

WHO IS JESUS

WEEK THREE: HIM... REALLY?

SAM BURKE

Well... this is the final week of our series "Who is Jesus?"

RECAP:

- week one: we talked about 4 opinions about who Jesus is: 1. pop culture Jesus, 2. Painted Jesus, 3. Santa Jesus, 4. Vintage Jesus. And we said that the Bible gives us the most complete and accurate picture of who Jesus was.. and the Bible tells us that Jesus came to: take care of the problem of sin, seek and save the lost, show us who God is, give us a new way to live, and give us an eternal hope.
- Week two: we answered some FAQ's about Jesus: is he God, was Mary a virgin, was he really perfect, and what was his death about?

My hope through this series and through these three weeks is two things: 1) that we would get to know the REAL Jesus better and have our understanding of him deepen so that we can learn to trust him more & 2) that this would somehow give you the information you need to someday share who is Jesus with someone else.

This afternoon what I want to do to wrap this whole thing up is to answer 2 main questions.

1. Did Jesus Raise from the Dead?

Story about my Aunt Karen... she passed away around almost two years ago. She had lung cancer. But she had peace about dying. Most people when they think about death have an anxiety or fear of it... But she had peace. Why? Because she believed that this life is temporary, and she was going to live eternally with God. If she were here today to talk with you, she would say that the one thing that made a difference in her life more than anything else was the fact that she believed in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Jesus raising from the dead is the most celebrated and known miracle in the world. In fact, we have an entire holiday based around it: EASTER. That's right, Easter is not about wearing pastel colors, coloring eggs, or a chocolate bunny. Easter celebrates Jesus raising from the dead.

Of all the beliefs in the Christian faith, there is none more central or crucial than Jesus' resurrection.

Arnold Toynbee, the author of the book *Man's Concern with Death* said this, "*Find the Body of that Jew (JESUS) and Christianity crumbles into ruins.*"

If Jesus did not raise from the dead... then he was just another good man that did a lot of good things and was martyred for his cause.

Hear what some major university professors have to say about all this.

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"No one fact in the history of mankind... is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort" than the fact of "Christ died and rose from the dead."

- Thomas Arnold (professor of modern history @ Oxford)

"In the whole story of Jesus Christ, the most important event is the resurrection."

- William Lyon Phelps (Yale professor)

"The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact."

- Benjamin Warfield (Princeton professor)

These are highly educated men who are saying these things about Jesus raising from the dead.

So here's the deal with answering this question, "did Jesus rise from the dead?" It is going to take 2 things to really answer this: **FACT & FAITH.**

Let's talk about some facts first:

Biblical Evidence:

- **Jesus resurrection was predicted in advance by others.**

About 700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be born into humble life, die an excruciating death, and raise from the dead to take away our sin.

"Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied, by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities..."
Isaiah 53: 10-11

- **Jesus predicted his own death and resurrection.**

On a number of occasions throughout the Gospels, Jesus said to his disciples and to others that he would die and after three days would rise again.

"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."
Mark 10:33-34

- **Jesus appeared to eyewitnesses.**

The Bible tells on many accounts that Jesus appeared to hundreds of people after he raised from the dead. In a court of law in the United States, one eyewitness can turn an entire case over... Jesus had HUNDREDS of eyewitnesses.

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“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

These verses are written by Paul to convince a group of people that Jesus raising from the dead was not something that was just made up. It was a fact that was predicted and fulfilled and had eyewitnesses.

Non-Biblical Evidence:

Believe it or not... there are actually accounts of Jesus raising from the dead outside of the Bible. They are historical accounts.

- Josephus (AD 37-100)

This is what this Jewish historian said:

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and then thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

- Suetonius (AD 70-160)

Suetonius was a roman historian. In his biography of Nero, this is what Suetonius says about the resurrection:

*“Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a **new and mischevious superstition** [the resurrection].”*

So there is Biblical evidence, non-biblical evidence, and even circumstantial evidence such as the power of a life that has been changed, and so on.

But as much as there is fact out there about Jesus raising from the dead, people still are skeptical. That is why I said to answer this question it will take not only fact... but faith. Faith is believing in something that you cannot see or totally explain away.

2. What does all this mean?

Here is the critical part, the point that this entire series has been building to. **SO WHAT???** **WHAT’S THE POINT???** Because if this doesn’t have a point, it’s just useless information that could be good to know. Here’s the point.

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Jesus wants a relationship with you.

The sole reason for all of who Jesus is and why he came is to bring God glory by providing a way back to him and giving us an opportunity to have a relationship with him. Jesus wants to have a relationship with you. He died to have a relationship with you. He rose from the dead to have a relationship with you. All he asks is that you admit that you cannot make it on your own and that you are in desperate need of him in your life. He asks that you believe that he is who he says he is and that his death paid your price. He asks that you confess him as the lord and leader of your life. And he asks that you accept what he did on the cross as the payment for your sins. You no longer have to try to do enough good to make it to God. Jesus paid it all. That is the starting point of this relationship.

ADMIT, BELIEVE, CONFESS, & ACCEPT.

Jesus wants to make a difference in your life.

Jesus wants to not only have a relationship with you, but he wants to change your life... to rock your world, and make a difference in you. The more you have a relationship with him, the more you will become like him... and that is God's plan. Jesus wants to transform your life into something amazing.

Jesus wants you to make a difference in your world.

He wants a relationship with you, make a difference in your life, but he also wants you to make a difference. He wants to use you to reach the world... to change the world. He wants to use you in your school. He wants to use you in your neighborhood. He wants to use you to reach your friends. He wants to use you to make a difference.

That's the point of all this.

If you would like to read more about all of this and go even deeper than what we have discussed... I have a book that would be awesome for you to read and I can get it for you for \$15. It's called "Vintage Jesus: Timeless answers to Timely Questions" If you'd like to get it, let me know and I'll order one for you.

{PRAY}