

April 20, 2025
Resurrection Sunday

The F.E.A.T. of The Resurrection

I Cor. 15:3-8; John 20:1-8

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ can only be characterized in one of two ways:
 - Either as the greatest historical hoax ever perpetrated or...
 - The single most important event in all of history that changed the course of every human life through the entirety of time
- The historical proof of Jesus' resurrection has stood the test of time over the centuries
 - Yet there are still many people, many groups, even many scholars who still do not believe it ever happened
 - They say no "thinking" person would believe that it could or would happen the way the Bible says it did
- This morning, I would like to present 4 arguments for the truth of the resurrection
 - Argument is a defense of a debated point
- Acronym – **F.E.A.T.**

1. The Fatality of the Crucifixion

- a. To believe that Jesus was resurrected you have to first believe and accept that He died
- b. The death of Jesus is a well-established fact of history
 - i. There are multiple extrabiblical writers who corroborate the biblical narratives
 1. Josephus Flavius – the Jewish historian who recorded his writings just 60 years after the event
 2. The Jewish Talmud – written between 400-700 AD – denied the deity of Jesus but nonetheless confirmed his life and death
 3. The Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus – writing in 116 AD
 4. The Early Church Fathers - Clement of Rome; Ignatius of Antioch
 5. Even the Gnostic Gospels – heretical in their theology acknowledged the life and death of Jesus
 - ii. What every one of them recorded was completely consistent with the practices of the day
- c. There is one particular theory that gained a great deal of popularity attempting to offer an explanation to contradict the Gospels, claiming that Jesus only fainted or, as it became known, as the Swooning – Jesus swooned and only appeared to be dead
- d. The problem with that theory is that the best medical minds of both ancient and modern science agree that the wounds Jesus suffered, in their totality, had only one possible outcome - death

- e. Consider what Jesus endured -
 - i. Jesus was most likely beaten at most if not all of the 6 trials –
 - 1. Fists; rods; head blows (concussions)
 - 2. Slaps also contributing when done repeatedly
 - 3. Jesus, before He even got to Golgatha, was suffering from blunt trauma with likely internal injuries ([Mark 14:65, 15:15, 19](#))
 - ii. Scourged or whipped – tremendous blood loss; traumatic injury ([Matt 27:26](#))
 - iii. Crown of thorns on the head (these thorns were several inches in length) – more blood loss ([Matt 27:29](#))
 - iv. Carrying the cross beam
 - 1. Called the *pah-TIB-you-lum* – weighing anywhere from 100-125 pounds
 - 2. Suffering great fatigue; tremendous blood loss exacerbated by an elevated heart rate ([John 19:17](#))
 - 3. Matthew, Mark, Luke – all say that a man, Simon of Cyrene, had to help Him carry the beam after falling to the ground – probably multiple times
 - v. Nailed to the cross
 - 1. 6-8” nails hammered into the wrist – likely between the heads of the radius and ulna bones just below the radiocarpal joint
 - 2. Another was then driven through both feet
 - 3. Suspended in the air making it almost impossible to draw any more than a quick gasp of air when He was already in oxygen deprivation
 - 4. Severe trauma; additional blood loss ([Mark 15:24](#))
 - vi. As He is suspended – His body is spent in great fatigue; normally death by asphyxiation
 - vii. Finally, a Roman spear to the side
 - 1. Called a *Pilum* – 6’6” in length with a triangular iron head on the end
 - 2. Angled up through the 5th intercostal space between the ribs; piercing the pericardium (the fluid sac that surrounds the heart with water), and into the organ itself ([John 19:34](#))
- f. To accept the theory that Jesus swooned or simply passed out on the cross to justify calling it a hoax defies even the most basic of medical diagnoses
 - i. Then, in order for you to continue saying that Jesus only swooned or fainted you would have to believe...
 - 1. That He lay for the next day and a half continuing to bleed out without medical attention, without water, or food
 - 2. That He freed himself from the Jewish burial tradition of wrapping the grave clothes (Remember...Jesus told the people to loose Lazarus)

