**EASTER SPECIAL**

**2017, Pastor Mike Smith, Country Bible Church**

OUR SAVIOR LIVES

COMPARE:

Hymn 299, *He Lives says, “You ask me how I know He lives, He lives, within my heart,,,”* with

Hymn 292, *Because He Lives, which says, “An empty grave is there to prove my savior lives”.*

Which one offers genuine proof?

**Fideism** is a faith that is not based on evidence; comes from **fide**, the Latin word for “faith”.

We don’t have to depend on BLIND FAITH to believe the truth of God’s Word because it is well supported.

**ABUNDANCE OF EVIDENCE**:

1. **WRITTEN EVIDENCE** that the inspired inerrant Word of God is true in the Bible itself:

***John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.***

***Psalm 12:6 The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.***

1. **FULFILLED PROPHECY** of the Bible substantiates its truthfulness.

**2 Peter 1:20-21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. 21) For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

**2 Timothy 3:16–17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17) That the man of God may be perfect** [complete]**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

1. **SCIENTIFIC FACTS** found in the Bible were given centuries before man discovered them.

THE EARTH IS ROUND

***Job 26:10 He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters, at the boundary of light and darkness*.**

THE EARTH HANGS ON NOTHING

**Job 26:7 *He stretches out the north over empty space, And hangs the earth on nothing.***

1. **5,600 GREEK MANUSCRIPTS** of the N.T., comprise significantly more than any other writing from antiquity which verify the accuracy of our modern English texts.
2. **SEAMLESS CONTINUITY** of the 66 books of the Bible testify of its supernatural origin.
3. **SPIRITUAL TESTIMONY** Believers have the Holy Spirit to bear witness to them about the veracity of the Scriptures.

***Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God…***

So there is an abundance of evidence as to why people can trust that the Bible as being the inspired inerrant Word of God. But is there conclusive evidence that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the tomb?

But before we answer that question, we should answer this question - Why should everyone be interested in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Because Jesus made a promise to those who trust His sacrifice on the cross, and nothing else, to pay for their sins.

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**John 14:2-3 Jesus said, “…I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself: that where I am, there you may be also”**

Obviously, Jesus cannot return to us if He wasn’t resurrected.So is there any evidence that Jesus Christ rose from the tomb? Absolutely!

1. **WRITTEN TESTIMONY**:

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4) and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**

1. **VERBAL TESTIMONY**:

**Luke 24:5b-6 …"Why do you seek the living One among the dead? 6) "He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,**

1. **EYE WITNESSES**:

**1 Corinthians 15:5-6 He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6) After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;**

1. **THE EMPTY TOMB**:

The only possible way that the tomb could be empty was for Jesus Christ to be resurrected.

 1. Huge stone placed over the entrance.

 2. The stone was sealed with wax.

 3. Roman soldiers guarded the tomb.

1. **EXTRA-BIBLICAL RECORD**:

The Jewish historian Josephus (AD 37-100 Aprox.) talks briefly but matter-of-factly about Jesus. Josephus lived a few years after Christ, he was a Pharisee who went over to the Roman camp and wrote a history of his people. In his history he briefly mentions Jesus Christ.

"*About this time appeared Jesus, a wise man (if indeed it is right to call Him man; for He was a worker of astonishing deeds, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with joy), and He drew to Himself many Jews (many also of Greeks. This was the Christ.)*

*And when Pilate, at the denunciation of those that are foremost among us, had condemned Him to the cross, those who had first loved Him did not abandon Him (for He appeared to them alive again on the third day, the holy prophets having foretold this and countless other marvels about Him.) The tribe of Christians named after Him did not cease to this day." (Jewish Antiquities, 18.3.3 §63 )*

We don’t have to ask, “What if Jesus Christ was not resurrected?” because the Apostle Paul gives us a description of what it would be like:

***1 Corinthians 15:12-20 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14) and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15) Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16) For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17) and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worth- less; you are still in your sins. 18) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19) If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20) But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of***

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***those who are asleep. 21) For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23) But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming…***

1. **ARCHAEOLOGY**: Verifies biblical places, whole civilizations, practices, people, & events.

**A FEW QUESTIONS AND POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

1. If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, why didn’t the religious leaders who hated Him so much simply produce His body to prove that He was a phony?

2. No one, not even the enemies of Christ, disputed that the tomb was empty. That’s why they had to pay off the Roman soldiers and make up the ridiculous story about the disciples stealing His body while the soldiers on guard were asleep.

