

EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION

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Hillcrest
BAPTIST CHURCH

Bible study & Worship Services
Sundays 9:30 & 10:45 am
"God's people sharing His Love"

Westminster Presbyterian Church
3333 Oak Ridge Dr.
(across from Bryan High School, next to Bryan Aquatic Center)

HE IS RISEN!
HE IS RISEN, INDEED!
Easter Sunrise Service at church 6:30 am
Children's Easter Musical 9:40 am
Morning Worship 10:55 am
776-1185 • email: wpc@myriad.net
(a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America)

Sunday Worship 8:30 & 10:45 am, 7:14 pm
Wednesday Services 7:14 pm
Randall Scott - Pastor
776-4835 • email: ranscot@startel.net

BETHEL TEMPLE
ASSEMBLY OF GOD

"Easter is the traditional time when we celebrate Jesus' triumph over death, and praise God for the new life he has given us."

2608 E. Villa Maria • Bryan, Texas 77805

ABS
Association of Baptist Students
Invite you to join them for

"RELOAD" & REALITY
Thursdays at 7:30 PM
ABS Center
410 College Main

Sunday Mornings 10:30 AM
In the facilities of A+ Tutoring

For more information call 846-3223

A passion for Jesus A vision for people

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Chris Osborne - Pastor
600 S. Coulter Dr., Bryan
779-1591
Prayer Line 779-PRAY

Sunday School - 8:15, 9:30, 11:00 am
Freedom College Bible Study - 11:00 am
Worship Services - 9:30, 11:00 am, 6:30 pm

'97 EASTER PAGEANT
Thursday 27th through Sunday 20th at 7:00 pm
Call the Church Office for more information.

University Christian Fellowship
"A Church Without Walls"
With priorities on "celebrative worship" and "small groups."

Cosponsor of

REALITY

Sunday Mornings at 10:30 AM
In the facilities of A+ Tutoring

For more information call 268-6445

First Baptist Church Bryan

Come Celebrate Easter Sunday With Us!

9:30 a.m. - University Worship and Bible Study
10:50 a.m. - Easter Celebration

Located 5 miles north of Texas A&M on Texas Ave.

John David Herring, '93
University Minister
779-2434
email: jdherring@juno.com

Is it miracle or hoax? Reports of empty tomb circulate

After 2,000 years the resurrection of Jesus Christ continues to remain a hotly contested issue. Josh McDowell writes in his best seller *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, "After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, and thoroughly investigating its foundation, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic fact of history."

World's Major Religions Examined

Only four of the world's major religions are based upon personalities rather than philosophical propositions. Abraham, the father of Judaism, died around 1900 B.C. and was said to have been buried with no claim to resurrection. Wilbur M. Smith, *Therefore Stand*, says, "The original accounts of Buddha never ascribe to him any such thing as a resurrection: in fact, in the earliest accounts of his death...we read that when Buddha died it was with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind." Mohammed, founder of Islam, died June 8, 632 A.D. and his tomb is visited annually by millions of devotees. Jews, Buddhists, and Mohammedans agree their founders are dead and have never been resurrected. Only Christianity claims an empty tomb for its founder.

To refute Christian claims one must first explain away the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What exactly occurred that fateful weekend some 2,000 years ago?

First, it is vital to note that Jesus was dead as a result of the crucifixion. Michael Green, *Man Alive*, writes of Christ's death, "We are told on eyewitness authority that 'blood and water' came out of the

pierced side of Jesus (John 19:34, 35)...Had Jesus been alive when the spear pierced his side, strong spouts of blood would have emerged with every heart beat. Instead, the observer noticed semi-solid dark red clod seeping out, distinct and separate from the accompanying watery serum. This is evidence of massive clotting of the blood in the main arteries, and is exceptionally strong medical proof of death." Green also points out that Pilate required proof of a criminal's death. "Four executioners came to examine him (Christ), before a friend, Joseph of Arimathea, was allowed to take away the body for burial."

Burial Customs Explained

Second, Joseph of Arimathea then prepared the body for burial according to Jewish custom and placed it in a new tomb hewn out of solid rock. Merrill Tenney, *The Reality of the Resurrection*, explains the grave clothes as follows: "In preparing a body for burial according to Jewish custom, it was usually washed and straightened, and then bandaged tightly from the armpits to the ankles in strips of linen about a foot wide. Aromatic spices, often of a gummy consistency, were placed between the wrappings of folds, they served partially as a preservative and partially as a cement to glue the cloth wrappings into a solid covering." This "encasement" weighed about 100 pounds.

Third, a stone "door" was rolled against the entrance to the tomb. Matthew said the stone was large. Mark called it extremely large. Frank Morrison, *Who Moved the Stone?*, as well as other engineers have calculated the size of stone that would have been needed to cover the entrance of such a tomb would have to have weighed 1 1/2 to 2 tons. In Mark 16:4

portion of the Bezae manuscripts in the Cambridge Library in England, a parenthetical statement is found that adds, "and when he (Jesus) was laid in the tomb (Joseph) put against the tomb a stone which the twelve men could not roll away."

Fourth, a detachment of at least four Roman guards was placed at the tomb and the tomb was sealed according to Roman law. This would prove quite a deterrent to anyone wishing to rob a gravesite.

Tomb Found Empty

Even with all these precautions, the tomb was empty three days later and the foundation for Christianity established. Dr. David Fredrick Strauss, unbelieving skeptic who was severely critical of anything supernatural in the gospels, has acknowledged that the resurrection is the "touchstone not of Jesus only, but of Christianity itself." It "taught Christianity to the quick" and is "decisive for the whole view of Christianity."