3. That He single-handedly rolled away a stone weighing approx. 1500 – 2000 lbs (impossible when strong and healthy)
 4. That He subdued the armed Roman guards (there would have been a minimum of 4)
 5. That He walked around for the next 40 days with wounds that would have required weeks if not months to heal
 6. And that He then convinced His disciples to give up their entire lives and travel the world perpetuating a lie while Jesus Himself lived out the remainder of His life in pathetic obscurity
- ii. And these are the same people who tell us that what we believe is nonsensical and impossible!
 - iii. My friends, you need not have a shred of doubt in your mind – there can be no doubt that Jesus died on the cross that Friday afternoon
 - iv. His wounds were fatal

2. Empty Tomb

- a. We begin this segment of the argument by knowing that Jesus' body was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea ([John 19:38-42](#))
- b. As a documented member of the Jewish court, Joseph's life was not one given to fabrication or even putting himself in a position of notoriety ([Luke 23:50](#))
- c. The account of the burial is found in all four Gospels
 - i. But it should be noted that the earliest of the four, the Gospel of Mark, records the details
 - ii. As the first one written it was the freshest of memory of the Jesus narratives
 - iii. Only 30 or so years after the events took place not 100's or more years like so many of the writings
 - iv. Finally, the Jewish leaders themselves, the very opponents of Jesus, confirmed His death and resurrection by their actions
 1. First, they bribed the guards to keep them from saying anything about Jesus being missing or what they witnessed ([Matt 28:12](#))
 2. Then they gave the guards the story of what they were to say happened in order to make sure they said the same things to minimize suspicion ([28:13](#))
 - v. And instead of simply rolling the stone back and denying the tomb was empty, they claimed the body had been stolen by the disciples
- d. The guards knew what had happened, the priests knew what had happened, the Roman officials knew what had happened...
- e. ...now it was time for the rest of the world to find out what had happened

3. Appearances

- a. In order for the story of a hoax to be preserved, the report of Jesus' appearances would have had to have been minimal so the story could be controlled
- b. But that is not what happened

READ – [I Cor 15:3-8](#)

- c. As Rod just read, there were numerous appearances, to many people, and of many different groups
 - i. And the ones who saw Him were not just the disciples
 - ii. Paul lists those who Jesus appeared to and, he writes, many of them are still alive
 - iii. IOW, what Paul was saying was, “Look, if you don’t believe me, go ask them yourselves!” (15:6)
- d. Two paths were presented for those involved in the hoax of Jesus’ resurrection
 - i. They would either tell as few people as possible or...
 - ii. They would tell as many people as they possibly could to try and spread the lie
- e. But Jesus did neither of those
 - i. He did not try and hide – He appeared not only to His closest followers but to over 500 at one time
 - 1. This was not an effort to control a narrative
 - ii. But did you notice who He did not appear to?
 - 1. He did not appear to Herod, Caiaphas, Ananias, Pilate, the Pharisees, or the Sanhedrin – that would have certainly confirmed His resurrection
 - 2. Instead, He went to those who were going to be spreading the news throughout the world once He left them

F – the fatality of the crucifixion; **E** – the empty tomb – **A** – the appearances...

4. The Transformations

- a. The resurrection was a transformative event for every person connected to it
- b. Consider how it transformed three of those who were going to be taking the message to the world
- c. Peter
 - i. He indignantly proclaimed to Jesus that he would never abandon Him! (Mark 14:31)
 - ii. And yet when it came to that moment, he could not even stand up to a young girl who asked him a simple question (Luke 22:56)
 - iii. But after his transformation Peter became that rock on which the church would be built (Matt 16:18)
 - iv. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down during the Roman rule of Nero
- d. James, the half-brother of Jesus who did not fully embrace his brother’s ministry (John 7:5)
 - i. But after the resurrection he became the leader of the church of Jerusalem (Gal 2:9)
 - ii. James was also martyred for his faith
- e. Paul, of course, was completely transformed by the risen Jesus even though he was not a witness to the physical Jesus
 - i. Early in his life, Paul was the chief persecutor of the Christians (Acts 9:1)
 - ii. As a young Pharisee he was present at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1)

