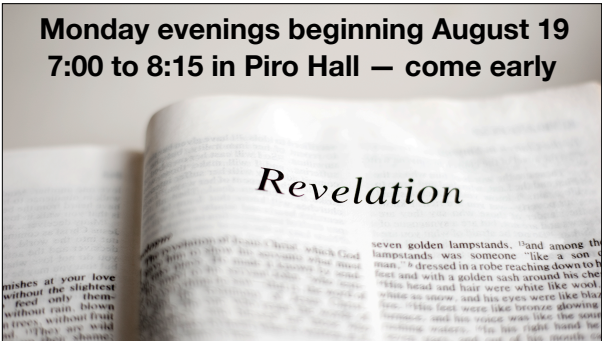




Boxes of Hope

**We'll be assembling 60
of them after class on
August 18.**



DESTROYER OF THE GODS
FROM PAGAN TO CHRISTIAN



**BEGINS
NEXT SUNDAY
AUGUST 11**



Does this even matter?

The earliest Christians saw that Jesus' resurrection was absolutely central to the faith.

1 Corinthians 15 -- If Jesus was not resurrected, then Christians are to be pitied more than any, for we have believed a lie!

The early creedal portion (v. 3-6) goes back to, at most, a year or two after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Acts 17 -- Jesus' resurrection is the proof that Paul's claims about God and the very nature of reality are true!

Jews and Resurrection

Led by the Pharisees, most (but not all) Jews of Jesus day believed that:

God would again reign over his people and all of creation.

The coming of God's kingdom would be a world at peace, with God's people living in right relationship with God.

When God's kingdom arrived, all of God's people would be bodily resurrected – *all and at one time*.

The events leading up the resurrection

Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified

Jesus is taken to Golgotha and crucified there. He dies. There are witnesses to the crucifixion. Jesus' side is pierced by Roman soldiers to be sure he is dead.

Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for Jesus' body and is given it. He buries Jesus' body in his family tomb.

Matthew tells us that the chief priests and Pharisees put a guard outside Jesus' tomb.

The resurrection account

Jesus was crucified and buried on a Friday. On Sunday, several women arrive at the tomb, find the tomb opened, and Jesus' body missing. An angel tells them that Jesus has risen.

The women ran to get others.

Matthew tells us that the guard reported to the High Priests who decided that they would claim Jesus' disciples had stolen the body.

The resurrection appearances

Jesus appears to two on the way to Emmaus

On the evening of his resurrection, Jesus appears to his own disciples (without Thomas)

A week later, Jesus appears to the disciples and Thomas

Jesus appears to the eleven at a table

Jesus appears to the eleven on a mountaintop

Jesus appears at the seashore

Paul says that witnesses include James, Peter, the rest of the twelve, 500 others, and Paul himself. (1 Cor 15)

Four established facts (from William Lane Craig)

There are four facts that the vast majority (80% or so) of NT scholars and historians accept.

Jesus was buried in a tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea.

Women discovered an empty tomb.

On different occasions, at multiple times, people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead.

The original disciples believed that Jesus had risen from the dead – despite having every reason not to!

Jesus' burial in the tomb

Jesus' burial is attested in some of the earliest Christian writing, e.g. Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth. (1 Cor 15:3-5)

The burial story is part of the old material used by Mark, the first gospel written.

As member of the Jewish court that condemned Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea is unlikely to be an invention of the Gospel writers.

There is no other burial story.

Women and the empty tomb

This story is also part of Mark's very old source material.

Why would the Jewish leaders make up a cover story for an empty tomb, unless it was actually empty! (Matt 28:11-15)

If you were going to make this up, you would never use women as witnesses. Women were not accepted as credible witnesses in first century Palestine.

People's experiences of Jesus' appearances

Paul's claim in his first letter to the church in Corinth about there being 500 witnesses virtually guarantees that people experienced the risen Christ. There are multiple, differing stories of Jesus' various resurrection appearances.

Virtually no NT scholar disputes that a number of people believed that they had seen the risen Christ.

The original disciples' beliefs

Their leader was dead – and there was NO first-century Jewish belief in a dying and rising Messiah!

Jesus' execution was the criminal sentence for a heretic.

For Jews, the resurrection was about the restoration of all Israel, not the resurrection of any single person. Judaism was profoundly communal.

What do we make of these historical facts?

What is the most plausible explanation of these facts?

What is the best hypothesis?

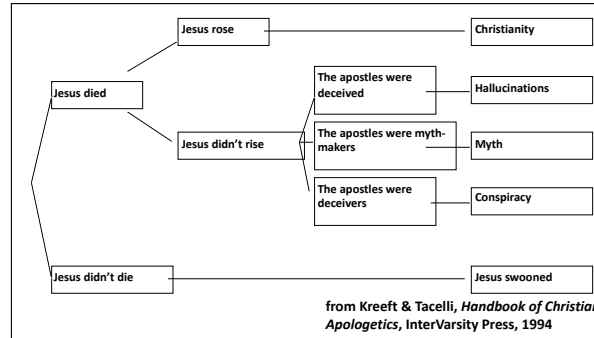
Can we imagine a way in which this hypothesis could be tested?

Our explanation/hypothesis must:

Include all the data

Construct a basically simple and coherent overall picture – look for the simpler explanation

Make sense of areas/questions/concerns outside the immediate question of the resurrection. How does the explanation fit into the bigger picture?



**If Jesus was not raised,
how do you explain the
emergence and growth of
Christianity?**

Obstacles to belief in the resurrection

Ignorance of the historical evidence

Inattention to the claims

Makes it easier to ignore Jesus' challenge

A worldview that precludes the possibility of anything "supernatural," no matter the evidence

Failure to understand the importance of the resurrection to the Christian faith