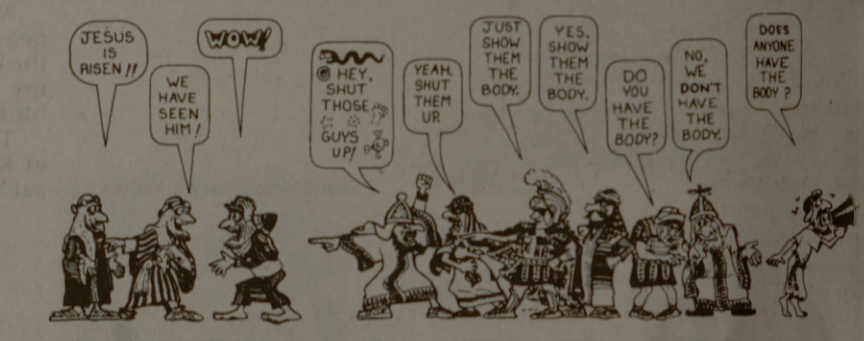
Paul Althus, cited by Wolfhart Pannenberg (*Jesus - God and Man*), says, "In Jerusalem, the place of Jesus' execution and grave, it was proclaimed not long after his death that he had been raised. The situation demands that within the circle of the first community one had a reliable testimony for the fact that a grave had been found empty." The resurrection Kerygma (proclamation) could have not been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all concerned."

(Information in this article was taken from *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* and "The Resurrection - Hoax or History?" both by Josh McDowell.)

Who moved the stone?

The 2 1/2 ton door was sealed by special government order and a guard of Rome's elite was posted. The disciplines were cowering somewhere in Jerusalem. Yet Jesus' body was gone within three days!

How? Why?



Bible reliability questioned; historicity defended

Many discussions concerning the veracity of the claims of the Christian faith center upon the reliability of the Bible. F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, makes some appropriate comments.

Reliability Truly Important

"Does it matter whether the New Testament documents are reliable or not? Is it so very important that we should be able to accept them as truly historical records? Some people will very confidently return a negative answer to both these questions. The fundamental principles of Christianity, they say, are laid down in the Sermon of the Mount and elsewhere in the New Testament (NT): their validity is not affected by the truth or falsehood of the narrative framework in which they are set..."

Bruce continues, "This argument sounds plausible, and it may be ap-

plicable to some religions. It might be held, for example, that the ethics of Confucianism have an independent value quite apart from the story of the life of Confucius himself...But the argument can be applied to the NT only if we ignore the real essence of Christianity. For the Christian gospel is not primarily a code of ethics or a metaphysical system; it is first and foremost good news...And this good news is intimately bound up with the historical order...This historical 'once-for-all-ness' of Christianity, which distinguishes it from those religious and philosophical systems which are not specially related to any particular time, makes the reliability of the writings which purport to record this revelation a question of first-rate importance."

NT Evidence Overwhelming

What exactly is the "evidence" for the historical reliability of the New

Testament? Bruce writes, "The evidence for our NT writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no-one dreams of questioning."

Many critics say the NT was written long after the deaths of the original apostles, which allows for the development of myths and legends concerning the life of Jesus Christ. William F. Albright, who in his day was the world's foremost biblical archeologist, said, "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the NT after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical NT critics of today."

"Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works," says Bruce. Caesar's *Gallic War* (written 58-50 B.C.) has only nine or ten good extant manuscripts (mss) the oldest of which was copied 900 years after the original. Plato's *Tetralogies* (written

427-347 B.C.) has seven extant mss the oldest being scribed 1200 years after the original.

How do the ancient mss of the NT compare? There are more than 24,000 existing copies of the NT dated 125-250 A.D. There are also over 36,000 quotations of the NT in patristic writings to the fourth century.

Integrity of NT Established

Sir Francis Kenyon, a scholar of ancient mss concludes, "The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

(Material for this article was taken from *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce and *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell.)

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
2506 Cavitt, Bryan
779-7608

Good Friday Worship - 7:00 pm
Easter Sunrise Service 6:00 am - Sue Haswell Park
(located on William Joel Bryan Pkwy.)
"Lawn Chairs Welcome"
Easter Worship 8:30 & 11:00 am at Church
Sunday School 9:45 am

Celebrate Easter at the Creek
Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheater
March 30, 10:00 am
9:30 am Preservice & 11:00 am Postservice Concerts

Featuring
Aggie Concert Band,
Freedom Worship Band, and Zion Jubilee
Worship Service Music

Presented by:
A&M United Methodist Church Choir
Admission Free Parking at Post Oak Mall
Seating on lawn (bring blankets or lawn chairs)
Transportation from parking lot for handicapped.
Sponsored by A&M United Methodist Church
For additional information, call 846-8731.

New Life in Christ Church
401 Lawrence

"God has a good plan for you"
Sunday Worship 10:30am & 6:30pm
Children's Church 10:30 am
Wednesday 7:00pm
Nursery Provided for all services
Alfred Paine - Pastor
779-1682

There exists no document from the ancient world witnessed by so excellent a set of textual and historical testimonies... Skepticism regarding the historical credentials of Christianity is based upon an irrational bias.

Clark Pinnock
McMaster University

College Heights Assembly of God
4100 Old College Rd., Bryan • 846-2777

9:30 am Sunday Service
10:30 am Morning Worship
6:00 pm Resurrection Celebration Praise and Worship Service

Tommy Thompson, Pastor
"People Reaching People"