

The First Baptist Church of Columbus

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T I T L E: Facts Regarding the Resurrection of Christ

T E X T: Matt. 17:22-23

There is a verse found in the writings of the Apostle Paul that reads like this: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." (NIV)

This verse is a reminder, nay it is a command to Christians, "Don't be gullible."

One such area in which we Christians cannot afford to be gullible is that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, there is a multitude of interpretations today, regarding His resurrection, which attempt to discredit it altogether.

One such interpretation is that taught by the Jesus seminar, which was fairly popular a few years back even among some circles of persons who called themselves Christians such as those who teach or taught the Jesus Seminar.

Hank Hanegraaff (The Bible Answer Man) writes in his book Resurrection regarding the Jesus Seminar:

Jesus Seminar founder Robert Funk is bent on convincing the world that the historical Jesus is not worthy of worship. Said Funk, "Jesus himself should not be, must not be, the object of faith. That would be to repeat the idolatry of the first believers." His stated objective is "to liberate Jesus. The only Jesus most people know is the mythic one. They don't want the real Jesus; they want the one they can worship. The cultic Jesus." Fellow cofounder John Dominic Crossan took dead aim at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Time magazine reports Crossan's pontification: "The tales of entombment and resurrection were latter-day

wishful thinking. Instead, Jesus' corpse went the way of all abandoned criminals' bodies: it was probably barely covered with dirt, vulnerable to the wild dogs that roamed the wasteland of the execution grounds."

The founders of the Jesus Seminar make little attempt to hide their disdain for the biblical Jesus. Crossan denigrates him as "a peasant Jewish cynic," and Funk demeans him as "perhaps the first stand-up Jewish comic." At times, the assertions of Jesus Seminar participants are so outrageous that the eminent Jewish scholar Jacob Neusner called the Jesus Seminar "either the greatest scholarly hoax since the Piltdown Man or the utter bankruptcy of New Testament studies. One member of the Jesus Seminar says Jesus died and later his body was dug up by dogs that ate it! Others speculate that the disciples moved his body.

Reasons for Belief — Norman L. Geisler — Some say he passed out on the cross and later recovered. Once he recovered, say others, he ran off to France with Mary Magdalene, married her, had children by her, and eventually died a natural death. Others teach that Jesus went to (and died in) India. One town in Srinigar even claims that Jesus is buried there.

Hanegraaf goes on to say: "Multitudes uncritically accept the assertions of the Jesus Seminar, failing to recognize that they fly in the face of well-established facts."

I. THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

John 20:1-18

Most Bible scholars, even critics who deny Christ's resurrection, agree that his tomb was found empty, days after his dead body was put there.

II. HIS APPEARANCES: HE APPEARED TO A MULTITUDE OF PERSONS FOLLOWING HIS RESURRECTION

Acts 1:3 ---- After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

III. MARTYRDOM OF THE EARLY DISCIPLES

One source wrote: Here's a short list of disciples who were martyred for preaching that Jesus was the Son of God and that he rose from the dead:

Peter, Andrew, and Simon were all crucified. Matthew was killed by the sword. Mark was dragged to death by horses through Alexandria's streets. Luke died by hanging. James the Greater was beheaded. James the Just was thrown down from a pinnacle of the temple after refusing to deny Jesus Christ. Thaddaeus (sometimes known as Jude) was killed by arrows. • Thomas was run through by a spear in India. • Bartholomew (also known as Nathanael) was whipped to death in Armenia. • Matthias was stoned and then beheaded.'

Read this account of Andrew's death. Does this sound like a man who had doubts about Jesus being raised from the dead? Andrew was crucified in Greece after being whipped by seven soldiers. As he was being led to the cross, he said: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it." According to accounts that were left behind, Andrew did not die quickly; he lived for two more days and preached from the cross to anyone who would listen until he finally died.

IV. PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Acts 2:24 ---- But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

V. CHRIST'S TESTIMONY ABOUT HIMSELF WHEN SPEAKING TO MARTHA ABOUT HER BROTHER LAZARUS WHO HAD DIED

John 11:25 ----Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.

Conclusion: Sir Lionel Luckhoo was a famously successful defense attorney. The Guinness Book of Records (1990) cites him for having the most successive acquittals (245) in murder trials. This is what he said about the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus:

I have spent more than 42 years as a defense trial lawyer appearing in many parts of the world and am still in active practice. I have been fortunate to secure a number of successes in jury trials and I say unequivocally the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt(emphasis added).