

March 27, 2016
Jesus and the Kingdom of God Pt 15
The Resurrection of the King
Jeff Kennedy

Introduction: Some hoaxes are benign. Like...

- The legend of Sasquatch
- Nessie
- crop circles
- the Alien autopsy video
- Orson Well's infamous 1938 broadcast of the war of the worlds—which had many people freaking out. But in the end.

Those things are pretty harmless. Not much is at stake if those wives tales and myths are false.

Other frauds are more damaging—when they involve religious claims and the leaders of those religions seeking control over the lives of many. Creating entire stories, narratives, and supplemental books that turn out to be historically false in so many ways. Those hoaxes are far more destructive.

Or the financial frauds that have led to so many losing their life savings. Very bad.

Over the centuries, the masses have believed things that turned out not to be true. Today we're talking about the single most important truth claim in history—and it is either a factual event which did happen—or it is the single biggest hoax and fraud ever perpetrated on the human race.

Unlike some historical claims—if this one is not true, then as Paul has stated in 1 Cor. 15—we have believed in vain—our very eternity is on the line.

Transition: We're going to look at the last chapter of Matthew today. We'll unpack this story of the raising to life of Jesus from Nazareth.

Here's the first thing we observe...

1. Jesus first appears to women.

“Now after the Sabbath Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.”

This would have been for two reasons—the rectangular shaped opening at the top of the tomb was so that they could drop small alabaster or clay jars filled with perfume—once the jars broke inside—it would cover the stench of the rotting corpse until it had sufficiently decomposed. The Men left this task to the women.

So as a reward the women got to see Christ first. They are the ones who received the first revelation of Jesus.

Look closer at Luke's account which fills in more details.

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Luke 24: 1-8

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” ⁸And they remembered his words,

Jesus prophesied his resurrection multiple times before his death. The text says “and they remembered his words”. Giving the great hope that Jesus was

His followers could not make sense of it. The claim that their Messiah would die and raise seemed like crazy talk. But they remembered it. And so did Jesus’ enemies which is why they posted the Guard at the tomb.

The fact that Jesus first appeared to women—in that society is huge. The testimony of women wasn’t even allowed in court, unless it was of a very trivial nature. And all 4 Gospels state this fact.

The point is, if you’re making up stories about the resurrection—you don’t win friends and influence first century people by claiming the first witnesses were Women (or Galileans for that matter). You only include this kind of detail if the story is true.

2. Jesus’ resurrection is attested by apocalyptic signs (28:2): earthquakes and angelic messengers.

And behold there was a great earthquake caused by an angel of the Lord who descended and rolled back the stone.

“Shake” is the same verb used for “earthquake” at the crucifixion.

Earthquakes in the OT and Revelation (Ezek. Isaiah, Rev.) were symbols of God’s divine power often used to get the attention of those who were being judged. The Roman soldiers experience the shaking with holy thunder—the blazing light of the angelic host. And the dead are raised living and the living fall down as though dead. And God’s Son comes out of the tomb.

But the angel said to the women who had arrived that morning, “Don’t be afraid—you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come see the place where he was laid. Go quickly and tell his disciples.

Angelic announcement

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3. The resurrection is the end of fear (28:5a). Do not fear

Just as at the announcement of Jesus' birth and other significant theophanies in the Old Testament (appearances of God)—an angelic messenger comes and induces terror and wonder on the part of the recipients.

But there is a greater lesson about fear going on here.

The greatest enemy we face is not disease, cancer, nukes, Isis or Al Qaeda or even Satan. The greatest enemy we face is death. And up until the resurrection of Jesus—death was batting 1000. A 100 percent kill rate. No exceptions—until Jesus came out of that grave with earth shattering force.

Now we who believe who have repented of our sin and place our faith in Jesus can say with confidence—with no fear “Death, Where is your sting?” “What happened to your permanency?” Because the finality of death has been overcome—defeated.

And those who believe in Jesus Christ the risen savior have no fear of being eternally left to the grave—his resurrection means our resurrection.

I've mentioned before, I've had the opportunity to sit at the bedsides of those who were believers and had the hope of the resurrection and those who didn't. And the difference in how they face death is dramatic. The faithful are usually still sorrowful that their time has ended here—but they have a hope in future renewal that is inexplicable.

Likewise I've seen the fear in men's eyes who have no hope—and that fear is justified.