- iii. But after his encounter with a risen Jesus, he became the first great missionary and church-planter
- iv. Spent his life spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout all of Asia-Minor the location of the bulk of the world's population at that time
- v. He too was martyred for his faith in Rome

Jesus had risen from the dead!
It was not in any way a hoax

But finally, I want for us to consider two of the disciples and their reaction to the news when they were told that Jesus was not in the tomb

READ – John 20:1-8

- There is no doubt that Mary's report to the disciples would have been received with a healthy dose of skepticism
- But Peter and John decided to take action and check it out for themselves
 - I would think they might have started off walking toward the tomb, but then broke into a run as the enormity of what this could mean settled into their minds and hearts
- But I also believe that they are running with two very different emotions
 - Peter is running carrying a great deal of guilt
 - The last association he had with Jesus was as the one who had denied Him three times (**John 18:27**)
 - And he is well aware of what he has done and, perhaps worse yet in his mind, Jesus knew
 - The account in **Luke 22** tells us that Peter wept bitterly after the rooster crowed
 - In contrast to that, John is running with excitement and with great expectation
 - John is the only disciple recorded to have been present at the crucifixion standing with Jesus' mother Mary and the other women (**John 18:26**)
 - John knows what he saw and experienced just 36 hours earlier
 - He is running in joyful anticipation
- When they arrive at the tomb, they also approach the entrance in different ways and because of that do not see the same things
 - In John's account in the **20th** chapter the original Greek uses 3 different words for how they looked in
 - John arrives first (he was after all younger than Peter) but he stops outside and "looks" in (**20:5**)
 - That word looks is translated as to clearly see something but not in its entirety
 - *Example:* us at the ocean and me on the balcony – see the beach clearly but not all of it in my field of vision
 - Peter arrives and being Peter, rushes straight into the tomb (**20:6**)
 - We read that he "saw" the strips of linen

- That word “saw” translates to closely scrutinize or examine; to see something in detail
 - John then enters and he saw the empty tomb (20:8)
 - John now “saw” but that translates as he comprehended or fully grasped the meaning, and because of that, he believed
 - His belief was not just by the physical evidence but by what his heart now knew to be true
 - After the two men left to go back and tell the others Mary, who was following them, remained (20:10-11)
 - She encountered two angels in the tomb
 - One seated at the head and the other at the feet of where Jesus had laid (20:12)
 - Their positioning from head to foot, or top to bottom, is symbolic – it is a statement of totality, fullness, or completion
- This morning, we have examined proven evidence that Jesus lived, died, was buried and rose again!
- And we rejoice that the tomb is empty!
 - You know, every tomb around the world is known by who is buried there
 - The pyramid tombs of Egypt contain the mummified bodies of the pharaohs
 - Westminster Abbey in London – over 3300 people are entombed there including 30 British kings and queens; Isaac Newton, Charles Dickens, Mary Queen of Scots and other English nobles and royalty
 - In Saudi Arabia is Mohammed’s tomb – stone coffin containing his bones
 - In Moscow there is a plexiglass coffin where the remains of Lenin can be viewed
 - Arlington Cemetery in DC – JFK and Kennedy family; President Howard Taft; Robert Todd Lincoln; Abner Doubleday; the Challenger shuttle astronauts; Chief Justice Earl Warren;
 - But the Garden Tomb of Jesus is known not because of who is buried there, but because of who is NOT there!
- That knowledge is our joy, our strength, our hope, our reason for life
- How are you approaching the tomb this morning?
 - Do you approach hesitantly, like Peter, filled with guilt and doubt?
 - Or do you come expectantly, filled with joyful anticipation?

And the only way you can be His child is to ask Jesus to come into your life as your Lord and Savior

Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?