3. Why were the disciples willing to die rather than lie about Christ’s resurrection if it wasn’t true?

**THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**

1. **IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR SALVATION:**

***Rom 4:24-25 …It*** [faith] ***will be counted to us*** [as righteousness] ***who believe in Him who raised from the dead 25) Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.***

1. **IT SUBSTANTIATED THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD**.

***Romans 1:3-4 …concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4) who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead…***

1. **IT CONFIRMED THE VERACITY AND IMPECCABILITY OF OUR LORD’S LIFE ON EARTH**.

He told the disciples several times that He would die, be buried, and then rise from the

tomb on the 3rd day. This promise was very easy to verify; just go to the tomb to find out.

***Luke 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.***

Did the disciples anxiously go to the tomb that Sunday morning to see their risen Lord?No.Jesus had to be absolutely sinless to be qualified to go to the cross or else God the Father would not accept His sacrifice for us.

***2 Corinthians 5:21 He*** [GTF] ***made Him*** [J C] ***who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

1. **IT IS THE BASIS OF HOPE / CONFIDENT EXPECTATION** for all believers to eagerly await our Lord’s return.

***1 Corinthians 1:6-7 …the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, 7) so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ****,*

Since Christ’s resurrection guarantees His return to earth, we will receive a resurrection body as well, so we eagerly anticipate His arrival and it motivates us to be spiritually ready when He comes.

***1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3) And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.***

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1. **THE IMMANENT RETURN OF OUR LORD**

This is what motivates us to keep learning and applying Bible doctrine so that we will not be ashamed when He returns.

1. **OUR RESURRECTION BODY WILL BE LIKE CHRIST’S**.

We can get an idea of what ours will be like. It’s important to note that Christ’s resurrection was not a spiritual resurrection but a bodily resurrection.

1. We will be recognizable to others in our resurrection bodies just as Christ was in His.
2. The resurrection body of Christ could eat, ***Luke 24:42-43***, but He didn’t need to.
3. Christ’s resurrection body had substance. It could be touched or felt, ***Matthew 28:9****;* ***Luke 24:39****;* ***John 20:17.***
4. His resurrection body possessed flesh and bones, ***Luke 24:39, 40***.
5. His resurrection body could walk through closed doors, ***Luke 24:36****;* ***John 20:19***.
6. The resurrection body was able to appear and disappear, ***Luke 24:17***.
7. The resurrection body of Christ could move horizontally or vertically, ***Acts 1:9-10****,* ***1 Thess. 4:16-17***
8. **RESURRECTION IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM RESUSCITATION OR REANIMATION** of the physical body. The resuscitated body will die again but the resurrection body will never die. **HALLELUJAH!!!!**

*After Sir Walter Raleigh was beheaded in the tower they found in his Bible these true and striking lines, written the night before his death:*

*“Even such is time, that takes in trust, Our youth, our joys, our all we have,*

*And pays us but with age and dust; Who in the dark and silent grave,*

*When we have wandered all our ways, Shuts up the story of our days.*

*But from this earth, this grave, this dust, My God shall raise me up, I trust!’*

*All the things of this world he had lost, but he had kept his faith; and faith spoke to him of a hope and life beyond the grave*.

*Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*

**8. SOME PEOPLE WILL GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO THWART THE PLAN AND THE GRACE OF GOD CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION.**

*According to Dr. E. R. Bull, a Methodist missionary to the Ryuku Islands of Japan, a huge grave has been discovered on the Island of Amakusa, where a marker states that the heads of 11,111 Christians are buried there. The date of the grave is 1637, in which year the Japanese government ordered all Christians exterminated, and the inscription above this grave states that 11,111 Christians were killed, and that their bodies were buried separately.*

*The purpose in this was that the missionaries who had brought Christianity to Japan had preached the resurrection of the body, and the Japanese rulers supposed that by separating the heads from the rest of the bodies in burial, there could be no possibility of the Christians coming forth from their graves.*

“Easter” is found only in the KJV of the Bible and only in one verse, ***Acts 12:4*** where it is translated from the Greek word PASCHAwhich is translated 28 times as “Passover” and only one time as “Easter”.

**Many men have risen to prominence in which people have worshiped, but ONLY ONE HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE (thus far).**

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**JESUS CHRIST IS EITHER A LIAR, A LUNITIC, OR LORD**.

**We worship on Sunday instead of Saturday in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ which was on a Sunday.**