4. Jesus was crucified (28:5b). The angel says to the women—“for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.” (v.5). We can't skim over the crucifixion straight to the hope of the resurrection. Jesus was risen after he had been executed by the Romans at the behest of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Set Up: Jesus has been tried:

- **Before the Sanhedrin** in a false sham of a trial. It turns out that the false witnesses who were ginned up by the elders and chief priests weren't necessary. Jesus incriminates himself when asked, “Tell us. You—*YOU*—are the Son of God?” “It is as you say. And you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of glory with the angels at his side.” This is a quote from Daniel 7—the Ancient of **Days. 7:14 states, “And He gave him dominion and glory and a kingdom, and all peoples, nations, and tongues shall serve him; his dominion is an eternal dominion, which will not be removed, and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”** First we note: 1.) The text says he is *like a son of man*, 2.) the text was interpreted in the intertestamental period and is often found in Jewish apocalyptic writings to refer to a Son of Man who is a divine Messiah. 3.) The text was understood in Jesus' day to be an anthropomorphism of God himself who empowers an heir of David to rule

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forever. So Jesus' claim to be this apocalyptic Son of Man who shares authority with the exalted and glorious Ancient of Days—God—was blasphemy. And Caiaphas tears his robes in protests—orders that Jesus be struck in the face for it.

- **Before Pilate** Jesus is mostly silent. Pilate is deeply superstitious and his wife has warned him of an omen—a night vision warning her to stay away from this man. But Pilate asks, “Are you the King of the Jews”—blasphemy wasn't punishable by death among the Romans, the new charge is given him—King in place of Caesar—an insurrectionist and revolutionary who sets himself against Caesar's official claim of “King of Kings and Lord of lords.” But Pilate the procurator cannot fathom that this man is a threat to the power of Rome. Pilate washes his hands of Jesus' death by handing him over to Herod and then to the crowds.
- **Before the Crowds**—they are offered a choice. A notorious criminal, a Sicarrii (dagger man)—a murderous revolutionary who went by the title *Barabbas*—not a name—a title meaning “son of the father.” The crowd—under the influence of the elders and chief priests of the Law—they choose the wrong son of the father. They leave for judgment the Father's one and only Son—Jesus.

Now Jesus is scourged, beaten, mocked, tortured.



Jesus is crucified on a Roman Cross.

Archeologist Hershel Shanks has examined the ancient evidence for the use of Roman crosses—either by tying the victims to the horizontal cross beam (if the field soldier didn't have a hammer and nails handy) or by tying the arms and legs to the vertical and horizontal beams—then nailing the feet and wrists. A bone fragment, for example, from an ossuary box of a man named Jehohanan (John) with the nail and a piece of the cross still attached to the heel bone. His arm bones were scarred where nails would have held him to a horizontal beam. And both his legs were badly fractured from a blow with a large mallet in order to hasten his death. This finding corroborates what we know about ancient crucifixion on crosses. It was brutal, vicious, and a shameful scandalous way to die in public.

This is the death sentence Jesus was given. Crucified to the death. And there is no mistaking whether or not Jesus had given up the ghost—he was gone and Roman crucifixion methods left no margin for “almost dead.”

5. Jesus was raised bodily from the dead, leaving behind an empty tomb (28:6b).

The first thing the angel wants to do is to point out to the women that Jesus' body is gone. “Come see the place where he lay” *past tense*. This is the tomb that you remember putting him with Joseph from Arimathea. And this tomb is empty.

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"Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy *this temple*, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body," John 2:19-21.

After Jesus' resurrection he could eat with the disciples (Lk.24:42-43), he could be touched by physical hands (Lk. 24:39; Mt. 28:9).

Thomas would not believe in the resurrection without placing his hands in the scars of Jesus' hands, side and feet (Jn. 20:25).

And Luke records Jesus explicitly stating...

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have," (Luke 24:38-39).

1 Cor. 15: 35, 39, 42-44: "But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come? . . . 39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. . . 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."

New bodies for eternity. Bodies that will never grow old. That will never experience another twinge of pain, sickness—bodies incorruptible and not subject to decay.

If the resurrection of Jesus is true—then every person who believes on Christ—every person who accepts him as their Savior—Messiah—Lord and King—they will be saved and raised to life again in Christ with imperishable bodies—forever immortal.

6. The resurrected Jesus was worshipped by his closest disciples (28:9; 16-17).

This corresponds with Thomas exclaiming "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28)—In every instance of Scripture where someone falsely tries to worship an angel or a messenger of God who is less than deity—that Angel or apostle stops them immediately. The Angel in revelation has to even stop John from worshipping him—that is how glorious and radiant and awash in light and power these beings are. But they're not God.

Jesus accepts the worship of his people. He accepts their praise and adoration—he accepts the titles of deity. It's because he is the living Word who, as John opens his Gospel by saying "the Word was with God and was God—all things were made through him and without him nothing was made."

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Band Come Back Up:

Conclusion: We asked the question at the beginning—*What if it never happened?* Then we have been hoodwinked on an epic scale. We are dopes for having been duped.

But I want to close today by asking this—*What if on Easter Morning the angel rocked that tomb and shook it open and Jesus came walking out of it in a resurrected glorious body?* And what if those who believe on his name, those who acknowledge the depth of their lostness—who embrace his death on a cross and receive the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit—*what if those who do will live for eternity with a raised to life Jesus—never to die again—never to experience suffering again at the resurrection.*

Let's sing the rest of the story, let's sing our commitment to Jesus this morning.

Band plays closing 3 songs.