as evidence for various arguments in favor of the Resurrection & Ascension.

THE LATER DAY IN COMMON - 1

Because the accounts in all six sources state what happens in such different detail, there are only three general facts that are consistent. Yet these facts are crucial to the understanding of the purpose and the results that the Resurrection will provide to later Christianity.

THE LATER DAY IN COMMON - 2

The Gospel accounts as well as Acts and Paul have these general points in common.

- 1. Jesus appears to his followers (implied in Mark).**
- 2. Jesus overcomes their doubts (implied in Mark).**
- 3. Jesus preaches and instructs them.**

SUMMARY

OF THE

RESURRECTION

FROM BIBLICAL SCHOLAR H. RAISANEN

“The principle difficulty here is not to believe, but to know what it is which offers itself for belief. There is a marked contrast between the centrality of the Easter faith of the New Testament, and the almost fortuitous character of the traditions that support it.”

FROM BIBLICAL SCHOLAR R. H. FULLER

“The New testament asserts that something over and above the Good Friday event happened in the experience of the first disciples...to account for the complete change in the behavior of these disciples who at Jesus arrest fled and scattered...but who in a few weeks were found boldly preaching their message...”

SUMMARY - 1

Theologians and New Testament Scholars from all backgrounds and beliefs do agree on only one point pertaining to the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Something happened after the crucifixion that started a process whose culmination is a world wide religion of over one billion members.

SUMMARY - 2

The common points of agreement in the Canonical writings provide one possible answer to what may have happened on that fateful day around 30 A.D. and may have occurred over the next few weeks. The followers of Jesus of Nazareth were transformed and went forth with a message.

EPILOGUE

AND

POSTSCRIPT

THE FINAL WORD FROM JOHN 21:25

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for all the books that would be written.”

THE FINAL QUESTION???

If this statement is true (and this question concerns the greatest single event of Christianity), why are there only a total of 153 verses about the Risen Jesus written in all the various Canonical sources (an average of 25 verses per source)???

POSSIBLE NEW COURSE????

THE DIFFERENT GOSPEL OF JOHN:

CONFLATION FACTS & ISSUES

Please note on evaluation forms if this should be completed and presented.

THE END

AND

THE BEGINNING